

**OPINION 8**  
THE SINKING OF  
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ISRAELI STRIKES KILL  
42 IN GAZA CITY**SPORT 14**  
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MANOJ  
BAJPAYEE IS  
ON A BREAK  
12 VIVACITY

## Covid second wave tamed: Yogi

### ‘Directives issued to counter possible 3rd wave of virus’

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that the battle against the second wave of Covid was being fought on a war-footing and it was the reason why the active cases across the state were waning rapidly.

Interacting with media-persons in Noida on Sunday, Yogi said, “Our plans are ready to deal with a possible third wave of Covid and we are working with utmost care. Directives have been issued to form dedicated ICUs to counter the possible third wave, especially in community health centres, district hospitals and medical colleges for women and children.”

Admitting that the viral infection has infiltrated into the



Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inspecting Covid work at the Chhaprauli village PHC in Gautam Budh Nagar on Sunday

rural areas of the state, the CM said that the need of the hour

is to prevent the infection from spreading further. “A strategy

for tracing, testing and treatment has been prepared for this. If the infected person is identified early and treatment begins promptly, the case will not be critical. We are giving the health teams medical and antigen test kits. Even though the RT-PCR test report comes later, treatment is started,” he said. Yogi said that 2.50 lakh people were being tested daily on an average.

On vaccination, the chief minister said that around 1.50 crore people across the state had been administered the jabs and the focus was now on villages. “I have directed that vaccination should be carried out in the common service area in villages so that local residents can get themselves registered and then vaccinated without

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## Demand for ‘kafan’ rises 30-fold

Covid deaths keep looms running round the clock

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■ NEW DELHI

There are things one takes for granted, like the cloth used to cover a body. Not any longer. The “kafan” (shroud), generally a thick, white, unstitched piece of cloth, is suddenly dearer. It is on account of the unusual spike in the number of deaths owing to Covid-19. More people are buying the cloth to drape their dear ones on their final journey than for the living these days.

In Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, small handloom and machine loom units are busy making

bolts of “kafan”. The production has been ramped up to meet the surge in demand. While these units produced 10,000 individual pieces of the shrouds a month, they are coping with the demand for a similar number every day. That’s not it. They need to be cut to size, packed and transported as fast as possible.

Such looms in Bihar’s Gaya are functional round-the-clock. The labourers have no shift breaks. They are meeting the challenge to dispatch the stuff not only to various places in Bihar, but Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal and even the north-eastern States.

An official of the Handlooms and Textile Department of Uttar Pradesh said that the demand of one

lakh “kafan” per month manufactured in Lohta area of Varanasi, Mau and Azamgarh has now nearly trebled. The powerloom units of these areas supply to entire northern India, from the Poorvanchal region to Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat and other parts of southern India.

“Nowadays these are done on powerloom and it’s no more a handloom material. Raw materials come from Gujarat and then made in looms of UP, Bihar and then supplied to most parts of India,” said the official.

Underlining a factor of class divide, the official said as the making of the product is not a profitable one, it is mostly confined to areas where cheap labour is available, like in Bihar, UP and West Bengal. Manpur

in Gaya is known as the Manchester of eastern Bihar and the workers here are doing overtime to meet the demand for about 50,000 “kafan” per day for adjoining areas and other States. Besides cotton, the units from here also make shrouds out of polyester and silk.

“We have been working round the clock. Pained to make bolts of kafan. The demand is high, but we have been supplying with full integrity and at same price as earlier. No black marketing for this product,” said Dwarika, who owns a small unit at Patwatoli, Gaya, which has several small units. He said all religions require this piece of cloth and the price could vary from place to place and depending on sizes range from ₹100 to ₹1,000.

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## Teleconsultation, surveillance to combat Covid in rural areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As rural areas become new hunting grounds for deadly coronavirus, the Centre on Sunday issued guidelines calling for door-to-door surveillance, teleconsultation for asymptomatic cases, and active

surveillance for influenza-like illness periodically by ASHA workers among others.

Releasing the guidelines, the Union Health Ministry said there is a need to strengthen primary-level healthcare infrastructure at all levels to intensify Covid-19 response

in these areas while continuing to provide other essential health services.

In every village, active surveillance should be done for influenza-like illness/severe acute respiratory infections (ILI/SARI) periodically by ASHA workers with help of the Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committee (VHSNC).

The advisory comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, chairing a high-level meeting on the Covid-19 situation, directed Government officials to make a distribution plan for oxygen supply to rural areas and scale up health infrastructure to manage the disease burden in those regions.

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Ensure bodies are not thrown in Ganga, but given proper funeral, Centre tells States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has directed States to prevent dumping of dead bodies in the Ganga and focus on their safe disposal and providing support for ensuring dignified funeral.

Secretary, Ministry of Jal Shakti, Pankaj Kumar reviewed the position and action taken in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in this regard.

He highlighted the instructions and wanted expeditious action and also underscored the need to give equal attention to such incidents in urban as well as rural areas along the Ganga and other rivers.

He said after knowing the progress from the States, CWC, CPCB and State Pollution Control Boards would also give their feedback.

Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Director General National Mission for Clean Ganga stated that the situation is being followed up with several districts like Unnao, Kanpur rural, Ghazipur, Balia and Buxar, Saran in Bihar.

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## ASHA lone ray of hope for Covid ravaged villages

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Caught off guard, the Centre and State authorities are now banking on oft-ignored frontline workers, ASHA, to take on the second wave of Covid-19, which has already swept a vast swathe of rural areas, where the bulk of the population lives.

Officials said that the challenge from Covid was bigger this year and only pro-active ASHA workers can help stop villages from being affected.

Lack of awareness, reluctance to submit to testing and widespread hesitancy against vaccine are challenges that the

Governments are looking to combat.

ASHA workers risk their lives each day in exchange of a meagre sum of ₹2,250 per month. However, they have to face pay cuts for taking more than 10 days off leave even in this time of crisis.

Rural communities face unique challenges in responding to the pandemic due to medical workforce shortage, fewer hospital beds per capita, limited access to tele-medication, and populations that are at elevated risk for Covid-19 related deaths due to age or chronic disease prevalence.

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Cong’s Satav dies of Covid-related complications

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/PUNE

Congress Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Satav succumbed to Covid-19-related complications on Sunday after battling with it for three weeks.

Satav, who represented his home State of Maharashtra in the Upper House, had tested negative last week.

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several Cabinet colleagues, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi consoled the death of 46-year-old Satav.

## Covaxin effective against all corona variants in India, UK

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indigenously developed Bharat Biotech’s Covid-19 vaccine — Covaxin — has produced neutralising titres (concentration) against all key emerging variants tested, including the B.1.617 and B.1.1.7, first identified in India and the United Kingdom, according to a study published in peer-reviewed medical journal Clinical Infectious Diseases.

A modest reduction in neutralisation by a factor of 1.95 was observed against the

B.1.617 variant compared to the vaccine variant (D614G). Bharat Biotech joint managing director Suchitra Ella cited it. However Ella added that despite this reduction, neutralising titre levels with B.1.617 remain above levels expected to be protective.

“No difference in neutralisation between B.1.1.7 (first found in the UK) and vaccine strain (D614G) was observed,” Ella said. These find-

ings are from a study conducted in collaboration with the National Institute of Virology — Indian Council of Medical Research.

Covaxin is one of the three Covid-19 vaccines that are currently available in the country.

Developed by Bharat Biotech in partnership with National Institute of Virology and ICMR, Covaxin was approved for emergency use against coronaviruses in January.



## Tauktae disrupts LIFE, VACCINATION



Electric poles fell due to heavy rain and wind from Tauktae cyclone, at Bidarhalli near Chikmagalur on Sunday

Cyclone claims 8 lives, inoculation drive suspended in costal areas

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The anti-Covid inoculation drive in most parts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Kerala, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu was affected on Sunday due to the cyclonic storm ‘Tauktae’ that displaced thousands of people and claimed eight lives so far.

Keeping in view of India Meteorological Department’s warning, most of the coastal regions in these states suspended the drive for two days-Sunday and Monday.

The inoculation was suspended for two days—Sunday and Monday in Mumbai, Palghar, north Konkan, Thane, Ratnagiri districts in Maharashtra. Gujarat has also suspended the drive for two days. The drive was also affected in Kerala, Goa, Tamil nadu, Gujarat and Karnataka.

Heavy to heavy rainfall, gusty winds with 145 to 175 kmph, disruption in power supplies, floods in low lying areas, water logging and blockage of roads due to fallen trees impacted the inoculation drive.

As per preliminary reports, the cyclone has claimed eight people (two in Kerala, two in Goa and four in Karnataka), uprooted a large number of trees, electricity poles and damaged a large number properties so far.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Tauktae which has taken the form of a “very severe cyclonic storm” is likely to intensify further during the next 24 hours and reach the Gujarat coast on Monday evening.

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## IAF, Navy poised for action

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bracing for Cyclone Tauktae, the Government has put the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Navy on standby with nearly 40 planes

ready to be deployed at a short notice. The IAF planes on Saturday morning airlifted teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to some parts of Gujarat where the cyclone is

likely to hit.

Giving details here on Saturday, official said the Navy’s ships, aircraft, helicopters, diving and disaster relief teams are on standby for “rendering full support to the State Government.”

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# State being equipped to deal with third Covid wave: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that as the spread of the deadly coronavirus is on the decline, the state is equipping itself to fight the anticipated third wave.

As per predictions, the third Covid wave could severely affect children, women and vulnerable groups, and is likely to come within the next 3-4 months. “Reacting to experts’ assessments on a probable third wave, immediate directions have been issued to ramp up health infrastructure in all the community health centres and set up paediatric ICUs with a minimum capacity of 100 beds in all the districts for proper and special care of the children,” the CM said.

He said while preparing extensively to compete against the possible third wave of corona, the past experience of Japanese encephalitis would come handy. Encephalitis, which had created havoc in the state, especially in eastern UP for many decades, has been controlled by 98 per cent.

“We made a comprehensive action plan while fighting the menace and as a result, the casualties which used to be between 1,200 and 1,500 every year came down to 63 last year,” the CM said while press-



ing home the point that on the basis of encephalitis experiences, instructions have been given to protect children and women from the third wave by setting up dedicated hospitals and ICUs.

A coordination committee has been formed which will work in rural areas and urban areas, he said. The CM said that strict directives have been issued to facilitate easy and timely availability of medical

resources, ambulances and other Covid-related supplies to people in need. Besides, the authorities have also been directed that if the patients’ RT-PCR reports are negative but they still show symptoms of Covid, a digital X-ray must be done to get the correct results,” he said.

The CM said that to give a wider coverage of the immunisation programme, the state will continue to conduct the

vaccination drive in a planned, organised and phased manner to provide a safety shield to every person free of cost.

He said that an advisory has been issued to tackle black fungus. An action plan has been made to prevent this. The advisory has been sent to CMOs, medical colleges and district hospitals. Training is also being given to health personnel to deal with black fungus.

# Fresh orders issued for payment to kin for cremation of Covid victims

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Panchayati Raj department, in a bid to prevent the dumping of bodies into the Ganga river, has issued fresh orders for payment of Rs 5,000 by village panchayats and urban local bodies for the cremation of the dead. Similar order was first issued in June last year.

Additional Chief Secretary, Panchayati Raj, Manoj Kumar Singh said there could be several reasons why bodies were being dumped into the river. “It may be the lack of resources to buy firewood, tradition in some communities or the scare caused by the pandemic,” he pointed out.

He said there is no dearth of money and the government

has given adequate funds to the village panchayats and urban local bodies for cremation of the Covid patients. “In view of the availability of money for the cremation, there is no reason for dumping the bodies into the river,” the official said.

In the backdrop of corpses found floating in the Ganga, the Centre on Sunday directed officials in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar to prevent people from dumping the bodies into the river or its tributaries and ensure safe disposal of corpses.

Official sources said the Namami Gange Ministry has directed the state government to prevent the dumping of dead bodies into the Ganga and focus on their safe disposal and providing support for ensuring dignified cremation.

The Centre’s reaction comes in the backdrop of as many as 71 corpses found floating in the Ganga in Bihar’s Buxar district earlier this week. A similar incident was reported from Ghazipur and several other districts in UP.

These incidents come amid crematoriums across the country grappling to perform the last rites of Covid-19 victims due to a massive surge in the number of infections.

At a review meeting held on May 15 and 16, the Centre said dumping of the dead bodies and partially burnt or decomposed corpses into the Ganga and its tributaries has recently been reported, which is the most undesirable and alarming. The Centre has also directed the state pollution

control boards to constantly monitor Ganga’s water quality.

Earlier on May 7, the Urban Development department had issued orders to all urban local bodies in the state to hold funerals of all those who died of coronavirus infection without charging any money.

The municipal corporations will bear the expenses of funerals at all crematoriums, cemeteries and cremation grounds falling within the limits of the corporation. The expenditure incurred on the funerals will be met by the urban local bodies from their own resources or from the annual grants received from the State Finance Commission. A maximum amount of Rs 5,000 will be spent on each funeral.

# Govt to set up Covid care centres at RPLs in 66 UP districts

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Aiming to provide prompt and better medicare facilities to police personnel, the state government has decided to set up Covid care centres at Reserve Police Lines across 66 districts of Uttar Pradesh.

“Committed to the well-being of personnel of Uttar Pradesh Police, Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC), Government Railway Police (GRP) tirelessly engaged to maintain law and order across the state amid the ongoing Corona crisis and monitoring partial curfews, the government has set up Covid care centres with 2,993 beds, of which 299 are those with facility of medical oxygen, in Reserve Police Lines. Besides, a provision of 628 beds has been made for better treatment and health care of personnel of Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC),” a government spokesman said in Lucknow on Sunday.

As many as 589 policemen were undergoing medical treatment at these Covid care centres across the state and 244 have completely recovered and were discharged.

“A 107-bed Covid care centre was set up exclusively for frontline workers by Government Railway Police and a 236-bed facility was set up by the Training Directorate to provide immediate and proper medical treatment to the virus-afflicted policemen,” the spokesman said.

The official further said that these fully functioning centres have not only reduced the burden on district hospitals but have also led to swifter recovery of cops due to the conducive environment and medical care without any delay.

“Isolation wards and Covid care centres were set up in Reserve Police Lines in Hamirpur, Siddharthnagar and Unnao and the government has instructed the officials to provide ailing cops all health-related facilities. Such centres are also being operated in Chakia State Hospital in Chandauli, Girls Hostel of Veer Bahadur Sports Stadium in Gorakhpur and District Hospital in Shravasti,” he said.

# No new virus strain behind spate of deaths in AMU

Aligarh (PTI): Genome sequencing of Covid-19 samples has not found any new coronavirus strain behind the infection around the AMU campus, university authorities said Sunday as another member of their fraternity died.

Professor Abu Qamar, 75, the former dean of the Faculty of Medicine in the Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College and Hospital died here on Sunday of Covid-19 after battling it for nearly three weeks. JNMC Principal Shahid Ali Siddiqui said, Prof Qamar died two days after AMU’s former proctor, Prof Nasim Beg, 76, died in a New Delhi hospital where he was shifted to and admitted after his condition worsened here, his family members said.

At least 38 AMU teachers, including 17 serving ones, have died of Covid or Covid-like symptoms in the last one month, triggering doubts if any new deadly strain of the virus has been in circulation on the AMU campus.

These doubts also prompted the varsity’s JNMC author-

**No new strain of coronavirus has been detected in samples sent for genome sequencing to the CSIR in New Delhi, said a senior JNMC official, in a relief to the hospital’s beleaguered staff who have been on the edge following a large number of deaths of the serving and retired AMU employees**

ities to send Covid-19 samples from the AMU campus and its neighbouring Civil Lines area for genome sequencing to the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology in New Delhi. No new strain of coronavirus has been detected in samples sent for genome sequencing to the CSIR in New Delhi, said a senior JNMC official, in a relief to the hospital’s beleaguered staff who have been on the edge following a large number of deaths of the serving and retired AMU employees.

Prof Haris Manzoor Khan, the head of the JNMC’s Department of Microbiology and the principal investigator of the AMU’s Viral Research

and Diagnostic Laboratory, said out of the 20 samples sent to CSIR for genome sequencing, 18 (90 percent) had B.1.617.2 lineage referred to as the double mutation variant, first identified in Maharashtra on October 5, 2020. It is a sub-type of B.1.617 variant which is the main virus circulating in the second wave of COVID-19 in Uttar Pradesh, he added.

The WHO has described it as a Variant of Concern because of its higher transmissibility and reduced neutralization from pre-existing antibodies, he said. B.1.617 has a higher growth rate than other circulating variants suggesting a potentially increased rate of transmission. **PTI**

# Govt to provide solar lamps to kids in rural areas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a novel initiative aimed at bringing the light of education to children on the one hand and empowering women on the other, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched a project to manufacture solar lamps and provide them to children in rural areas at low cost.

The beneficiaries of this project also include school-children and women of the ancestral village of President Ram Nath Kovind, Paraunkh in Derapur block of Kanpur (Rural) district.

With the help of the government and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Fund, women of self-help groups are creating these solar lamps, which are being made available to school-children by the government

for Rs 100 per piece against their market rate of a Rs 500 per piece.

Earlier, the Yogi government had distributed 28 lakh solar lamps made by 4,000 women to schoolchildren in 75 blocks spread over 30 Uttar Pradesh districts. The initiative is a part of the ‘Prerna Ojas’ programme of the Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihoods Mission (Rural Development Department) that helps women of self-help groups become self-reliant and socially and economically empowered.

In the first phase of the ‘Prerna Ojas’ programme, 35 women from 18 groups were selected to receive training in manufacturing cheaper solar lamps and selling them while a unit was set up at Paraunkh village in Kanpur.

## SCHOOLSCAN

**YAMINI SELECTED FOR INTERNSHIP OF COVID RELIEF AMBASSADOR**

Yamini Mishra, a class XI student of City Montessori

School, Rajendra Nagar Campus I, has made Lucknow proud by being selected for internship of Covid Relief Ambassador at United Nations Volunteer (UNV) due to her spirit of service and high moral values, thus highlighting the school’s commitment of instilling human, material and divine values in students. CMS founder Jadish Gandhi wished Yamini a bright future and said CMS students are always ready for the service of humanity with their spirit of compassion, hard work and dedication. “CMS endeavours to make every child a light of the society and a pride of the human race, always eager to contribute to the creative development of the society. The world today needs such dedicated citizens, especially in the midst of the Corona pandemic,” he said.



# Akhilesh indulging in petty politics, says minister

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The UP government on Sunday slammed Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav for making repeated statements against the government and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the management of Covid pandemic and relief measures.

Government spokesman and Cabinet minister Sidarth Nath Singh said Akhilesh Yadav is indulging in petty politics instead of helping the people on ground.

Criticising the series of statements issued by the SP president, the minister said: “Akhilesh Yadav is busy in spreading confusion and the former CM should learn from Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath that despite being Covid positive, he continued to work in public interest.”

“The CM did not rest for a day despite being Covid positive a few days ago and even held regular meetings with health officials. As soon as the CM tested negative, he started visiting the districts to have a first-hand account of preparations to provide relief to people affected by the pandemic,” Singh said, adding: “It is easy for opposition leaders to indulge in hair-splitting and issue statements from the comforts of their air-conditioned rooms.”

He said first Akhilesh Yadav created confusion among the people in the name of “BJP’s vaccine” and now he has been talking about making a policy on vaccination.

“He is misleading the public by indulging in petty politics and issuing irresponsible statements during this time of crisis,” Singh said.



The minister asked the SP president as to how many districts he has visited so far to get a hang of the ground reality and help people of the state.

He said that during the last few days, Yogi has reviewed health facilities in about 38 districts, physically or virtually. He said the state government would provide free rations to the weaker section and financial assistance to daily-wagers of urban areas like last year.

Singh said that four lakh members of more than 60,000 surveillance committees have been pressed into service by the Yogi government for door-to-door surveys while rapid response teams are conducting tests and delivering medical kits to patients.

He said that more than 44 million people have been tested so far in the state while more than 1.45 crore vaccine doses have been administered. Food is being delivered to all the needy through community kitchens, he added.

Singh said while respected institutions like WHO, NITI Aayog and Bombay High Court are appreciating the Covid management model of the Uttar Pradesh government, the SP is making a mockery of itself by making petty and false statements. He also asked Akhilesh Yadav to shun complacency and help the people in distress.

dance among the poor and migrant workers heading home. He also arranges beds for Covid patients and has been at the forefront. “The poor and the deprived do not know where to get medicines, so I ensure that the medicines reach them,” he said.

On April 12 when he could not arrange an ambulance for noted historian Yogesh Praveen, who ulti-

mately died for the want of treatment the next day, Pathak wrote a stinging letter to the additional chief secretary (health) and principal secretary (medical education), exposing the health scenario of Lucknow and calling for improvements.

“The infection is continuously increasing in Lucknow and the situation is getting worse. Hospitals do not have

beds and people are not getting ambulances on time,” Pathak wrote, painting a pathetic picture of the state of affairs in Lucknow. While refusing to delve on the one-page missive that spurred the administration to improve healthcare in Lucknow, Pathak said: “The state government is doing its job, but as an individual I am trying my best to help the people in distress.”



Minister Brajesh Pathak has been distributing 800 to 1,000 packets of medicines prescribed to combat coronavirus infection among the symptomatic poor and needy through BJP volunteers

**NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY, PRAYAGRAJ**

**ENGAGEMENT OF CMP DOCTORS**

North Central Railway, Prayagraj Division intends to engage 04 full time Contract Medical Practitioners (CMP) (General duty) on contract basis for a period of one year as per details given below -

SN	Speciality	Vacancy	Place of posting
1.	General duty	02	SDH/CNB
2.	General duty	02	HU/ETW

The contract is extendable up to 12 year on year to year basis.  
As per policy & rule, reservation will be given as under -

SC= 01	ST= 00	OBC= 01	UR= 02	Total= 04
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The interested candidates can appear for the engagement which will be organised by Virtually/Online mode on dated 21.05.2021 followed by Medical examination. Candidates will informed by phone for this engagement, so they have switch on their mobile on dated 21.05.2021.

\*Medical examination of candidates will be held simultaneously along with engagement.

**NOTE:-**

1.Candidate must submitted their application (**Mobile No. mandatory**) on the prescribed and enclosed proforma,all educational certificate, caste certificate, experience certificate etc on the e-mail ID- [prjgajsection@gmail.com](mailto:prjgajsection@gmail.com) latest by **23:59 on dated 20.05.2021 through on line**.

2.In case the number of candidates is more and they cannot be interviewed /Medically examined on the nominated day, they will be interviewed /Medically examined on next working day/days.

**Essential educational qualification** : M.B.B.S with MCI registration & for Specialist - MD.

**Desirable Qualification** : Candidates having Post Graduate Degree and prior working experience will be preferred. All proper educational and working experience documents should be submitted on the day of engagement if engagement made by physically.

**Remuneration** : Rs 75,000/- for general duty doctors is fixed if Govt. accommodation is not provided. If railway accommodation is provided, an amount equivalent to the sum of house rent allowance and licence fee of the accommodation provided will be deducted.

**Age for open market CMP**: Age of candidate as on 01.05.2021 should not exceed 53 years but there is 05 years relaxation for SC/ST & 3 years, for OBC candidates on production of caste certificate. The maximum age limit will be 65 year or 12 terms out of which each term with not exceed 01 year, whichever is earlier.

**Terms and condition :-**

The engagement of Doctors would be on Contract basis initially for a period of one year, which is extendable on annual basis up to a maximum period of 12 years as per administrative requirements on the basis of assessment of performance of CMPs. However, the services of these doctors can be terminated before the expiry of one year after giving 15 days' notice on either side. Railway Administration will be at liberty to terminate the contract of the Doctor with immediate effect by paying honorarium in lieu of 15 days' notice period, if the circumstances, so warrant. The service rendered as Contract Doctor is a stop gap arrangement and will not have any bearing in respect of consideration of their period in case of subsequent regular selection through UPSC. It will also not confer upon any right for regularization or permanent absorption in the Railway. **No private practice is allowed.**

**Note:-**

1. The Contract Doctors shall not be entitled to Railway quarter etc. as a matter of right. However, if such a quarter is available, they will be provided accommodation. The detailed instructions with regard to their duties while on contract with the Railway, shall be given to them in the event of their selection along with the offer of engagement.

2. The offer of engagement to the selected candidates shall be issued subject to the availability of vacancy as per requirement in Hospitals/ Health Units located at different stations on 'as is where is basis'. Administration has right to change the place of posting as per administrative needs.

3. The place of notified vacancies may be changed as per requirement of the administration.

4. The notification & application can be downloaded from N.C.Railway website [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in).

5. After approval of the panel by Competent authority, the panel will be uploaded on the same day at NCR's website [www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in). The suitable candidates will be called through Speed post/Registered letter, Telephone call and SMS to report on a particular fixed date at Central Hospital/N.C.R/PrjYJ for Medical examination. The candidates who do not report at the assigned date and time can be forfeit their chance of contract engagement and such engagement can be offered to the next empanelled candidates.

6. The candidates are also required to indicate their preferences for the Stations where vacancies are notified in this notice above. To the extent possible, this will be kept in view while offering them contract engagement. The exact place will, however, be known only after they report for taking posting order as per para above.

7. The administration reserves the right to effect changes in station/place of engagement at any stage.

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# Facilities being ramped up for Covid patients in rural areas

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The government health facilities are being ramped up for COVID-19 patients in the rural areas of the state capital so that they are able to get free and qualitative treatment. Lucknow district Covid incharge Roshan Jacob said that currently the focus was on rural areas of the district. She said that to prevent any surge in COVID-19 cases in rural areas there was need to strengthen the medical facilities there.

“On Sunday, a meeting was held with the officials of Balrampur Hospital and Lok Bandhu Hospital to see how the health facilities could be ramped up in the rural areas so that each hospital there had a hundred more beds,” she said.

Jacob said there were plans to make all the suburban hospitals at Chinhhat, Malihabad, Mohanlalganj, Gudamba Covid facilities and the chief medical officer had been asked to ensure that these hospitals were ready in case the need arose.

She said all the primary health centres would have holding areas along with arrangements for medical oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators for treatment of at least ten persons.

When asked about the need to make these preparations when COVID-19 cases were declining, Jacob said it was important to be prepared in case there was an upsurge. “Currently we are still trying to ensure that the cases do not increase in the rural areas. It will not be correct to say that everything is fine in the rural areas. We should still believe that the novel coronavirus is present and there could be an upsurge and keeping this in mind we are making the preparations,” she said

On being asked that despite so many additional facilities in healthcare, patients were still facing a lot of problems, the district Covid incharge said that the doctors were also under stress and hence their aim was to see that the system delivered its best.

“This means that bed allocations are fast, the patients get their required medicines and the families are updated about the health of the patients,” she



District Magistrate Abhishek Prakash took stock of rapid response teams and nigrani samitis at Chandrawal village in Sarojininaragar, which has a population of around 5,000. He interacted with patients in home isolation and issued directions for providing them medical kits. He also spoke about the importance of wearing masks and following Covid protocols

Pioneer

said. Jacob said that under the surveillance in the rural areas they were trying to cover as many houses as they could. She admitted that the urban areas of the district still had maximum number of cases.

“Most of the rural parts of Lucknow had a peak along with the city and currently it is on the downside and we are trying to be doubly sure about it. In the city we were aggressively monitoring through testing which is very important when the pandemic is going down primarily for two reasons. Firstly, to know the positive cases and secondly, to ensure that if there are positive cases then we have a system to cater to these cases,” she said. The official said that the administration was increasing the static teams for testing by three times in the urban areas of the district and the locations could be checked on the app and whosoever wanted to get tested could access the location from the CoWIN app. She said 16,000 tests were being done on a daily basis in Lucknow district which included 8,000 RT-PCR and a similar number of antigen tests

Currently the focus has been shifted to villages. In the city our strategy is response and not surveillance which is why the rapid response teams (RRTs) have been asked to

focus more on distribution of medicines. However, in the villages, it is one stage prior to what the city is facing with the Asha and Anganwadi workers going from house to house and inquiring from each about Covid symptoms. The strategy of the government is that the nigrani samitis should distribute medicines in rural areas,” she said.

Jacob said that what was advantageous in the rural areas was that there were established government systems in terms of clearly defined Asha and Anganwadi workers while in the cities one had to build the system block by block.

Regarding public complaints in the urban areas of the district, she said that they were primarily related to absence of doctors in hospitals, not getting timely information about the condition of patients and overcharging by private hospitals. She admitted that with the positive cases on the decline, the system had already taken root.

“The Integrated Control and Command Centre has had zero pendency for the past four to five days because we have changed the system in such a manner that people are getting admissions faster. We had also been receiving complaints of ambulances returning from the hospital which has

eased down,” she said. Jacob said that with the public display of beds on the dashboard, the bed allocation was a lot smoother and the demand for bed was cleared the same day. Lucknow, she said was the only district which was displaying availability of beds in Covid facilities. The official said that they were carrying out verification of the distribution of drugs on a daily basis in the district. “From the stage where the percentage of undelivered drugs was very high, it has come down to 3 per cent on Friday,” she said. She said that there were also a lot of complaints about follow-up by doctors.

“People who do not want to get admitted just want to talk to the doctor. We had revamped the Hello Doctor scheme and it was working at the block level and for each block we had deputed a team of teachers and a team of doctors. The teachers would call the patients and enquire whether they had received the medicines from the RRT and if the patient wanted to talk to a doctor, he/she was provided the number,” she said. Jacob stressed the need to have Covid helpdesks to give proper feedback to the family about the health of the patients so that they do not panic.

# 525 test positive, 1,944 recover

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow reported 525 fresh cases on Sunday but the recoveries were around three times at 1,944. The active corona cases in the state capital also came down to 11,045.

Uttar Pradesh reported a further dip in fresh Corona cases with 10,682 new cases in the last 24 hours while 24,837 patients recovered in the corresponding period. However, the casualties during the period rose to 311.

The maximum deaths were reported from Meerut (27), followed by 20 in Lucknow, 13 in Kanpur, 12 each in Chandauli & Basti, and 10 in Shahjahanpur.

Meerut witnessed the maximum number of fresh cases at 701. Additional Chief Secretary, Health, Amit Mohan Prasad said in Lucknow on Sunday that 2.67 lakh people were tested for Covid on Saturday and 10,682 tested positive. The recovery rate now stands at 88.92 per cent.

“Out of a total of 1.63 lakh active corona cases, 1.34 lakh patients are in home isolation while others are undergoing treatment in government and private hospitals. Under the



Passengers being tested for Covid upon their arrival at Charbagh railway station on Sunday

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ongoing surveillance exercise, 16.85 crore people in 3.50 crore households were surveined through 6,20,896 teams,” he said.

Prasad said that the vaccination of people in the 18-44 years age bracket and those

above 45 years was underway. “So far 1.16 crore people have been given the first dose of vaccine while 32.66 lakh people have been fully vaccinated. Those who got the first jab must also get the second one in time. People should use masks

compulsorily, wash hands with soap and follow Covid protocol even after vaccination. From Monday onwards, the vaccination of people between 18 and 44 years will be carried out in 23 districts,” Prasad said.

## JIM alumni lends helping hand to Covid patients

**Lucknow (PNS):** Dr Reena Agrawal, chairperson of social responsibility committee of Jaipuria Institute of Management and a faculty member said that the alumni of Jaipuria Institute of Management comprising students of all the batches of the last 15 years had joined hands to save COVID-19 patients in pandemic times.

“Jeevan Dhara, Let’s Be Human, Let’s Save Humanity, all the three group are working with full capacity, 24x7 and helping COVID-19 patients all over India. They have created some backend inventory which they update minute to minute and are able to guide which hospital nearby has vacant beds, where to get oxygen, plasma, medicines etc,” Dr Agrawal said.

She said that when a requisition reached, the group was able to provide relevant leads in just two minutes. “We have been successful in getting patients admitted within 20 minutes. Now many volunteers have also joined us and are helping us help others,” she said. She said that they had helped in the admission of patients in Lucknow, Delhi, Noida, Gurgaon, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Jaipur, Rajasthan, Patna, Dehradun, Varanasi and Prayagraj.

Dr Agrawal said that they had been providing medicines, injections, oxygen cylinders, cans and concentrators and other medical assistance.

## Traders oppose hike in power tariff in pandemic conditions

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Traders of the city, on Sunday, opposed the proposed hike in power tariff in view of the virtual hearing to be held by the Uttar Pradesh Electricity Regulatory Commission on Monday. President of Akhil Bharatiya Udyog Vyapar Mandal, Sandeep Bansal, said that in the last 15 months the trade and industry were not functioning in a normal manner and the traders’ community had been facing several problems.

He said the situation had slightly improved in February but after that the second wave of coronavirus again brought the trade to a standstill.

“Any hike in the power tariff will not be accepted. The state government should take this matter seriously and save the public from this unwarranted expenditure. The electricity companies have already proposed surcharges on consumers and if the UPERC gives its nod then the electricity tariff could increase by 12 per cent from May 17 itself,” he said.

President of Adarsh Vyapar Mandal, Sanjay Gupta, while express-



ing the same concern, said that the state government should intervene and direct the UP Power Corporation Limited to take back the proposal. He said that in the pandemic times it was not right to increase the tariff and the state government should waive all charges for the next six months except for the commercial use of the electricity. “If there is any hike in power tariff in these times then the public will not forgive the government,” he added.

## Two youths killed in mishap, villagers block road in protest

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A huge number of villagers blocked the Kakori-Malihabad road on Sunday in protest over the death of two youths in a road mishap the previous night. The family of one of the deceased suspected foul play and demanded a probe into the case. However, police registered a case for reckless driving and causing death due to negligence against an unidentified car driver.

The deceased were identified as Indrajeet (26) and Shyam (25), both of Malihabad.

Indrajeet’s brother Anuj said the former, along with Shyam, had gone to Bhaiya village in Kakori to meet a relative on a bike. “They were returning home around 9 pm when a speeding car hit their vehicle in Hasibpur village. Villagers noted down the registration number of the car and rushed the injured to KGMU Trauma Centre where both were declared dead,” Anuj stated in the FIR.

The police said efforts were on to track down the errant driver. The police did not explain as to why they registered a case of death due to

negligence when Indrajeet’s brother suspected that it could well be a murder.

The incident sparked stiff protests from villagers who blocked the main road for hours on Sunday. However, it did not lead to traffic jam due to lockdown, but the police were alarmed over the assembly of villagers in view of the pandemic. Senior police officers reached the scene but they failed to mollify the protesters demanding government jobs for the dependents of the deceased.

Elsewhere in Gosainganj, a 40-year old man, identified as Dheeraj, was killed in a road mishap on Sunday afternoon. Reports said Dheeraj of Gosainganj was going for some work and was hit by a speeding dumper near Malauli culvert. He died on the spot.

Meanwhile, police failed to work out the case in which a painter was murdered and his body was dumped in Gosainganj five days back. The victim, was identified as Ram Saijwan, was found murdered on May 12. The victim’s face was crushed apparently with some blunt and heavy object. Inspector Brijesh Singh had

claimed some insider’s role in the murder but he was later sent to police lines and was replaced by Amarnath Verma.

Earlier, the police had quizzed a number of people to get a clue, but to no avail. The police had also quizzed the victim’s wife as the couple were not on good terms. Ram Saijwan’s nephew was also interrogated by the police, sources said.

### PALL OF GLOOM DESCENDS ON GULHARIYA VILLAGE

A pall of gloom descended on Gulhariya village of Mall on Sunday after the bodies of four minors, including three girls, who drowned in a pond in Ludhiana, reached there. The deceased were identified as Laxmi (10), Chhoti (8), Monu (7) and Priya (4). They were the children of Sanjay Raidas. They drowned in a pond in Mangarh locality in Ludhiana on May 12. Autopsy was conducted before the bodies were handed over to Sanjay on May 14. Later, he reached the village with the bodies for last rites. Sanjay works in Ludhiana as a labourer and was staying there with his family.

## Covid-19 impacts export of mangoes

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

COVID-19 is disrupting some important activities in horticulture and supply chains. Production, marketing and export of mangoes will be adversely affected due to the pandemic. Central Institute for Subtropical Horticulture (CISH) director Shailendra Rajan said the current situation has impacted mango export as well as the sale within the country.

“Exporters are not sure about the crop and availability of the fruits as per their requirements. This is the harvesting time of some early mango cultivars but due to the global epidemic, the export is greatly reduced,” he pointed out. He said many orchard contractors are in inactive mode and are not interested in purchases due to the uncertainty in mango marketing. As a result, the expected sale price of mango orchardists may not be realised. “The big farmers who have orchards far away from their houses are finding

it difficult to execute timely actions. Buyer-seller meets can’t be arranged under the present circumstances and only virtual meetings are possible. Sometimes, virtual meetings are not as much effective as the interaction between farmers and supply chain players face to face. It is difficult to arrange mangoes although no one can get orders from foreign countries. Preparation of consignment and planning requires a lot of movement from the orchard to the packhouse. However, WhatsApp and mobile phones may play an important role in connecting stakeholders with each other,” he said.

He admitted that it is difficult to think about the scenario in June, the main harvesting period. “However, with the slowing down of the infection rate, it seems that as compared to the present scenario, better environment will prevail. An additional advantage this year is that the major harvesting was scheduled after Ramzan,” he pointed out.



Aminabad market wears a deserted look on Sunday

Pioneer

## Woman found murdered

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A woman was found murdered at her house where she lived with her husband in Kathauta village under Vibhuti Khand police station area on Sunday. However, a police spokesman said the woman consumed some poisonous substance probably after a brawl with her husband who fled the scene.

The deceased was identified as Komal of Satrikh in Barabanki while her husband as Shani, also of Barabanki.

Shani works with Sonu Shukla, who runs a bati-chokha shop.

Her landlord Keshav Kumar, who informed police about the incident, said the couple used to have fight over petty issues off and on.

The police spokesman said the couple were addicted to consuming whitener and had a court marriage recently. He said the woman had injury marks around her neck and foam-like substance had oozed out from her mouth. The body appeared to be 24 hours old. ADCP Qasim Abdi said autop-

sy report would ascertain the cause of death.

Meanwhile, a 22-year-old BA student was found hanging at her house in Para police station area on Sunday. Her mother works with Special Security Vahini in Lucknow. Reports said Pragya Singh Chauhan of Shubh city locality in the area was hanging from the ceiling with a dupatta tied around her neck. She was found hanging around 11 am on Sunday and was rushed to a hospital where she was declared brought dead.

## Drug peddler arrested

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Special Task Force (STF) nabbed a drug peddler who used to supply drugs to people having night parties in Lucknow. The accused, identified as Danish Siddiqui aka Ish Ali, is a native of Azamgarh currently staying at Yaduvansh Hostel (room number 30) in Chinhat. The team recovered 22 grams of methadone, two mobile phones, Rs 62,000 in cash, a car and other documents from his possession.

The police team, sleuthing the gangs which used to supply drugs in rave parties in

Lucknow, was tipped off about the accused who lived at an apartment near Amity University and who was to hand over the drug packet to some person near Malhaur railway station.

Danish confessed to his crime and disclosed that he met some boys who had attended a night party 6-7 months back. He said that through them, he came in contact with a New Delhi man in December last year. He used to send Danish the drug through courier service at Rs 20,000 for 10 grams. Danish used to it at Rs 4,000 per gram.



LMC workers making food packets to be distributed among labourers

Pioneer

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Gut health projects the balance of bacteria in many parts of the gastrointestinal tract consisting of many organs which help in digesting food. This term has been gaining traction in the past few years and the one point which attracted FLO Lucknow to organise this talk was how the gut health impacted the overall immunity and mental balance.

With reference to the pandemic, it has been observed

that the COVID-19 virus is using both the lung and the gut microbiome to gain a hold in the body and that it is prompting a rise in negative bacteria and removing the ‘good’ bacteria in the gut microbiome.

Talking to FLO members in Lucknow and other chapters, biotechnologist and gut health coach Tanisha Vadhwa made them aware of how to maintain and sustain good gut health thereby increasing immunity and mental and physical health. She also talked

about how to lose weight in a healthy and sustainable manner. Besides talking about gut health and the food one must take or avoid to ensure that the gut bacteria thrived, she also spoke on the role that collagen could play in boosting bone health and ensuring great skin and hair.

Arushi Tandon, chairperson of FLO Lucknow, stressed on the importance of maintaining good gut health given the severity of the pandemic and also the lifestyle diseases plaguing modern women.



# Black fungus claims first life in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

This holy city, which is recovering slowly from the second wave of coronavirus pandemic amidst the threats of third wave, is also facing a serious challenge of black fungus (mucormycosis) as the same has already infected dozens of patients. It also claimed the first life when a woman who was being treated at Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH) in Banaras Hindu University (BHU) for the last many days died and cremated here on Sunday. Hailing from Bihar, this 58 years old woman was living in Maudhela area here for many years.

Meanwhile, as many as six new patients infected with this deadly black fungus have been detected and admitted to SSH BHU, increasing the total number of such patients to 29 in the district. The woman infected with black fungus was admitted to the hospital where the specialists from the ENT department, SSH BHU, tried their best to save her life by removing the infected left eye,



UP Minister Anil Rajbhar addressing a press conference in Varanasi on Sunday

nose, jaw and bone above the cheek but they could not save her life.

Amidst all the prevailing fear with the finding of cases of this new deadly disease, corona curfew continued for the 18th day. During the day, the roads, markets, ghats etc wore a deserted look. All the railway stations and bus depots witnessed thin attendance of passengers though in the morning hours, several markets saw rush of retail shopkeepers and

customers purchasing essential items as the period of corona curfew was extended up to May 24 by the state government.

Meanwhile, addressing a press conference at Circuit House here, UP Cabinet Minister Anil Rajbhar highlighted the steps being taken by the state government to provide relief to various weaker sections of the society.

He informed that as per a decision taken by the Cabinet of Yogi government, Rs 1000

per month assistance to daily wage workers including cobblers, boatmen and others would be given for three months on the same line it was provided last year.

Besides, the efforts are also being made to issue new ration cards to those weak people whose names are not included among the beneficiaries.

Earlier, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLC Ashok Dhawan, along with District Magistrate (DM) Kaushal Raj Sharma inaugurated three projects at Mata Anandmayee Hospital here.

They flagged off seven ambulances and one dead body carrying vehicle apart from inaugurating 12 oxygen concentrators. The facilities of all these vehicles and oxygen concentrators would be provided free-of-cost.

Joint Secretary of the hospital Akhilesh Khemka said that these facilities were provided by various educational institutions and others and the hospital is providing free oxygen cylinders since April 10 apart from starting the facilities of refilling 600 cylinders.

# Resentment over burial of bodies at Chhatnag Ghat

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

More than a hundred dead bodies of Covid patients have been buried at the Chhatnag Ghat, about a kilometre off the banks of the Ganga. This has caused a lot of resentment among the local people. People have demanded an immediate ban on this move from the administration.

The existence of Maa Ganga, which has been worshipped as the faith of people for centuries, is in danger in Jhansi. The Ganga coast located in Chhatnag village of Jhansi has been converted into a graveyard by the people.

Though Chhatnag Ghat is more recognised as a crematorium, people in these days of corona transition to cremate the body, are engaged in polluting the mother Ganga by burying the body in sand.

Ganga river has been a symbol of faith for Hindus since time immemorial. Maa Ganga is also called the soul of

Indian culture, but these days its existence is in danger due to administrative neglect and apathy of the people. All the schemes are being run by the Central and State Government to clean the mother Ganga and make it pollution-free, but if one wants to see the reality, then he/she should come to Chhatnag Ghat in Jhansi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ambitious scheme Namami Gange is being flouted on the Chhatnag Ghat. People are trying to pollute the mother Ganga badly. During Magh, Mahakumbh and Kumbh, a fair is organised till Chhatnag Ghat.

However, during this time, the cremation of dead bodies is stopped here. Apart from Jhansi at Chhatnag crematorium, people from many cities including Jaunpur, Pratappgarh, Handia, Gopiganj, Gyanpur, Baraut, Badshahpur come to perform the last rites of the dead bodies here. There are also many shops of wood to burn the dead bodies along the

banks of the ghat. Despite this, during the growing infection of Corona and the death of a large number of people, few are busy polluting the mother Ganga to save money. More than a hundred dead bodies are buried in an area of about one kilometre, just 200 metres away from the undulating stream of mother Ganga at the ghat. Due to this, people including Chhatnag village are shocked. Villagers have demanded immediate ban on burial of bodies.

When the scribe spoke to the people who came to perform the last rites at the Chhatnag crematorium, they responded that the work during the Corona transition period is in complete disarray. It takes at least ₹ 10,000 to 12,000 to do the cremation of the dead body which is a huge amount for them at this time. Therefore, they are forced to leave the Hindu tradition and bury the dead body in sand.

Within a radius of about one kilometre of the Chhatnag

Ghat, people are shaken by seeing the marks of pyre, the remains of the last rites scattered. Bamboo and bedding lie next to the places where dead bodies have been buried. Due to this, the people living nearby are finding it difficult to live.

The dead bodies carved into sand on the banks of Chhatnag Ghat become a major problem for the people during the floods. Nearly every year in the month of July-August, people are surrounded by severe floods along the banks of the Ganga coast of Jhansi. The condition remains that the flood waters enter the nearby ashrams, monasteries and homes. At the same time, the corpses which are carved on the banks of the Ganga also come up.

The corpses are swept away by the ashram and on the side of the house of the people. This aggravates people's woe. Due to this, the villagers have demanded the administration to immediately ban the burial of dead bodies.

# Health dept issues notice to 14 private hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

Taking a tough stand against the overpricing, the Health department has issued notice to 14 private hospitals for realising more money than the charge fixed by the state government for the treatment of corona patients under COVID-19 Healthcare Protocol. These hospitals have been directed to respond to the notice within two days by fixing the treatment rate as per the government order otherwise they should be ready to face the action under Epidemic Act, 1897 and Uttar Pradesh Epidemic Disease, COVID-19 Regulations, 2020.

The district administration has allowed some private hospitals for the treatment of corona patients and the treatment charge has also been fixed as per the government order regarding this. When the pandemic was at its peak some days ago, the district administration received repeated complaints of overpricing particularly against 14 hospitals in the name of treatment. The district administration also

received complaints that these hospitals also realised an additional amount from the corona patients in the name of facilities such as nursing care and visits of the expert doctors.

The notice has been issued against these 14 private hospitals, the Chief Medical Officer Dr VB Singh informed adding, this is violation of the government order and also punishable under the Epidemic Act, 1897 and UP Epidemic Disease, COVID-19 Regulations, 2020. These hospitals have been directed to communicate the information within two days regarding this by fixing the treatment rate as per the government order, the CMO informed on Saturday evening. The hospitals against which the notice has been issued include Apex Hospital, Bhikharipur, Popular Hospital, Bachhaw, Populat Hospital, BLW, Nova Hospital, Shivpur, Omega Plus Hospital, Sunderpur, Lakshmi Hospital, Cantt, Sainath Hospital, Sunderpur, Janata Hospital, Akhri By-Pass, DP Medical Centre, Pahadia, SAS Hospital, Harahua, Warseva Hospital, Chitapur, Suryoday

India Hospital, Bhojpur, Midvin Hospital, Maidagin and Upkar Hospital, Sunderpur.

As per the rate set by the government under the COVID-19 Healthcare Protocol, there is charge of Rs 1200 including Rs 1200 of PPE Kit for the one day treatment of the patient suffering from moderate sickness while Rs 15000 including Rs 2000 of PPE Kit and Rs 18000 including Rs 2000 of PPE Kit have been fixed for the one day treatment of the patient suffering from severe sickness respectively, the CMO informed adding, these rate has been fixed for hospitals having recognition of the National Accreditation Board for Hospital & Healthcare (NABH). For the Non-NABH hospitals, the rate for the one day treatment of patient suffering from moderate sickness under the first category is Rs 8000 including Rs 1200 of PPE Kit, while Rs 13000 and Rs 15000 are the rate

for the one day treatment of the patient suffering from severe sickness and very severe sickness respectively, he added. The practical treatment such as Remdesivir, RT-PCR test and IL-6 test has not been included in the package for the treatment of all three categories under the COVID-19 Care Protocol. The above mentioned rate is also applicable for the treatment of the pediatric patients. The hospitals will realise the expenditure to be incurred on the treatment of delivery and newly born child separately at the rate of Ayushman Bharat Yojana, the CMO informed and also made it clear that no charge will be realised from the beneficiaries of this central government's health scheme. Besides 14 hospitals against which the notice has been issued, there are also 36 hospitals on which the district administration and Health department are having close vigil despite the rate provided by the management of these hospitals has been found equal to the same fixed by the government, the CMO informed further.

# Over 20K people vaccinated in BLW

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

As many as 20,828 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) so far and this was the result of continuous ongoing awareness campaign being done on the instructions of General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal and Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Sujit Mallik. Out of vaccinated people, the first dose was given to a total of 14,277, while second dose to 6,551. Besides, all the arrangements including medical system, screening, testing and vaccination are being reviewed regularly by the GM herself.

In order to encourage not only the railway employees and their families but also the common citizens of the city, the vaccination campaign continued as per the government guidelines at the Vaccination Centre at Employees' Club in BLW. Out of 14,277, who had given first doses, 7,282 were Railways staff / family members

and 6,995 non-Railways beneficiaries while out of 6,551, who had received second doses, 4,512 were related to Railways and 2,039 others. To ensure following the Covid guidelines, Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel and St John's Ambulance Brigade volunteers are giving their full cooperation while the members of the Civil Defence, along with the vaccination teams, are giving their support in registration and verification of beneficiaries. Public Relations Officer (PRO) Rajesh Kumar has appealed to the railway employees who are more than 18 years of age or less than 45 years to join the vaccination campaign in order to break the chain of COVID-19 infection and check the spread of new strains of coronavirus. He also suggested all the vaccinated people to continue using masks and sanitisers and maintaining social distance.

Besides, for effective tracing, testing and treatment, PCMO and his team is regularly reviewing all the arrange-

ments in view to ensure 100 per cent screening by conducting continuous antigen and RT-PCR tests at workplaces, railway colonies and in the entire BLW premises.

Regular drive is also being launched to do testing of shopkeepers, vegetable sellers and others.

Free medicines are being distributed to the infected people apart from giving them medical counselling.

The Staff Council members and other railway employees are keeping watch on all positive patients being treated in home isolation. They are also keeping watch on those serious employees who returned home after getting treatment at BLW Central Hospital, where the district administration has reserved 40 beds for corona patients which include railway staff/ families/retired employees and others from the city areas.

Divisional Medical Officers (DMOs) Dr SK Maurya and Dr Minhaj Ahmed regularly visited the hospital to see the

patients. Though they were themselves infected, they had resumed duties as soon as their Covid reports became negative. Dr Dvesh Kumar and Dr SK Sharma, who were also infected, continued giving tele-medical counselling to the patients while staying in home isolation. Additional Chief Medical Officers (ACMOs) Dr Sunil Kumar and Dr PR Thakur are regularly examining the other patients at OPD apart from looking after their routine administrative assignments while Senior Divisional Medical Officer (SDMO) Dr Madhulika Singh is also treating the both indoor and outdoor patients. Working as a nodal officer Dr Vishan Mishra is maintaining coordination between district administration and BLW hospital. Besides, Assistant Divisional Medical Officer (ADMO) Dr. Tanmay Anand, along with his team, is busy in vaccination work while ADMO Dr Amit Gupta is responsible for ensuring the timely availability of medicines.

# 422 new Covid cases found in Varanasi

VARANASI (PNS): The district continued recording a decrease another day in the positive cases and remained less than 500 for the second consecutive day in the second wave of the pandemic. As many as 422 cases of COVID-19 were recorded on Sunday evening increasing the total number to 79,078 crossing the 79K-mark. With 7 more deaths recorded during the last 24 hours, the death toll increased

to 693. As many as 890 patients of home isolation recovered, while as many as 62 have been recovered from the hospitals. The total number of patients cured in the district increased to 71,670 including 66,540 in home isolation and 5,130 in COVID-19 hospitals. In the first report of the day, 341 positive patients were found out of 4,086 reports received and this figure increased to 422 out of 9,185

received samples as per report provided by the Health department this evening. The total active cases also decreased to 6,715 from 7,252 which was a day ago. On Saturday evening, as many as 426 positive cases were recorded and the total number was 78,656 while 7 deaths were reported and the death toll was 686. Earlier, in view of finding hundreds of new positive cases, with 6 new hotspots, the number of active

hotspots was 495 with 4 green zones having been converted to red zones by a day ago. Out of total 3,311 hotspots, 2,816 are green zones and 495 are red zones. On Saturday, a total of 6,952 beneficiaries including 2,659 aged between 18 and 45 years were vaccinated at various vaccination centres and out of them, 5,201 took first dose of vaccine, while the second dose was given to 1,751 beneficiaries.

# Corona infection to be controlled through village pradhan

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Preparations are being made to control the corona infection in villages through the pradhan of the village. Accordingly, a meeting of newly elected village heads was called on in the Bahadurpur block development complex of trans-Ganga. The heads were also told through the meeting how to prevent corona infection, but during this the Corona's official guidelines were also thoroughly flouted. Social distancing was also not taken care of during the meeting. The heads of various gram sabhas were found sitting next to each other.

Through the meeting, the

pradhans were told how to give information about people coming from outside in the village, in some way they have to be quarantined in school and panchayat building. Along with this, being a part of the monitoring committee, how they will distribute medicines in the villages. These days, after the completion of all the process of three-tier panchayat elections, the newly elected village head is celebrating the victory. If attention is given to the 66 gram sabhas of the development block, the new village heads have been crowned in most of the gram sabhas.

In this too, the command of the village has come to the

hands of the youth in most of the gram sabhas. They are not even fully aware of the operation of the gram panchayat. Formerly on May 12, the village headmen were to be sworn in but it was postponed due to the increasing infection of the corona. The pradhan plays an important role in the village. In such a situation, finding the corona-infected patients from village to village is nothing short of a big challenge for the administration and the Health department. The Health department had launched a campaign to check the coronavirus by putting LT teams in every village for five days from May 5.

The committee consisted

of Asha, Anganwadi workers, village chowkidars and kotedars but could not find much success in finding the patients infected with corona infection. In such a situation, an exercise has been started to search for corona infected through village heads. On Friday, in the meeting called by the village head in Bahadurpur block, the entire guidelines issued for the corona were blown off. In the meeting held in the hall of the block premises, social distancing was not taken care of. Most village heads did not even wear masks. In such a situation, the question arises how in the villages it will be possible to find out the corona infected by their trust.

# 165 more test positive in Prayagraj

ALLAHABAD (PNS): The number of new Corona patients declined further on Saturday. A total of 165 patients were found infected with COVID-19 on Saturday night, 26 fewer than the day before. However, the death toll increased. A total of nine infected people died on Saturday, three more than on Friday, according to government figures. Nodal Officer of Corona, Dr. Rishi Sahai said that on Saturday, a total of 10,058 people were tested for corona in the district. In this, an antigen test of 5,716 people was done, the rest of RTPCR and Trunat tests were conducted. About 165 people were

found infected. About 43 people were found infected with the antigen test, while the infection was confirmed in 91 people by the RTPCR and 31 by the Trunat tests. He said that till Saturday evening, the active cases in the district remained at 3,665. Apart from this, beds in hospitals are also empty. On the other hand, nine people died along with the mother of a lawyer, block secretary of Teachers Union, on Saturday after being hit by Corona. All those who died due to infection were admitted to Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital. In addition, 521 people became infection free. In this, 45 people were discharged from Swaroop Rani

Nehru Hospital. Beli, private hospitals and railways hospital, while the home isolation of 476 was completed. According to the Health department, home isolation of 64,323 people has been completed so far in the district. Those infected included CRPF camp inspector at Phaphamau, inspector of RAF, SI, constable, constable of Kotwali police station, head constable of CISF, SI of Georgetown police station, clerk of consumer office and a primary school teacher at Kaundhiyara among others..

**CRIMINAL HELD:** A history sheeter criminal was arrested by the police after a brief encounter in Tharvai

area. The wanted criminal sustained bullet injury in his leg during encounter and fell on the ground. Rajababu alias Mohammad Kasim, son of Ashik Ali of Padila Tharvai is a noted criminal and 17 cases are pending against him. The police had created a barrier near a culvert in Tharvai to check vehicles moving during lockdown. When a bike rider was given signal to stop, he opened fire on the police and tried to jump the barrier. The police retaliated and opened fire. The police bullet hit the leg of the criminal and he fell on the road. The injured Kasim was sent to hospital for treatment under police security.



# Shekhar stresses on proper monitoring for effective control of pandemic

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar, who has been appointed Covid nodal officer for Kanpur Nagar and Kanpur Dehat, directed static magistrates to coordinate with the nigrani samities (village vigilante committees) for proper monitoring and coordinate with them for the effective control of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

He directed the static magistrates to set up WhatsApp groups to ensure that the works were being done transparently.

It may be mentioned here that in view of the sudden surge in COVID-19 cases during post-panchayat poll period, the district administration was caught on the horns of a dilemma, the reason being the poor infrastructure and medical facilities in the rural areas and the failure to curb the rush to urban areas for treatment.

The divisional commissioner said the work being done by the nigrani committees should be physically cross-checked by the static magistrates.

He said with migrant labourers inundating villages, they should be given sheltered in quarantine centres with



Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar along with DM and other officials addressing the Static Magistrates.

Pioneer

essential arrangements and all the labourers be tested for COVID-19.

He said the onus lay on the static magistrates to ensure that door to door survey was carried out to detect the coronavirus affected persons and also to ensure that the surroundings were clean and fogging and sanitisation drives were carried out regularly along with spraying of anti-larvae chemicals.

Dr Shekhar said it was the duty of the static magistrates to file reports daily on the prescribed proforma. He said all those who underwent RT-PCR test and were positive should be immediately provided home isolation kits. He said it was the duty of the static magistrates to

ensure that this was done transparently. He also directed them to prepare a register of the migrant labourers and update it every week.

He said every possible care had to be taken to ensure that the dead bodies were not dumped into the Ganga.

He then reviewed the vaccination data and said people need to be made aware of vaccination. He directed the district magistrate to monitor the working of all the static magistrates, especially testing and medicine distribution.

He said people who tested positive should not be unnecessarily put into difficulty. He also directed the district magistrate to find out such children who had been orphaned dur-

ing this pandemic and had no relatives so that they could be benefited from the state government plans.

Chief Development Officer Dr Mahendra Kumar said during the house to house survey if suspected cases were identified, the nigrani samities should be assigned the task of monitoring them daily till they were healthy. He also directed the block development officer and the medical officer incharge to provide all help to the sector magistrates and exchange data as well.

Prominent among those who took part in the meeting were ADM Atul Kumar, CMO Dr Nepal Singh, zila panchayat adhikari and officials of nyay panchayat.

## Kanpur police to launch drive against black marketeers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Commissioner of Police Asim Arun has announced to launch a drive to initiate penal action against people involved in black marketing of medicines, medical equipment and food items.

He appealed to people to immediately inform the police if they found anybody involved in the black marketing of these items.

The police would initiate strict penal action against the black marketeers to teach them a lesson, the commissioner of police added.

Arun said for the past several days, complaints about people black marketing medicines, medical equipment and food items were being received by the police.

He said on the pretext of shortage of food items and medicines, the unscrupulous shopkeepers were selling them at higher prices.

He appealed to the masses to immediately inform the police at Dial-112 if anybody was found involved in black marketing these articles.

He said on receipt of complaint, a police force would immediately be deputed to the indicated spot to arrest the culprits.

After lodging FIR against the black marketeers, strict penal action would be initiated against them, he said, adding that black marketing of essential items was a big crime, especially during COVID-19 pandemic.

While fighting with the deadly novel coronavirus, people are compelled to buy necessary medicines, medical equipment and other food items at higher prices. In the absence of any strict provisions in the law, the guilty are bailed out from the thana itself. There should be provision for strict penal action and imprisonment for such black marketers, he said.

## IIT-K to study impact of immersion, burial of bodies in Ganga

KANPUR (PNS): The Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IIT-K) will now study the impact of the immersion/burial of bodies in water and soil.

According to Prof Vinod Tare, advisor to the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMC), the development comes against the backdrop of mass graves being discovered on the banks of the Ganga in Rae Bareilly, Unnao, Kanpur, Fatehpur and Kannauj, and fears about possible contamination of water and soil if the bodies were of COVID-19 patients.

"We are going to study the impact of immersion and burial of bodies on water and soil," Prof Tare said, adding that the issue had been discussed at the NMC level. "Immersion of COVID-19 body in Ganga would wash the virus, but it won't be destroyed. You need different agents such as heat and others to destroy the virus," he said. Prof Tare, who is with the institute's environmental science department, has been part of all top panels formed to rejuvenate the Ganga. The professor sought a complete ban on immersion of bodies and their burial on the riverbed and said the government should make arrangements to prevent the practice.

# Mahana dedicates oxygen plant at Ursula Hospital

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Uttar Pradesh's Industrial Development Minister Satish Mahana, while dedicating to people the oxygen generation plant at Ursula Hospital on Sunday, said there was a crisis of oxygen in Kanpur but now liquid oxygen was also being sent to the surrounding districts as well.

He said the UP government was making concerted efforts to improve the health infrastructure and necessary steps were being taken in this regard and oxygen plants were being set up in hospitals.

He said the oxygen generation plant at Ursula Hospital had been set up in a record 21 days and added that another oxygen plant would be set up in the hospital in one month's time.

Mahana said another oxygen generation plant was being set up in GSVM Medical College. The minister claimed that he had sanctioned Rs 47 lakh for setting up an oxygen plant at Kanshiram Hospital.

He said similarly, sanction for CPAP for GSVM Medical



State Industrial Development Minister, Satish Mahana, inaugurates the Oxygen Generation Plant at Ursula Hospital on Sunday.

College had been given. He said several MLAs had given funds and thus with the total help Kanpur would have a permanent infrastructure.

He said if the third wave came there should be proper

and full preparations to handle it. The minister said for this we all would have to jointly fight and the UP government along with the district administration was making every effort to improve infrastructure in the

city.

Those present included Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar, Chief Medical Officer Dr Nepal Singh and many other officials and BJP members.

# DM warns pvt hospitals denying admission to CGHS beneficiaries

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Nagar District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, while addressing press persons on Sunday, said it had come to the notice of the district administration that CGHS beneficiaries and card holders were being denied admission by private hospitals. He said the

district administration had decided to take not only disciplinary but also legal action against such hospitals.

The district magistrate said if the CGHS beneficiaries and card holders were denied admission by any hospital they should immediately bring it to the notice of the static magistrate at that hospital and

the chief medical officer as well.

He said the private hospitals had already been told that they could not deny admission to hospitalisation card holders on any grounds. He said people were advised to file a complaint with the district administration on the basis of which strict action could be

taken against the hospital concerned.

It may be mentioned that not only CGHS beneficiaries, even people who have taken health insurance and are valid cashless beneficiaries are being denied admission by hospitals on the pretext of non-availability of beds or absence of official confirmation.

# People with untreated high BP more at risk of severe COVID-19 illness

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Recent evidence shows that people with uncontrolled or untreated high blood pressure may be at risk of getting severely ill with COVID-19. It is important to note that people with untreated high blood pressure seem to be more at risk of complications from COVID-19 than those whose high blood pressure is managed with medication.

This was stated by Dr Urooz Jehan, currently part of the GSVM Medical College

doctors' team providing free counselling, while expressing her views on hypertension on the eve of World Hypertension Day. She said this year the theme of the day was 'Measure your blood pressure accurately, Control it, live longer'.

She said the day focused mainly on combating low awareness rates especially in Indian middle income groups and also accurate blood pressure measurement methods.

She said high blood pressure was a serious condition and if left untreated, it could lead to many other health

issues like heart disease, stroke and dementia.

She said when medical care was not easily available due to COVID-19 pandemic, one must seek shelter in the famous adage 'prevention is better than cure' and added that if one had high blood pressure, the most important step one could take was to successfully manage it.

She cautioned that protecting oneself against serious health issues that high blood pressure could cause was especially important with COVID-19.

Dr Urooz Jehan said med-

ication and lifestyle changes offered a powerful combination for preventing health issues or reducing issues that could be caused by high blood pressure.

She advised people to choose heart-healthy foods and consider the dietary approaches to stop hypertension (DASH) diet, which focused on fruits, vegetables, whole grains, poultry, fish and low-fat dairy foods.

She suggested that one need to reduce salt content in diet and aim to limit sodium to less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) a day or less. She said a lower

sodium intake — 1,500 mg a day or less — was ideal for most adults. She said it was advisable to lose even a little weight which would certainly reduce blood pressure. She suggested that people remain active with regular exercise which reduces stress and weight loss.

She said that when one is stressed, one may cope in unhealthy ways that raises blood pressure. She advised them to try managing stress in healthy ways, such as deep breathing and meditation. She stressed on shunning alcohol.

# DC inspects Covid control room

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Divisional Commissioner Yogeshwar Ram Mishra inspected the Covid-19 Control Room and Command Centre along with District Magistrate Praveen Kumar Laxkar on

ambulance service, oxygen supply, bed and medicines. He instructed the staff to work promptly. He told the staff to entertain each call sincerely and note down the information in detail. He further directed them to be in regular touch



DC Yogeshwar Ram Mishra inspecting Covid Control Room and Command Centre on Saturday

Saturday. During the inspection the DC became aware with updated information and checked the working of help desks. On the occasion he directed the staff to remain updated with complaints, patients in home isolation,

with the patients who were in isolation. He asked the DM to ensure a uniform to the staff of the control room having their name plates. He directed to keep some beds reserved for children more than 12 years of age in advance and if any case

was reported then the authorities should be informed without delay. ADM incharge control room Amarendra Kumar apprised that 36 employees were deployed and shift wise they were working to run the control room 24 hours. The DM directed the staff to maintain social distancing and following the Covid-19 protocol. During the inspection Additional District Magistrate (F&R) UP Singh, deputy collector Ashwini Singh and PO ICDS PK Singh were also present. Besides, the DC inspected the demolition work at Vindhychal which was under progress under Vindhya Corridor project. He directed the contractor to finish the demolition work within this month so that final shape of beautification of temple could be designed. He directed the officials concerned to expedite the purchase of properties which were stalled due to second wave of Covid. During the inspection city magistrate Vinay Kumar Singh and naib tehsildar Sadar were also present.

# Oxygen Express reaches Nakaha Jungle rly station

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

The Indian Railways by carrying oxygen tankers quickly is doing the work of maintaining oxygen supply in the country at a rapid pace. During this period of coronavirus pandemic in order to provide relief to people of Gorakhpur and its nearby areas the 'Oxygen Express' carrying 40 metric tonnes (MT) of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) in two tankers after departing from Durgapur on May 14 at 23.52 hrs reached North Eastern Railway (NER)'s Gorakhpur-situated Nakaha Jungle railway station on Saturday at 12.10 hrs, Chief Public Relations Officer (CPRO) Pankaj Kumar Singh said. At Nakaha Jungle station in the presence of senior officers of the district administration and railway the decanting of liquid medical oxygen was done safely.

This Oxygen Express was run at an uninterrupted speed and covered a distance of 840



Oxygen Express arrives at Nakaha Jungle railway station

km in just 12 hours.

Earlier, through three Oxygen Express tankers a total of 120 MT of liquid medical oxygen was brought from Durgapur to Madhosingh station of NER which was supplied to Varanasi and its nearby areas which brought great relief to people.

## CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Due to operational difficulties and lack of sufficient

number of passengers the railway administration has been decided to cancel the following special trains, CPRO Pankaj Kumar Singh said.

**TANAKPUR-DELHI SPECIAL:** The 05325 Tanakpur-Delhi special train will remain cancelled from May 17 until further orders.

**DELHI-TANAKPUR SPECIAL:** 05326 Delhi-Tanakpur special train will remain canceled from May 18, 2021 till further orders.

# 110 persons administered vaccine

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The Varanasi division of North Eastern Railway (NER) is making continuous efforts to prevent Coronavirus (Covid-19) infection. Under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Vijay Kumar Panjari, and under the leadership of Chief Medical Superintendent (CMS) Dr MS Nabial in collaboration with the district administration a total of 110 persons, including 38 railway personnel and their family members besides 72 others, were vaccinated at the Divisional Hospital here on Saturday. Public Relations Officer (PRO), Varanasi, Ashok Kumar said. The vaccination programme is being carried out as a campaign on Varanasi division in which employees are also being encouraged to get



themselves vaccinated against Covid-19. Apart from it at various rail sections and stations of the division for vaccinating employees connected with operations along with their family members at their workplace by running the medical van (SPARME) of railway as Vaccine Express the railway personnel are being vaccinated at their workplace/station. In addition at all major railway stations of Varanasi for protection from Coronavirus passengers are being made alert and aware through public address system. Along with through video messages along with large video panels at major stations effective messages

are being propagated among people in order to avoid and prevent coronavirus infection. Besides, awareness-related messages are being displayed in the station premises through posters.

# Man's body found in field

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

The body of an aged person was found lying in a field situated under Padari police station on Saturday. On getting information about the recovery of the body in Chauhanpatti village in the morning police personnel reached the spot. As per the locals, the deceased was mentally retarded and was roaming in the area for the past few days. The deceased was later identified as Pyarelal (70), a resident of Govarddhanpur village under Kachhawaan police station.

The police took the body into custody for completing the necessary legal formalities.

**NINE HURT:** As many as nine persons were injured in a group clash over the issue of molestation in Kolaund village under Adalhaat police station on Friday evening. On getting information about the matter the police personnel reached the spot and brought the injured to the police station. A case has been registered from both the sides. After registering the case in this connection the police took action under preventive measures. Investigation into the matter was on.

On the other hand, two persons sustained serious injuries when a truck rammed into a house under Adalhaat

police station recently. It is learnt that the truck was on the way to Sonbhadra on Varanasi-Shaktinagar road when its driver suddenly lost control over it and it rammed in a house at Rastogi Talab under Adalhaat police station. As a result the driver and helper got stuck in the truck and could only be rescued with the help of the locals. On getting information about the matter the police reached the spot and sent the injured, driver Chhotu and helper Golu, both residents of Vikasnagar, Renukoot Sonbhadra to Trauma centre in Varanasi. The condition of both injured was stated as serious, last reports received here said.

# One killed in road accident

CORRESPONDENT ■ GORAKHPUR

A motorcyclist was killed in a road accident around 7 pm on Friday. It is learnt that 29-year-old Inderjit a resident of Raghupur village, died on the spot after being hit by an unknown vehicle near Aaravjagdish village under Uruva police station while

Manish, a resident of the same village, was seriously injured and admitted to the district hospital for treatment. According to the information both Inderjit and Manish were going on a motorcycle to attend a 'tilak' ceremony at Rauja Dargah under the Uruva police station when an unknown hit it

as a result of both were injured. Later the villagers reached the spot and found that Inderjit had died on the spot. Besides Manish was found in an unconscious state. On being informed by the villagers the police reached the spot and sent the injured to the hospital for treatment and the body for the post-mortem examination.



# Maha logs 974 deaths

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

The Covid-19 triggered daily deaths jumped to a staggering 974—the second highest-ever number of fatalities recorded in Maharashtra, on Sunday, even as the infections came down further to 34,389. A day after Coid-19 claimed 960 lives and left 34,848 others infected, the number of daily deaths went up by 64 to touch a figure of 974, while the infections went down marginally to 34,389.

It may be recalled that on April 28, the number of daily deaths breached the threshold of 1,000 in Maharashtra to reach the figure of 1035, which has been the highest-ever number of deaths recorded since the break out of Covid-19 in March-April last year. The daily tally on that day was a consolidated figure that had included 50 earlier deaths which had earlier not been accounted.

With 974 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the state climbed from 80,512 to 81,486. Similarly, with 34,389 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 53,44,063 to 53,78,452.

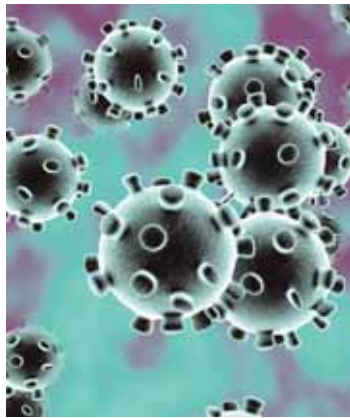
As 59,318 patients were discharged from the hospitals across the state after full recovery, the total number of people discharged from the hospitals since the second week of March last year went up from 47,67,053 to 59,318. The recovery rate in the state went up from 89.2 per cent to 89.74 per cent.

The total “active cases” in the state dropped from 4,94,032 to 4,68,109. The fatality rate in the state went up from 1.51 per cent to 1.52 per cent.

With 60 fresh deaths, the Covid-19 toll in Mumbai increased from 14,164 to 14,224, while the infected cases went up by a relatively low 1535 to trigger a jump in the infections from

6,86,295 to 6,87,830.

The situation in Pune improved a bit as the “active cases”, which had come below one lakh mark early this week, improved once again as the “active cases” dropped from 93,245 to 82,397. Mumbai with 33,574 active cases stood second in the State.



## Situation in Kerala grim as 29,704 more test Covid positive

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

The Covid-19 situation in Kerala continued to be critical as the number of new cases showed that 29,704 persons were afflicted with the pandemic in the last 12 hours that ended at 6 pm on Sunday. The department of health said in its release that 89 lives were claimed by the pandemic and the Test Positivity Rate remained at 25.61 per cent.

In a simultaneous development, the Centre expressed its doubts over the figures released by the Government of Kerala and asked Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to be transparent in the details

about the pandemic which he shared in his media briefing.

V Muraliedharan, Union Minister of State for external affairs, who is the uncrowned king of Kerala BJP, in a statement expressed reservations and doubts over the claims made by Vijayan viz-a-viz the pandemic. He reminded the Kerala Government that this was the time to be transparent in all details connected with the state of Covid-19 in Kerala. “This alone will help all of us in fortifying a preventive mechanism to spread the transmission of the disease. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that this was the time to be honest and transparent.

The death tally from Kerala is a matter of serious concern,” said the Union Minister.

# 59 fall prey to virus in J&K

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

The Covid-19 situation in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir continues to be grim even as elaborate measures are being taken to contain the spread of virus to rural pockets in the coming days.

The region reported 59 more deaths on Sunday and the positivity rate climbed further up to 11.27 per cent. A total number 3,934 patients returned home and 4,141 fresh cases tested positive taking the active caseload to 51,623.

The twin capital cities of Jammu and Srinagar continue to record the highest number of cases but the health administrators are more worried over the fact that the virus is spreading rapidly across several rural pockets in both the divisions.

Meanwhile, a three-member central team of experts from National centre for Disease control (NCDC) and PGI Chandigarh visited Government Medical College and Associated hospitals in Jammu to ascertain the reasons for surge and assist UT Government in Covid-19 control and containment measures.”

The team members Dr. Pranay Verma, Joint Director, Epidemiology Division, NCDC, Delhi, Dr. Mahesh Waghmare, Microbiology NCDC, Delhi and Dr. Navneet Sharma, Professor, Dept. of Internal Medicine, PGIMER Chandigarh also met GMC, Principal Dr Shashi Sudan Sharma and NHM, J&K Director Ch Mohammad Yasin and collectively analysed the data before recommending measures to contain the spread of virus and check the high mortality rate across Jammu region.



On the other hand, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha also visited Government Medical College, Jammu to take stock of the situation amid rising number of complaints related to poor patient care services in some of the Covid-19 wards.

During his visit, LG Manoj Sinha was informed that as many as 250 nurses would join GMC Jammu within three days, substantially adding to the available healthcare workforce.

Referring to the availability of Oxygen supply, the Lt Governor sought the status of two new Oxygen plants which are being set up by the J&K UT administration at GMC Jammu to augment its oxygen capacity.

While reviewing the progress being made for establishing an additional 100-bedded Covid ward, the Lt Governor directed the Principal and senior doctors of GMC Jammu to ensure the operationalization of the said facility at the earliest.

The Lt Governor also enquired about Covid care facilities, availability of oxygen support beds, functionality of

Oxygen Generation Plants, besides compliance of earlier directions including regular rounds of HoDs and senior doctors in the wards to examine the patients.

Earlier, the Lt Governor visited Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) 500-bedded under construction Covid hospital site at Bhagwati Nagar and took first-hand appraisal of the ongoing work.

The fully air-conditioned make-shift Covid facility with 125 ICU beds and ventilators will be completed by May 25, 2021.

The Lt Governor directed the Health Department to provide all support to DRDO, including arrangements of health related facilities, hiring/posting of doctors, paramedics, and other healthcare workforce well before the formal functioning of the hospital.

It was informed that Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) tanks with a capacity of 40 metric tons (2 tanks of 20 metric tons each) would be installed in this Covid care facility, besides the whole structure is prefabricated and fire retardant.

# Bengal imposes strict lockdown,158 violators held

**PNS ■ KOLKATA**

Bengal reported a massive spike in death rate due to corona infection in the 24 hours intervening Saturday and Sunday even as the State administration went about imposing a strict lockdown that saw multiple arrests and seizures of vehicles in Capital Kolkata and elsewhere.

The State reported 144 deaths crona deaths between Saturday and Sunday—the highest so far—as 19,511 people tested positive for the disease. This is the lowest single-day spike reported in the preceding 10 days, Health Department sources said.

While Kolkata reported 3,951 new cases with 30 deaths the North 24 Parganas adjoining the State Capital witnessed a record 35 deaths with 4,279 infections sources said on Sunday morning adding the number of active cases in Bengal stood at about 1.3 lakh.

Meanwhile, even as the police administration imposed strict lockdown all over the State 158 people were arrested in Kolkata under Pandemic laws for breaking the lockdown protocol. The police also seized 58 vehicles for violation of Government orders.

All government and private offices, shopping complexes,



Ferries stay anchored on the Ganga river during the Covid-induced lockdown in Kolkata on Sunday

malls, spa, beauty salons, sports complexes, pubs, cinema halls have been asked to remain closed. Only emergency and

essential services related to healthcare, law and order, courts, power, drinking water and media would function.

The lockdown started from 6 am on Sunday and was likely to continue at least till 6 pm on May 30.

The State Government has already postponed the Secondary (Class X) and Higher Secondary (Class XII) exams that were scheduled to take place in the month of June. “No secondary and higher secondary examinations will be held in June,” Chief Secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay said adding, “The future dates of the examinations will be notified” by the respective West Bengal Board of Secondary Education (WBSE) and West Bengal Council of Higher Secondary Education.

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### COVID SECOND WAVE TAMED: YOGI

having to travel far,” he said.

Referring to the Covid crisis in Noida, Yogi said that while there were more than 10,000 cases on April 27, there were less than 400 cases on Sunday. The number of active cases in the state has come down to 1.63 lakh in the last 24 hours.

He said the state government is focusing on ensuring awareness and treatment of the black fungus infection, which has emerged as a challenge for the people who have recovered from Covid-19.

Apprehensions have been expressed about a possible third wave of the coronavirus in the state, Adityanath said, adding the government is already preparing an action plan to effectively check the third wave.

Mentioning the new challenge of black fungus infection among cured Covid patients, the chief minister said the state government has issued an advisory regarding it besides conducting virtual meetings with health officials and medical colleges in every district.

The chief minister talked of the black fungus infection or mucormycosis a day after AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria attributed the new malady to the misuse of steroids in the treatment of Covid-19 patients and asked hospitals to follow the infection control protocols.

“It has been seen that secondary infections — whether fungal or bacterial — are causing more mortality. This disease, mucormycosis, can affect the face, infecting the nose, the orbit of the eye or the brain which can even cause vision loss. It can also spread to the lung,” Guleria had said on Saturday.

Talking of his government preparedness to tackle the possible third wave of Covid-19, which, he said, is feared to be affecting children more, the chief minister said, Every district administration has been asked to prepare a dedicated hospital for women and children.

We have 2,220 ambulances of 102 service which are dedicated for women and children and for their emergency services besides providing them telephonic consultation from these hospitals, he said.

The chief minister said arrangements are also being made to set up paediatric intensive care units (ICU) in every district and every medical college amid the apprehensions of an impending third wave.

In the case of Covid-19, we have been able to keep the CFR (case fatality rate) lower than one per cent. Similarly, for black fungus, there should not be any problem if its timely treatment is ensured, the chief minister said.

The government's advisory also calls for a comprehensive awareness campaign to inform people about the cause, symptoms and treatment of black fungus, Adityanath said.

The government is quickly working on ensuring treatment of black fungus in all districts of the state, he added. Uttar Pradesh has fought encephalitis and reduced mortality rate by 95 per cent from 2017 to 2020, hence the state has over these years improved medical resources in districts of its eastern region, he said.

### DEMAND FOR ‘KAFAN’ RISES 30- FOLD

According to Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) sources, the increase in demand of the “kafan” is “indeed unfortunate”. The CCI, however, is concerned about the continuous drop in cotton yarn prices since the beginning of May due to non-operational hosiery and garment markets that had witnessed a peak at the beginning of the year following the tapering down of the first surge of Covid-19.

Prices of almost all counts of yarn have dropped by at least ₹10 a kg as demand is low due to the second wave of coronavirus. Production in textile mills has dropped and it is impacting yarn offtake, according to Anand Poppat, a cotton trader from Gujarat.

The Cotton Association of India says the last six months were a favourable period for Indian spinning mills because there was a huge shortage of cotton yarn due to last year's Covid-19 lockdown and huge demand for yarn came from domestic and international markets.

### TAUKTAE DISRUPTS LIFE, VACCINATION

The IMD said Tauktae would cross Gujarat's coast between Porbandar and Mahuva in Bhavnagar district by early Tuesday morning and tidal waves are likely to inundate several coastal districts during the landfall.

The cyclone has damaged thousands of properties and displaced over 3 lakh people in six states. Cyclone Tauktae is very likely to cross Gujarat coast between Porbandar & Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) around 18 May afternoon or evening.

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) had announced that there would be no inoculation on May 16-17 considering the IMD's cyclone warning. The vaccination programme will now be implemented on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, the BMC said.

Considering the warning, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has shifted more than 500 Covid-19 patients to state and civic-run hospitals in Mumbai. The IMD has issued an orange alert for Mumbai and heavy to heavy rain is expected. Inoculation drive also impacted north Konkan, Thane, Ratnagiri, Palghar and several other districts in Maharashtra due to gusty winds and heavy rainfall.

Inoculation remained affected in Gujarat due to bad weather on Sunday. The Vijay Rupani government on Sunday has suspended the vaccination on Monday and Tuesday as the health staff will be kept on standby for the next two days to meet any emergency arising out of the cyclonic storm. The government has asked hospitals treating COVID-19 patients to ensure a power backup and arrangements are also being made to ensure uninterrupted generation of medical oxygen in the eight manufacturing units and its supply.

The drive was also affected in Goa. Water entered the Goa medical college, (where 82 patients died of shortage of oxygen or logistic issues in the last one week). Power supply in most parts of Goa was disrupted as hundreds of electric poles were uprooted due to the high-speed winds.

Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant said that it will take two days to restore power supply across the state. Due to heavy rain and strong winds, water entered through windows in Goa Medical College's Super Speciality Block which was inaugurated two days back for Covid-19 patients. As a precautionary measure, the patients were shifted to a safer place. Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment at hospitals and requiring oxygen cylinders need un-interrupted supply of oxygen. All air operations were suspended for a day at Goa International Airport on Sunday

In Kerala, inoculation drives remained affected Mankombu, Thekkedara, Vejpura and Poovam, Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Thrissur and Malappuram on Sunday. According to preliminary reports, two people died in Kerala on Sunday as a result of heavy rains accompanying the storm. The two deaths were reported from Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts.

Waterlogging in several parts of Alappuzha and water enters houses in low-lying areas of Mankombu, Thekkedara, Vejpura and Poovam. In Karnataka, vaccination was suspended in over 70 villages in seven districts including Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu and Hassan.

In Karnataka, inoculation drives were cancelled in Udupi, Dakshina Kannada, Uttara Kannada, Shivamogga, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru districts due to heavy rainfall, waterlogging, disruption in power supplies.

### IAF, NAVY POISED FOR ACTION

The IAF has kept 16 transport aircraft and 18 helicopters on operational readiness in peninsular India.

These measures are in preparation for the Cyclone Tauktae which is expected to cause very heavy to extremely heavy rainfall along the western coast of India in the next few days.

One IL-76 aircraft has airlifted 127 personnel and 11 tonnes of cargo from Bhatinda to Jamnagar. A C-130 aircraft has airlifted 25 personnel and 12.3 tonnes cargo from Bhatinda to Rajkot. Two C-130 aircraft have airlifted 126 personnel and 14 tonnes cargo from Bhubaneswar to Jamnagar.

Additionally, IAF Covid relief operations have been focused in these coastal areas for the coming few days, as bad weather is likely to affect air operations later. The cyclone relief operations are in addition to those underway for Covid relief where more than 40 aircraft are working round the clock ferrying much needed oxygen from abroad besides airlifting medicines and other such equipment to various parts of the country.

According to the Navy's Information Fusion Centre for Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), the cyclone in the Arabian Sea is likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm and further intensify into very severe cyclone storm late hours of May 15 or early hours of May 16. It is likely to move North-North-West and cross between Porbandar and Naliya on May 18, IFC-IOR said on social media.

As regards the IAF operations to fight the corona, they said the force so far has carried out 778 sorties accumulating 1,147 hours and airlifted 490 oxygen tankers with 8,343 MT capacity and 209 MT of other equipment.

The IAF transport planes flew 30 sorties accumulating 633 hours and transported 104 containers with 872 MT as well as 352 MT of other equipment from foreign countries. The IAF was pressed in to service on April 22. On the Navy's efforts, they said it has deployed nine warships to bring oxygen from foreign shores.

### ASHA LONE RAY OF HOPE FOR VILLAGES

Home to nearly 70 per cent of India's population, villagers have little access to healthcare and are struggling to support themselves through the economic slowdown and jobless migrants. States like Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh are still witnessing the most number of returning labourers - now they are also witnessing the sharpest rise in new cases. Infections have now spread to 98 of the country's 112 poorest rural districts, according to various reports.

Various districts in the country have a skeletal health infrastructure, with most villagers accessing hospitals in nearby cities. India spent just 3.7 per cent of gross domestic product on health care in 2016, putting it in the bottom 25 countries globally, according to the most recent World Bank data.

### TELECONSULTATION, SURVEILLANCE TO COMBAT COVID IN RURAL AREAS

The guidelines also asked the community health officer (CHO) to determine the seriousness of the infection by teleconsultation and recommend cases with comorbidities and low oxygen saturation to higher centres. It also said the CHOs should be trained in performing rapid antigen testing (RAT) and the kits should be made at all public health facilities.

“These patients should be counselled to isolate themselves till test results are available. Those asymptomatic but having history of high-risk exposure to Covid patients (exposure of more than 15 mins without a mask within 6 feet distance) should be advised quarantine and tested as per ICMR protocol.”

The guidelines also talk on focusing on contact tracing as per Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme's (IDSP) guidelines, adding those testing positive should be allowed to quarantine at home by following the protocols issued by the ministry.

Stressing on the need to monitor oxygen saturation levels, the ministry directed the VHSNC to mobilise resources through local PRI to make provisions for these equipment. Thermometers and pulse oximeters can be given the families in the rural areas on loan and follow-up visits should be undertaken by frontline worker following required infection prevention practices.

“A home isolation kit shall be provided to all such cases which should include required medicines such as Paracetamol 500 mg, Tab. Ivermectin, cough syrup, multivitamins (as prescribed by the treating doctor) besides a detailed pamphlet indicating the precautions to be taken, medication details, monitoring proforma for patient condition during the home isolation, contact details in case of any major symptoms or deterioration of health condition and the discharge criteria,” as per the guidelines.

### ENSURE BODIES ARE NOT THROWN IN GANGA, GIVEN PROPER FUNERAL

However, some cases are also reported from other districts as well. He asked the State missions to follow up action taken with all districts.

He said there is need to strengthen enforcement, maintain vigil and also take proactive action to facilitate and support the families for cremation of dead bodies and asked State missions to specifically report on this. If needed, Project Directors can assess and also give support to District Ganga Committees for this out of NMCG funds available with them while keeping NMCG informed.

Uttar Pradesh was represented by Rajnish Dubey, Additional Chief Secretary, Urban Development and Anurag Shrivastava, Principal Secretary, Jal Shakti, Government of Uttar Pradesh and Project Director, State Ganga Mission. Shrivastava shared that all the district magistrates in the states have been alerted about the issue and NMCG's instructions have been shared. These district magistrates are getting patrolling carried out to prevent dumping of dead bodies in the Ganga. He also informed that 13 crematoriums under Namami Gange in addition to existing ones are made available for cremation of the dead. It was informed that orders have been issued for financial support in urban areas. Dubey shared that similar orders for financial support of Rs 5,000 have also been issued by Panchayati Raj Department for rural areas, similar to urban areas, and SDRF and other forces have also been asked to do patrolling. Authorities are in touch with Panchayats and ULBs.

# Cong MP Rajeev Satav dies of post-Covid complications

**TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI**

In a shocking development, Congress' promising leader and Rajya Sabha member Rajeev Satav died of post-Covid complications, after having battled for life for 24 days at Jehangir hospital in Pune Sunday morning.

A close associate of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, 46-year-old Satav had been admitted to the hospital on April 16 after he tested positive for Covid-19.

After he recovered from Covid-19, his condition suddenly worsened and he was put on a ventilator.

Satav, who developed Covid-19 pneumonia lung fibrosis after his recovery from the pandemic, was in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Hospital for more than a week now. His end came in the morning.

Satav, who is the son of former State Minister Rajani Satav, is survived by his wife and two children.

State Revenue Minister Balasaheb Thorat, who had visited Jehangir Hospital and met the doctors attending on Satav on Saturday, said that the latter had experienced some uneasiness on Saturday night but his impression was that the party MP would recover soon. Health Minister Rajesh Tope had said on Friday that besides Covid-19, Satav was also being treated for additional complications with the help of experts.

Given that Satav was very close to the Gandhi-Nehru family, Rahul and Priyanka used to be in regular touch with the doctors to inquire about his progress, party and family sources said. “I'm very sad at the loss of my friend Rajeev Satav. He was a leader with huge potential who embodied the ideals of the Congress. It's a big loss for us all. My condolences and love to his family,” Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted.

“In Rajeev Satav we have lost one of our brightest colleagues. Clean of heart, sincere, deeply committed to the ideals of the Congress & devoted to the people of India. I have no words, just prayers for his young wife & children. May they have the strength to carry on without him,” Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted.

After being elected to the Maharashtra Assembly from Kalmanuri constituency in 2009, Satav was elected to Lok

Sabha fromn Hingoli constituency in 2014. He did not contest the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. However, the Congress got him elected to Rajya Sabha subsequently.

Satav, who was the Indian Youth Congress president from February 2010 to December 2014, was the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in charge of Gujarat. He was also a permanent invitee to Congress Working Committee, the highest decision making body of Indian National Congress.

Meanwhile, mourning Satav's death, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said: “Congress leader and CWC special invitee Rajiv Satav's death has come as a big shock for all of us.

He was a young, upcoming and talented leader. He had effectively discharged his role of observer assigned to him by his party during Gujarat elections. In his death, Maharashtra has lost a most promising leader.”

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said that in the untimely death of Satav, Maharashtra had lost a promising and well-poised leader. Satav forged friendships going beyond political affiliations. He had complete faith in parliamentary democracy and was known as a studious leader,” the Chief Minister said.

Describing news of the untimely demise of the dynamic parliamentarian as ‘agonising’, Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari said that the death came at a time when one felt that he would come out of Covid-19. “He was known for his leadership qualities and organizational abilities. He had excellent public relations. Unfortunately, death has snatched away a promising leader with great potential,” Koshiyari said.

Veteran Congress leader and MP Mallikarjun Kharge said: “I am deeply shocked and saddened by the sad and untimely demise of Satav. He was one of the most promising leaders of the next generation of Congress leaders.”

“The passing away of Shri Satav is a huge loss to the people of Maharashtra and India. He would have served the people and the country for so many more years, if we had not lost him in the prime of his life and career. Having seen him closely over the last many years, this is also a deeply personal loss for me,” Kharge said.



# Keep ration shops open for longer period, States told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Worried over the reports that the ration for the month of May and June had not been distributed to the people facing enormous hardship due to the pandemic and the lockdown, the Government on Sunday asked the State Governments to keep ration shops, also called fair price shops, open for a longer duration on all days to ensure timely and safe distribution of both subsidised and free food grains to the poor.

Many ration card-holders say the facility has not begun yet despite announcements by the Centre and the State Governments. The delay in distribution of rations is forcing people to buy food grains from the open market at non-subsidised prices. Besides, ration card holders are also not getting any information about when food grains would be distributed.

Besides, the ministry has received several representations that during the current lockdown in some States/UTs, ration shops' timings have been curtailed due to which the intended beneficiaries might not be getting adequate time to lift their entitled food grains. Most of the States and UTs are under lockdown-like situation and ration shops are not allowed to open.

"In view of the ongoing



lockdown in some States/UTs, that may curtail the functioning hours of Fair Price Shop (FPS), an advisory has been issued on 15th May, 2021...to keep the FPSs open, preferably on all days of the month," the Union Food Ministry said in an advisory to States and Union Territories.

The Centre is distributing highly monthly subsidised foodgrains of 5 kg per person at ₹1-3 per kg via ration shops to over 80 crore poor under the National Food Security Act (NFSA).

Over and above this, additional 5kg of free grains are being distributed to the same beneficiaries under the PMGKAY (Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana) scheme for two months — May-June in order to minimise economic hardships being faced by the NFSA beneficia-

ries during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the advisory, the Centre has asked States to keep the ration shops open for distribution of foodgrains under the NFSA as well as PMGKAY scheme in a staggered manner throughout the day, maintaining proper social distancing and adhering to all Covid-19 protocols, it said.

To facilitate this, States have been requested to ensure that FPSs are exempted from the restricted hours of opening of regular markets as foodgrains are covered under essential items, it added.

Further, the Centre has asked states to take necessary steps for timely distribution of foodgrains at their FPSs without causing hardships to the beneficiaries, and to give wide publicity to the measures undertaken in this regard.

# Tauktae wreaks havoc across Kerala, K'taka, Goa Likely to reach Gujarat coast today evening

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gale-force winds, heavy rainfall and high tidal waves swept the coastal belt of Kerala, Karnataka and Goa as Cyclone Tauktae hurtled northwards towards Gujarat on Sunday, leaving four people dead, damaging hundreds of houses, uprooting electricity poles and trees and forcing evacuation.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), 'Tauktae which has taken the form of a "very severe cyclonic storm" is likely to intensify further during the next 24 hours and reach the Gujarat coast by Monday evening. The IMD said Tauktae would cross Gujarat's coast between Porbandar and Mahuva in Bhavnagar district by early Tuesday morning and tidal waves are likely to inundate several coastal districts during the landfall.

"The very severe cyclonic storm 'Tauktae over the east-central Arabian Sea moved nearly northwards with a speed of about 11 kmph during the past six hours," it said.

"It is very likely to intensify during the next 24 hours. It is very likely to move north-northwestwards and reach the Gujarat coast in the evening hours of May 17 and cross the State coast between Porbandar and Mahuva in Bhavnagar dis-

trict around May 18 early morning," the IMD said.

With the cyclone intensifying, the wind speed along and off Gujarat coasts in Porbandar, Junagadh, Gir Somnath and Amreli districts will reach 150-160 kmph gusting to 175 kmph by Tuesday morning. It will reach a speed of 120-150 kmph gusting to 165 kmph over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Bhavnagar districts during the same period, the IMD said.

"Gale winds with speed reaching 70-80 kmph gusting to 90 kmph are likely to prevail along and off Valsad, Navsari, Surat, Bharuch, southern parts of Ahmedabad, and Anand districts, as well as Dadra, Nagar Haveli, Daman (Union Territories) from May 17 midnight till Tuesday morning," it said.

A nearly 3-metre-high tidal wave is expected in Junagarh, 1-2.5 metres above astronomical tide is likely to inundate coastal areas of Diu, Gir Somnath, Amreli, Bharuch, Bhavnagar, Ahmedabad, Anand, Surat and about 0.5-1 metres over Devbhoomi Dwarka, Jamnagar, Porbandar, Kutch and the remaining coastal districts of Gujarat during the time of landfall, the IMD said.

An estimated 1.5 lakh people are being shifted from low-lying coastal areas in Gujarat

# Amit Shah holds review meeting with CMs of Tauktae-hit States

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday held a review meeting with Chief Ministers of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Administrator of Daman & Diu and Dadra Nagar Haveli to assess the preparedness to deal with the situation arising out of Cyclone "Tauktae".

Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba chaired a meeting of the National Crisis Management Committee (NCMC).

The meeting was held through video conferencing with Chief Secretaries of the States of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu as well as Advisors to the Administrators of the Union Territories of Lakshadweep and Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu. Secretaries of various Union Ministries also attended the meeting.

Chief Ministers Uddhav Thackeray and Vijay Rupani apprised Shah of the cautions and relief measures undertaken at coastal areas. "Shah said that a 24x7 control room is functioning in MHA, which can be contacted at any time for any assistance by the States. He said Indian Coast Guard, the Navy, Army and Air Force units have also been put on standby and surveillance aircraft and helicopters are carrying out aerial sorties.

Union Home Minister directed the senior officers to take every possible measure to ensure that people are safely evacuated and all essential services maintained, including health and oxygen facilities, power, telecommunications, drinking water etc. and that these are restored immediately in the event of damages caused to them," said the MHA.

Reviewing the preparedness of the Central and State

agencies, Cabinet Secretary stressed that all measures should be taken to evacuate people in areas affected by the cyclone, so as to ensure zero loss of life and damage. Preparatory arrangements to restore power, telecom and other important services should be ensured. Gauba also emphasised that all steps should also be taken to avoid disruption of functioning of hospitals and Covid Care Centres and maintenance of regular supply of oxygen to them.

Necessary arrangements have been made in this regard to ensure uninterrupted functioning of hospitals and Covid Care Centres, along with ensuring generation and supply of oxygen to Covid facilities across the country.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) informed that they have deployed and made available 79 teams in the affected States.

and extremely heavy rainfall in Raigad on Monday.

Four deaths have been reported from Karnataka's Uttara Kannada, Udupi, Chikkamagaluru and Shivamogga districts in cyclone-related incidents. The water level in many dams across Kerala showed a rising trend after heavy rains in the

catchment areas, prompting authorities to sound an alert.

Gusty winds and heavy rainfall have been lashing several parts of Goa since Sunday morning. Power supply in a majority of areas of Goa has been disrupted as hundreds of electric poles were uprooted due to the high-speed winds cause by the cyclone.

## Modi talks to CMs, takes stock of Covid Status

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday spoke to the Chief Ministers of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Puducherry on the Covid-19 situation in the States and the Union Territory as they briefed him on the measures being taken to contain second wave of Covid-19.

Modi, who has been regularly speaking to Chief Ministers to take stock of the pandemic situation in States and Union Territories, has told the States that localised containment strategies were the need of the hour.

Besides, he has asked the States to ensure oxygen supply in rural areas.

According to sources, the the Chief Ministers informed the Prime Minister that central guidelines were being followed and vaccination being accorded the highest priority.

The Prime Minister is to start next week his direct interaction with the District Magistrates of 54 districts to workout Covid19 strategy following its second wave.

With 3.11 lakh fresh coronavirus infections, India saw the lowest rise in daily Covid-19 cases after a gap of 25 days, while the death toll rose to 2,70,284 with 4,077 new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry.

## NIA raids four locations in Madurai Facebook post case



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted searches at four locations in Tamil Nadu in connection with Madurai fundamentalist Facebook post case.

The case relates to incriminating Facebook post by accused Mohammad Iqbal, an extremist advocating ideology of ISIS and Hizb-Ul-Tahrir terror groups.

The searches were conducted at Kazimar Street, K Pudur, Pethaniyapuram and Mehboob Palayam in Madurai.

During the searches, sixteen digital devices including laptop, hard discs, mobile phones, memory cards, SIMs, pen drive, and many incriminating books, pamphlets and documents were recovered, the NIA said.

The case was originally registered by Madurai police under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The NIA had re-registered the case on April 15 this year and took over the investigation.

Investigation has revealed that the posts on the Facebook page "Thoonga Vizhigal Rendu" is in Kazimar Street" was uploaded by the accused Md. Iqbal for denigrating a particular community, it said.

"The posts were designed to incite communal disharmony among different religious groups in a manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order," it said.

Accused Md Iqbal alias Senthil Kumar of Kazimar, Street, Madurai, was arrested on December 2 last year and is presently in judicial custody.

# States, UTs asked to use IoT tools ensure water supply to villages

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

The National Jal Jeevan Mission (NJJM) has asked all States and Union Territories (UTs) to roll out sensor-based IoT solutions to measure and monitor water supply in rural areas, so as to ensure water service delivery in rural homes by addressing various issues that cause disruption on a regular basis.

In a statement, the Jal Shakti Ministry said: "India has one of the most vibrant Internet of Things (IoT) eco-systems in the world, with various supporting enablers making it conducive for companies seeking to serve the global demand beyond national boundaries. The Government of India has introduced a number of initiatives to leverage the benefits of these disruptive IoT technologies in multiple sectors."

To utilise this expertise, the NJJM, and the Ministry had set up a Technical Expert Committee to prepare a road map for measurement and monitoring of water service delivery systems in the rural areas. The committee has eminent members from academia, administration, technology and specialists from the water supply sector.

The committee met 11 times and despite the Covid pandemic, finalised the report,



which has shared to the states/UTs and provides a framework to design, develop and establish a coherent system that is able to exchange the data at local and central level.

The broad framework will help the States/UTs in firming up the desired standards to meet the requirement of change from mere infrastructure to ensuring water service delivery. The NJJM, in partnership with state governments and sector partners, has started facilitating sensor-based water supply systems on pilot basis in several villages.

The data from 11 pilot locations about the daily water supply, its quantity and regularity are shown on the Jal Jeevan Mission dashboard.

"Many States like Bihar, Punjab, Haryana have come forward for the implementation. Sikkim, Manipur, Goa have completed basic survey works. Gujarat has begun navigating the sensor-based rural

water supply systems in 1,000 villages. A technology grand challenge launched by NJJM in partnership with MEITY, Government of India, is going to be showcases in 100 villages in states of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Manipur," the Ministry said.

The data collected from the field locations will be transmitted to the state and Central server and can be used to monitor the functionality (quantity, quality and regularity of water supply) at the state and Central level. This will ensure to minimise service delivery outage and water loss and monitor the quantity and quality on a long-term basis.

The additional advantage of this data would be to analyse the demand pattern of the user groups over time and use this information for demand management at the aggregate level.

# Nishank receives int'l honour, dedicates it to Covid warriors

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' has been honoured with "International Invincible Gold Medal" of 2021.

In a statement to the media, Tony Nader, president of Maharshi Organisation world-wide and various Maharshi Universities, said that Nishank has been recognised for his extraordinary commitment and outstanding service to humanity through his writings, social and illustrious public life.

The decision was made after due deliberations by a high-powered committee duly constituted under the leadership of Nader, who is the global head of the organisation.

The statement further praised the relentless efforts and great commitment of Nishank to propagate ancient Vedic values, wisdom and traditional knowledge in the most scientific manner.

Nader lauded Nishank for his continuous support and



commitment to world peace through Veda and world peace programme.

The honour was announced at a two-day virtual session which was attended by representatives from over 110 countries. The award will be formally presented to the Minister on Guru Purnima this year.

Nader also congratulated the Minister for the most innovative, creative, scientific and inclusive New Education policy.

He added that the new education policy crafted by the government will go a long way in establishing human values globally as the base of modern education.

Accepting the award, Nishank said that he was grateful to the selection committee.

He dedicated his award to all the corona warriors who are

risking their lives to save the patients in this difficult time.

In his emotional address, Nishank said that he has just come out of covid infection. He has felt the pain and closely observed the dedication, struggle, duty, service of our doctors, nurses, health workers.

In order to save the lives of others, they put their lives in danger. He said, "We will definitely win on the strength of our Corona warriors.

Nishank said that he is very happy that his writings, social and public service have been appreciated.

He said he was committed to promote scientific research on Indian traditional knowledge and india's eternal life values of life so that it can benefit humanity.

Thanking Nader for his positive views on education policy, Nishank said that this policy not only help India to meet the upcoming global challenges but will establish the country as Vishvaguru in times to come.

# PC questions Govt on fall in daily Covid jabs

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister and Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday questioned the Narendra Modi Government on the decline in the number of daily vaccination while taking a jibe at Health Minister Harsh Vardhan over the shortage of vaccines.

"Why is the number of vaccinations administered going down every day? It was only 11,60,000 doses on Friday, bringing down significantly the daily average of May. It is a far cry from the 42 lakh doses administered on April 2.

"The only reason and explanation is shortage of vaccines. Of course, the loyal and obedient Union Health Minister will flatly deny any shortage of vaccines!" Chidambaram said.

Harsh Vardhan on Saturday reviewed public health response to Covid-19 and progress of vaccination in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra



Pradesh and Gujarat.

All the state health administrators were advised to increase ICU and oxygenated beds, undertake oxygen audits, take stock of availability of medicines in the state and strengthen their medical workforce.

Detailing the ramping up of vaccine production, he said, "We will have 51.6 crore vaccine doses by the end of July including the 18 crore doses already administered. Sputnik has been approved.

This along with the slated approval of the new vaccine of Zydcus Cadila, Serum Institute of India- Novavax vaccine, Bharat Biotech's nasal vaccine and the Genova mRNA vaccine will push the availability of Covid vaccines to 216 crore doses in the August-December period."

# Nadda flags off medical supplies to Himachal, praises Anurag Thakur's role

IANs ■ NEW DELHI

BJP national President JP Nadda on Sunday flagged off a large quantity of Covid-19 relief materials to Himachal Pradesh under the party's 'Seva Hi Sangathan 2.0' campaign.

The Covid relief materials comprise nearly three lakh three-ply face masks, 50,000 N-95 face masks, 25,000 gloves, 10,000 face shields, 7,000 PPE kits, 6,000 oxygen mask, 3200 NMRs, 1500 oxygen regulators, 250 nasal cannula and other medical items.

The BJP National President also flagged off consignment of medical equipment procured 17 mobile medical units under the "Saansad Mobile Swasthya Seva" with the help of Union Minister of State for Finance &



Corporate Affairs, Anurag Thakur.

Nadda praised the efforts of Thakur for this noble initiative in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

"As we all know that the Covid-19 pandemic has emerged as the biggest medical and health crisis in the history of mankind but all Indians under the leadership and guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi have unitedly

fought this war against the pandemic and soon we will emerge victorious in this war against Covid," he said.

He urged all BJP office bearers, leaders and workers of Himachal Pradesh to ensure last mile delivery of all medical aid and other assistance in the state so that every single needy and poor person gets relief and are not left unattended from getting the medical supplies and relief materials.







## FIRST COLUMN

## SHOULD YOU COUNT ON MUTUAL FUNDS?

Research shows that past returns and the age of the mutual fund have an impact on your savings



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Mutual funds are gaining popularity as a preferred investment avenue among Indians over the last decade. Particularly over the last five years, the industry has witnessed a huge increase in the number of folios which grew to 44.2 million from March, 2014 to June, 2019. What makes this growth interesting is the fact that it had largely come from the segment of individual investors, including both retails investors and high network individuals (HNIs). This segment registered a growth rate of 15.5 percent during this period, which in turn contributed to a 27 percent rise in assets under management (AUM) of individual investors from ₹4 lakh crore in March, 2014 to ₹4 lakh crore in June, 2019. Since mutual funds have become one of the preferred investment destinations or investor, it is important to choose funds that will perform better than others.

One of the ways in which the performance of mutual funds is measured is through net inflows and outflows, which is the net result of the total money that has moved into and moved out of the fund for a particular time period. If the end result is positive, indicating



inflows, it means that more money has been invested into the funds and vice versa. Net flows are important as they provide the performance report of mutual funds. High net inflows are significant as they lead to higher AUM, which in turn increase company's profits. On the other hand, high net outflows, might lead to some tactical changes like changing the fund manager or the investment philosophy. Increase in the collective net inflows also leads to increase in the size of some individual mutual funds and also the size of the mutual fund industry as a whole. In addition, net flows can also provide an insight into the general collective predictive capacity of investors. So, an overall net inflow into any mutual fund may forecast its positive performance. So, if net flows are so important for any mutual fund, what determines that it gets positive inflows? Research shows that factors like past returns, the age of the mutual fund, higher expenses like higher advertising costs, lower fees and size of the fund family. Some strategic decisions, like changing the name of the mutual fund to match the current season trend also bring in extra inflows.

Size plays an import role in the performance of mutual funds. Several studies suggest that younger or new funds have higher performance as they enter the industry with higher skill sets and their relatively smaller exposure to market makes sure that any adverse market movements would have less impact on the performance. In addition, the increasing size of the industry also has an adverse impact on the performance. The larger the industry size, the lesser is the potential of any profitable trades, as adjustments to any anomalies, which may lead to any profit making, quickly happen, leading to less chances of booking profits.

Skill of the fund and the fund manager are an important determinant of mutual fund performance. Fund managers' compensation also contributes its performance. In cases where the compensation depends on performance, such mutual funds, due to an active strategy, end up generally becoming high performance funds and perform better than funds where managers use passive fund management style. So, a fund manager's skill in stock picking helps in generating a higher return.

Several studies show a predictive pattern of mutual fund analysis based on the above discussed determinants. Small investors should take advantage and make use of the skills of the funds and fund managers to beat the benchmark and hope to generate higher returns. *(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)*

# Corona: Some real, though some hype

Somehow, the States and the Union Government are passing on the impression that they have been unable to meet the challenge of the virus. But why?

Thoughts of prospective troubles hardly come true, and most people die of visceral fear of spectre or something that doesn't exist. "Ninety per cent of our problems are caused by our own thoughts," says Hilda de la Rosa, a South African popular author and motivational speaker. She says, entrapped in our thought processes, we find it arduous to extricate ourselves from the thinking pattern we have imbibed over years. Unaware of the facts about morbidity and mortality due to Covid or otherwise, most people are caught with the fear psychosis that is taking a larger toll than the pandemic itself. The predicament has shaken people of all description. The pandemic 2.0 is hitting Indians with greater intensity and virulence but a sensible and broader perspective can reduce the hype and assure the implications of the current crisis are not as dismal as being made out.

Certain mystery shrouds the resurgence of Covid 2.0 with new strains. True, the plateauing of Covid cases in India by last fall led to public and government complacency about continuing risks. And the the government toned down restrictions. As the going seemed manageable, shops, restaurants, wholesale and retail markets, malls, schools, public transport, businesses and public establishments tended to function normally. Export of jet fighters, plans to lay 75,000+ stations to charge electric vehicles, supply of domestically produced Covid vaccine to 87 countries and medicines to over 150 countries meant progression towards a vibrant economy and making of "atmanirbhar" nation. Naturally, the Indian buoyancy and optimism was not palatable to arms, oil, and pharma lobbies, as they could lose huge businesses in India; apropos of 5-billion-dollar PPE and masks deals alone came to a naught in one shot, oil companies were next. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who repeatedly said and meant 'desh nahi lutne dunga, desh nahin bikne dunga' was a common enemy who would not bend like Donald Trump of the US. For the global business magnates to flourish in India, Modi's downsizing-with the aid of domestic disgruntled elements appeared the only option. To support them was neighbouring China. Possibility of China-sponsored biological war behind the abrupt rise in Covid cases in India bypassing the neighbouring countries with identical life style during April 10-15 cannot be ruled out. Accompanying this was the opposition's refrain of failure of Modi government to deal with Covid, enthusiastically supported by Western media. On April 20, international media showed 'large scale' cremations and highlighted deficiencies in Indian health care sector. Strangely, at this hour, Pakistan also offered to help India.

The anti-government chorus was endorsed by UNICEF executive director Henrietta Fore on May 4: "The tragic situation in India should raise alarm bells for all of us." Most recent is the editorial in the medical journal *Lancet* summarily undermining the government's efforts in dealing with Covid; the vindictive portion being, "Modi's actions in attempting to stifle criticism and open discussion during the crisis crisis are inexcusable." The statement suggesting the government "own up to its mistakes" is the tone of a hardcore political adversary and in bad taste, unbecoming of a medical publication. Reports about Chinese instigations behind the sordid coverage and observations on India's handling of Covid



AT HOME, DURING COVID 1.0, THE OPPOSITION DECRIED LOCKDOWNS FOR ITS ADVERSE IMPLICATIONS ON LIVELIHOODS. IN THE SECOND WAVE, AFTER THE STATES WERE ALLOWED TO DECIDE AT THEIR OWN LEVEL, THEY CHOSE LOCKDOWN. THEY ALSO CRITICISED THE EFFICACY OF VACCINE, THEN TOOK IT ONE BY ONE

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shall be revelatory.

At home, during Covid 1.0, the Opposition decried lockdowns for its adverse implications on livelihoods. In second wave, after States were allowed to decide at their own level, they chose lockdown. They also criticised the efficacy of vaccine, then took it one by one. The purpose was creating a public impression that government is unwilling and unfit to manage Covid crisis, something not in national interest.

Ambiguity in identifying the precise aetiology, genesis and manifestations of Covid 2.0 further tends to destabilise the poise of lay public. The doctors find it expedient to classify routine health issues as Covid in keeping with trends. The head of a prestigious health facility, Dr Arvind Kumar of Medanta, Gurugram: Consider any one of symptoms like sneezing, headache, fever, throat soar, vomiting, diarrhoea, loss of smell or taste, skin patches, body ache as Covid case unless proved otherwise, and begin with self-isolation without wait for lab reports - even negative reports with either symptom must be treated as Covid. Such precepts further down the already diminishing morale of the patient and his kith and kin that needs bol-

stering in the nerve breaking era we are passing through.

As for the numbers gamein Covid, national morbidity and mortality data across states in specific time frames are subject to wide fluctuations because transmission of Covid is multifactorial in nature involving the vision of the governmentad thestrict measures it takes to control the pandemic including health facilities. Thus, it shall be naive to pronounce judgement on the performance of the governance based on infections and death data of few days, weeks or even months; policies and actions take long to show results. Taking the Covid data of April 28, 2021, though numerically India witnessed largest daily deaths (3647) compared to USA (954), Germany (320), France (344) and Italy (344), the deaths per crore population turns out to be mere 26 for India and 29, 38, 48 and 57, respectively, for these countries (source: worldometers.info). Thus, the narrative that India is worst hit by Covid smacks of foul play to tarnish the image of India.

Doctors are not knowalls in health matters but in a few weeks after Covid 2.0, how do they presume that all non-Covid diseases

have eclipsed altogether. Based on 2017 data, World Economic Forum analysis revealed 25,270 daily deaths in India, second to China at 28,036. The estimated global annual death toll for tuberculosis of all kinds in 2019 stood at 14.18 lakh and 79,144 in India; for HIV-related diseases the annual death toll was 5-9 lakh globally and 69,000 for India in 2017. These figures shall not be significantly different for 2020 and 2021. A fair, comparative assessment of quantitative changes in morbidity and mortality in pre-Covid and it a time frame shows that the Covid death toll as reported is misleading and ignores mortality from classical diseases. The actual Covid toll is not of the level we are told to make out.

The fear against COVID is largely visceral. It is the spectre of COVID that is the real threat, and not the virus itself. The virus with a life of around seven days is an issue only in about three to five per cent cases where specialist handling is required. We are undergoing times when each section of country has to lend a helping hand. Let us face the facts squarely, keep our peace and hope for the best.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THERE WILL BE NO SHORTAGE OF OXYGEN IN THE STATE NOW, AND I ALSO I ONCE AGAIN APPEAL TO THE FARMER LEADERS TO SUSPEND THEIR PROTESTS. HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER — MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR



THE SITUATION IN HARYANA IS WORSE THAN THAT OF NEIGHBOURING DELHI. HEALTH MINISTER ANIL VIJ SHOULD RESIGN FOR FAILING TO HANDLE THE SITUATION. INLD LEADER — ABHAY SINGH CHAUTALA

# Time to take hypertension, a COVID-19 comorbidity, head-on

You can reduce your risk for high blood pressure with healthy lifestyle changes; just stick around with a few simple tips

In India at least one in three adults in India have hypertension, also known as high blood pressure. The ongoing pandemic has revealed how people with hypertension are at greater risk of becoming severely ill or dying from COVID-19. Research indicates that most people are unaware that they have high blood pressure and even if diagnosed, they are either irregular with their medication or discontinue taking it after a while. Studies have also shown that patients with hypertension but not on medications had a significantly higher risk of mortality compared with those on medication, if they got Covid-19.

In the past World Health Organisation (WHO) and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) have issued various warnings and guidelines for people with chronic



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conditions, particularly hypertensives to ensure they continue their treatment - through telemedicine whenever possible and keep taking the prescribed medicines. On this World Hypertension Day, it is critically important for India to pay attention to this silent killer and take adequate precautions.

### Dos and don'ts:

Secure your supply of blood pressure medicines. Keep a stock of at least 90 days.

Continue to take medicines for blood pressure and other chronic conditions such as diabetes as prescribed by the doctor.

If possible, regularly measure your blood pressure at home. If it fluctuates, consult your doctor remotely. Do not change your treatment without a medical opinion.

Avail of telemedicine facility if you develop coronavirus



symptoms or feel unwell. In the last one year, 35 lakh Indians have dialled E-Sanjeevani, the government's telemedicine platform for a medical consultation.

**Avoid consuming excess salt in your food** Risk Factors associated

with hypertension

Hypertension can lead to severe health complications and increase the risk of heart disease, stroke, and sometimes death. It is a primary risk factor for cardiovascular disease, including stroke, heart attack, heart failure, and

aneurysm. Uncontrolled hypertension may affect eyes; leading to Hypertensive Retinopathy which may lead to irreversible blindness. Keeping blood pressure under control is vital for preserving health and reducing the risk of these dangerous conditions.

High blood pressure is often symptomless and quietly damages blood vessels leading to serious health problems. While there is no cure, using medications as prescribed and making lifestyle changes can enhance your quality of life and reduce your risk of heart disease, stroke, kidney disease and more.

You can reduce your risk for high blood pressure with healthy lifestyle changes. If you already have high blood pressure, the same lifestyle changes combined with medication therapy (as recommended by your provider) can also help you control it. Certain individuals are more likely to develop high blood pressure than others if they have a family history of hypertension or consume diets rich in salt, saturated fats, consume tobacco or alcohol and are overweight. Stress

can also raise your risk of developing high blood pressure. Hypertension typically develops over the course of several years. Usually, you don't notice any symptoms. But even without symptoms, high blood pressure can cause damage to your blood vessels and organs, especially the brain, heart, eyes, and kidneys.

The first criteria to deal with hypertension or high blood pressure is early detection. Regular blood pressure readings can help you and your doctor in noticing any change. If your blood pressure is elevated, the health provider may need to keep checking it for over a few weeks to see if the number stays elevated or falls back to normal levels. Treatment for hypertension includes both prescription medication and healthy lifestyle changes.



# GDP growth may be below 9pc in FY22: Care survey

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Amid a raging second wave of Covid-19 and subsequent restrictions on business activities imposed by several states, economic recovery is beginning to lose steam and the country's GDP growth is likely to be below nine per cent for the current fiscal, according to a survey.

At least 80 per cent of the respondents expect consumer demand for non-essential items as well as investment to be severely impacted due to the current Covid situation, the survey conducted by Care Ratings said.

"The economic recovery is beginning to lose steam with infection rates scaling record highs. Almost seven out of 10 respondents expect GDP (growth) to be below nine per cent for FY22," it said.

According to the study, the majority of respondents expect the lockdown



announced by several states will stay till May-end.

Together, 54 per cent of the people, who participated in the survey, believe that the lockdown is a solution to the current COVID-19 situation in the country, it said.

Little more than three-fourth of the respondents feel that the current lockdown is not as stringent as the restrictions imposed last year, it

added.

Another rating agency CRISIL said India's GDP growth is likely to drop to 9.8 per cent in a moderate scenario, assuming the second wave of coronavirus disease peaks by May- end.

The economic growth may slip further to 8.2 per cent in the severe situation when the second wave of the pandemic peaks by June-end, it added.

# M-cap of 8 most valued companies plummets over ₹1.13 lakh crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Eight of the top-10 most valued companies witnessed a combined erosion of ₹1,13,074.57 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys and HDFC Bank emerging as the worst hit.

Among the top-10 most valued companies, only Reliance Industries Limited and State Bank of India managed to book gains on a weekly basis.

During the holiday-truncated trading week, the BSE benchmark Sensex tanked 473.92 points or 0.96 per cent.

The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services tumbled ₹30,054.79 crore to ₹11,28,488.10 crore.

Infosys witnessed an erosion of ₹15,168.41 crore, taking its market worth to ₹5,61,060.44 crore.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of HDFC Bank eroded

by ₹15,139.12 crore to ₹7,65,035.49 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank plummeted by ₹14,398.04 crore to ₹3,38,358.80 crore.

The valuation of HDFC dived ₹13,430.38 crore to ₹4,36,879.75 crore and that of Bajaj Finance tanked ₹9,844.62 crore to ₹3,21,592.05 crore.

The m-cap of Hindustan Unilever Limited diminished by ₹8,505.43 crore to stand at ₹5,58,445.28 crore and that of ICICI Bank dipped by ₹6,533.78 crore to ₹4,13,243.07 crore.

In contrast, Reliance Industries added ₹3,518.62 crore to take its valuation to ₹12,27,855.04 crore and State Bank of India added ₹2,052.66 crore to help its m-cap reach Rs 3,21,732.25 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Reliance Industries retained the most-valued company title followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan .

# SBI to sell three NPA accounts next month for recovery of over ₹ 235 cr



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The State Bank of India (SBI) will sell three bad accounts to asset reconstruction companies or other financial institutions next month to recover dues of over ₹235 crore, according to a sales notice.

In terms of the bank's policy on sale of financial assets, in line with regulatory guidelines, SBI said it has placed Heavy Metal and Tubes Ltd, Khare and Tarkunde Infrastructure Pvt Ltd and Elize International Ltd for sale to

recover a total of ₹235.32 crore.

Heavy Metal has outstanding dues of ₹116.91 crore to the bank, Khare and Tarkunde owes ₹99.84 crore and Elize International ₹18.57 crore. The bank has set the reserve prices for these NPA accounts for sale at ₹27.50 crore, ₹15 crore and ₹8 crore, respectively.

The e-auction of Heavy Metal and Tubes; and Khare and Tarkunde will take place on June 7, while that of Elize will be on June 8.

SBI said the interested

ARCs/banks/NBFCs/FIs can conduct due diligence of these assets with immediate effect, after submitting expressions of interest and executing a non-disclosure agreement with the bank.

Ahmedabad-based Heavy Metal and Tubes is engaged in manufacturing of stainless steel tubes and pipes, while Nagpur-based Khare and Tarkunde is engaged in real estate business.

Elize International is a Kolkata based company engaged in manufacturing of clothing.

# Amazon helps sellers procure oxygen concentrators for customers in India



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce major Amazon is working with sellers on its marketplace in India to help them procure about 9,000 oxygen concentrators for customers in the country.

The first batch of 1,000 oxygen concentrators have already landed in India, and are now available for purchase for consumers and business customers. The rest are expected to come through in the second half of the month.

Sellers on Amazon will now be offering oxygen concentrators along with other genuine and high-quality products like oxymeters, thermometers, masks, gloves, sanitizers and disinfectants for customers across India, Amazon India said in a blog-post.

"To address the growing customer demand and shortage of critical medical equipment, Amazon India is working with sellers on its marketplace to help them bring in about 9,000 oxygen concentrators for customers in India," it said.

Amazon's global procurement teams are helping interested sellers from India connect with global suppliers to enable them to procure oxygen concentrators, while simplifying supply chain complexities and facilitating the overall process, it noted.

"In the last few weeks, we have seen up to a 70x increase in search volume for oxygen concentrators and we are collaborating with our sellers to ramp up inventory of critical medical equipment including oxygen concentrators for our customers. Our focus is to enable an easy and convenient access to genuine, high quality products for our customers in their time of need," Amazon India Vice President Manish Tiwary said.

India is registering a high number of COVID cases daily that has put extreme pressure on the healthcare infrastructure of the country.

The massive rise in infections in the second wave of the pandemic has led to hospitals in several states reeling under a shortage of medical oxygen and beds and people turned to social media to procure oxygen cylinders, hospital beds, plasma donors and other resources.

Previously, Amazon had announced importing and donating 100 ventilator units, and that it is bringing in over 10,000 oxygen concentrators and BiPAP machines to India in collaboration with multiple partners.

The medical equipment will be donated to hospitals and public institutions

to augment their capacity to help COVID-19 infected patients across multiple cities.

# Go Airlines might face turbulence from possible floating-rate plane leases

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The IPO-bound Go Airlines is set to induct 22 new planes in less than two years but expects that a possible shift to floating-rate aircraft leases might have an adverse impact due to higher interest rates.

The low-cost airline has filed draft papers for an initial share sale worth ₹3,600 crore and will be the first domestic scheduled carrier to get listed on domestic bourses in nearly six years.

Apart from the prospects of moving to floating-rate leases for new planes, issues related to brand 'GoAir' and certain related trademarks, and indebtedness, are among the risk factors mentioned in its Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP).

All its 55 planes as of March 31, 2021, were under operating and fixed-rate leases but the airline anticipates that future leases could be based on floating rates.

The airline, which

announced rebranding itself from 'GoAir' to 'Go First', expects to add eight new aircraft in fiscal 2022 and 14 in the next financial year ending March 31, 2023.

These planes will be part of the order placed for 98 A320 neos. Currently, the carrier's fleet has a mix of A320 neos and A320 ceos.

While noting that its indebtedness could adversely affect its business, Go Airlines said that it might be required to switch over to floating-rate leases for planes in the future.

"All our 55 aircraft as of March 31, 2021, are under operating leases under fixed-rate leases and we may be required to obtain floating-rate leases for future aircraft leases.

As a result, a significant increase in interest rates may increase our obligations under any floating-rate

leases and may adversely impact our results of operations," as per the DRHP.

As of April 19, 2021, the company's aggregate indebted-

ness on a consolidated basis stood at Rs 8,160.09 crore.

According to the DRHP, the brand 'GoAir' and certain related trademarks, are registered in the name of Go Holdings, in which one of the promoters Jehangir Nusli Wadia has 99 per cent stake. During the re-branding transition period and thereafter, it might use trademarks/ service marks, that primarily consist of the terms 'Go', 'GoAir' and 'Fly Smart'.

As per the DRHP, in March 2021, Go Holdings made two applications to the Registrar of Trade Marks, for registration of two word marks used exclusively by our company, namely 'Go Airlines' and 'www.Goair.In'.

In April 2021, Jehangir Nusli Wadia made an application to the National Internet Exchange of India, to transfer 115 domain names registered in the name of the company, from one domain registrar to another domain registrar, namely Net4India Ltd to Network Solutions.

# Govt may table amendment to DICGC Act in monsoon session

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to ensure timely support to depositors of stressed banks, the government may bring amendment to DICGC Act in the monsoon session with the objective to provide account holders easy and time-bound access to funds to the extent of the deposit insurance cover.

Last year, the government raised insurance cover on deposit five-folds to ₹5 lakh with a view to provide support to depositors of ailing lenders

like Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank. Following the collapse of PMC Bank, Yes Bank and Lakshmi Vilas Bank too came under

stress leading to restructuring by the regulator and the government.

The amendment to the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) Act, 1961 is the budget announcement made by the Finance Minister and the Bill is almost ready, sources said.

It is expected that the Bill will be tabled in the upcoming monsoon session after being vetted by the Union Cabinet, sources added.

Once the Bill becomes the law, it will provide immediate relief to thousands of depositors who had their money parked in stressed lenders such as PMC Bank and other small cooperative banks.

As per the current provisions, the deposit insurance of up to Rs 5 lakh comes into play when the licence of a bank is cancelled and liquidation process starts.

DICGC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India, provides insurance cover on bank deposits.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget speech in February said the government had approved an increase in the Deposit Insurance

cover from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh for bank customers last year.

"I shall be moving amendments to the DICGC Act, 1961 in this session itself to stream-

line the provisions, so that if a bank is temporarily unable to fulfil its obligations, the depositors of such a bank can get easy and time-bound access to their deposits to the extent of the deposit insurance cover. This would help depositors of banks that are currently under stress," she had said.

It could not be presented in the Budget session due to curtailment of the last session following the spread of second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

It is to be noted that the enhanced deposit insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh is effective from February 4, 2020. The increase was done after a gap of 27 years as it was static since 1993.

# Power consumption grows nearly 19 pc in 1st fortnight of May

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Power consumption in the country grew by around 19 per cent in the first fortnight of May to 51.67 billion units (BU) over the same period last year, showing recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to the power ministry data.

Power consumption in the first fortnight of May 2020 was 43.55 BU.

The power consumption in the entire month of May last year was 102.08 BU.

During the first fortnight of May this year (from May 1 to 14), peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day touched the highest level of 168.78 GW (on May 6, 2021) and recorded growth of over 15 per cent over 146.54 GW (peak met) recorded in the same period in 2020 (on May 13, 2020).

The power consumption in April grew nearly 40 per cent to 118.08 BU.

# Petrol, diesel price hiked again; petrol price nears ₹99 in Mumbai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price on Sunday was increased by 24 paise per litre and diesel by 27 paise, pushing rates across the country to record highs and that of petrol in Mumbai to near Rs 99 a litre.

The increase led to rates in Delhi climbing to Rs 92.58 per litre and diesel to Rs 83.22, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Rates had already crossed Rs 100-mark in several cities in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra and with the latest increase, price in Mumbai too was inching towards that level.

A litre of petrol in Mumbai now comes for Rs 98.88 and diesel is priced at Rs 90.40 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as

VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra.

This is the ninth increase in prices since May 4 when the state-owned oil firms ended an 18-hiatus in rate revision they observed during assembly elections in states like West Bengal. Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan had the costliest petrol at Rs 103.52 per litre and Rs 95.99 a litre, respectively.

In nine increases, petrol price has risen by Rs 2.19 per litre and diesel by Rs 2.49.

Since March last year when the government raised excise duty on fuel to an all-time high, petrol price has increased by a record Rs 22.99 per litre (after accounting for a handful of occasions when rates fell) and diesel by Rs 20.93.

# Telecom operators urge Haryana Govt to curb rumours linking Covid-19 spread to 5G

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Sunday said it has urged the Haryana government to curb misinformation being spread regarding 5G testing being responsible for the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In a letter to Haryana Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan, the telecom operators has said some miscreants are spreading rumours that deaths and health problems faced by people due to Covid-19 are caused by testing of 5G and not coronavirus.

These rumours are spreading at a time when 5G testing has not even started in the country and the government has only given permission for doing 5G testing, which is yet to start, the COAI said in a statement here.

Telecom operators have kept Haryana, Punjab and Chandigarh out of their list of

places for doing testing of the 5G network, the association said.

Recently, Haryana BKU chief Gurnam Singh Chudani has hinted that the COVID-19 spread might be due to 5G testing being done.

The COAI letter stated, "We would hereby like to highlight that these types of rumours have spread over the past two weeks, mainly in semi-urban and rural areas. There has been a rise in such misinformation in the state of Haryana."

The letter stated that there have been incidences in Haryana wherein the farmer groups are also getting agitated over the myth of linking the COVID-19 pandemic with 5G services. Several farmers from Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh have been sitting on three borders near Delhi for about six months demanding repeal of the new three farm laws.

# Pharma industry to be given priority post-Taukate: Goyal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Sunday interacted with the industry on preparedness for cyclone Taukate and said that the pharma industry, especially oxygen producers, will be given priority to resume operations once the severe cyclonic storm subsides.

Taukate is expected to reach the Gujarat coast on Monday evening and cross between Porbandar and Mahuva (Bhavnagar district) Tuesday early morning, which will lead to winds with the speed of over 150 km/h, heavy rainfall and high tidal waves.

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the issue of continuous availability of oxygen, maintaining buffer stock of medicines and essential items was stressed in the meeting. Smooth functioning of communication facilities and other utilities also came up in the

meeting, an official statement said.

Goyal said that there could be a surge effect post-cyclone, and asked the industry to support health care personnels.

"He also stressed that all the people who are involved in the production of liquid medical oxygen, pharma industry, and all those who make cylinders or products in the supply chain of the pharma industry will be given priority to come back into operation," the statement added.

The minister also directed the railway authorities to closely monitor the situation, and be ready to rush the essential items to the affected areas in the shortest possible time, and provide help in any manner.

The minister said that a round-the-clock control room to monitor cyclone progress is already functioning.

He said that relief material should be properly channelised so that the common

man gets the relief and the unscrupulous elements are not able to take advantage.

He urged all the big industries to look after their local area to support small industries, suppliers and neighbourhood industry associations.

Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Mansukh Mandaviya also attended the meeting. Besides, senior officials of Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, Railways ministry, NDMA, and states of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Goa, and UT of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu also attended the meeting.

Mandaviya said that coastal areas in the western India are having a lot of industries. He said that the state governments are equipped for undertaking the relief and rescue operations, and have the experience in doing so.



# Israeli strikes kill 42 in Gaza City

## PM Netanyahu warns war against Hamas will go on

AP ■ GAZA CITY

Israeli airstrikes on Gaza City flattened three buildings and killed at least 42 people Sunday, medics said, as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu signaled the fourth war between Israel and Palestinians in Gaza would rage on despite international efforts to broker a cease-fire.

In a televised address, Netanyahu said Sunday evening the attacks were continuing at “full-force” and will “take time.” Israel “wants to levy a heavy price” from Gaza’s militant Hamas rulers, he said, flanked by his defense minister and political rival, Benny Gantz, in a show of unity.

The Israeli air assault early Sunday was the deadliest single attack since heavy fighting broke out between Israel and Hamas nearly a week ago, marking the worst fighting here since the devastating 2014 war in Gaza.

The airstrikes hit a major downtown street of residential buildings and storefronts over the course of five minutes after midnight, destroying two adjacent buildings and one about 50 yards (meters) down the road. At one point, a rescuer shouted, “Can you hear me?” into a hole in the rubble. “Are you OK?” Minutes later, first

responders pulled a survivor out and carried him off on an orange stretcher. The Gaza Health Ministry said 16 women and 10 children were among those killed, with more than 50 people wounded, and rescue efforts are still underway.

Earlier, the Israeli military said it destroyed the home of Gaza’s top Hamas leader, Yahiyeh Sinwar, in a separate strike in the southern town of Khan Younis. It was the third such attack in the last two days on the homes of senior Hamas leaders, who have gone underground.

Israel appears to have stepped up strikes in recent days to inflict as much damage as possible on Hamas as international mediators work to end the fighting and staff off an Israeli ground invasion of the territory. But targeting the group’s leaders could hinder those efforts. A U.S. Diplomat is in the region to try to de-escalate tensions, and the U.N. Security Council is set to meet Sunday.

In its airstrikes, Israel has leveled a number of Gaza City’s tallest office and residential buildings, alleging they contain Hamas military infrastructure. Among them was the building housing The Associated Press office and those of other media outlets.



Palestinian rescue a survivor from under the rubble of a destroyed residential building following deadly Israeli airstrikes in Gaza City, Sunday

## Islamic nations slam Israel — and each other’s ties to it

AP ■ DUBAI

A league of Muslim nations on Sunday demanded that Israel halt attacks killing Palestinian civilians amid heavy fighting between it and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, even as fissures between countries over their recognition of Israel emerged.

A statement by the 57-

nation Organization of Islamic Cooperation heard closely to previous ones issued by the Saudi-based group, including backing the decades-old call for Palestinians to have their own nation with East Jerusalem as its capital.

However, recent normalization deals between Israel and some nations in the group — as well as their own concerns about

Hamas — saw diplomats at points instead criticize each other.

“The massacre of Palestinian children today follows the purported normalization,” Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said. “This criminal and genocidal regime has once again proven that friendly gestures only aggravate its atrocities.”

# Myanmar junta attacks town that resisted coup

AP ■ BANGKOK

The US and British embassies in Myanmar expressed concern about reports of fierce government attacks on a town in a western Chin state, where the ruling junta declared martial law because of armed resistance to military rule.

The fighting began around 6 am Saturday when government troops reinforced by helicopters began shelling the western part of the town of Mindat, destroying several homes, said a spokesman of the Chinland Defence Force. It is a locally formed militia group opposed to the February coup that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. Helicopters also took part in the attack, according to the spokesman, who spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

“Mindat town is now under siege and is bracing for an all-out assault by the junta troops from air and by land,” said a statement by the Chin Human Rights Organisation.

The shadow National Unity Government, set up by lawmakers who were blocked by the army from taking their seats in Parliament, warned that “within the next 48 hours, Mindat can potentially become a battleground and thousands of people are facing the danger of being displaced.” Many have

already left the town of about 50,000 people, said a resident contacted by phone who was also fleeing.

The Mindat Township People’s Administration, another opposition grouping, claimed that 15 young men had been seized by government troops and used as human shields. It said at least five defenders of the town had been killed in clashes and at least 10 others wounded.

None of these details could be independently verified, but a Myanmar state television broadcast Saturday night reported that fighting was going on, and acknowledged the town’s defenders have been putting up stiff resistance against the army.

“The military’s use of weapons of war against civilians, including this week in Mindat, is a further demonstration of the depths the regime will sink to to hold onto power,” the British Embassy said on Twitter. “We call on the military to cease violence against civilians.”

The US Embassy said it was “aware of increasing violence in Mindat, including reports of the military shooting civilians,” and urged that evidence of atrocities be sent to UN investigators.

Detailed tallies compiled by several different watchdog groups say government security

forces have killed upwards of 750 protesters and bystanders as they have tried to suppress opposition to the military’s seizure of power.

In April, security forces were accused of killing more than 80 people in one day to destroy street barricades that militants had set up as strongholds in the city of Bago.

In many or most cases, police and soldiers were trying to break up peaceful protests, though as they increased the use of lethal force, some protesters fought back in self-defense. In recent weeks there has been an upsurge in small bombings in many cities, mostly causing little damage and few casualties.

The junta says the death toll is less than 300, and the use of force was justified to quash what it calls riots.

Mindat’s resisters are only lightly armed, mostly with a traditional type of single-shot hunting rifle, but the territory around the town is mountainous and wooded, favouring defenders over attackers.

The report on state television MRTV listed past attacks on government forces and installations, most recently on Thursday, when it claimed a force of about 100 blocked security forces from entering the town, destroying one vehicle and leaving an unspecified number of security forces dead and missing.

## Pope denounces violence between Israel, Hamas

Vatican City: Pope Francis has denounced the “unacceptable” spiral of violence between Israel and the Palestinians, saying the deaths in particular of children was a “sign that they don’t want to build the future but want to destroy it.” Francis prayed for peace, calm and international help to open

a path of dialogue during his Sunday blessing, delivered from his studio window overlooking St. Peter’s Square.

The pope said: “I ask myself: this hatred and vendetta, what will it bring? Do we truly think that we can build peace by destroying the other?”

## UN head ‘deeply disturbed’ by Israeli airstrike

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN spokesman said Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is “deeply disturbed” by the Israeli airstrike that destroyed a high-rise building in Gaza City housing offices of several international media organisations and residential apartments, and

is “dismayed” by the increasing number of civilian casualties.

“The secretary-general reminds all sides that any indiscriminate targeting of civilian and media structures violates international law and must be avoided at all costs,” spokesman Stephane Dujarric said Saturday.

## Afghan ceasefire ends amid calls for fresh peace talks

Kabul: A three-day cease-fire marked by violent attacks — most claimed by the Islamic State group — ended Sunday in Afghanistan amid calls for renewed peace talks between the government and Taliban.

Taliban political spokesman Suhail Shaheen said the negotiating teams of the government and the Islamic Emirate, as the Taliban refer to their ousted regime, met briefly Saturday in the Middle Eastern State of Qatar. They renewed their commitment to finding a peaceful end to the war and called for an early start to talks that have been stalled, he said.

The US has been pressing for accelerated talks as it withdraws the last of its 2,500-3,500 soldiers and NATO its remaining 7,000 allied forces.

Even as the Taliban and government signed on to the cease-fire, which was declared to mark the Islamic holiday of Eid-al-Fitr, violence continued unabated in Afghanistan.

A bombing Friday in a mosque north of the capital killed 12 worshippers, including the prayer leader. Another 15 people were wounded. The Taliban denied involvement and blamed the government intelligence agency.

In a statement Sunday, the

IS affiliate took responsibility for the mosque attack, saying its fighters planted an explosive device in “a worship place for disbelievers Sufis,” killing the “apostate Imam,” or prayer leader. The statement claimed 40 worshippers were wounded.

The IS also claimed it blew up several electrical grid stations over the weekend. That left the capital Kabul in the dark for much of the three-day holiday that followed the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan.

In posts on its affiliated websites, IS claimed additional attacks over the last two weeks that destroyed 13 electrical grid stations in several provinces. The stations bring imported power from the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

The attacks have left nine provinces including Kabul with disrupted power supplies, said Sanger Niazi, a government spokesman. There was also concern that local warlords, demanding protection money from the government to safeguard stations in areas they control, may have been behind some of the destruction.

At least one local warlord was arrested last year after demanding protection money.

On Sunday in the mostly

Shiite neighbourhood of Dasht-e-Barchi, parents of scores of young girls killed in a brutal May 8 bombing demonstrated to demand the government provide them with greater security. They said 90 people were killed, most of them students of Syed Al-Shahda girls school, in the bombings outside the school.

No one took responsibility but the IS affiliate has declared war on the country’s minority Shiites.

The seemingly unstoppable violence in Afghanistan has residents and regional countries fearful the final withdrawal of US and NATO soldiers could lead to further chaos. Washington said it wants its last soldier out of Afghanistan by September 11 at the latest, but the withdrawal is progressing quickly and a Western official familiar with the exit said it is likely to be completed by early July.

He spoke on condition of anonymity because details of the withdrawal are not being made public. On Saturday, China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi expressed concern about the rapid withdrawal of US and NATO forces in a phone call with Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. AP

## China slams ‘hasty’ withdrawal of US troops from Af, urges UN to play ‘due role’

Beijing: China has said that the “hasty” withdrawal of the US troops from war-torn Afghanistan has severely affected the peace process and the regional stability as it called on the UN to play its “due role” and urged the SCO to pay more attention to the situation.

The issue of US withdrawal from Afghanistan figured in the telephonic conversation between Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Pakistan counterpart Shah Mehmood Qureshi on Saturday. Wang said that the “hasty withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan”, which is expected to be completed by September this year, has severely impacted the Afghan domestic peace process and negatively affected the regional stability.

Under such circumstances, China expects the United Nations to play its “due role”, state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Wang as saying. He, however, did not elaborate the UN’s “due role”. Wang also said that the eight-member Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), of which India and Pakistan are members, should pay more attention to the situation and Afghanistan’s neighbours. AP

## GLOBE TROTTING

**FOUR KILLED AS HEAVY RAIN, FLOOD HIT LANKA**  
Colombo: At least 4 persons have died and over 11,500 others affected due to heavy rains and floods prevailing in several parts of Sri Lanka for the last few days.

**SENIOR JAMAAT LEADER ARRESTED IN B'DESH**  
Dhaka: A senior leader of the hardline Jamaat-e-Islami group has been arrested in Bangladesh for allegedly instigating violence in March during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to the country, police said on Sunday.

**NEPAL’S COVID DEATH TOLL CROSSES 5K MARK**  
Kathmandu: Nepal recorded 145 new Covid-19 fatalities in the last 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 5,001, the Health Ministry said. The total coronavirus tally stands at 4,55,020 with 7,368 new cases, it said. Of the total new cases, 2,609 were reported from Kathmandu Valley in the last 24 hours. While 3,39,756 people have recovered so far, 1,10,263 others are undergoing treatment at various home and institutional isolation centres.

## China calls for UN council action, slams America

Beijing: Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has called on the UN Security Council to seek an early de-escalation of violence between Israel and Gaza’s Hamas rulers. He also blamed the US for the council’s lack of action so far.

“Regrettably, the council has so far failed to reach an agreement, with the United States standing on the opposite side of international justice,” the state-run Xinhua News Agency quoted Wang as saying in a phone conversation Saturday with Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

He expressed support for a two-state solution, and said China, which holds the Security Council presidency this month, expects all parties to speak with a unified voice when the council discusses the conflict later Sunday. AP

## Refugees arriving in US unlikely to exceed cap set by Trump

AP ■ SAN DIEGO (US)

President Joe Biden, under political pressure, agreed to admit four times as many refugees this budget year as his predecessor did, but resettlement agencies concede the number actually allowed into the US will be closer to the record-low cap of 15,000 set by former President Donald Trump.

Refugee advocates say they are grateful for the increase because it’s symbolically important to show the world the US is back as a humanitarian leader at a time when the number of refugees worldwide is the highest since World War II. But they’re frustrated, too, because more refugees could have been admitted if Biden hadn’t dragged his feet.

“About 10,000 to 15,000 is what we’re expecting,” said Jenny Yang of World Relief,

adding that Biden’s inaction for months after taking office in January was “definitely problematic”.

“That delay meant not being able to process refugee applications for four months. We weren’t able to rebuild for four months, so it really was unfortunate,” Yang said.

Biden first proposed raising the cap to 62,500 in February in a plan submitted to Congress, but then refused to sign off on it for two months before coming back April 16 and suggesting he was sticking with Trump’s target.

Democratic allies and refugee advocates lambasted him, saying he was reneging on his campaign promise in the face of bipartisan criticism over his handling of an increase in unaccompanied migrant children at the US-Mexico border.

## Nine killed in shootout between two tribal groups in Pakistan

PTI ■ KARACHI

At least nine people were killed and five others injured in an exchange of firing between two tribal groups in Pakistan’s Sindh province, according to a media report on

Police said the bodies and injured have been shifted to the hospital

Sunday. The shootout happened on Saturday between Jagirani and Chachar tribes in Kandhkot over long-standing enmity, ARY News reported.

According to police, nine people were killed as a result of firing between them over long-standing enmity.

Police said the bodies and injured have been shifted to the hospital. Tensions between the two groups spread fear and panic in the area. A heavy contingent of police arrived in the area to defuse the tension.

## German expert: New Covid jabs needed in 2022

Berlin: The head of Germany’s independent vaccine advisory panel says it’s likely that everyone will have to get vaccinated again next year against Covid-19. Thomas Mertens told the Funke newspaper group in comments published Sunday that there isn’t yet enough data to say when exactly booster shots will be needed, and officials will have to wait a few months to see whether protection against the coronavirus weakens in some groups.

**Nearly 30.4 million people in Germany, or 36.5 per cent of the population, had received at least one vaccine shot by Friday**

But he stressed that “the virus won’t leave us again” and so the vaccinations currently under way won’t be the last. He added: “In principle, we have to prepare for everyone possibly having to refresh their vaccine protection next year.”

Nearly 30.4 million people in Germany, or 36.5 per cent of the population, had received at least one vaccine shot by Friday. More than 9 million, or 10.9 per cent of the population, had been fully vaccinated.

## Bangladesh extends lockdown till May 23

PTI ■ DHAKA

Bangladesh on Sunday extended ongoing nationwide lockdown till May 23 to contain the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bangladesh clamped a week-long nationwide lockdown on April 5, suspending public transport and shutting markets to combat the surge in coronavirus cases in the country. The restrictions were later extended till April 28, then till May 5 and then till May 16.

Lockdown restrictions are extended from May 16 in light of the current state of the pandemic,” the Cabinet Division said in a notice on Sunday.

All offices and organisations related to revenue collection have been included under emergency services, which will be out of the purview of the restrictions, the Daily Star newspaper reported.

Besides, shops that sell food items, hotels and restaurants will only be allowed to provide takeaway or online services during the period, the circular said.

## Sharks use Earth’s magnetic field as a GPS, scientists say

Portland: Sharks use the Earth’s magnetic field as a sort of natural GPS to navigate journeys that take them great distances across the world’s oceans, scientists have found.

Researchers said their marine laboratory experiments with a small species of shark confirm long-held speculation that sharks use magnetic fields as aids to navigation — behavior observed in other marine animals such as sea turtles.

Their study, published this month in the journal Current Biology, also sheds light on why sharks are able to traverse seas and find their way back to feed, breed and give birth, said marine policy specialist Bryan Keller, one of the study authors.

“We know that sharks can respond to magnetic fields,” Keller said.

“We didn’t know that they detected it to use as an aid in navigation ... You have sharks that can travel 20,000 kilometers (12,427 miles) and end up in the same spot.” The question of how sharks perform long-distance migrations has intrigued researchers for years. The sharks undertake their

journeys in the open ocean where they encounter few physical features such as corals that could serve as landmarks.

Looking for answers, scientists based at Florida State University decided to study bonnethead sharks — a kind of hammerhead that lives on both American coasts and returns to the same estuaries every year.

Researchers exposed 20 bonnetheads to magnetic conditions that simulated locations hundreds of kilometers (miles) away from where they were caught off Florida. The scientists found that the sharks began to swim north when the magnetic cues made them think they were south of where they should be.

That finding is compelling, said Robert Hueter, senior scientist emeritus at Mote Marine Laboratory & Aquarium, who was not involved in the study. Hueter said further study is needed to find how the sharks use the magnetic fields to determine their location and whether larger, long-distance migrating sharks use a similar system to find their way. AP

## Fauci says pandemic exposed ‘undeniable effects of racism’

AP ■ ATLANTA

The immunologist who leads the COVID-19 response in the United States said Sunday that the undeniable effects of racism have led to unacceptable health disparities that especially hurt African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans during the pandemic.

COVID-19 has shown a bright light on our own society’s failings, Dr. Anthony Fauci said during a graduation ceremony for Emory University.

Speaking by webcast from Washington, Fauci told the graduates in Atlanta that many members of minority groups work in essential jobs where they might be exposed to the coronavirus. He also said they are more likely to become infected if exposed because of medical conditions such as hypertension,

chronic lung disease, diabetes or obesity.

Now, very few of these comorbidities have racial determinants, Fauci said. Almost all relate to the social determinants of health dating back to disadvantageous conditions that some people of colour find themselves in from birth regarding the availability of an adequate diet, access to health care and the undeniable effects of racism in our society.

Fauci said correcting societal wrongs will take a commitment of decades, and he urged the graduates to be part of the solution.

Fauci said that once society returns to some form of normality, people should not forget that infectious disease has disproportionately hospitalised and killed people of color.

Fauci on Sunday was awarded the Emory University

president’s medal. Previous recipients include former President Jimmy Carter, the Dalai Lama and the late U.S. Rep. John Lewis, a civil rights icon. In accepting the award, Fauci denounced the destruction of division.

“Societal divisiveness is counterproductive in a pandemic,” Fauci said. We must not be at odds with each other since the virus is the enemy, not each other.

He praised the graduates for handling the profound disruption of the pandemic.

“Not since the influenza pandemic of 1918 has humanity faced a public health crisis of this magnitude,” he said. “Each of you deserves enormous respect for your extraordinary adaptability, resilience and dedication to learning, completing your studies and graduating despite immense difficulties and uncertainties.”





**Bollywood**

'I just want to do good films so that I can look back on them proudly after 50 years.'

—Rajkumar Rao

**12**



## LEARN WHILE YOU LISTEN

The last several years have seen the rising popularity of podcasts. Touted to be the digital make-over of the radio, these have many advantages that cannot be ignored, says DUSHYANTT KOHLI



this digital advancement. Overall, it has made learning an easy and joyful experience.

### Benefits of podcasts

There are numerous ways through which podcasts are able to fulfill the aspirations of the common masses.

The contents available on podcasts are made to custom-fit the needs of people from different regions. The verbal presentation of information becomes easy to understand and consume. At the same time, the cost-effectiveness of podcasts is a boon. They are mainly in the form of digital files that can

be downloaded or streamed easily over online platforms. Subscribing to high-quality audio content is also an option that users are preferring over reading these days.

Time-efficiency is possibly one of the best factors behind audio format's rapidly growing use. For instance, the working population of our country, which spends a few hours travelling every day, can make productive use of that time by listening to some news or learning a new language via podcasts. This will enable them to stay updated while utilising their precious time, thereby, allowing them to keep pace with the fast-moving world. Being available remotely, such podcasts can be listened to anytime, anywhere and do not come with the limitation of location-specific traditional channels. They can also be tapped via various digital devices which is an added advantage. Furthermore, there are plenty of options available to choose from according to personalised listening needs such as educational content, inspirational content, news, audiobooks, entertainment based podcasts and a lot more. All these are adequate to provide enough options for one's needs.

There are several other features of podcasts that improve and enhance the learning and listening experience of a person. The audio contents are so engaging that it has the potential to increase the concentration power of students. Educational material, using the audio-guided format, is known to pique the interest of students to the extent that even tough topics become relatively easy for them to understand. Today, with the increased use of smartphones, relevant podcasts can be conveniently downloaded and listened to. It is being widely adopted as a teaching and learning resource. A prime advantage that comes with the use of audio contents is that audio format also minimises the scope of visual impairment, which is a key challenge these days owing to increased exposure to digital devices. Therefore, learning through listening should be encouraged even more.

In a nutshell, podcasts are a true gift of the digital revolution. They are giving time-tested formats such as radio their new digital makeover with the touch-of-a-button experience. It barely comes as a surprise that there is an increasing number of takers for podcasts across the world.

(The writer is the Coo of Khabri.)

## WEBBED



### DOCTOR SLEEP

In this sequel to *The Shining*, Danny, now a traumatised adult, is sought out by a young psychic as evil beings that feed on their powers close in. Starring Ewan McGregor, Rebecca Ferguson and Kyliegh Curran, the film releases today on Netflix.



### SARDAR KA GRANDSON

A devoted grandson's mission to reunite his ailing grandmother with her ancestral home turns into a complicated, comic cross-border affair. Starring Arjun Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh and Neena Gupta, the film releases on May 18 on Netflix.



### DOG GONE TROUBLE

The privileged life of a pampered dog named Trouble is turned upside down when he gets lost and must learn to survive on the big-city streets. The film releases on May 28 on Netflix.



## Why Shilpa said no to grocery savings?

Whether it be sumptuous kitchen delicacies, useful backyard garden gyaan or power yoga punches, actor Shilpa Shetty has proven that she can never go wrong when it comes to nutrition that's packed with taste and health. But, what does she do when her brother-in-law orders groceries with a 100-rupee bachat?

Seen these days in a humorous television commercial for Nourish Chakki Fresh Atta with Extra Chokar by BL Agro Industries Limited, Shetty embodies every ounce of the wisdom of the modern Indian woman, especially when it is about making smart choices for the family. In her signature comic style, she educates her brother-in-law on the consequences of choosing ordinary food products with an interesting *Do Baatein* approach.

Dressed traditionally and elegantly in a pink kurta, the fitness icon takes the dining table talk one notch higher by convincing her family to look at the bigger picture while ordering *atta* or flour. In a rather endearing *bhabhi* avatar in the Nourish commercial, she drives home the message that we are what we eat; and immunity is not built by eating just about anything from the market shelves.

When it comes to healthy food choices, there's hardly anyone better than the fitness icon to explain the importance of choosing better. The TVC is the first in the series of three and has garnered close to 1.4 million views on YouTube within two weeks of being launched. Shilpa Shetty's fitness mantra? *Saadharan Chhodo, Nutrition Chuno.*

—IANS

Over the last two decades, we have witnessed a significant transition in Indian cinema. While it was once widely believed that only a male star can turn a film into a blockbuster, today this formula has been rendered obsolete. Actresses are at the forefront now, and are taking up dominant, substance laden roles in order to be the ultimate voice of change. Celebrating the women of Bollywood, today we have listed five actors who stole the show with their knockout performances over the years.

### Priyanka Chopra Jonas

A well known name across the globe, Priyanka Chopra Jonas has been breaking glass ceilings for the longest time and certainly needs no introduction. Her global superstardom and massive fanbase is proof that she's unstoppable. In her two-decade long Bollywood career, Chopra has delivered several path breaking performances in *Aitraaz* (2004), *Fashion* (2008), *Kaminey* (2009), *7 Khoon Maaf* (2011), *Agneepath* (2012), *Barfi!* (2012), *Mary Kom* (2014), *Dil Dhadakne Do* (2015), *Bajirao Mastani* (2015), *The Sky Is Pink* (2019) and the latest global release *The White Tiger* (2021) among many others. The National and Filmfare Award winning actress will be next seen alongside Keanu Reeves in *Matrix 4*. Other notable future releases include *Text For You*, an English remake of the 2016 German film *SMS für Dich*, and Russo Brothers' *Citadel*.

### Yami Gautam

Ever since her dreamy Bollywood debut with *Vicky Donor* in 2012, Yami Gautam

## WINDS OF CHANGE

The women of the film industry are changing the once prominent notion that a male star is a must for box office success

has managed to strike the right chord with the audience. In her career spanning over eight years, Yami has successfully established herself as one of the most versatile actors in the industry today. She is credited for various potent performances in films such as *Badlapur* (2015), *Kaabil* (2017), *Uri: The Surgical Strike* (2019), *Bala* (2019) and her recent release on Netflix, *Ginny Weds Sunny* (2020). Meanwhile, she is ready to take the box-office by storm with several releases lined up for this year. Taking note of her recent performances, Yami seems to be in no mood to stop and is sure to continue surprising cinephiles with her performances. Yami's latest project, a spooky adventure comedy titled *Bhoot Police*, which is scheduled for release on September 10, has her starring alongside Saif Ali Khan, Arjun Kapoor, Jacqueline Fernandez and Javed Jaffrey. Other noteworthy forthcoming releases include *Lapata*, *A Thursday* and *Dasvi*.

### Taapsee Pannu

Think Taapsee Pannu and you know we are talking about a stellar, versatile performer. The Filmfare Award winning actress made a lot of noise with her 2020 release *Thappad* which is undoubtedly her most powerful performance till date. Taapsee is also known for her roles in films like *Saand Ki Aankh* (2019), *Manmarziyaan* (2018), *Mulk* (2018) and *Pink* (2016). The experimental actress has a couple of interesting projects in her kitty

including *Loop Lapeta* (an official remake of the 1998 German thriller *Run Lola Run*), *Rashmi Rocket*, *Dobaaraa*, *Haseen Dhruba* and Rahul Dholakia's directorial biopic on Mithali Raj entitled *Shabaash Mithu*.

### Alia Bhatt

Hailed as one of the most bankable new age actors in the industry today, Alia Bhatt is known to be a directors' favourite. Over the years, Alia has delivered some extra-

ordinary performances in her career ranging from Imtiaz Ali's *Highway* (2014) and *Udta Punjab* (2016) to Gauri Shinde's *Dear Zindagi* (2016), Meghna Gulzar's *Raazi* (2018) and Zoya Akhtar's *Gully Boy* (2019). Over the years, she has surprised critics and the audience alike with her performances. After making her debut with *Student of the Year* in 2012, she has grown to become a household name in a span of just eight years. Her forthcoming releases include Sanjay Leela Bhansali's *Gangubai Kathiawadi*, *Brahmastra*, S.S. Rajamouli's *RRR* and Karan Johar's ambitious project *Takht*.

### Anushka Sharma

Known for always giving something new to the audience, Anushka has time and again won hearts with author-backed roles, right from her debut in *Rab Ne Bana Di Jodi* (2008) alongside Shah Rukh Khan. The actor who turned producer with *NH 10* (2015), which featured one of her most impactful on-screen characters, has delivered various powerful performances including *Sultan* (2016), *Sui Dhaaga* (2018) and *Zero* (2018). According to reports, Anushka will be next seen in the biopic of Jhulan Goswami, the former captain of the Indian women's cricket team, tentatively titled *Chakdaha Express*.

## TRENDBLAZER



### MANOJ BAJPAYEE ON A BREAK

Actor **MANOJ BAJPAYEE** posted a gamut of pictures on Instagram on Saturday of mountain tops and a rainbow, while refraining from informing fans of his current location.

"Away from everyone and everywhere," he wrote as caption for the images.

On the work front, he was recently seen playing a cop in the digital film *Silence... Can You Hear It*. He will soon be seen in the second season of the popular web series *The Family Man*.

### fairtalk

HIMANSH KOHLI



'I remember my father used to counsel me and we used to have a talk regarding everything. We used to have even the most awkward conversations so that I don't make mistakes in the future. It's necessary to open up to your parents because the advice they give will always be in your favour. They would never let you do anything bad.'

### dailytalk

GUL PANAG



'I have always done films that spoke to me and I was able to leverage my film career to do many other things. So, I made my film career an enabler of doing other things such as being a producer, entrepreneur, public speaker, motivational speaker. It's incumbent for me to make sure that I make choices wisely as an actor.'

### KATY REGRETS OBSESSION WITH BOYS

**KATY PERRY**, who revisits her teenage years in the video of her latest single, *Electric*, says she would have liked it a lot more if she was less obsessed with the opposite sex when she was younger.

"I stumbled, I fell, I made mistakes. I learned from all of it. But I was pretty boy crazy. I think I was always searching for real love and true love," Perry said.





# Good Samaritans step up

As the healthcare system gets overburdened, citizens of Rajasthan are helping the state government in the fight against COVID-19.

By Dr ABHA SHARMA

Last year, when the novel Coronavirus raged havoc in our country, many people based in metropolitan cities opted to shift their parents or vulnerable family members to their native villages. For these places were considered safer and not much affected by the pandemic. One year later, the deadly virus has crossed urban boundaries to hit the rural hinterland with a vengeance. Now staying 'far from the city crowd' doesn't sound like an ideal option.

Who would like to take the risk of falling sick in a village or town given the near collapse of health infrastructure due to the rising COVID-19 cases?

Last month has seen a worrying surge in cases in rural areas of Rajasthan. Jaipur, Jodhpur, Udaipur, Kota, Alwar and Bikaner are the worst hit districts in this western Indian state. The village chaupals, which witnessed elders recalling the harrowing tales of the devastating famine of 1856, now swear that this deadly virus is indeed a greater demon.

There has been a reported 15 per cent increase in COVID-19 cases in rural areas of Rajasthan during the last month. As per a rough estimate, almost 35 per cent of the total COVID-19 cases in the state are now being reported



from rural areas. Referring more and more patients from villages to cities is putting additional stress on urban medical infrastructure where both government and private hospitals are already running short of beds, oxygen and other life saving equipment.

From a partial lockdown (Red Alert Self-discipline fortnight) already in place since April, the state government has now announced a "strict, complete lockdown" from May 10 for two weeks. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said at a press conference, "The decision to impose strict lockdown has been taken due to the rising COVID-19 cases in rural areas, increasing instances of youth

getting infected and the overall worrying surge in number of COVID-19 deaths." To break the chain, gatherings must be stopped, he added.

No more work on MGN-REGA sites while the construction material shops too will remain shut, except for some industrial units. In addition, a total ban on *Band-Baja-Baraat* and a cap of 11 persons, if any weddings are to be solemnized. Akha Teej or Akshya Tritiya, one of the most auspicious days for holding weddings across Rajasthan, will not witness any community weddings this season.

During last year's lockdown there were unfortunate instances of assaults on front-

line health workers and some migrants losing lives while walking long miles to get back home. The focus last year was on distributing food, ration supplies or masks and sanitizers. That scenario has completely changed this year, where there is a greater demand for health services. That's why several volunteer groups are trying to help people through helplines and social media.

Public representatives, government officials and philanthropists are also donating funds to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to help fight the crisis. Help is pouring in from MPLAD/MLA funds to facilitate purchase of oxygen cylin-

ders, concentrators, PPE kits, N-95 masks, sanitizers and other lifesaving equipment.

While some organisations have come up with complimentary telemedicine services, some others have decided to provide oxygen concentrators/plants. "Given the shortage of oxygen, we have decided to donate at least 10 oxygen concentrators to help patients, who are in queue for a hospital bed with oxygen support," said Suresh Kalani of the Jaipur based Rajesh Kalani Foundation.

There are other good Samaritans who continue catering to the needs of COVID-19 patients in home isolation, by getting them food, groceries, medicines etc. On the con-

trary, there is no dearth of people who don't mind breaking the rules. Not wearing a mask, let alone properly, is a common phenomenon. Those loitering around with no justified reason are being quarantined by the police and being released only when they test negative. Such quarantine centers have been set-up in nearly all districts and sub-divisional headquarters.

Last year, the whole world awaited a vaccine as the ultimate ray of hope. We now have the vaccine and greater control over COVID-19 management, but this killer second wave has enveloped us with greater despair and gloom. It is not only more infectious but more virulent and is impacting even young people, with new mutations of the novel Coronavirus coming to the fore.

Overcome by her father's death due to COVID-19, a daughter in Barmer district of Rajasthan jumped into the funeral pyre and is now struggling for life having sustained 70 per cent burn injuries. In another incident, afraid of infecting their only grandson, COVID-19 positive grandparents in Kota reportedly committed suicide by jumping before a train.

People with access and understanding of social media platforms are reaching out for help on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Aware and responsible citizens are helping others with verified information on hospital beds, oxygen supplies, blood plasma, and medicines. This is missing in rural areas. People are not only suffering due to lack of infrastructure but also because of lack of information. It is important that relevant information is made available and accessible to rural communities so that they can break the chain of this deadly virus.

—Charkha Features



## Life is short, make the most of it

Even a small act of kindness can contribute towards your moral progress, says RAJYOGI BRAHMAKUMAR NIKUNJ JI

It is an incontrovertible fact of life that anyone who is born would die one day. Another important fact is that everyone is judged or would be judged by one's actions. The recent deaths of many notable personalities across the world during the pandemic witnessed a large number of VVIPs coming to pay their respectful homage, and of thousands of people expressing their feeling of deprivation, show how these personalities had carved a niche for themselves in the hearts of the people by their certain uncommon charismatic acts. These events of the demise of world-famous personalities that saddened the hearts of millions should indeed have provided people some moments for earnest introspection and deep reflection on their own personal life and acts. If people developed this into a sort of a good habit to consider such occasions as hidden reminders by the Cosmic Order, by whatever name it be known, they would become more sane than mundane and profane. They would, gradually, be uplifted to be themselves, the veritable saints rather than pay only lip-service to saints and be lost in the strong surge of grief and remorse. It has been well-said that every saint has a past and every sinner has a future. So, such events, seen in a right perspective, could have served as rungs of a ladder to rise high. Death of these personalities that gave their admirers a jolt, could have served to push them high but lethargic as human nature is in this age, soon people would return to their earthly ambitions, petty objectives. Most would again go into a deep slumber of ignorance as earlier. For, this also is a fact of life that the mood of giving up negative habits or evil intentions is only evanescent and like white froth on the surface of dirty water. And very soon, one takes again to wanton and wild ways.

Whatever be one's philosophy of life, the truth is that even a small act of kindness paves the path of one's moral progress. It enables one to pay one's debt to the society, to leave a lasting impact on the sands of time and to earn the blessings of thousands or millions of men and women. So, the reward for one's virtues is greater than the reward for any other thing. Since the afore-mentioned virtues are considered as sublime or angelic, people reward such a person generously with their heart-felt devotion and ever-growing respect. One of these lessons could be learnt by asking the self this question: If a human being is a mere body and brain, whom do people pay homage to when the body and the brain become dead? For whom do they pray to the lord to give peace? If a person sincerely believes that there exists no entity other than the material, then where do the virtues or moral values, such as compassion, love, kindness... abide? Are these the qualities of matter that take some complex forms as a body and brain? On what basis can one substantiate or establish the mere assumption that these are qualities of things that are material? Aren't moral considerations often in conflict with attractions that relate to flesh, thus, indicating that the two are separate? Does not sometimes a person think of sacrificing life (body and brain) for a moral cause? Can a social order be run merely on the belief that man is an evolved form of matter? Do the moral and ethical principles not pertain to something that aspires for a higher and nobler order and makes efforts to be above the bondages of the material world?

If one argues with oneself on these or similar lines and takes into consideration the reported accounts of reincarnations, hypnotic regressions, near-death and out-of-body experiences, and the nature of moral values that are meant to regulate the body and the brain and are non-physical and of a higher order, then one will easily conclude that the real actor in the drama of life is a non-material entity, called the soul, self or atman. The body serves the purpose of a costume and also as an assemblage of instruments that are required by the soul to act and to make efforts. The body also serves as a medium for experiencing pleasure and pain. If one adopts this truth, one would be above all kinds of sorrow and miseries. This would also remind him/her that this life can come to an end at any moment and we should not postpone good acts but engage ourselves into these soulfully.

—IANS

# Ayurveda to treat PCOS/PCOD



Women with infertility issues need to make a drastic shift in their lifestyle and eating habits. One can start with giving up dairy products, meats, seafood and eggs from their diet. It has proven beneficial for women dealing with various menstrual disorders.

## Ayurveda and PCOD/PCOS

Nowadays, four out of seven women complain of PCOS or PCOD, infertility or menstrual disorders. Therefore, women must adapt plant-based diet. One must include carrot, beetroot and spinach in their diet. They can make a soup and drink it every night for a 28-day cycle. It helps to purify the blood and rectifies the damage done to the uterus. Spices like fenugreek, carom seed in your dals or soups can work wonders for these women.

Seeds like chia seeds, flax seeds, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds and sesame seeds are excellent source of protein for women following plant-based diet. Cumin seeds and fennel seeds help women prevent UTI. Coriander seed and cardamom seeds have proven to be best remedies for period cramps.

Fruits like pomegranate and Black grapes also help in purifying the blood that carries fresh oxygen to the uterus, thus helping to repair damaged tissues, muscles, and nerves.

One can also consume saptashayam kasayam or Sukhumarum kasayam for 3 - 4 month. It has proven to show good results for all gynaecological health issues. This should be practiced with yoga and exercise to strengthen the core muscles around the uterus and pelvic. Asanas like the Camel Pose, Boat Pose, and Butterfly also help to build strength around the core.

—IANS



Polycystic ovarian syndrome or disease (PCOS/PCOD) is a common condition in women in their reproductive age caused due to hormonal imbalance. This hormonal breakdown results in irregular or prolonged menstrual periods, excessive body hair, acne, and hair loss. Because of this, Polycystic ovaries may fail to develop follicles and regularly release eggs, causing difficulty in conceiving. Ayurveda Diaries, on Tata Sky Fitness explains ayurvedic ways to treat these problems:

## Ayurveda and infertility

Both men and women face issues of infertility. However, one of the reasons for infertility is the irregular metabolic fire that results in PCOS and ovarian disorder that is results in PCOD. This disorder can be treated by various ayurvedic products.

Men can consume products like Ashokarishta, Ashwagandha, Shatavari and Guggul that helps them to build and strengthen vigour, increase vitality and metabolism. Also, products such as Kaunch, Musli and Shilajit help men in healing infertility.

**A person who never made a mistake never tried anything new.**  
—Albert Einstein

## OLDER ADULTS ADAPTED TO TECH IN LOCKDOWN

The COVID-19 lockdown led several older adults to adapt and engage with technology such as Zoom, WhatsApp or FaceTime, to stay in touch with loved ones or participate in exercise classes or religious groups, finds a new study.

The participants reported that lockdown had led them to engage with neighbours and other members of their communities for the first time, while several said social distancing had brought an additional meaning to life, by highlighting what was important to them.

"Those who engaged in such activity were able to prevent high levels of loneliness, therefore, helping older adults to increase their digital literacy and use of remote social interactions could be a really important tool for addressing loneliness," said researcher Anna Whittaker from the University of Stirling.

According to the research, understanding the coping mechanisms adopted by some over the 60s during the pandemic will play a key role in developing interventions to help tackle loneliness, isolation and well-being in the future.



## DENTAL PROCEDURES SAFE DURING PANDEMIC

Want to go for a dental check-up but afraid due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic? Take heart, according to a small study SARS-CoV-2 infection risk at the dentist's office is low.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind COVID-19, spreads mainly through respiratory droplets, and dental procedures are known to produce an abundance of aerosols, leading to fears that flying saliva during a cleaning or a restorative procedure could make the dentist's chair a high-transmission location.

Researchers from the Ohio State University in the US, set out to determine whether saliva is the main source of the spray, collecting samples from personnel, equipment and other surfaces reached by aerosols during a range of dental procedures.

"Getting your teeth cleaned does not increase your risk for COVID-19 infection any more than drinking a glass of water from the dentist's office does," said lead author Purnima Kumar, Professor of periodontology at Ohio State.



## MIXING COVID VACCINE DOSES SAFE

Mixing COVID-19 vaccine doses — second dose from a different brand than the first — is safe, but may present more frequent mild side-effects such as a headache, chills or a fever, showed results of a preliminary study published in the Lancet.

The study led by University of Oxford researchers, earlier this year, began to investigate the effect of alternate doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine and the Pfizer vaccine. The team examined more than 800 adults aged 50 and over who had received mixed vaccine doses at a four-week interval.

When given at a four-week interval, both of the 'mixed' schedules (Pfizer-BioNTech followed by Oxford-AstraZeneca, and Oxford-AstraZeneca followed by Pfizer-BioNTech) induced more frequent reactions following the 2nd, 'boost' dose than the standard, 'non-mixed' schedules.

However, the adverse reactions were short lived and there were no other safety concerns, the researchers said.



## BLOW CONCH SHELLS TO KEEP VIRUS AT BAY

Yoga experts are now advising people to blow conch shells in order to strengthen the respiratory system.

The age-old practice of blowing conch shells, known as *shankh*, after prayers, is said to help in fighting COVID by enhancing the lung power.

Yoga expert, Ratan Sinha of Prayagraj, said, "Blowing a conch shell is a part of Hindu and Buddhist tradition. Our elders blew the *shankh* regularly and their lungs were strong. They rarely suffered from respiratory problems.

On Sinha's advice, people in three Lucknow neighbourhoods at Stanley Road, Darbhanga and Civil Lines area have started blowing conch shells on a regular basis. The members of the group admit that there is no scientific evidence to prove that blowing conch shells helps prevent COVID-19 but they say it definitely helps one in lung exercise.



## BREATHING EXERCISES AID KIDS WITH ADHD

Yoga and breathing exercises have a positive effect on children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a new study suggests.

The researchers, including Sergey Kiselev from the Ural Federal University, say that after special classes, children improve their attention, decrease hyperactivity, they do not get tired longer, they can engage in complex activities longer.

"Exercise has an immediate effect but there is also a delayed effect. We found that exercise has a positive effect on regulation and control functions in children with ADHD and one year after the end of the exercise," Kiselev said.

"This happens because the child's correct breathing is automated, it becomes a kind of assistant that allows a better supply of oxygen to the brain, which, in turn, has a beneficial effect on the behaviour and psyche of a child with ADHD," Kiselev added.





# IGA IS QUEEN OF ROME

AP ■ ROME

If Iga Swiatek continues playing like this, she might have no problem defending her French Open title when the year's second Grand Slam starts in two weeks.

The 19-year-old Pole routed Karolina Pliskova 6-0, 6-0 with what is known as a "double bagel" score in an Italian Open final that lasted just 46 minutes Sunday.

Swiatek lost just 13 points. "Definitely not the best day for me," Pliskova said. "Iga was playing great tennis today."

It was the first double bagel in a WTA final in five years, since Simona Halep overwhelmed Anastasiya Sevastova in Bucharest.

"I think you have just days like this in tennis where things are not going your way," Pliskova added. "I will just quickly forget about today."

Blasting winners at will with both her forehand and backhand, Swiatek led 17-5 in winners and committed only five unforced errors to Pliskova's 23.

It wasn't always so easy this week for Swiatek, the surprise winner in Paris last year when she was ranked 54th.

She had to save two match points in her third-round victory over Barbora Krejickova then had to win twice on Saturday — beating both two-time Rome champion Elina Svitolina and 17-year-old Coco Gauff — after



her quarterfinal was pushed back a day due to rain.

"It's been a tough week but I'm really happy that I got through everything," Swiatek

said. "I was super focused today so I'm really proud of myself."

Swiatek's third career title will move her into the top 10 of the rankings for the first time on

Monday — to No 9.

Pliskova was playing in her third consecutive final at the Foro Italico, having won the title in 2019. The veteran Czech player

slammed her racket to the clay in frustration early in the second set and received a code violation warning for unsportsmanlike conduct.



## Novak vs Nadal in men's final

Maybe the new generation of tennis players isn't quite so ready to end the eras of Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal.

Titles for Stefanos Tsitsipas and Alexander Zverev in the Monte Carlo Masters and Madrid Open, respectively, raised speculation again that the Big Three — including Roger Federer — was expiring.

Well, again, not yet. Djokovic and Nadal won a total of three matches over younger players on Saturday and will renew their record-setting rivalry in the Italian Open final on Sunday — exactly two weeks before Roland Garros starts.

## Coach creating match situations for me in training: Sindhu



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The lack of competitions before the Olympics is a major concern for Indian shuttlers but not so much for PV Sindhu, who trusts her Korean coach Park Tae Sang to create match situations for her in training itself.

Owing to the raging Covid-19 pandemic, the Badminton World Federation has been forced to cancel the remaining three Olympic qualifiers in India, Malaysia and Singapore. These were to be the last set of events before the Tokyo Games in July-August.

Asked if cancellations will affect her preparations, Sindhu said: "Well, we were thinking that Singapore will be the last event before Olympics but now we don't have another option, so I am playing matches against different players and my coach Park is trying to create match situations for me in training."

"Different players have different styles like Tai Tzu (Ying) or Ratchanok (Intanon) have different styles of play but Park is there to guide me, to prepare me for it," Sindhu said.

"Obviously, we will be playing each other after a few months and there will be something new in our games, so I will have to prepare for that."

Sindhu doesn't train with the rest of the Indian Olympic-bound team. She has been training at the Gachibowli indoor stadium in Telangana and does her fitness training at Suchitra academy.

The 25-year-old endorsed BWF's decision to cancel the events, saying while it is sad that competitions could not take place but but life is more important than sports.

"It is sad that the whole world has come to a standstill but before sportspersons, we are human beings and life comes first," Sindhu said.

"If tournaments happen, we don't know if we will be safe, we might think we will be but we can't be sure because we don't know from where this virus will come."

"For the moment, events are being cancelled and I know sportspersons are sad but I think it is good for the people...Organisers take a lot of measures and keep us in a bubble but still we need to be careful."

Sindhu, who had reached the finals of Swiss Open in March after returning to action following a long break, said she is improving as a player.

"It has been a good campaign so far this year. I have been improving as a player. My coach has analysed my game, so really looking forward to the Olympics. My dad also helps me a lot," she said.

## Kohli best batsman in world: Paine

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Virat Kohli seems to have left an indelible mark on Australian Test captain Tim Paine, who says he will "always remember" the Indian skipper for being the world's best batsman, capable of also getting under the opposition's skin with his competitiveness.

Kohli and Paine have had a fiery rivalry which goes back to India's 2018-19 tour of Australia. Their on-field spats were an interesting sub-plot during the historic showdown in which India became the first Asian country to win a Test series Down Under.

"For Virat Kohli, I've said many times, he seems like the type of player you would love to have on your team. He is competitive. He is the best batsman in the world," the 36-year-old



Paine said on the *Gilly and Goss* podcast.

"He (Kohli) is challenging to play against and he can get under your skin because he is so good and he is so competitive."

"But yeah, for me from where I came from, sharing a feud with him four years ago. He is certainly someone I will

always remember," he added.

Interestingly, last year Paine had said that Kohli is "just another player" in the Indian team who "doesn't really bother me".

He had also stated that the Australian team "loves to hate" the superstar for his awe-inspiring abilities with the bat.

## Finally, Hussey leaves for home

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Having recovered from Covid-19, Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey left for Australia on Sunday via Doha, a top official of the IPL franchise said.

Following an RT-PCR test, the former Australia batsman had returned negative for Covid-19 on Friday, paving the way for his departure in the early hours of Sunday.

"Yes, Hussey has left for Australia via Doha by a commercial flight. He left in the early hours of Sunday," CSK CEO K S Viswanathan said.

Hussey, who had first tested positive for Covid-19 during the now-suspended IPL, is expected to reach home on Monday.

Hussey aside, the other Australians involved in the 2021 edition of IPL took a detour to Maldives and quarantined there before heading back to Australia.

## India Eves likely to tour Oz in Sept

New Delhi: The Indian women's cricket team is set to travel to Australia in September.

Australia pacer Megan Schutt dropped a hint that India will be visiting in September though Cricket Australia is yet to announce the schedule. The tour is expected to comprise ODIs and T20s.

"We have got a tour against India in mid-September," Schutt said on *No Balls: The Cricket Podcast*, hosted by Kate Cross and Alex Hartley.

"So, there's a couple of camps. I believe we are doing one in Darwin, which will be really cool... And then the tour against India.

And then pretty much from there things get crazy with Big Bash, WNCL, Ashes, World Cup, and hopefully the Commonwealth



Games."

The BCCI, in its last Apex Council meeting, had also approved the tour of Australia ahead of the World Cup in New Zealand next year. A home series against the Windies was also cleared.

The tour of Australia was originally planned for January this year but was postponed after the World Cup was put off to 2022 amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

PTI

## shortpasses

### BREMEN SACK KOHFELDT

BREMEN: Werder Bremen on Sunday sacked head coach Florian Kohfeldt and replaced him with club legend Thomas Schaaf for their final league game this season after the club slipped into the bottom three of the Bundesliga. After four years in charge, Kohfeldt has been shown the door with just next Saturday's home game against Moenchengladbach left as Bremen fight to stay in Germany's top flight.

### ZIZOU IS LEAVING REAL

MADRID: Spanish media claimed early Sunday that Zinedine Zidane has already told his players that he intends to quit as coach at the end of the season. According to Onda Cero radio and Goal online, the Frenchman, who has a contract until 2022, informed his squad a week ago that he was going to leave when the season ends next week.

### TEJASWIN CLINCHES GOLD

NEW DELHI: Indian high jumper Tejaswin Shankar has claimed a Gold medal at the Big 12 Outdoor Track and Field Championships in Manhattan, USA. Representing Kanساس State University, Tejaswin cleared 2.28 metres on Saturday, making a facility record.

### SPOTIFY BID TO BUY ARSENAL

LONDON: Spotify co-founder Daniel Ek said Saturday a formal offer to buy Arsenal had been rejected by the Premier League club's American owners. In a statement on Twitter, the Swedish tycoon said the club's owners, Kroenke Sports and Entertainment (KSE), had rebuffed his bid.

### N KOREA OUT OF WC QUALIFIERS

SEOUL: North Korea have pulled out of next month's qualifying matches for the 2022 World Cup in Qatar, the AFC said on Sunday. No reasons were given for the withdrawal but South Korean media reported earlier this month that Pyongyang had said it would skip the qualifiers over coronavirus fears.

### KAYLEE NARROWLY MISSES WR

SYDNEY: Australian Kaylee McKeown narrowly missed the 50 metre backstroke world record on Sunday while setting the year's best time in the 200m individual medley as she ramps up preparations for the Tokyo Olympics.

### TEAM SELECTION ON JUNE 15-16

NEW DELHI: The Indian para-athletics team for the Tokyo Paralympic Games in August-September will be picked during a to-day trial to be held in New Delhi on June 15 and 16, the national governing body Paralympic Committee of India said on Sunday. Agencies

## 2018 sandpapergate monumental mistake: Sekar

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia bowling coach David Sekar, who was with the team during the 2018 ball-tampering scandal, on Sunday said it was a "monumental mistake" which could have been prevented and for which fingers can also be pointed at him.

"Obviously a lot of things went wrong at that time. The finger-pointing is going to go on and on and on. There was a lot of people to blame. It could have



been me to blame, it could have been someone else. It could have been stopped and it wasn't, which is unfortunate," Sekar told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "Cameron's (Bancroft) a very nice guy. He's just doing it

to get something off his chest... He's not going to be the last," he added. Sekar lamented that the incident is going to be associated with Australian cricket forever and there is nothing one can do about it.

"You could point your finger at me, you could point your finger at *Boof* (then coach Darren Lehmann), could you point it at other people, of course you could," he said.

"The disappointing thing is it's never going to go away. Regardless of what's said. We all

know that we made a monumental mistake. The gravity wasn't as plain until it all came out," he added.

The 54-year-old Victorian made the statement after Bancroft made a startling revelation that Australian bowlers at the time might have had some knowledge about the plot.

While Cricket Australia issued a statement saying that it was open to a re-investigation into the incident, Sekar said he was not sure what could possibly come out of it.

## Spurs still in Europe race



Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg, left, celebrates with teammates after scoring Spurs second goal

AFP ■ LONDON

Harry Kane scored his 22nd Premier League goal of the season as Tottenham Hotspur beat Wolves 2-0 on Sunday to maintain their hopes of a top-four finish.

England captain Kane fired Spurs ahead on the stroke of half-time before Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg doubled their lead in the 62nd minute.

Victory left Spurs in sixth place, five points behind fourth-

placed Chelsea, with a maximum of six points available to them from their final two league games.

The top four in the Premier League are assured of a place in the 2021/22 Champions League.

Kane gave Spurs the lead running onto Hojbjerg's through ball behind centre backs Conor Coady and Romain Saiss.

The Spurs star side-stepped Coady's challenge and rounded goalkeeper Rui Patricio, before curling the ball into the corner of

the net.

Hojbjerg made it 2-0 just after the hour when he followed up Gareth Bale's shot and tapped the ball in after Patricio could only parry.

Earlier, Crystal Palace twice came from behind to beat Aston Villa 3-2, with Tyrick Mitchell's first goal for the club sealing victory six minutes from time.

John McGinn's third goal of the season put Villa ahead in the 17th minute at Selhurst Park before Christian Benteke equalised against his former club with a 32nd-minute header.

But Palace fell behind again two minutes later when Anwar El Ghazi scored from close range.

The Eagles equalised for a second time in the 76th minute when Wilfried Zaha grabbed his 11th goal of the season with low shot deflected in off Ahmed Elmohamady.

The comeback was complete in the 84th minute when the 21-year-old Mitchell followed-up from close range after team-mate Eberechi Eze had miscued.

Victory lifted south London club Palace to 13th.

## IPL helped Shami get his rhythm back

New Delhi: Veteran India pacer Mohammed Shami found his "rhythm" during the now suspended IPL and feels the UK tour will be a successful one for the team if it is able to replicate the stellar performance of the last six months.

India will leave for the UK on June 2 for three and half months during which they will play six Test matches starting with the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton from June 18.

With the Covid-19 wreaking havoc across the globe, the soon to be 31-year-old Shami said that too much of planning in these times is of no use.

"See, there is no point in planning too much as certain things are not in our control. Who would have thought that the pandemic would virtually destroy two years of our lives — hence I prefer to take it by each series or tournament as the case may be," the pacer told *Gulf News*.

"We have played some extraordinary cricket in recent times as an unit and naturally, the confidence level is high on the eve of our departure for England."

"If we can reproduce some of the form which we did over last six months, I am confident it will be a great summer for us," said the man, who has 180 wickets from 50 Tests.



## Archer's elbow injury resurfaces

PTI ■ LONDON

England's star pacer Jofra Archer's participation in the upcoming Test series against New Zealand was thrown into doubt after his longstanding elbow injury resurfaced during Sussex's county championship game against Kent.

The 26-year-old fast bowler has a history of elbow injuries that saw him miss two Tests against India and the currently-suspended IPL earlier this year as



well as games in South Africa at the start of 2020.

Turning out for Sussex in his first competitive game after the injury lay-off, Archer registered figures of 2 for 29 in the first innings. However, the pacer could only bowl five overs in the second essay and complained of a sore elbow.

"If you saw today he's not going to bowl tomorrow. You'll have to ask the ECB," Sussex head coach Ian Salisbury told reporters on Saturday.

## Napoli keep CL hopes alive

AFP ■ FLORENCE

Napoli moved third in Serie A on Sunday with a 2-0 win at Fiorentina to keep their push for a Champions League return alive.

Lorenzo Insigne missed a penalty but send in the rebound after 56 minutes with a Lorenzo Venti own goal 11 minutes later sealing an important win for the visitors.

Napoli are third, two points behind Atalanta who assured a third consecutive season of Champions League football, with a 4-3 win at Genoa on Saturday.

AC Milan, are a point behind Napoli, occupying in the final Champions League berth, and play 16th-placed Cagliari later on Sunday.

Juventus are fifth, one point behind Napoli, but still in the running for a top four finish after a 3-2 win over newly-crowned champions Inter Milan on Saturday, with one match left this season.

Napoli's final game will be at home against midtable Hellas Verona, as they look to return to elite European football after missing out last season.

Juventus play their final game at Bologna desperate to avoid missing out on the Champions League for the first time in a decade.

Lazio will not play among the European elite next season after a 2-0 derby defeat to Roma on Saturday.

Sixth-placed Lazio are eight points behind Juventus having played a game less.