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MUCH A DEMOCRACY**WORLD 11**
GAZA TUNNELS DESTROYED IN
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RETURN HOME

LUCKNOW, TUESDAY MAY 18, 2021; PAGES 14 ₹3



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13 VIVACITY

TMC workers go berserk after Narada arrests

Calcutta HC stays bail granted to state ministers Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee, TMC MLA Madan Mitra and former Kolkata Mayor Sovan Chatterjee by Special court

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Pandemic-stricken Bengal witnessed a day-long high-voltage political drama that started with the arrest of four senior politicians — two Ministers, an MLA and a former Minister — by the CBI and all four getting bail from a designated CBI court late on Monday evening. However, the day ended with the Calcutta High Court ordering a stay on bail granted to the four.

Senior Ministers Subroto Mukherjee, Firhad Hakim, MLA Madan Mitra and former TMC leader and Minister Sovan Chatterjee were earlier granted bail on personal bonds of ₹50,000 each in the much-hyped Narada payoff case which was later stayed by the

High Court.

Before the four got bail, thousands of angry TMC cadre hit the streets blockading roads, pelting stones, burning tyres and effigies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and the CBI and causing a major law and order issue.

The seven-year old Narada sting case involving a dozen politicians and police officers once again snowballed into a Modi-versus-Mamata Banerjee affair on Monday after the CBI in a sudden move arrested four senior politicians evoking mass protests in Kolkata and districts.

Soon after the arrests a CBI statement said, "Firhad Hakim, Subroto Mukherjee, Madan Mitra and Sovan Chatterjee have been arrested by CBI and

Raj Bhawan gherao: Guv warns of action

Kolkata: Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Monday made a series of tweets slamming Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over violent protests by the ruling Trinamool Congress workers outside the CBI office and Raj Bhawan in Kolkata and asked her to consider the repercussions of such lawlessness.

are being produced in the jurisdictional court."

Mukherjee, Hakim and Mitra senior TMC leaders, Chatterjee a former Kolkata Mayor and TMC leader had joined the BJP and later quit the party just before the State elec-

tions.

Even as Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee responded — to the "sudden arrests keeping the State Government in the dark" — with a personal appearance and six-hour sit-in at the CBI office at Nizam Palace demanding release of her party men hundreds of Trinamool supporters gathered outside the central government building shouting slogans and pelting stones at the central forces giving the Kolkata Police a trying time to control the crowd.

Banerjee reportedly told DIG CBI AK Singh to arrest her also. "If you can arrest my ministers without papers and procedure then you can arrest me also. I dare you to arrest me... either arrest me or release them," she said.

Caseload 4-wk low, India turns the corner

Nation sees lowest Covid count in 25 days in last 24 hrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's Covid-19 caseload saw a major dip on Monday hitting a four-week low as Maharashtra, Delhi, Kerala and Uttar Pradesh recorded major decline in number of cases and overall situation looked promising for the first time in months.

On Monday, India recorded 2,42,903 cases and 3,707 deaths which is the lowest single-day count since April 19 when the country recorded 2.57 lakh cases in 24 hours.

Of course, the Monday number also reflects the impact of lower testing at the weekend, but the fact that positive rate is beginning to count down gives an undeniable impression that India may have peaked out and now there will be a painful process of plateauing.

Even on Sunday, the daily cases dropped below the 3-lakh mark — 2,81,386 to be precise

— for the first time in nearly a month. This was the lowest count in 25 days.

On May 12, India recorded 4,205 fresh Covid deaths, while on May 7, the country had recorded its highest ever cases of 4,14,188.

In a substantial drop in both Covid-19 fatalities and infections in Maharashtra on Monday, the cases dropped to 26,616, while the daily deaths came down to 516 on Monday, in what came as a big relief to the State authorities.

A day after Maharashtra logged a staggering 974 and 34,389 new cases, the situation in the State improved as the infections dropped by 7,773 cases, while the daily deaths came down by a substantial 458.

With 516 new deaths, the total number of deaths in the State climbed from 81,486 to 82,486. Similarly, with 26,616 new infections, the total number of cases climbed from 53,78,452 to 54,05,068.

India's Covid-19 tally crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7 last year, the 30-lakh mark on August 7 last year, the 30-lakh

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Desi game-changing drug launched

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Seen as a game-changer in the battle against deadly coronavirus, the first indigenously developed oral drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose drug (2DG drug), which is said to help in faster recovery of virus-infected patients while reducing dependence on supplemental oxygen, was launched here on Monday.

The drug is likely to be made available in all medical settings in the country from June.

The first batch of the drug, developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL), was released by Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan at an event at the DRDO headquarters here.

The limited batch will be used in a first manner in Central Government medical settings like AIIMS, Armed Forces Hospitals, DRDO hospitals and any other places where the need arises. The deliberations are on to decide on the price, in case it is to be sold in the open market, even as States like Haryana have shown interest to purchase the medicine.

In his brief remarks during its launch, the Union Defence Minister said the drug developed by the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS), a lab of DRDO, has brought a new ray of hope for the treatment of Covid-19 patients. "This is a great example of the scientific prowess of our country," he said.

DRDO chairman Dr G Satheesh Reddy said the drug will work on all variants doing round in the country.

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RSS outfit starts campaign for patent-free rights for vax, drugs

DEEPAK K UPTETI ■ NEW DELHI

Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), an RSS outfit, on Monday asked the Government to use the public health safeguards in the Patents Act to grant licence to more pharmaceutical companies for the production of Covid vaccines and medicines. The country may require 200 crore vaccine doses in the next six months.

The SJM has started a "Digital Signature Campaign" for Universal Access of Vaccine and Medicines. According to sources, though the Centre is working towards giving licence to more companies, the "pharma lobby" may be the pushing against this move.

Talking to *The Pioneer*, National Co-Convenor of the SJM Aswini Mahajan, said, "We are trying to identify Indian firms with competence We have the competence, we sell medicines to 200 countries."

Mahajan said in 1990 during the TRIPS negotiations, India presented its side that in the eventuality of a pandemic, the Government has competence to cancel patents. He said in 2009, Indian company NATCO had manufactured cancer drugs bringing its price down by thousand times.

Patience need of the hour, not panic: Yogi

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Patience is our greatest friend in the hour of crisis, and everyone should stand together to overcome this pandemic instead of creating an atmosphere of fear, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said while taking the attack to the opposition. Yogi, who was on a visit to Muzaffarnagar after hitting the ground running with whirlwind tours of districts, includ-

ing Moradabad, Gorakhpur, Aligarh, Mathura and Varanasi after coming out of isolation on April 30, said that this pandemic should be tackled with 'patience' instead of creating panic. "But, there are some people who, instead of boosting the morale, are creating fear among the masses which resulted in everyone running around for oxygen and essential medicines, creating a lot of panic and disorder," he said.

Reiterating that Uttar Pradesh has sufficient supply of oxygen for treating COVID-19 patients, the CM said that the demand in the second wave has reached over 1,000 MT and the government managed to meet it with the help of the Centre, Air Force and Indian Railways.

The CM also said that as the state has managed to deal with the second wave of coronavirus, the entire machinery is prepared to deal with the third wave in the same way.

While addressing a press conference in Muzaffarnagar after inspecting the Covid command centre and having a review meeting with the district officials, the CM said four oxygen plants have already been set up in the district and six more are being set up to ensure that there is no shortage of oxygen. "At present, work is underway for 300 oxygen plants in the state," the chief minister said.

The CM has also asked the officials to ensure that there is no scarcity of food for the underprivileged families in every district and village. From May 20, 5 kg of foodgrains will be distributed among the poor and ₹ 1,000 per head per month to daily-wage workers, street vendors, cobblers and potters. "To curb the spread of coronavirus infection in villages, screening work is being

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Fresh cases in UP drop below 10,000-mark

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

For the first time since mid-April, the number of fresh cases dropped below the 10,000-mark as active cases also showed a sharp decline by 52 per cent while the recovery during the same period was almost 14,000 more than the fresh cases reported on Sunday.

UP recorded 9,391 cases, a sharp slide from 10,682 on Saturday, even as the state conducted a total of 2,55,110 tests in the last 24 hours. The state saw a whopping 23,045 recoveries.

"The state's recovery rate recorded a significant improvement as it climbed up to nearly 90 per cent, testifying the success of the 'Yogi Model' that has also been acknowledged and praised by experts nationally and globally," a government spokesman said here on Monday. The daily Covid positivity rate — the number of positive cases against the total tests done — on Sunday dipped below 5 per cent in Uttar Pradesh for the

Continued on Page 6

Tauktae threatens Covid spread

Crowded relief centres pose grave danger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Extremely severe cyclone Tauktae has diverted the attention and resources of Covid-19-affected districts across Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Diu and Tamil Nadu, which are already facing shortage of medical supplies from oxygen cylinders to vaccines. As several lakh people have been shifted to relief shelters, there is a greater risk of virus transmission in crowded evacuation shelters. The situation is likely to worsen if any long-term disruption is caused by the cyclone.

Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said Tauktae is close to the Gujarat coast. "The land-fall process has started and will continue during next two hours," the IMD said.

These States are on high alert with transport services suspended and emergency and relief teams on the lookout for possible rescue operations. Tauktae has killed at least 14 people and left a trail of destruction as it brushed past the coastal States of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra.

Virus lockdown measures, meanwhile, could slow relief work after the storm, and damage from the storm such as uprooted electricity poles, disruption in power supplies may further delay the fight against the Covid-19 in affected States.

In Gujarat, vaccination was suspended for two days and authorities worked to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people to temporary relief shelters.

According to authorities, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has moved at least 600 patients from Covid centres to Government hospitals. While 243 patients were shifted from BKC facility, 176 were removed from Mulund and 184 from Dahisar centre.

In Gujarat, in the



An uprooted tree collapsed on a house due to Cyclone Tauktae at Nerul on Monday

PTI

ruption in power supplies may further delay the fight against the Covid-19 in affected States.

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In Gujarat, in the

Khambhalia Civil Hospital of Devbhumi-Dwarka district, where 120 Covid-19 patients are on oxygen support, authorities have installed two extra diesel generator sets to deal with power outage. In Bhavnagar, all 35 private Covid-19 hospitals have already been instructed to install generators to run ventilators and other medical devices in case of power failure.

In Jamnagar Civil Hospital, around 45 Covid-19 patients lodged on the eighth and ninth floors of the facility were shifted to lower floors as a precautionary measure. An extra generator set and an oxygen tanker were also kept on standby to deal with any emergency situation, officials said.

In the Union Territory of Diu, the administration has installed a 250 KV power generator at the civil hospital there in case the permanently installed generator fails, Diu health secretary A Muthamma said. "Of the total 177 patients currently undergoing treatment at the hospital, 60 are on oxygen support. We have also kept two days of buffer stock of oxygen," she said.



प्रधानमंत्री गरीब कल्याण अन्न योजना के अन्तर्गत

उत्तर प्रदेश के पात्र 15 करोड़ कार्डधारकों को

राष्ट्रीय खाद्य सुरक्षा अधिनियम 2013 में आच्छादित अंत्योदय तथा पात्र गृहस्थी राशनकार्ड से सम्बद्ध यूनिट पर

माह मई व जून 2021 में 05 किग्रा. प्रति यूनिट राशन (3 किग्रा. गेहूँ व 2 किग्रा. चावल) का निःशुल्क वितरण

माह मई हेतु निःशुल्क राशन वितरण 20 मई से प्रारंभ होकर 31 मई 2021 तक किया जायेगा।

अंत्योदय अन्न योजना के अन्तर्गत कुल यूनिट 1,30,07,969



पात्र गृहस्थी योजना के अन्तर्गत कुल यूनिट 13,41,77,983

- निःशुल्क खाद्यान्न वितरण ई-पॉस मशीन द्वारा किया जायेगा।
- ई-पॉस मशीन का उपयोग करने से पहले दुकान पर उपलब्ध सेनिटाइजर / साबुन / पानी से हाथ साफ करना अनिवार्य है।
- एक दुकान पर एक समय में अधिकतम 05 उपभोक्ता तथा दो उपभोक्ताओं के मध्य 2 गज की दूरी बनायी रखी जायेगी।
- पोर्टबिलिटी के अन्तर्गत राशन प्राप्त करने की सुविधा 29 से 31 मई 2021 के मध्य ही अनुमत्य।
- सोशल डिस्टेंसिंग का अनुपालन करते हुए टोकन सिस्टम लागू कर खाद्यान्न वितरण किया जायेगा।

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

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खाद्य एवं रसद विभाग उत्तर प्रदेश

1,082 deaths in over two months!

SHARMILA KRISHNA ■ LUCKNOW

Lucknow has witnessed 1,082 deaths so far in the second wave of COVID-19 outbreak in over two months. As per the records, there were 1,186 COVID-19 deaths in the state capital till March 2, 2021, and 2,268 deaths till May 17, 2021. The second wave started in March and is ebbing now in May. Incidentally, these are the official figures whereas it is a possibility there may have been more COVID-19 deaths that have not come to the notice of the administration. Although the second wave is ebbing, deaths are still being reported in double digits.

Though statistically these deaths are in proportion to the large number of cases which have been testing positive, the fact remains that every life remains precious and experts say that there are lessons to be learnt from the second wave which has impacted every household in the district in some way or the other.

Lucknow Divisional Commissioner Ranjan Kumar said that amongst the lessons which the administrative machinery has learnt is the need to stress on self-reliance.

“We have worked on oxygen supply for streamlining its distribution and we are establishing oxygen plants. We have strengthened the system by ramping up infrastructure in terms of ICU and HDU beds. We have started working in the rural areas which is very effective in containment and a kind of permanent system is developing. We are also running an awareness programme for vaccination and training manpower,” he said.

Nodal Covid officer at Lok Bandhu Hospital, Arun Tewari, said there were four lessons which needed to be learnt.

“Firstly, we should anticipate and then make preparations in advance and accordingly. Secondly, the society along with the government must ask the general public to strictly follow the Covid protocol. There should be no complacency in

this regard. Even if markets are open and economic activities are resumed, everybody should follow the protocol strictly and the state government has to be strict because following the Covid protocol cannot be left to the choice of the public,” he said. Tewari said the third lesson was that the hospitals must be equipped to cope up with the anticipated situation. “We must have equipment, infrastructure and oxygen. It should be well managed and it should be supplied within the time required,” he said.

Talking about the deaths, he said that looking into the possibility of the third wave of COVID-19 outbreak the state government was taking proactive action. “For example, in our hospital, a 50-bed ICU unit is being set up as part of the preparation. The second wave has been a very bad experience and it is not being taken lightly. The second wave was because of slackness and complacency on behalf of all stakeholders and we cannot blame just one segment of society,” he

said. Tewari said, “The state government has become so proactive that it does not want to leave any stone unturned even when the prediction is that the third wave is likely to occur in October. The preparations are on and right and the top echelons and administrative machinery are in full swing. We do hope that all preparations will be made well in advance and we will not be in the same state as we were in the second wave. The focus is now on small children and adolescents,” he added.

Centre of Bio Medical Research (CBMR) Director Dr Alok Dhawan said that one of the most important lessons was that as a society we did not adhere to the protocols. “We became complacent to the extent that even when the vaccines were available people were apprehensive and said that they did not need it,” he said.

He said two things had very clearly come out, one, that people should believe and listen to the scientists and doctors

since the scientific data had already proved that vaccination helps. “Pandemic times are very different from the times of natural diseases. In March, when the state government was pushing people to get vaccinated, people were taking it lightly but those who took the vaccine in time are happy today that they have completed their two doses,” he said. The second lesson, he pointed out, was that as a community we failed because we did not acknowledge that we are living in pandemic times.

“As compared to the first wave, a majority of the people have been affected in the urban landscape in the second wave. In the first wave, people by and large came out of the infection. If we look at the lessons from the Spanish flu, it took almost three years to go. The government should not be responsible for making us wear masks, it should be our responsibility to look after our families and ensure that we wear masks. It is difficult to police everybody,” he added.

NCC opens door to more schools

Lucknow (PNS): There is good news for schools in Uttar Pradesh waiting to introduce NCC. The Central government has recently sanctioned 4,000 junior division wing vacancies in NCC under self-financed scheme. This move will further help in spreading the footprint of NCC in the state which already

has 1,50,000 cadets. This move comes after the demand of numerous schools who could not introduce NCC due to limited vacancies available. This will benefit the student community in a big way wherein not only will they get an opportunity to play a major role in nation building but also, apart from get-

ting NCC 'A' certificate, will also benefit while seeking admission to professional colleges.

NCC Additional Director General (UP) Maj Gen Rakesh Rana said that schools which were interested in out of turn allotment in fully self-financing schemes could approach the nearest NCC office.

Data intensive studies to throw light on need for booster dose

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

For those who have already got their two doses of Covid vaccine and are wondering for how long the efficacy of the vaccine will remain and whether a booster dose will still be required, city scientists say that data intensive studies are on in India and across the world for the same and the picture will become more clear in the coming days.

Centre of Bio Medical Research (CBMR) Director Dr Alok Dhawan said that what was required was further study of the data to know whether booster doses would be required after a person is administered two doses of the Covid vaccine.

“When the vaccination started in the month of January, it was emphasised that it was important to observe the beneficiary till after half an hour of vaccination. From that point onwards, we have reached the point where we have got enough data to show that the vaccines are safe and so the vaccinations are being allowed at other places such as primary health centres and private hospitals,” he said.

Dr Dhawan said that whatever literature on vaccination is coming forth, it was stating that one should not go by individual data but by the total data to show how effective vaccination is and that will come by the study of hospitalisations, severity of the disease and mortality. “So as we progress with data of five months it will throw



more light. For example, the doses between the vaccines have been increased recently as regards their better effectiveness. Also, the data is studied population-wise as well as exposure-wise and hence one has the doctors' data who have been vaccinated and who are exposed the maximum to the infection to be correlated to how effective the vaccinations are in keeping them safe. Based on this, the booster dose will be decided,” he said. He said that data studies were also being carried out to find out whether the booster dose was required of the same vaccine or of a variant.

“It is possible that the next booster dose could be of another vaccine,” he said. Dr Dhawan said that what was of advantage was that several vaccine platforms had been developed and therefore the knowledge base was 100 per cent ready and the only question was of safety and efficacy and more of data analysis. Head of environmental division at Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Prof Naveen Arora, said that

although the vaccination drive was increasing, one was not clear about the life-span of antibodies developed in the body post-vaccination.

“Most of the experts agree with 6-12 months but with emerging variants of the virus and vaccination programme still in its early stage, nothing can be said for certain. Explaining the need for a booster dose, studies suggest that vaccines wake up the immune system. Post-vaccination, there is stimulation of production of antibodies, which identify the virus, encounter it and also target the infected cells. Some senior virologists from around the world have already suggested that additional doses will be required each year against the current or future variants of the virus and this will most likely be the new reality,” he said.

He further pointed out that it would be suggested that the generation was dealing with a novel virus with lesser known facts, and the vaccines were still in preliminary stage, therefore, before declaring a fact or taking any steps a lot more data and studies were required.

“Hence it would be very important to track the genetic variants of the virus. For this, testing is very important to cover the maximum number of positive cases and also all of the possible variants. This will not only help in controlling the virus but also in developing the booster doses and prevention of successive waves,” he added.

Centres listed for O2 supply to patients in home isolation

Lucknow (PNS): Looking into the problems faced by the home isolation COVID-19 patients, Lucknow

Divisional Commissioner Ranjan Kumar said here on Monday that they had fixed centres in various districts of the division and nominated nodal officers for the same. The divisional commissioner said that the relatives of the home isolation patients could obtain oxygen from these centres and contact the nodal officers if they faced any problems. He said that in Lucknow, Messrs Murari Gas Private Limited at Nadarganj had been listed as the centre for providing oxygen to home isolation patients and nodal officer Devendra Kumar could be con-

tacted on mobile phone number 9454416496 in case of any problem/difficulty. Messrs Prerhut Industrial Enterprises at Sarojinagar has also been listed for supply of oxygen to home isolation patients and nodal officer Umesh Kumar Singh could be contacted on 9454416503 in case of any problem.

The other centres for oxygen supply to home isolation patients are Messrs Star Gas at Kanpur Road (nodal officer Meenakshi Dwivedi, 8115614018), Messrs Awadh Oxygen at Talkara (nodal officer Tehsildar Ramjit, 9919202021), Messrs RK Oxygen at Bakshi Ka Talab (nodal officer SDM Dr Shubhi, 9454416498).

Security guard mowed down by speeding car in Chinhat

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A security guard was killed in a road mishap in Chinhat on Monday morning. Police registered a case but failed to trace the errant driver. The victim was identified as Ashok Kumar Shukla of Amethi. He was staying with his family in Faizullahganj locality in Lucknow. On Monday morning, he was returning home on his motorcycle after his duty was over. When he reached Dayal Farm near Tata Motors, a speeding vehicle knocked him down. Due to heavy impact, Shukla suffered critical injuries and was rushed to RMLIMS where he was declared brought dead. Police said Shukla had been working as a security guard for two decades.

Meanwhile, seven youths were arrested from a hookah bar for violation of Covid guidelines in Ashiyana on Monday. Police, however, failed to explain since when the hookah bar was functional. The police said they were tipped off about the hookah bar which was being run on the second floor of Muthoot Finance Building in Bangla Bazaar, and a team conducted a raid there. Those arrested were identified as Shariq Husain, Sultan & Nadeem Siddiqui (all of Ashiyana), Rajveer Sengar of Alambagh, Tushar & Amit (both of Krishna Nagar) and Manik of Aminabad.

Meanwhile, family member of a youth, accused of abduction and rape, attacked the survivor and her family members to force them to take back the case in Vibhuti Khand police station area. Police registered a case in this connection, but the accused were said to be at large.

The victim alleged that Laxmi Narayan Yadav, Amar Singh Yadav (of Vibhuti Khand) and their nephew Ritesh of Barabanki attacked her, her mother and minor brother. “All of them had sticks and handguns as they stormed the house. They started abusing us and beat up my mother. As I rushed to her rescue, I was also attacked. They did not even spare my minor brother, who unsuccessfully tried to save us,” she alleged.

UPRRA employee attempts suicide over Covid fears

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

A 50-year-old employee of AUP Rural Road Authority attempted suicide after having Covid-like symptoms. He was admitted to Civil hospital in Hazratganj and doctors said his condition was improving.

A resident of Nyay Vihar Colony on Sitapur road, he slit his wrist and throat at his house around 5 am on Monday. His family later rushed him to the hospital. A police spokesman said he had tested negative on May 11 but he was having symptoms and thus he was in fear,” the spokesman said. There were reports that the man had got infected in the past as well. However, the spokesman denied these

Police said the man had tested negative for coronavirus infection on May 11 but he was having symptoms and thus he was in fear

reports and said the man had tested negative on May 11.

Meanwhile, a 26-year-old man ended his life at his house in Jankipuram police station area on Monday. His wife Aneta told police that she woke up around 8 am on Monday and found her hus-

band hanging from the ceiling in the same room with a bed-sheet tied around his neck. Police said Pappu worked as a labourer and was under depression after losing his job.

Meanwhile, kin of a youth, who was killed in a road mishap, blocked the main road in Kakori and demanded compensation. A police spokesman said Zubair of Kakori and his friend were hit by some speeding vehicle on Narayanpur Behta road. Zubair died on the spot while his friend was rushed to a hospital in Banthra.

Police were deployed to bring the situation under control. Senior officers also reached the scene and counselled the protesters after which the blockade was lifted.

3 youths killed in freak mishap

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Three youths were killed in a road mishap which took place during a police checking in Sarojinagar on Monday evening. A pedestrian was also among the deceased and he was identified as Sufian of Banthra, while efforts were on to ascertain the identity of others.

Enraged over the incident, kin of the victims and villagers blocked the Lucknow-Kanpur highway for hours and did not allow police to shift bodies from the site. As per reports, police were checking two-wheelers on both sides of the

road at Scooter India crossing around 5 pm on Monday.

The police spotted two youths and ran towards them in order to catch them. The youths suddenly stopped their bike. In the meantime, a lorry coming from behind also reached the scene. The lorry driver applied brakes and swerved the vehicle to avoid hitting the youths.

However, he lost control of the vehicle in the process and as a result, the lorry jumped the divider of the service road and ploughed into a public toilet. Sufian was run over by the lorry. Two other youths who were passing via the service

road were also crushed under the wheels of lorry. Sufian had died by the time the rescue operation ended. The injured were rushed to Sarojinagar CHC and they were also declared dead. Senior officers reached the scene and said they would recommend compensation for the kin of the victims. On their assurance, the protest was ended.

DCP, Central, Somen Berma said the lorry driver lost control of the vehicle which resulted in the mishap. “It had nothing to do with police checking. We have sent the lorry driver for a medical test,” he said.

CITY MONTESSORI SCHOOL FOUNDERS DECLARE THEIR PERSONAL ASSETS

Dr. Jagdish Gandhi & Dr. Bharti Gandhi, Founders of City Montessori School, Lucknow have declared their personal assets as on 1st April, 2021

Also see on Website: www.jagadishgandhiforworldhappiness.org

Details of Assets	Figure in Rupees
1- VEHICLES:	
Honda JAZZXMAT A/C Car	Rs. 1,65,984.00
2- INVESTMENTS:	
Infrastructure Bonds - Bharti Gandhi	Rs. 40,000.00
Infrastructure Bonds - Jagdish Gandhi	Rs. 40,000.00
Tax Saving - Bharti Gandhi (Allahabad Bank Hussainganj)	Rs. 1,18,620.00
Tax Saving - Jagdish Gandhi (Allahabad Bank Hussainganj)	Rs. 1,01,673.00
TOTAL	Rs. 3,00,293.00
3- SHARES (Current Value):	
100 Shares of Union Bank of India @ 34.05 per share as on 31/03/2021 - Jagdish Gandhi	Rs. 3,405.00
100 Shares of Bank of India @ 67.85 per share as on 31/03/2021 - Jagdish Gandhi	Rs. 6,785.00
100 Shares of Union Bank of India @ 34.05 per share as on 31/03/2021 - Bharti Gandhi	Rs. 3,405.00
200 Units of UTI Mutual Fund @ 177.345 per unit (master gain) as on 31/03/2021 - Bharti Gandhi	Rs. 35,469.00
1166.006 Units of Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund @ 58.66 - Bharti Gandhi	Rs. 68,397.44
4964 Shares @ 25.00 per share of Hindustan Cooperative Bank Limited - Bharti Gandhi	Rs. 1,24,100.00
TOTAL	Rs. 2,41,561.44
4- CASH IN HAND:	
Cash-in-hand Bharti Gandhi (as on 31/03/2021)	Rs. 3,21,526.00
Cash-in-hand Jagdish Gandhi (as on 31/03/2021)	Rs. 2,78,574.00
TOTAL	Rs. 6,00,100.00
5- BANK ACCOUNTS & BALANCES: As on 31-03-2021	
Allahabad Bank Hussainganj, Saving Bank A/c No. 20296581190	Rs. 6,08,369.40
Allahabad Bank Hussainganj, Saving Bank A/c No. 20296592678	Rs. 1,27,573.96
Allahabad Bank Hussainganj, Saving Bank A/c No. 20296581032	Rs. 64,304.34
Yes Bank Ltd., Saving Bank A/c No. 001890700003782	Rs. 1,40,507.33
TOTAL	Rs. 9,40,755.03
6- Net Assets as on 1st April 2021:	
Net worth of Assets (Rupees Twenty-Two Lakh Forty-Eight Thousand Six Hundred Ninety-Three and Paise Forty-Seven only)	Rs. 22,48,693.47
OUR DECLARATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We do not have any personal Land, Property or own house. We are living in a rented House for the past 62 years. We do not have any Foreign Currency, Gold, Silver Jewellery or Ornaments. We have no Locker anywhere. We do not have any Current Account in any bank. We do not have any Fixed Deposit. 	
We do not have any thing else other than the above in this world.	
www.jagadishgandhiforworldhappiness.org/assets.html	
Signature (Dr. Bharti Gandhi)	Signature (Dr. Jagdish Gandhi)

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Efforts on to face third wave challenges in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

With the declining intensity of second wave of coronavirus pandemic though the possibilities of further rise in cases in rural areas have yet not been ruled out, the efforts have been started by the district administration to face the challenges of third wave and in this direction a high-level meeting of officers and public representatives was held recently to discuss the steps to be taken in such situation. Now the Banaras Hindu University (BHU) is planning to open a 100-bed baby corona ward in its Shatabdi Super Specialty Block of Sir Sunderlal Hospital (SSH) soon so that in case of finding of child Covid patients they can be treated properly. In this direction, the hospital management has already talked with the pharmacy and other companies to prepare medicines especially in syrup forms so that they can be given to child patients.

Besides, as many cases of cardiac arrest fatalities of some



Post-Covid patients doing chest physiotherapy exercises at BLW in Varanasi on Monday

Pioneer

post-Covid patients were seen in the recent times, a post-Covid chest physiotherapy treatment has started being given to post-Covid patients in Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) so that they can rule out the possibilities of heart attacks and other related problems like chest congestion, weakness and others. On the instruction of General Manager (GM) Anjali Goyal and initiative of Principal Chief Medical Officer (PCMO) Dr Sujit Malik, the Physiotherapy Unit of BLW

Central Hospital launched the same treatment programme under which the post-Covid patients would learn breathing exercises, pranayama, kapalabhati, anulom-vilom etc in order to strengthen their lung and heart capacity for overall betterment of health. The cured Covid patients were taught how to stop breathing at a fixed time interval, take the breath with depth and exhale rapidly.

Senior physiotherapist Rajendra Kumar Sinha of the hospital and associate physio-

therapist Dr Rashmi Gupta presented various breath exercises to the patients present under Post Covid Chest Physiotherapy. The programmes will be organised in three shifts daily from 9:30 am to 10:30 am, 10:30 am to 11:30 am and 11:30 am to 12:30 pm respectively. Registration will be done from 8:30 am to 9:00 am. In the said programme, five patients are to be registered and exercised in a shift.

Meanwhile, amidst all the prevailing fear with the finding of hundreds of new cases and detection of some black fungus patients, corona curfew entered 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. However, in the morning hours, several markets saw a rush of retail shopkeepers and customers purchasing essential items. The police personnel have also intensified their action against the violators of curfew restrictions and COVID-19 guidelines.

239 more test positive in Varanasi

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The district continued recording a decrease for another day in the positive cases for the third consecutive day and it came down below the figure of 300 for the first time in the second wave of the pandemic. As many as 239 cases of COVID-19 were recorded on Monday evening increasing the total number to 79,317. With 5 more deaths recorded during the last 24 hours, the death toll increased to 698. As many as 923 patients of home isolation recovered, while as many as 109 have been recovered from the hospitals. The total number of patients cured in the district increased to 72,702 including 67,463 in home isolation and 5,239 in COVID-19 hospitals.

In the first report of the

day, 176 positive patients were found out of 4,845 reports received and this figure increased to 239 out of 8,912 received samples as per report provided by the Health department this evening. The total active cases also decreased to 5,917 from 6,715 which was a day ago. On Sunday evening, as many as 422 positive cases were recorded and the total number was 79078 while 7 deaths were reported and the death toll was 693. Earlier, in view of finding hundreds of new positive cases, with 1 new hotspot, the number of active hotspots was 494 with 7 green zones having been converted to red zones by a day ago. Out of total 3,306 hotspots, 2,812 are green zones and 494 are red zones.

The Health department continued the vaccination drive

at as many as 92 vaccination centres on Monday but with a reverse system. Out of them, the vaccines were administered on the beneficiaries aged above 45 years at as many as 66 vaccination centres and at as many as 26 centres for the beneficiaries aged between 18 and 45 years.

The vaccines were also administered on the employees of the Postal department aged above 45 years by a team of the Health department at the General Post Office in Cantonment area on the initiative of the Post Master General (PMG), Varanasi Region Krishan Kumar Yadav.

Yadav informed that the Central Government has enlisted the postal services in the list of necessary services and so, the postmen and Rural Dak Sewaks are distributing postage

on the daily basis as corona warriors.

The services of saving bank, insurance, India Post Payments Bank, Aadhar, etc are available besides the services of speed post, registry and parcel booking at counters. Earlier, the Health department vaccinated the employees of the Postal department at the General Post Office in Visheshwarganj.

Meanwhile, the CMO Dr VB Singh informed that on the suggestion given by the India's National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI), the Central Government has decided to administer the second dose of Covishield from 12 to 16 weeks after the administration of first dose but the beneficiaries will take the second dose of covaxin after 28 days of the first dose.

Food packets distributed in PM's adopted villages

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

When the nation is fighting hard against the excruciating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, many philanthropic and social groups are supporting the hospitals and patients by providing medical equipment, oxygen etc and tirelessly working to distribute food packets and ration to the daily wage workers and marginal communities. In this direction, Aavaada Foundation, the philanthropic arm of the Aavaad Group of companies, is distributing 800 food packets in Jayapur, 600 in Nagepur and 350 house households in Kakariya villages of the district daily. All these three villages have been adopted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi under Adarsh Sansad Gram Yojana.

The foundation is also undertaking the similar humanitarian response in many places in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan to help the daily wage workers, migrant labourers and other who are facing a challenging time due to ongoing lockdown restrictions.

Besides, the foundation sets up four hospitals with 300 beds along with two oxygen plants and distributing ventilators (BiPAP), oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators at different locations in Rajasthan and Maharashtra. According to Aavaada Group Chairman Vineet Mittal, until the day everyone gets vaccinated, food is the best medicine. 'Lack of necessities like food could result in social unrest, a rise in migration, and widespread under-nutrition among

populations previously immune from hunger. I believe that everyone is indebted to his nation and one should repay his debt in his lifetime. The debt of love, prosperity and progress that the great land of Varanasi has given us, we must repay. I hope these efforts can alleviate the situation,' he said.

Besides, the leading social organisation of the city, Vishal Bharat Sansthan (VBS), which has already set up its war room at Lamahi for providing 24 hours supply of ration, food packets and medicines to the Covid patients and their families, has extended its social work as it has received five oxygen concentrators from Sewa International (New Delhi). For providing the training of using oxygen concentrators and

check blood pressure, oxygen level, temperature, blood sugar etc,

Aditya Vikram Shah, an expert, gave training to some VBS volunteers which was inaugurated online by executive council member of RSS Indresh Kumar from New Delhi on Monday.

VBS has also set up its oxygen and medicine centres at Patalpuri Math, Narharpura and Khushhal Nagar. The function was also attended by Mahant Balak Das of Patalpuri Math, VBS founder president Dr Rajeev Srivastava, Ashok Sehgal, Mohd Azharuddin, Nazma Parveen, Nazneen Ansari and Dr Mridula Jaiswal and it was presided over by Dr Niranjana Srivastava while conducted by Managing Director of VBS Archana Bharatvanshi.

Varanasi stands first in IRAD

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ VARANASI

The district secured the first position in the state in the Integrated Road Accident Database (IRAD). The Central Government has started this new exercise to curb the road accidents. The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has developed the app to create an integrated road safety database in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC). Details of accidents in a district will be recorded on the IRAD App. It will be studied by IIT Madras experts. On this basis, a plan has been prepared to prevent accidents under the directions of Transport and Police department officials. On the instructions of Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) Vikas Kumar, NIC In-charge Prasanna Pandey and ARTO (Administration)

Sarvesh Chaturvedi, all the police station in-charges have been trained by roll-out manager Chandrakant Tiwari.

On receipt of the information of the accident, the policeman who reached the spot will have to upload the information related to the accident on the app such as the date of the accident, the possible cause, accident site etc. As soon as the upload is complete, the same would be delivered to Health, Transport and National Highway/PWD departments and the concerned departments will take action from their own level. In this app, the database of the relevant departments like vehicle registration, driving license, CCTNS, health, highway database etc has been integrated in this app so by using related available proper details, accidents can be recorded and effective action can be taken for redressal on the basis of that.

FLAGGED OFF: In order to break the chain of coronavirus particular in rural areas, the District Leprosy Officer Dr Rahul Singh on Monday flagged off 15 Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) at primary health centre in Kashi Vidyapith Development Block for the distribution of medical kits among corona patients in home isolation. The teams visited the homes of corona patients in BHU, BLW, Ramnagar and other areas and made the corona medical kits available to them. The teams also made the patients aware about the precautions to be taken to beat the virus and also about corona protocol to be followed during the home isolation. The patients were also made aware about the severe symptoms of the virus by the team members. After the teams were flagged off, the SDM Sadar Pramod Verma held a meeting with In-charge BDO

of block, in-charge of health centre and other staff and directed BPM and BCPM to make available the list of corona positive to Asha workers and Asha Sanginis through Whatsapp group on daily basis so that the medical kits could be distributed among the patients and also they could be made aware about the serious symptoms of virus. Meanwhile, a 30-bed covid care centre will be set up at community health centre in Cholapur with the MP fund of the local MP and Union Minister Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey. The facilities of ventilator and other medical equipment will also be made available at CHC in Narpatur and Cholapur. The MLC Lakshman Acharya has submitted a proposal to develop a separate ward for the children in Lal Bahadur Shastri Government Hospital in Ramnagar in view of the possible third wave.

ICUs for corona infected children to be set up in SRN, Beli Hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Department of Health has pulled its socks up to deal with a possible third wave of Corona. Swaroop Rani Nehru of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College and Beli Hospital, ICUs will be set up for treatment for the infected children of Corona. For this, talks are going on between the district administration and the medical college administration.

Following the directives of the government, the district administration has become active to protect children from corona infection. The Health department is preparing to build a 40-bed ICU for children at Beli Hospital. At the same time, an exercise is being made to form an 85-bed ICU in the Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital on behalf of the Medical

Education department.

The District Magistrate Bhanu Chandra Goswami for the ICU to be built in Beli Hospital, conducted the inspection and instructed the engineers of the Public Works Department on Saturday to start the work.

On Tuesday, the engineers of the Public Works Department will reach there and start the work of preparing the infrastructure for the ICU. Here, preparations are also underway to build an ICU for children in SRN. Principal of Moti Lal Nehru Medical College, Dr SP Singh said that talks are going on with the district administration in this regard.

Soon this work will be carried forward. SRN Hospital currently operates 625 beds for Covid patients. It also has an ICU of 325 beds. In this only,

children who are infected are being admitted. The creation of new ICUs will facilitate treatment of Covid infected children.

18,822 SUSPECTED CORONA PATIENTS FOUND: A survey of rural areas was conducted by the Health department from May 5 to test for coronavirus. A total of 18,822 suspected patients have been found in the survey that lasted for 10 days. The officials of the Health department were in a fix when such a large number of suspected patients were found. The department will resume survey work from Tuesday again, so that the suspected patients can be identified.

Due to the increasing outbreak of corona in rural areas, the Health department put up a team of 4,262 Asha workers in the district and surveyed

more than 1.40 lakh houses. The survey lasted from May 5 to May 15. In a survey that lasted for ten days, Asha workers found 18,822 corona suspects. According to the survey report, about 14,000 people have been tested for corona against the total suspects.

And how many people got infected out of it its details are not given separately. The department provided corona medicines to 16,000 people out of 18,000 suspects.

According to the department, continuous monitoring of suspected patients is being done. Such people are being admitted to the hospital if required.

ACMO Dr BN Singh, who is monitoring the survey, said that due to the large number of suspected patients being found, the survey work will be resumed from Tuesday.

174 new Covid cases found in Prayagraj

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The Prayagraj district late on Sunday night reported a total of 174 cases of COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, while six persons also succumbed to the deadly virus on the same day.

The corona infection was more common on Sunday than the day before. The testing was also done for a small number of people. More infections were found than that. In addition, six people died from Corona. This was confirmed by Dr. Rishi Sahai, the Nodal Officer of Corona. He said that on Sunday, a total of 490 people have been free from corona infection. Out of this, 40 people have been discharged from hospitals.

According to the Health department report, a total of 8,137 people had been tested for corona in the district on Sunday. Out of, 174 new infections have been found. This has been confirmed by antigen screening in 27 people while 93 were found infected in RTPCR. 54 people have come positive in Trunat test. It has the highest antigen test of 4,525 people,



People waiting for their turn to be vaccinated at Motilal Nehru Medical College in Prayagraj

Pioneer

3,233 people tested via RTPCR and the rest has been tested in Trunat and private labs.

About 20 per cent of the people who get infected need to be admitted due to breathing and other problems. Those whose condition is more serious, they were also admitted. Police Lines head constable, High Court advocate, ANM of Shankargarh CHC, manager of ICICI Bank based Civil Lines,

sub-inspector of Naini police station were found to be infected on Sunday.

On Sunday, 490 people became infection-free. Out of these, 40 people have been discharged after getting corona report negative from private hospitals including Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital, Beli, and Railways hospital. Home isolation of the remaining 450 people has been completed.

Gangster Act to be invoked against black marketeers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

The police are preparing for strict action against those who indulge in blackmarketing of drugs and injections during the crisis. Gangster Act will be imposed against such people. Dhoomanganj and Kotwali police have also started preparations for this move.

With the increase of corona crisis in the district, cases of black-marketing of drugs-injection and oxygen also started coming up. In Kotwali, where three people were first nabbed in the black marketing of Remdesivir injections, there were also cases of selling oxygen cylinders and oxygen concentrators at a price several times higher. Three people who sold oxygen in black were sent to jail after recovering five cylinders.

Similarly, a person was arrested for bargaining for an

oxygen concentrator machine worth ₹ 67,000 for ₹ 1.5 lakh. Meanwhile, three people were arrested for black marketing of oxygen cylinders in the Dhumanganj area. The police will now take action against these accused under the Gangster Act. Action has been started for this. The previous record of those arrested and sent to jail is also being scrutinised. Sources said that the gangchart of the accused will be prepared and sent to the District Magistrate through high officials. Thereafter, action under Gangster Act will be taken after getting permission.

ICE DEPOSITION ISSUE RESOLVED: Army Base Workshop resolved ice deposition issue on liquid oxygen plant vapouriser at Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital here.

Superintendent in-charge of SRN Hospital, Prayagraj approached Commandant 508

Army Base Workshop, Indian Army for resolving issue of ice deposition on newly installed liquid oxygen plant vapouriser, which was restricting the flow of oxygen to various wards of the hospital.

Under the guidance of Commandant 508 Army Base Workshop, a team of one officer and three technicians along with Superintendent in-charge, Dr Ajay Saxena visited the site to get basic understanding of the problem. After basic study of the system, solution to the problem was designed and installed at location which ensured resolution of problem of ice deposition on vapouriser within 48 hours. This repair effort also has improved the efficiency of the oxygen plant.

The swiftness with which the issue was addressed definitely stands testimony to the technical capabilities of the

Corps of Electronics and Mechanical Engineers – a technical branch of the Indian Army.

VACCINATION DRIVE STEPPED UP: In order to provide impetus to the requirement of vaccination of the population of Prayagraj, Field Hospital of the Red Eagle Division has established a Covid Vaccination Centre for the age group 18 years to 44 years at Thapar Polyclinic at Old Cantt, Prayagraj through close coordination and efforts of Dr Prabhakar Rai, Chief Medical Officer and Dr Tirath Lal, District Immunisation Officer, Prayagraj.

Thapar Polyclinic has upgraded its infrastructure including cold storage to ensure safe and efficient vaccination of military dependents and civilian beneficiaries. The vaccination centre is listed on the COWIN App.

Woman cop molested by policeman

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ ALLAHABAD

Women cops who are responsible for the safety of women are not themselves safe in the district. The latest case is that of a police station in trans-Ganga, where a woman cop was molested by a policeman posted in the police station itself.

The incident occurred when the victim went to conduct a raid with the team of the police station at night. Meanwhile, the accused policeman molested her when she was alone. A case has been registered against the accused policeman on the complaint being given by the victim. Simultaneously, action has also been initiated in connection with the suspension.

The victim is a resident of another district, and has been posted in the police station at

Gangapur for some time. She alleged that on April 5, she was on night duty when the incident happened. The force of the police station that night went to a village for a raid under Dhana police station area in search of the accused persons, along with the same accused policeman Ritesh Kumar Rai.

During the raid, a woman was caught, who was seated in the police jeep. At the behest of one of the sub inspectors involved in the raid, she stopped at the safety of the woman, while the rest of the policemen started looking for the other accused. It is alleged that during this, the accused policeman came and molested the woman cop.

He used force on being protested, which hurt her. At the same time, her gold nugget also fell. The victim alleged that since then, the accused police-

man has been calling and threatening her for dire consequences. Two days ago, on behalf of the victim, a complaint was filed in her own police station. After which a case was registered against the accused policeman. A case has been registered against him under sections related to allegations of molestation as well as intimidation. An attempt was made to talk to the in-charge of the concerned police station in the case, but he continued to hide it and disconnected the phone citing for talks in a while. On the other hand, due to the departmental matter, the officers also kept avoiding saying too much.

A suspension action has also been initiated against the accused person in the case. According to strong sources, the report has been sent to the SSP recommending his suspen-

sion.

On the other hand, it has also been learned that the accused policeman was working for the police station for a long time.

The activities in the police station area were being conducted through him only. With which his complaints were made earlier, but the in-charge kept it with him.

RETD AD PROF PASSES AWAY : Prof Lal Bahadur Verma, retired professor of Allahabad University and an eminent historian died of post-Corona complication on Monday morning. He was undergoing treatment at Dehradun.

Known for his left wing activism Prof Verma had authored a good number of history books, and many of them are prescribed in syllabus by different universities.



Divisional Commissioner, Dr Raj Shekhar, holding a review meeting at the ICCCC C at KNN on Monday

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DC stresses on increasing beds, setting up pediatric ICUs in Covid hospitals

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Kanpur Divisional Commissioner Dr Raj Shekhar, while chairing a special meeting at the Integrated Covid Command Control Centre (ICCCC) at Kanpur Nagar Nigam on Monday, laid emphasis on increasing beds and setting up pediatric ICUs in Covid hospitals to be prepared for the third wave of novel coronavirus, doubling testing and making the district self-reliant in oxygen generation.

He said the RT-PCR reports should be uploaded on the portal between 24 hours and 36 hours without fail.

Shekhar asked the officials

to work out the average requirement of oxygen after the increase in the beds and direct the private hospitals to set up their own oxygen plants on top priority as per the needs.

He said every effort had to be made to ensure that contact tracing was promoted in the right earnest.

He said the rapid response teams and nigrani samitis (vigilante committees) would distribute home isolation kits to all the people who tested positive and prepare a list of the beneficiaries. He also said that all the people who had come in contact with positive patients should be traced without fail and tested as well.

He said special emphasis

had to be laid on the ruralites and if they tested positive then all the people who had come in their contact should be tested and the symptomatic persons should be given medicine kits.

He said the Covid hospitals would soon be set up in Bilhaur, Ghatampur and Sarsaul and asked the officials to carry out the work on a war footing so that they were completed at the earliest.

He directed that special teams be deployed in the rural areas to prepare a list of people who travel daily to urban areas for work. He asked the teams to contact people and ensure 100 per cent vaccination.

Dr Shekhar said all the

patients who were in home isolation should be contacted by the ICCCC daily and enquired about their problems which should be solved as well.

He also directed surveys of all houses in nyay and gram panchayats for screening of people and distribution of home isolation kits to the symptomatic patients.

He said the sector magistrates need to ensure that sanitisation and fogging was carried out daily.

District Magistrate Alok Tiwari, CDO Dr Mahendra Kumar, Kanpur municipal commissioner, Chief Medical Officer Dr Nepal Singh and several other officials took part in the meeting.

All CHCs made L-1 Covid facilities

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Chief Medical Officer Dr Nepal Singh, in view of the upsurge in COVID-19 cases in rural areas, said the district had made every possible effort to not only treat critical patients but also prevent the spread of pandemic by strictly following the social distancing norms.

He said all the community health centres (CHCs), especially those in Ghatampur and Patara, had been declared

Level-1 Covid hospitals and people whose RT-PCR report was positive would be given proper treatment there.

He said oxygen cylinders were available in the district and the administration had provided oxygen concentrators as well. He said more oxygen concentrators would be provided soon.

He said proper beds and other infrastructure had been made available in the CHCs. He advised the rapid response teams to carry out testing,

tracking and tracing of the migrant workers who had returned to their native villages.

He said apart from this, movement of people had to be restricted to prevent further spread of the novel coronavirus both in the rural and the urban areas of Kanpur.

He said once the antigen test and RT-PCR test were done, the critical cases would be sent for X-ray and CT scan which alone could certify the positivity of the case.

He said with the necessary

infrastructure arranged, the CHCs would be thrown open for the people from Tuesday onwards.

He said the CHCs had also been provided PPE kits and stressed on wearing masks properly when visiting the CHCs. He said thermal checking was also to be carried out to identify suspected cases which could be a potent threat. He said sector magistrates had also been involved in monitoring and control efforts.

Man killed over property-related dispute

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

An elderly man was battered to death by his family members over a property-related dispute in Sakhrej village under Shivrajpur police station on Sunday night.

According to reports, Jagrup Singh (72) of Sakhrej village had a dispute with his nephew Rajendra Singh over possession on two bigha land for the past several years. Late Sunday evening, Rajendra Singh called Jagrup Singh at his house for a compromise on the issue. However, the talks lead to a heated argument during which Rajendra and his family members brutally beat Jagrup up.

On hearing noise, the family members of Jagrup rushed to spot and rushed him to hospital in an unconscious state

but he succumbed to his injuries on the way.

The local police reached the village late Sunday night and for investigation.

Jagrup's son Akhilesh told the police that there was a property related dispute between the two families for the past several years. He said that on Sunday evening, Rajendra, his son Anupam, wife Sarla and daughter Shweta had called his father at their house for a compromise but during the talks, they brutally beat him up.

Station House Officer Kaushlendra Pratap Singh said the elderly man was killed over property related dispute and an FIR had been registered against four persons, including two women and all efforts were being made to nab them.

YOUTH ATTEMPTS

SUICIDE ON SEEING WIFE HANGING: Upset at seeing his wife hanging, a youth attempted to commit suicide by slitting his throat in Sachendi town early Monday morning.

He was immediately taken to a private hospital from where he was referred to LLR Hospital. His condition was stated to be critical there.

According to reports, Yogendra, son of a farmer Dharm Singh, was married to Khushbu (23) about a year ago. Yogendra is employed in a local biscuit factory.

Late Sunday night, Khushbu hanged herself in mysterious circumstances. After Yogendra saw her body hanging from the ceiling early Monday morning, he attempted to commit suicide by slitting his throat. The family members rushed the profusely-bleeding

Yogendra to a private hospital from where he was referred to LLR Hospital in view of his serious condition.

Yogendra's family members told the police that they all had gone to the temple for darshan on Sunday and returned from home late in the evening. After dinner, Yogendra went to sleep in his room. On hearing screams in the early hours of Monday, when they rushed to his room, they saw Khushbu's body hanging and the profusely-bleeding Yogendra lying on the floor.

Sachendi Station House Officer Satish Kumar Rathaur said the cause of Khushbu's suicide could not be ascertained. He said the facts would be cleared after investigation and on receipt of the autopsy report.

The parents of Khushbu were informed about her death.

No dead body found in Ganga for past three days

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ KANPUR

Since the deployment of forces on the banks of river Ganga, no dead body has been disposed of in the river for the past three days.

The Ganga Prahari along with the PAC have been successful in preventing dumping of bodies in the Ganga. However, there are rumours that the villagers are burying the bodies in the sandy beds.

It may be mentioned here that the district administration had deployed JCBs to bury abandoned dead bodies at two prominent ghats Bhairon Ghat and Bhagwat Das Ghat.

After the hue and cry over the large number of dead bodies, suspected to be of COVID-19 patients, that were found floating in a vast stretch of the Ganga, the district administration had deployed one platoon of PAC and one team of State Disaster Response Force on the ghats and banks on Saturday. While one team is patrolling between Ganga Barrage and Bithoor the other is patrolling between Ganga Barrage and Shukla Ghat.

CDO Dr Mahendra Kumar had on Saturday informed that the issue had been effectively taken up with the help of police administration while the local vigilante bodies on the ghats commonly known as Ganga Prehari had been deployed on the banks to ensure that no dead body dumped into the Ganga.

Surendra Pal, one of the Ganga Prehari at Bhairon Ghat, said since the deployment of the force no dead body had been recovered from the river in the past three days.

The PAC Flood team comprising 25 jawans has been deployed with special boats to maintain a vigil on the ghats. The 15-member SDRF team is keeping a strict vigil on the banks and ghats day and night.

BMGF extends help to set up proper infrastructure, hospitals

KANPUR (PNS): In view of the large number of COVID-19 deaths in India, especially in Uttar Pradesh, the Bill and Melinda

Gates Foundation, (BMGF) has decided to extend all possible help to the government to set up proper infrastructure and hospitals well equipped to tackle effectively the third wave of novel coronavirus infections.

This was disclosed by Deputy Director, LEED State Health System India, Dr Devendra.

He said five prominent organisations would also join hands to ensure that it was fully prepared for any future pandemic threat.

He said under this, 10 oxygen plants would be set up two in Lucknow and one each in prominent districts including Kanpur Nagar.

He said the venture focused on last-mile health service delivery in rural areas, dissemination of the effective contact tracing mobile app developed by the Government of India, and leveraging India's massive pharmaceutical capacity to scale-up the production of vaccines and therapeutics upon their discovery.

He said the foundation would also analyse necessary changes in lifestyles, economic organisation, social behaviour, modes of disseminating education and healthcare that would emerge in the post-COVID-19 world. He said currently the priority was on setting up oxygen generation plants in all the hospitals.

AID DEMANDED: Members of Adhivakta Kalyan Sangharsh Samiti have urged the state government to extend financial aid of Rs 25,000 each to lawyers. In a memorandum addressed to the chief minister and handed over to ADM (I) RP Verma on behalf of the district magistrate on Monday, convener Pt Ravindra Sharma said due to prolonged lockdown imposed for the past several months following the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the lawyers were passing through great financial hardship. He said the demand for financial aid of Rs 25,000 each for lawyers was the need of the hour.

Vaccination drive for 18+ kicks off

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Vaccination drive for people in the 18-plus category for kicked off in the district on Monday. Kicking off the drive at Chilh primary health centre (PHC) MLA (City) Ratnakar Mishra appealed to people get themselves vaccinated on priority. Giving details about the

continue. He further said 29,800 doses of Covishield had been recently given to the district apart from the old stock. He added that the Covaxin doses had been kept for those who were to be given the second dose of that vaccine. About the registration for vaccination district vaccination officer Dr Neelesh said that till



MLA (City) Ratnakar Mishra kicking off the vaccination drive for persons in the 18-plus category at Chilh PHC on Monday

drive while talking to 'The Pioneer' Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr PD Gupta said in order to make the drive successful total 17 booths had been reserved for persons in the 18-plus category and adequate quantity of vaccines had been sent at the centres. Besides, the vaccination for people over 45 years of age will

date more than 15,000 persons had been informed about the date as well as the booth for vaccination. Besides, 4,000 people were called on Monday, he added.

GIRL DROWNS: A five-year-old girl drowned in Belan river under Lalganj police station on Sunday. According to a report, Rasool, a resident of

Third accused in murder case held

CORRESPONDENT ■ MIRZAPUR

Jigna police on Monday arrested the third accused in connection with the murder of Sukaru Bind.

The accused was identified as Vijay alias Kalloo Bind, son of Ramdhani Bind the resident of village Jaraila under PS Jigna. His name had come to light during investigation apart from those named. Earlier on Sunday the Jigna police had arrested the two accused in connection with murder case. It may be recalled here that a body was found near a brick kiln on Thursday in which the brother of the victim had lodged named first information report (FIR) against four persons. Taking the swift action in the matter the police arrested two accused who were identified as Triveni Prasad and Jawahar, sons of Jaimangal Bind, residents of Jaraila village under Jigna police station. Police recovered

the bricks too which were used for committing the murder. As per the confession of the accused, the murder was committed due to a land dispute.

MAN RUN OVER BY TRAIN: A man run over by a train under Padari police station recently. Reports said that Girdhari (35), a resident of Bhojpur Pahadi village, was on the way to the market when he found that his mobile phone was missing. In the dark he was searching for it on the railway track near Pahada railway station when he was run over by a speedy train. On getting information the area police reached the spot, informed the family members and took the body of the victim to complete the legal formalities.

SUICIDE: An aged woman committed suicide by gulping the poison under Halia police station here recently. According to a report, Tulsi Devi (55), a resident of Sagara

village, became unconscious under mysterious circumstances. Her family members brought her to Halia PHC but in view of her serious condition the doctor referred her to the district hospital but the victim died on the way. Meanwhile a hand pump mechanic died due to electric shock under Ahraura police station recently. Ravikishan (20), a hand-pump mechanic and a resident of Munjdeeh village under Ahraura police station, was repairing the hand pump of Reeta, daughter of Jagroshan, in his village when the pipe touched the electric wire in which along with Reeta, Mohan, son of Bechan, sustained injuries. The victims were brought to CHC Ahraura while Ravikishan died during treatment. Mohan and Reeta were sent to the trauma in centre Varanasi. The police took the body into custody for completing the legal formalities.

Thieves flee with cash, jewellery

CORRESPONDENT ■ CHANDAULI

In a sensational incident, some unidentified thieves targeted the house of Abul Mohsin (Sonu) and took away jewellery and cash from there at night recently. The victim has lodged a written complaint at the local police station in this connection. The police has started investigating the matter. According to the information received here, the thieves first entered the adjoining house of Seraj Khan by scaling its wall and found that its inmates were sleeping in all the rooms.

They closed all the rooms from outside and the help of a bamboo ladder which they had from his house entered the house of Sonu. They found the victim and his family members were sleeping in the verandah. They broke open the lock of the room and escaped with cash and jewellery kept in the cupboard. However the on nearing some voice, the mother of the victim woke up and started making noise following which the thieves were chased up to some distance but they escaped by taking advantage of the darkness. During this period

the thieves left their torches. According to the victim, in a bag in the wardrobe, ₹40,000 in cash and jewellery of two daughters-in-law, including a gold earring, a bracelet, two two necklaces, two 'maang tikas', four rings, two earrings, anklets etc worth lakhs of rupees were kept and they fled with it. The victim given information about it to the police at night. In the morning he gave written complaint at the police station in this regard. Thereafter the police inspected the spot and was investigating the matter.

Food packets given for distribution

CORRESPONDENT ■ SONBHADRA

The NTPC Vindhyachal management for fighting coronavirus and preventing it is making efforts in various ways. During this coronavirus crisis, the common public is being supported by the NTPC management in various ways. In this sequence the NTPC-Vindhyachal under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) keeping social distancing in mind in view of the current scenario provided 1,000 food packets (flour, rice, 'arhar dal' (pigeon pea), mustard oil, turmeric powder, salt, spices, onions, potatoes etc) to the



Singrauli district administration for distribution. These food packets will be distributed by the Singrauli district administration among the poor fam-

ilies in the villages surrounding the project. The distribution of this food material will benefit 1,000 families from the nearby villages.

2 hurt in tiger attack

CORRESPONDENT ■ BAREILLY

Two farmers working in a sugarcane field were seriously injured in a tiger attack on Sunday. The victims, Dharampal (40) and Chandrapal (42) were injured in a tiger attack in Hemrajpur village under Meeraganj police station. On hearing their screams farmers working in the adjoining fields rushed to their rescue. The family members of Dharampal and Chandrapal took them to a health centre from where they were referred to the district hospital. Their condition is stated to be critical. Later police officials along with Forest Range Officer Rajesh Sharma and his team reached the spot.

Man meets tragic end

CORRESPONDENT ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI

In a tragic incident, 45-year-old Ram Ratan, son of Balakram, a resident of Pashchami Dakshitana Mohalla, died after being crushed by some unidentified vehicle from behind on Khutahar Road near Saidham close to Ahmadnagar under the Hyderabad police station here recently. As a result he died on the spot. On getting information the police sent the body of the deceased for the post-mortem examination. The family members of the victim have lodged a case against an unidentified vehicle driver in this connection.

Won't cancel Class 10, Class 12 exams, says Karnataka Minister

IAN S ■ BENGALURU

Putting an end to speculation about cancellation of Class 10 and Class 12 examinations conducted by State boards, Karnataka Education Minister, S. Suresh Kumar on Monday said that the State Government has not decided yet to cancel examinations of Class 10 (Secondary School Leaving Certificate - SSLC) and Class 12 (II year pre-university) examinations.

In a statement released by the Minister's office here, Kumar has appealed students who are appearing for SSLC (Class 10) and II year PU (Class 12) must not fall prey to any rumours or mischievous statements quoting him on any social media sites.

"I appeal to students preparing for these examinations SSLC and PU II year to continue to study and prepare well for their examinations," he said and added that the state government would soon make a decision on announcing fresh dates for these examinations.

Amid the ongoing onslaught of the pandemic, on May 13, Karnataka had decided to postpone the Class 10 (Secondary School Leaving Certificate - SSLC) state board examination.

Kumar had said in a state-

ment released through his office that the fresh dates for SSLC examinations will be announced only after ongoing Covid second wave subsides.

Kumar on April 20 had asserted that the examinations for SSLC were scheduled to begin on June 21 and this time these examinations would neither be cancelled nor be postponed and it will be held in the state as scheduled from June 21 to July 5.

Karnataka had decided to postpone these examinations after parents, students and many school associations had raised red flag over holding these crucial examinations from June 21 onwards owing to a severe spike in Covid cases since the beginning of April.

Earlier, Karnataka had postponed the second year Pre-University Exam (PUC) or Class 12 final exams and promoted first-year students.

Given the circumstances, even the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET) 2021, which is held for Engineering admission, was also postponed on May 12.

Karnataka schools are currently observing summer vacation, which will continue till June 14. The new academic year would begin on June 15.

However, high school

teachers had been instructed to conduct revision classes for SSLC students. Summer vacation for high school teachers is till May 31.

With the second wave of the pandemic raising its head in April, several state boards and Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) announced their decision to cancel the ICSE or class 10 board examinations in April itself, but Karnataka continues to 'maintain' that it wants to hold examinations for class 10 students.

Subsequently cancelling class 10 examinations, the CBSE even announced an alternative scheme for the evaluation of Class 10 students.

The Karnataka Secondary Education Examination Board (KSEEB) - state's education board that holds class 10 examinations, about 8.5 lakh students appear for the SSLC (Secondary School Leaving Certificate or Class 10) examination annually.

While the Karnataka pre-university Examination board (KPUEB) is responsible for conducting board examination for Class 12 or II year PU examinations in multiple streams - humanities, commerce and science.

Jammu records 54 deaths on Monday, highest so far in single day, Kashmir 19

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

After wreaking havoc in the urban areas now COVID-19 is spreading its tentacles across rural pockets of Jammu division. On Monday, Jammu division alone recorded 54 deaths, highest so far in one single day, while 19 patients succumbed to the virus across Kashmir division taking the tally of deaths due to covid19 to 3222. So far, Jammu region has recorded 1493 total deaths and 1729 patients have succumbed across the Kashmir division.

Overall the positivity rate reported a marginal decline across J&K. From 11.27 per cent the positivity rate reported on Monday stood at 9.65 per cent. Significantly, 4042 patients recovered fully and went home from different hospitals.

According to the media bulletin, several districts of Jammu division including Rajouri , Poonch, Samba, Kathua, Udhampur, Reasi, reported deaths due to Covid 19 on Monday. Jammu district recorded a maximum number of 21 deaths followed by Rajouri where seven patients succumbed to the virus while 11 patients undergoing treat-

ment in home isolation were brought dead in the hospital. In the Kashmir division a total number of 1926 patients tested positive on Monday .

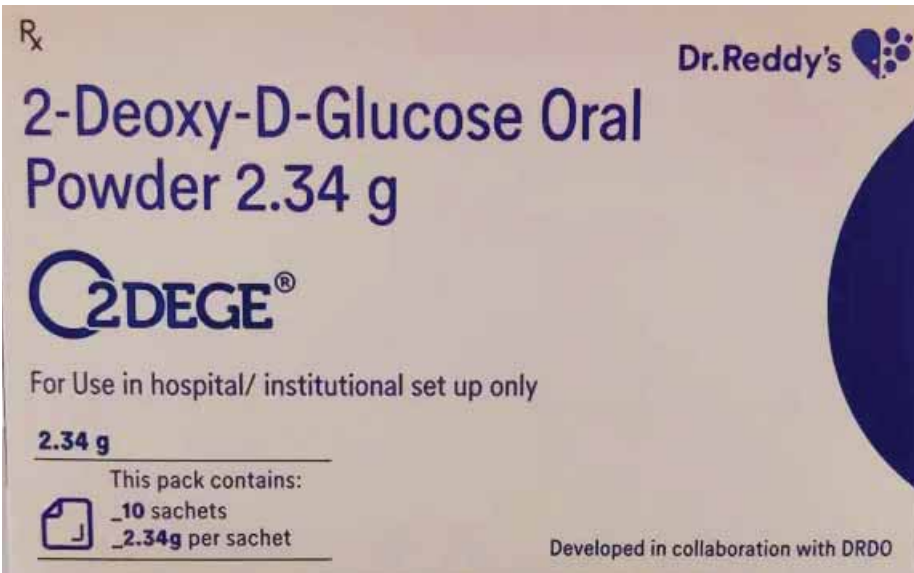
The highest number of 495 cases were reported from Srinagar district followed by Budgam where 373 patients tested positive and Anantnag reported 227 cases.

On its part the UT administration is working round the clock to meet the growing demand of oxygen and hospital beds. Advisor to Lieutenant Governor, Baseer Ahmad Khan Monday received the consignment of 7 Oxygen Generation Plants from Germany, Frankfurt on behalf of Jammu and Kashmir government at Srinagar Airport. Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, PK Pole and Chief Engineer, Kashmir (Mechanical), were also present on the occasion.

The Advisor said that with the Commissioning of these 7 plants, the oxygen requirement in the hospitals of the J&K will almost be fulfilled and will cater to our daily requirements.

Among the 7 plants, 5 will have a capacity of 1000 LPM each while the two plants will have a capacity of 1500 and 600 LPM.

Story behind 2-DG development



DRDO scientists began working on it last April

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The DRDO got into the act to develop 2-DG drug way back in April last year when the pandemic hit India. The oral drug is result of more than a year of trial and testing.

Project Director Dr Sudhir Chandana told mediapersons during laboratory tests that his scientists found that the drug was effective in blocking spread of Covid-19 inside the body cells.

Spurred by these critical findings, we asked the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for permission to conduct clinical trials," Chandana said. The DRDO got the go-ahead for the trials in May. The phase two trials were concluded in October last year and final trials in November. Dr Anand Narayan Bhatt,

another scientist associated with this path-breaking project said the rigorous trials took nearly a year before the DCGI approved emergency use of the drug last week. The INMAS-DRDO scientists conducted laboratory experiments with the help of Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad.

Giving details about the trials, Bhatt said a substantial number of patients were part of the phase three trials. The tests showed many patients were able to "come out of oxygen (support)," he added. On availability of the drug, officials said the hospitals across the country will start getting it by June. At present, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi and Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) have access to it. Veterans and serving personnel undergoing treatment for corona at the military hospital in Delhi and for that matter all over the country will be administered the drug as per the doctor's advice, officials said.

Two terrorists killed in Srinagar

PNS ■ JAMMU



now only five terrorists remain active in Srinagar.

"There were six active terrorists in Srinagar of which one was recently killed in Kokernag (Anantnag) gunfight. Now there are five local terrorists still active in Srinagar who would either be killed or apprehended," IGP Kashmir Vijay Kumar told reporters on Monday at Pantha Chowk, Srinagar after the gunfight in Khonmoh.

The IGP Kashmir said that there is a "vast network of OGWs" active in Srinagar district of which many have already been arrested and booked under PSA and many are still on the police radar.

"There are C-category OGWs who are being counselled and handed over to their families," the IGP said.

IIT-K sets up fund to help needy students in Covid times

Kanpur (UP): IIT Kanpur has raised over ₹ 1 crore by way of donations from around 650 contributors for providing financial aid to students who are facing medical emergencies.

Some of the students who approached the IIT-K authorities needed money for treatment of their family members.

The initiative, according to IIT-K director Prof Abhay Karandikar, was started on May 1 but the portal for this was launched on May 5. Students can send their requests at the portal.

"We had been receiving requests for help from students and so we decided to set up a relief fund. Our target is to raise Rs five crores," he said.

He explained that there are over 8,300 students at IIT K and is even 500 need financial help of Rs one lakh each, a corpus fund of Rs five crores is needed.

The IIT K director said that he had reached out to alumni and well-wishers through the social media and the response was overwhelming. The IIT -K has set up a committee headed by dean students' affairs and dean of resource and alumni, student president and two representatives of the alumni community to evaluate each request. and decide beneficiaries. **IAN S**

Son-in-law's rise in Kerala CPI(M) upsets leaders

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

The political grapevine in Kerala is working overtime to zero in on the names of the 11 CPI(M) representatives to be sworn in along with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday.

Since senior party leaders like E P Jayarajan, A K Balan , Thomas Issac, and G Sudhakaran were denied party tickets to contest the 2021 assembly election, Vijayan is left with comparatively young legislators which give him the freedom to try youth as ministers. One of the names that figures in all discussions is Mohammed Riyaz, the new son-in-law of Vijayan. Riyaz, though a first-time MLA , is certain to be included in the council of ministers and allocated an important portfolio.

The truth is that the hands of Riyaz were visible in the selection of candidates fielded by the party. "It was at his instance that the condolence message posted by the chief minister over the murder of Soumya Santos by the Hamas terrorists in Israel was removed from the social media page of Vijayan," a party insider told The Pioneer.

Riyaz is known for his association with Palestinian cause and holds the Hamas in respect. In addition to Chief Minister Vijayan, leader of the opposition Ramesh Chennithala and former Chief Minister Oommen Chandi too deleted their social media posts condoling the murder of Soumya.

"This is a sign of the extremist Islamist leaders establishing their command in the CPI(M)," said Rajit Kumar, political commentator and general secretary of Samskara Bharati. He said the CPI(M) has been taken over by the Islamists and this does not augur well for the party.

The 2021 assembly election results have strengthened Vijayan's position in the party and today he is the undisputed leader of the CPI(M) not only in Kerala but all over India. The editorial by People's Democracy decrying the tendency of a section of the media to bestow Vijayan with the entire credit for winning the 2021 election speaks a lot.

K Surendran, Kerala BJP president, has come out with the copy of an email sent by a senior journalist in a TV news channel exhorting her col-

leagues in the field to produce news reports portraying the Hindutwa party in poor light. Though TV channels do not play any significant role in deciding the winner in an election, this allegation by Surendran is a serious development," said Murali Parappuram, author and commentator.

The decimation of Congress, the principal Opposition party even as the Muslim League, its principal ally winning most of the seats it contested has opened a new political discourse in Kerala. The disclosure by leaders of the extremist organisations SDPI and PFI that their cadres voted in favour of the CPI(M) in the assembly election too has to be seen in this backdrop.

"P C George, a devout Catholic, who has never been defeated in any election from his home turf of Poonjar had to bite the dust this time as the Muslims got angry over the statement made by him against Love Jihad. Kerala has become the headquarters of terrorism and the coming days will see more developments in the political battlefield," said T G Mohan Das, a lawyer and commentator.

Many oral drugs to blunt virus attack likely by year-end

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

After grappling with the coronavirus for more than a year, a number of oral drugs are being tested across world to treat Covid-19 patients. Many of these formulations are currently in mid stage clinical trials, and, if successful, could be ready by end of the year. The list includes Molnupiravir, Baricitinib, colchicine, Bamlanivimab (LY-CoV555), Chloroquine phosphate, Bemicitinib, Fingolimod, metformin, Nafamostat, Famotidine and Umifenovir combination, zuclopenthixol, Kevzara (sarilumab), and nebulivol.

Pfizer is working on one oral drug to treat Covid-19 at the first sign of illness. It is expected by the end of the year. The drug is part of a class of medicines called protease inhibitors and works by inhibiting an enzyme that the virus needs to replicate in human cells.

Scientists from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) in the US and the University of Plymouth in

the UK found that MK-4482, also called Molnupiravir, was effective when provided up to 12 hours before or 12 hours after infection with SARS-CoV-2, that causes Covid-19. This could be a potential oral drug to treat Covid-19. This is being developed by German company Merck with Ridgeback Biotherapeutics.

An antiviral drug called umifenovir (marketed in Russia under the brand name Arbidol, and also available in China for the treatment of influenza) is being studied in China and other countries as a treatment for Covid-19.

Two other oral agents are being developed by RedHill Biopharma --- one for severe Covid-19 infection for hospitalised patients, and the other one for patients at home with mild infection.

The first, opaganib (Yeliva), has proceeded to a phase 2/3 global trial for hospitalised patients. In phase 2, the drug was shown to be safe in patients requiring oxygen and effectively reduced the need for oxygen by the end of the treatment period.

FROM PAGE 1

PATIENCE NEED OF THE HOUR, NOT PANIC: YOGI

done by the surveillance committees. If necessary, antibody and RT-PCR tests are also being conducted. Free treatment has also been arranged for people post-Covid," he said.

After Muzaffarnagar, the CM reached Rampur village and met the locals. He also interacted with the Rapid Response Team members and ASHA workers engaged in the control of coronavirus infection and reviewed the working.

The CM also urged people to make sure no one steps out unnecessarily. "People should maintain social distancing and wear masks while going out of their homes for essential works. Those suffering from any disease must take all the necessary precautions," the CM said.

Yogi then reached Saharanpur where he announced setting up of 11 new oxygen plants in the district. He said that oxygen generator plants will be set up in every district by the Sugarcane department. The CM inspected the Integrated Command and Control Centre and subsequently gave necessary instructions in a review meeting with public representatives and officials. Officials of Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts of Saharanpur division were also present in the meeting virtually. The CM said that in order to save the economy, the state government has imposed corona curfew and not a complete lockdown.

"Essential services are on. Labourers are not facing any problems as indus-

tries and businesses are functioning," he said. The CM said that their motive is not to create trouble for people as the directives are clear that there should not be crowd in industries or anywhere so that poor can earn their living.

"Community kitchens have been arranged for the poor so that they should not die of starvation. Food is being provided to the relatives of patients as they wait outside government hospitals. Free food grains distribution has also started," he said, adding that 13,000 youths have been vaccinated in Saharanpur.

FRESH CASES IN UP BELOW 10,000-MARK

first time since the middle of last month. This rate was at its highest at 16.84 per cent on April 24, which has now come down to 3.68 per cent. The active Covid cases have been drastically reduced by more than 1.60 lakh from its peak which went up to 3,10,784 cases on April 30, and has now come down to 1,49,032, recording a drop by 52 per cent.

"As a result of effective and swift implementation of the proactive test-trace-treat model, UP has managed to flatten the coronavirus curve," the spokesman said.

Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal said on Monday that 285 people died due to coronavirus infection in the last 24 hours as against 311 on Sunday. Sehgal said wrong information is being sent that the number of tests has been slashed. "Our target is 2.5 lakh tests per

day but we are doing more tests," he asserted.

Sehgal said that some people had predicted that more than one lakh new cases would be detected in UP everyday by May 15, but it did not happen.

As many as 542 new cases were found in Gorakhpur and 517 in Lucknow. On Sunday, Meerut reported the maximum cases at 782, but the number came down to 452 on Monday. Besides, 458 cases were found in Saharanpur and 457 in Gautam Buddha Nagar. In the last 24 hours, 22 people died in Lucknow, 21 in Kanpur and 11 each in Ghaziabad and Saharanpur. "From today, vaccination for 18-44 age category has been started in five more districts. So far, 1,16,00,000 people have been given the first dose of vaccine while 32,61,000 have been fully vaccinated," he said.

ORAL DRUGS ...

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CASELOAD 4-WK LOW

mark on August 23, the 40-lakh mark on September 5 and the 50-lakh mark on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and the one-crore mark on December 19 last year.

The figure crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4.

According to the Ministry, a total of 3,78,741 people have been discharged in the last 24 hours, with 2,11,74,076 being cured from Covid till date. According to ICMR, 31,64,23,658 samples have been tested up to May 14 with 15,73,515 samples being tested on Friday. The situation was not so encouraging in Tamil Nadu. While neighbouring Kerala has succeeded in bringing down the Covid-19 cases considerably, the number of new persons getting diagnosed with the pandemic is increasing on a daily basis.

On Monday, Tamil Nadu logged 33,075 new Covid -19 patients across the State while 335 persons succumbed to the pandemic during the last 24 hours, according to the release by the directorate of health and preventive medicine. There were 2.31 lakh Covid patients across the State as on Monday evening, said the release. But the State held more than 1.49 lakh RT-PCR tests on Monday while the corresponding figure for Kerala was 86,505 samples.

In Kerala, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Monday the total lockdown has started yielding results as the number of new Covid-19 cases has come down in the last 24 hours.

Journalists fall easy prey to coronavirus

ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 on Monday claimed West Bengal's top editor Anjan Bandyopadhyay. Two days ago, Sunil Jain, Managing Editor of *Financial Express*, succumbed to the virus infection. The list is long. Nearly 200 journalists have become victims of the lethal virus.

Ironically, while they had been vocal, shaking the authorities to ensure medical facilities to the common man, many among them died for want of timely treatment or due to financial constraints.

According to a study conducted by the Delhi-based Institute of Perception Studies, as many as 171 journalists have died due to Covid-19 between April 1, 2020 and May 10, 2021.

However, April 2021 has been the worst for journalism world in India as during the second wave at least 55 journalists died in just 30 days.

For instance, television journalist Neelanshu Shukla, associated with *AajTak* channel, Rohit Saldana, celebrated anchor of *AajTak*, Siliguri-based senior journalist in Himalaya Darpan, Mani Kumar Rai, *Malayala Manorama*'s senior journalist D



Vijayamohan, poet and journalist Manglesh Dabral, senior journalist Rajiv Katara, Pankaj Shukla from Noida, TV journalist Shankar Suman, Delhi-based senior journalist Rakesh Taneja, and Deputy News Editor Ajay Choudhury from *The Pioneer* shared similar fate.

Actual number of deaths could be even higher as many little known freelancers and scribes of small newspapers have been reporting at the local level despite lockdown.

Bhubaneswar-based television journalist Prabir Kumar Pradhan, Tripura-based Jitendra Debbarma, Mysuru-based Pavan Hettur, Patna-based photojournalist Krishna Mohan Sharma, Assam-based journalist Dhaneswar Rabha, Ludhiana-based veteran jour-

nalist Ashwani Kapoor, *All India Radio* news presenter from Guwahati Golap Saikia, Indore-based senior journalist Manoj Binwal are among the other few who couldn't survive the corona onslaught.

The journalists are already facing Covid-triggered economic pressures. Many have lost their jobs while many fear of layoffs.

Researchers say journalists below age 60 account for most recent deaths. Four journalists — Alladi Shekhar, 48, from Dharpalli who worked for Sakshi newspaper, Venugopal, 49, belonging to Nizamabad (Rural) and worked for TV-5, Ch Madhu, writer and editor of Jalapatham newspaper, and Dharshanam Ashok, belonging to Nandipet and working as a senior reporter for *Andhra Bhoomi* — recently died in Nizamabad district due to Covid-19 in April.

In July 2020, Madhusudhan Reddy, a Kadapa-based staff reporter working for an online media channel in Tirupati died while award-winning crime reporter Prabir Kumar Pradhan, with India's *News18 Odia TV*, was just 35 when he succumbed to Covid-19 in early November last year.

Bihar to track Covid +ve in homes with AI

DEEPAK KUMAR JHA ■
PATNA/NEW DELHI

With the situation likely to be precarious in Bihar due to the rural penetration of the Covid pandemic, the State has developed a first of its kind initiative in the country to track Covid positive cases under treatment at home.

The system called “Home Isolation Tracking (HIT) Covid” based on artificial intelligence will help the authorities track the every minute details of the corona patients and also would geo-fence the home or place where the positive cases are lodged.

The app-based system launched as a pilot project in five districts of Bihar will enable the administration to keep a track of the Covid positive cases and help in trend analysis in the districts which can enable that how much population was impacted and how much is home isolated.

“The App was designed and developed in a very rapid manner in a short span of time of five days by pulling up more resources by Bihar IT Department and Bihat Electronics Limited (Beltron) in coordination with the Health Department. The App is synced with the Data of Health department, so that the latest records are updated into the HIT COVID app. It also helped to reduce the time of data transferring between one process to another process,” said Santosh Kumar Mall, Secretary, IT Department, Bihar. He is also the CMD of Beltron and Secretary Tourism.



The most important functionality of the app is to transfer the details of all critical patients to the nearest authority. The app is design in a modular way, so that all the authorities at various level are well informed and involved. For instance, a Block Do Administration unit can see the critical patients under their area as well as the District administration units can also see all the patients across the districts. Similarly, States can also drill down to the last patient, who is critical. Currently it has been made functional in the districts of Bhagalpur, Aurangabad, Gopalganj, Nalanda and Supaul.

“In the pilot mode under operation on Monday around 1000 people tracked in these five districts, 952 cases had normal SPO2 level while 23 patients reported to have SPO2 oscillating between 90 to 94. A total of 12 Patients were found

to be critical there by escalating the alert right from block level to the State Health Department,” explained an official in the IT Department.

The system will enable the state machinery to track different data a requisite in monitoring of the Covid situation like daily patients whose details are recorded; district wise numbers of home isolated person; a way forward; development of other functionality where a person can be tagged with the health facility in the district thus making it convenient to know the status of the vacant facilities health and medical units within the State.

For the rollout across the state, all the districts have been provided with a user kit that comprises of user manual, walkthrough of the App and other necessary details to make it user friendly for the stakeholders.

States on full alert to blunt Tauktae’s devastating attack

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday called-up Chief Ministers of Gujarat, Goa and Lieutenant Governor of Daman and Diu to discuss preparation and response to the Cylone Tauktae in the respective States.

Assuring all possible Central assistance to these states and the UT, Prime Minister said the National Disaster Response Forces (NDRF) teams are also active in relief and rescue operations.

Prime Minister spoke to Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant and Daman & Diu’s LG Praful Patel over phone to know the preparation to counter cyclone Tauktae and minimise the damage to the life and property.

Earlier in the day , Prime Minister had spoken to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on the State’s preparedness to deal with the severe cyclone as heavy rainfall battered Mumbai City and 550 Covid-19 patients shifted to the safer camps. Mumbai airport has also been closed for operations till 8 pm.

Thackeray told the Prime Minister that the administration in the state is fully alert.

Prime Minister assured Chief Ministers and the Lt Governor of all the help from the Central Government in

dealing with the intensifying cyclone.

“Had a detailed telephonic discussion with Honourable Prime Minister Narendra Modi about Cyclone Tauktae. Briefed him about the situation and measures taken by the state government,” Rupani tweeted adding the Prime Minister assured all assistance.

Rupani visited the State Emergency Operation Center in Gandhinagar and held a video review meeting with district collectors saying generator back-up has been organised for all Covid19 hospitals in case of power failure.

Modi spoke to Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant over phone to enquire about damage caused in the state by cyclone Tauktae. Two persons had died on Sunday in separate incidents caused due to gusty winds triggered by cyclone Tauktae, which also damaged around 100 houses and blocked some highways due to the falling of trees, the Chief Minister had earlier said.

Similarly, the Prime Minister also had a call with Puducherry LG of Daman and Diu and enquired preparedness of the union territory to face the cyclone along the coast and it’s hinterland.

On Saturday Modi had reviewed the preparedness to deal with the cyclone’s fallout in a high-level meeting which was attended by several ministries and agencies concerned.

SC directs MP K Raju’s medical examination at Army Hospital

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday ordered that the rebel YSR MP, KR Krishnam Raju, be medically examined at Army Hospital, Secunderabad. The rebel MP was arrested by Andhra Pradesh crime branch on Friday under sedition charges. The MP said that he was tortured in custody.

However the Bench of Justices Vineet Saran and BR Gavai did not grant bail to Raju, who had filed a petition to cancel the bail of Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy in corruption cases filed by CBI.

Meanwhile, Andhra based TV Channels TV5 and ABN news also moved the Supreme Court against the FIR registered against them by the state police for sedition and other charges after it telecasted “offending speeches” made by YSR rebel MP Krishnam Raju.

Raju who is at loggerheads with Chief Minister obtained Y category security from Delhi High Court. The YSR Congress has already approached Lok Sabha Speaker to terminate his membership of parliament for several violation of party whips.

Appearing for Raju, Advocate Mukul Rohatgi pleaded for ad interim bail and a medical examination of his client by a neutral or private hospital. The Court was informed that Raju had open heart surgery last year, which is why the magistrate ordered a medical check up by a government and a private hospital. Advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for the Andhra Pradesh government, said that the matter be kept for Friday this week, as the State had not received a copy of the appeal.

Include oxygen audit in your daily efforts, Modi urges doctors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday told doctors that strategy of starting Covid vaccination with front-line warriors paid “rich dividends” in second wave of Covid-19 and urged them to include “oxygen audit” in their daily efforts.

Prime Minister interacted with a group of doctors from across the country, via video conferencing, to discuss the Covid related situation in the country, according to a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office.

Prime Minister thanked the entire medical fraternity & the paramedical staff for the “exemplary fight” displayed by them against the “extraordinary circumstances” of the second wave of Covid.

He said the entire country is indebted to them. Prime Minister noted that be it testing, supply of medicines or set-up of new infrastructure in record time, all these are being done at a fast pace.

Several challenges of oxygen production and supply are being overcome and steps taken by the country to augment human resources, like including MBBS students in Covid treatment, and ASHAs and Anganwadi workers in rural areas, provided extra support to the health system, said the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister underlined that the “strategy of starting vaccination programme with front line warriors has paid rich dividends in the second wave.”

Modi said about 90% of the health professionals in the country have already taken

the first dose. Vaccines have ensured safety of most of the doctors.

Prime Minister requested doctors to include oxygen audit in their daily efforts.

Noting that a large number of patients are undergoing treatment in ‘home isolation’, he requested the doctors to ensure that the home based care of every patient is SOP driven.

He said that telemedicine has played a big role for patients in home isolation, and this service needs to be expanded in rural areas as well.

Prime Minister lauded the doctors who are forming teams and providing telemedicine service in villages.

He appealed to doctors across the states to form similar teams, train final year MBBS students and MBBS interns, and work towards ensuring that all tehils and districts of the country have telemedicine service.

Prime Minister also discussed the challenge of Mucormycosis and said that doctors may need to put in extra effort towards taking active steps and spreading awareness about it. He further underscored the importance of psychological care, along with the importance of physical care.

The meeting was attended by Member (Health) NITI Aayog, Health Secretary, Pharmaceutical Secretary and other officers from PMO, Ministries and Departments of Central Government.

During the interaction, the Doctors thanked the Prime Minister for his guidance and leadership during the recent surge of cases.

2DG works directly on cells infected with Covid: DRDO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From the next week of June as the production span of 2DG will be increased, the Government will be able to make it available to all hospitals and other medical facilities in the country.

“This is because the production time and the cycle of this is about a month. After approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) the industry is working really hard but it will take a month to reach the normal production capacity,” explained the DRDO chief G Sathesh Reddy.

Talking about how the drug will work, Reddy said, “It works directly on the cells infected with Covid and gets absorbed in them. It then stops the virus from multiplying and moving to other healthy cells. It also works on the immune system of the patient so that the person can recover speedily.”

The person needs to take the drug twice a day for around five to seven days. It also depends upon the person’s weight and doctor’s prescription, he added. The 2-DG drug comes in powder form in the

sachet, which is taken orally by dissolving it in water. It accumulates in the virus-infected cells and prevents virus growth by stopping viral synthesis and energy production. Its selective accumulation in virally infected cells makes this drug unique.

During the first wave of the pandemic In April 2020, INMAS-DRDO scientists had started conducting laboratory experiments with the help of the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Hyderabad and found that this molecule works effectively against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and inhibits viral growth.

Based on these results, the DCGI gave nod to Phase-II clinical trials of 2- DG in Covid-19 patients in May 2020. In Phase-II trials (including dose ranging) conducted during May-October 2020, the drug was found to be safe in Covid-19 patients and showed significant improvement in their recovery.

Phase-II was conducted in six hospitals and Phase IIb (dose ranging) clinical trial was conducted at 11 hospitals all over the country. Phase-II trial was conducted on 110 patients.

Armed forces join rescue operation against Tauktae

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Cyclone Tauktae gathers momentum, the Armed forces have got their act together by deploying more than 40 aircraft and helicopters, four warships and 2,000 soldiers comprising 180 teams and nine engineer task forces of the Army. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the preparedness here on Monday besides taking stock of the ongoing operations in the fight against Covid pandemic.

Giving details of the naval readiness, officials said here the navy has deployed three of its frontline warships after receiving messages to rescue over 400 people onboard two barges off the Mumbai coast in view of cyclone Tauktae.

The ships deployed to extend assistance to the two barges are INS Kolkata, INS Kochi and INS Talwar, Navy officials said.

“On receipt of a request for assistance for a barge ‘P305’ adrift off Heera oil fields in Bombay high area with 273 personnel onboard, INS Kochi was swiftly sailed with a despatch for search and rescue assistance,” Indian Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said. The INS



Talwar has also been deployed for the search and rescue operation, he said.

“In response to another SOS received from barge ‘GAL Constructor’ with 137 people onboard about 8NM from Mumbai, INS Kolkata has been sailed with despatch to render assistance,” Commander Madhwal said.

He said several other ships and aircraft have also been readied for HARD (humanitarian assistance and disaster relief) operations in the wake of cyclone Tauktae.

As regards the army deployment, officials said 180 teams and nine engineer task forces are on standby to face

any contingency as Cyclone Tauktae is likely to hit the Gujarat coast on Monday evening.

“Sector commanders and Divisional HQ (headquarter) are in touch with District Collectors and the Revenue Commissioner who is the nodal agency for relief activities in Gujarat,” the Army said in a statement.

The Army said it has identified likely areas — talukas as well as districts — where the impact could be higher and it has geared up its columns to react immediately.

“Focus is to save lives, speedy clearance of routes to ensure movement of oxygen

and standby arrangements at Covid hospitals,” it mentioned.

The Army is continuously monitoring the situation for likely intensity, maximum impact areas and anticipated relief effort in coordination with civil administration, Indian Metrological Department (IMD), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard and other agencies.

Ten integrated teams are poised to be employed for aid to the civil administration of Diu. Moreover, ten teams have already been positioned in the Junagadh area while others are ready to move on short notice of the state administration after analysis of situation as it builds up.

“GOC (General Officer Commanding) of the Army Division located at Ahmedabad attended a coordination meeting chaired by the Honourable Chief Minister of Gujarat and has assured all support,” the Army noted.

At this meeting, it was discussed that all efforts should be made to open the roads at the earliest as Gujarat is a critical supplier of oxygen from its ports to outside state destinations.

The Army said it is providing assistance in creating power back up and making preparations for other contingencies at Covid Hospitals in the affected region including Dhanvantri Covid Hospital in Ahmedabad.

Fewer cases of vein blood clots in India after taking Covishield: Study



ARCHANA JYOTI ■ NEW DELHI

A large study in Denmark Aand Norway may have found slightly increased rates of vein blood clots, including in the brain, among adults who had received their first dose of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine, in India there have been ‘miniscule’ such cases, to be precise 26 serious and severe events following inoculation of the jab being manufactured by Serum Institute of India (SII) as Covishield.

However, no clotting case has been reported post Covaxin shot, said the panel on AEFI (adverse events following immunisation) which submitted its report to the Union Health Ministry on Monday. Covaxin is developed by Bharat Biotech.

The statement on the report shared with the media had no mention of if there was any fatal case due to the AEFI.

“The number of bleeding and clotting events following a Covid vaccine injection, of which 26 out of 498 serious and severe events are “miniscule” and “in line with the expected number of diagnoses while no clotting case has been reported post Covaxin shot,” said the panel. Covaxin is developed by Bharat Biotech.

The panel said that Covishield AEFI reported fewer than 0.61 cases per million doses administered. “It is far below the four cases per million doses reported by the United Kingdom’s health regulator, and the 10 cases per million doses reported by Germany.”

As of April 3, 2021, at least 75,435,381 vaccine doses had been administered of which 68,650,819 doses were of Covishield while 6,784,562 jabs of Covaxin. Of these, 65,944,106 were first doses and 9,491,275 second doses.

Thromboembolic is the formation of a clot in a blood vessel that might also break loose and be carried by the blood stream to plug another vessel.

“It is important to know that thromboembolic events keep occurring in the general population... background and

SUSPECTED THROMBOEMBOLIC SYMPTOMS

Breathlessness; pain in chest; pain in limbs/pain on pressing limbs or swelling in limbs (arm or calf); multiple, pinhead size red spots or bruising of skin in an area beyond the injection site; persistent abdominal pain with or without vomiting; seizures in the absence of previous history of seizures with or without vomiting; severe and persistent headache with or without vomiting (in the absence of previous history of migraine or chronic headache); weakness/paralysis of limbs or any particular side or part of the body (including face); persistent vomiting without any obvious reason; blurred vision or pain in eyes or having double vision and change in mental status or having confusion or depressed level of consciousness.

scientific literature suggests this risk is almost 70 per cent less in persons of South and South East Asian descent in comparison to those from European descent,” the panel said. Nevertheless, the Ministry has advised people to be aware of suspected thromboembolic events. (See Box)

Since the Covid-19 vaccination drive was initiated i.e. from January 16 more than 23,000 adverse events have been reported from 684 of the 753 districts of the country. Of these, only 498 cases were reported to be serious and severe in nature, said the panel.

Dr Rahul Bhargava, senior hematologist, cautioned that vaccine-induced thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT) is real. We need to be cognizant of sign and symptoms and one should take proactive steps for early diagnosis and treatment of this entity which could be life threatening.

The researchers from University of Southern Denmark, and Norwegian Institute of Public Health, had from February 2021 through to 11 March 2021 studied 280,000 people aged 18-65 who received first dose of Oxford-AstraZeneca jab to compare rates of blood clots and related conditions with those in the general populations of the two countries. However, the study published in The BMJ had stressed that the risk of such adverse events is considered low.

Raging cyclone disrupts medical treatment in Covid-hit districts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Extremely severe cyclone Tauktae has diverted the attention and resources of Covid-19-affected districts across Gujarat, Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Goa, Diu and Tamil Nadu, which are already facing shortage of medical supplies from oxygen cylinders to vaccines. As lakhs of people have been shifted to relief shelters, there is a greater risk of virus transmission in crowded evacuation shelters. The situation is likely to worsen if any long-term disruption is caused by the cyclone.

The weather department seems to be clueless as Cyclone Tauktae intensified from a very severe to an extremely severe cyclonic storm rapidly on Monday morning.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had earlier issued a bulletin saying that a cyclonic storm would intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm

and cross the Gujarat coast on May 18 (Tuesday) early morning.

The rapid intensification happened in the early hours of Monday, said the IMD, which had earlier not predicted that Tauktae will intensify into an extremely severe cyclonic storm.

Officials said that Tauktae has been intensifying very rapidly. From a depression formed in the southeast Arabian Sea on May 14 morning, it strengthened into a VSCS by the early hours of May 16. Compared to Tauktae’s 2 days, Cyclone Vayu had taken 36 hours to become a VSCS, while Cyclone Mekanu (4 days) and Cyclone Nisarga (5 days) had developed slower.

These states are on high vigil with transport services suspended and emergency and relief teams on the lookout for possible rescue operations. Tauktae has killed at least 14 people and left a trail of destruction as it brushed past the coastal states of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and

Maharashtra.

Virus lockdown measures, meanwhile, could slow relief work after the storm, and damage from the storm such as uprooted electricity poles, disruption in power supplies may further delay the fights against the Covid-19 in affected states. In Gujarat, vaccinations were suspended for two days and authorities worked to evacuate hundreds of thousands of people to temporary relief shelters.

According to authorities, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation has moved at least 600 patients from Covid centres to government hospitals. While 243 patients were shifted from BKC facility, 176 were removed from Mulund and 184 from Dahisar centre.

In Gujarat, in the Khambhalia Civil Hospital of Devbhumi-Dwarka district, where 120 Covid-19 patients are on oxygen support, authorities have installed two extra diesel generator sets to deal with power outage.

Arthritis to anti-malaria pills all part of Covid-19 oral drug

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From arthritis pills to anti-malaria formulations all are part of the oral drug being developed in several parts of the world as a potential cure for covid-19.

Of a range of oral drug undergoing phase 3 trial, Baricitinib studies are in progress to determine the effectiveness of a Janus kinase (JAK) inhibitor called baricitinib (marketed under the brand name Olumiant for the treatment of rheumatoid arthritis) as a potential silver bullet for Covid-19 patients.

Drug firm Eli Lilly on Monday said it has signed a voluntary licensing agreement with Natco Pharma to further expedite the availability of Baricitinib for Covid-19 patients in India.

Fingolimod, an approved drug (marketed under the brand name Gilenya for the treatment of relapsing forms of multiple sclerosis) is being studied as a treatment

for Covid-19 at the First Affiliated Hospital of Fujian Medical University in Fuzhou, China.

Bamlanivimab was designed to block the SARS-CoV-2 virus from

entering and infecting human cells. Research on Bamlanivimab is still ongoing, including using it in combination with other treatments.

In a small study commissioned by the French government, 20 patients with Covid-19 were treated with a combination of the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine and the macrolide antibacterial drug azithromycin (Zithromax). Results showed that all patients taking the combination were virologically cured within 6 days of treatment.

Besides, Monoclonal antibodies (MABs), Bamlanivimab (LY-CoV555), Bamlanivimab and Etesevimab, Casirivimab and Imdevimab (REGN-COV2), Kinase inhibitors, Kaletra

(lopinavir/ritonavir), Nitazoxanide, Lopinavir and Ritonavir, Remdesivir vaccines are also being tested for Covid treatment.

Keyvzara (sarilumab), which works similarly to tocilizumab, is also being tested for COVID-19. Early results were not promising. Another drug Monoclonal antibodies (MABs) are antibodies made in a lab.

It can take the body weeks to develop natural antibodies, so using MABs can potentially fight off infections sooner.

The Montreal Heart Institute’s COLCORONA trial is examining the anti-inflammatory drug colchicine, which is widely used to treat gout and some heart conditions. Researchers claimed that among 4,488 participants with mild, at-home Covid-19 cases, colchicine helped cut the combined risk of hospitalization or death by about 21 percent, when compared to patients who didn’t receive the drug.

Ready, go?

Are we on the right path to addressing the pandemic?
Do we have the right people on our right side?

One of the most prominent scientific voices of the COVID-19 pandemic, virologist Shahid Jameel has resigned as the head of the Indian SARS-COV-2 Genomics Consortia (INSACOG), the scientific advisory group coordinating the country's genome-sequencing work. The scientific body advising the Union Government on the epidemiological and virological aspects of handling the COVID pandemic is the poorer by the surprise resignation of the virologist. He chaired the INSACOG that the Government set up this January to use genetic sequencing to track the emergence of the COVID variants. The consortium first detected the deadly Indian variant, B.1.617, in February itself and shared the findings with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) under the Health Ministry in early March. It stated that the variant may cause a spurt in infections across the country. The consortium found out that B.1.617 had two mutations, called E484Q and L452R, that could transmit faster and escape antibodies as well. The Health Ministry made this information public on March 24. Responding to a query by the *Reuters* news agency about the lack of a more robust response from the Government to the findings, Shahid Jameel said: "I am worried that science was not taken into account to drive policy. But I know where my jurisdiction stops. As scientists we provide the evidence, policymaking is the job of the Government." He may not have been mending bridges with his well-known candour. Jameel continued to follow the Indian strain and regularly inform the Government.

On May 13, he wrote a signed article in the *New York Times*, critical of India's response, specially about vaccination. "India should vaccinate with far more than the two million daily doses now....In India the virus was mutating around the new year to become more infectious, more transmissible and better able to evade pre-existing immunity....The timing and scale of the third wave would depend on the proportion of vaccinated people, whether newer variants emerge and whether India can avoid additional super-spreader events, like large weddings and religious festivals....." Jameel gave no reason for quitting the post, but he may just have reached the end of the long rope. Previously, Dr Gagandeep Kang, another scientist and the only Indian woman to be elected as Fellow, the Royal Society of London, resigned as the executive director of the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute. She is also the vice-chairperson for Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness, a global consortium facilitating promising vaccine candidates for COVID-19. Kang was also the head of the National COVID-19 task force constituted by the Indian Council of Medical Research for a similar purpose, but disbanded within a month. She is also known to speak out her mind. It is high time that the scientific task force is headed by virologists —with the bureaucrats handling the execution side.

PICTALK



People at an amusement park during the Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations, in Baghdad

India is very much a democracy

Contrary to what the critics might say, we have a nation that is strong enough to accommodate all the viewpoints

Lately, several observers of democracy, the Freedom House of the US, V Dem based in Sweden and the Democracy Index of the UK, have commented that India may be moving towards an electoral autocracy. Such a conclusion is extremely unfair and positively damaging. Evidently, these agencies and others are unable to appreciate India having a strong Government. While the American establishment, especially the Pentagon, would like a viable ally against the expansionist China, these so-called liberals prefer to see India as a permanent Third World Society.

Do they realise that India has a dominantly Hindu ethos which is intrinsically an epitome of freedom? Anyone who believes in the phenomenon of karma is a Hindu. Whether he/she is a whole-time worshipper or an agonistic, it enjoys or suffers the fruit of his karma. No god sits on judgement over any individual or his/her community; there is no anticipation of a doomsday or an end of the world. *Anadi-ananta*, or there is no beginning of life and no end, according to Hindu scriptures.

Karma is reminiscent of physics, which says that for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction. Every action by an individual, whether virtuous or vicious, is spontaneously recorded by the grand nature or its celestial computer as well as its reaction or *bhagya*. There is no single judge, nor only two alternatives for the individual, namely heaven or hell.

Any assertion of a single god resembles Deductive Logic which asserts a premise namely so and so is my God and He is the only God. The corollaries that emanate from the premise are flawlessly consistent. In sharp contrast, Hinduism is a specimen of Inductive Logic. Herein lies the freedom intrinsic to Hinduism. To illustrate this contrast, say, four Hindus happened to meet somewhere and discuss the subject of roses. The person from the north may say that roses are red. The southerner could assert that he has seen only white roses. The easterner may express serious



disagreement and insist that the roses in his region are only pink. The person from western India may say you are wrong; roses are always yellow. After half an hour of animated argumentation, each would say: Possibly in your parts of the country, there are other colours of roses. Someone else would propose: Let us agree to disagree, and request that we exchange samples of all four colours.

A member of an Abrahamic or western background, in such a controversial situation, may well declare that roses are always red; the rest must be other flowers or, perhaps, weeds. Just as a Jew is a Jew, the rest are gentiles. That is where conflict and war begin. Prophet Abraham, when he first saw a vision, said God told him to prove his bonfires by sacrificing his own son Isaac. When he was about to obey God and behead Isaac, the Almighty told him to stop and sacrifice a goat instead. The western religion was thus born in violence; Prophet Moses had a much more violent experience when he freed the Israelis from the clutches



KARMA IS REMINISCENT OF PHYSICS, WHICH SAYS THAT FOR EVERY ACTION, THERE IS AN EQUAL AND OPPOSITE REACTION. EVERY ACTION BY AN INDIVIDUAL, WHETHER VIRTUOUS OR VICIOUS, IS SPONTANEOUSLY RECORDED BY THE GRAND NATURE OR ITS CELESTIAL COMPUTER AS WELL AS ITS REACTION

of the Egyptians and brought them to Judea.

Again, Jesus Christ, the "son of God", was brutally crucified, more violence.

When we went to Jerusalem, one morning the guide took us all to the foot of the Calvary Hill on the top of which Jesus Christ was crucified. There are 14 stations, or stops, to the top of the hill where now is the Church of Sepulchre; the "son of God" was buried therein. At the time, I was too weak to climb all the distance. To please my wife and cousins, I said I would climb to station two and sit down and wait for them to return from the top. However, a magnet in the air drew me on and on. I went up all the 14 stations. I am not a Christian nor have been to a missionary school. So, I climbed to the top of the hill and returned without feeling any great extra weakness or fatigue.

In the deductive religions, there is limited scope for spirituality beyond the scriptures and places of worship. As a result, the believers tend to unite communally and fight in

order to fulfill themselves collectively in the service of God. Whereas, the inductive Hindus are dependent on individual karmas and have no pressure to unite to serve society and, in turn, God. In the bargain, they unite only in the face of severe collective danger. In the bargain, they believe they are peace-loving and in the eyes of others they might seem deficient in courage. But those who believe in the deductive approach have their histories littered with violence and war.

As early as the ascension of Prophet Muhammad in 632 AD, the Caliphs initiated the conquest of the Middle-East, including Morocco in the west, to Iran in the east. The Moors of North Africa invaded Spain in 712 AD and reached Poitiers in France soon. Historian Ian Morris, in his book *WAR*, calls it the "Five Hundred-Years War" but it was actually longer. Eventually, Britain alone conquered one-fourth of the world.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TIME TO STAND UNITED

Sir — I refer to the article '*Corona: some real and some hype*' (May 17). It is true that the Opposition and the so-called section who are against Modi decried lockdown and its adverse implications on livelihood of the people when the first wave struck us. They were against vaccines and questioned its potentiality. Everybody pointed fingers at the Centre.

Now Lockdown 2.0 is being unilaterally announced by the States. Similar is the case with the other States pertaining to the vaccination drive which had some hesitancy among the people earlier because of their false propagation earlier. Won't this lockdown ruin the economy of the States or the people? The creation of such impression among the people is against the people, the States and the entire nation. It is against national interest, basically. It shows the inability of the local Government. When the entire world is fighting Coronavirus, such unwanted criticism by the Opposition does not entail well; in fact, it vitiates the entire atmosphere of recovery from the pandemic.

Secondly, the Centre was forced to keep its commitment on exporting vaccines after getting the raw material. Now the States have invited global tenders for vaccines. Still, the Centre is distributing vaccines to the States. On the other hand, in many States, the medicines, vaccines, oxygen cylinders, Remdesivir or hospital beds are being offered at a high premium. It is not the time to indulge in politics. We, together, should fight the virus tooth and nail

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

ENSURE SAFE CREMATIONS

Sir — The Central Government has directed the States to be on guard against the dumping of dead bodies in the rivers and focus on their safe disposal, besides providing support for ensuring dignified cremation. Witnessing dead bodies in the rivers would amount to among the most undesirable and alarming situations.

The dumping of dead bodies, as well as their safe disposal and protection of

Let's not be hesitant



The surge in COVID-19 cases and the deaths across India, the vaccine hesitation in the rural populace and small towns has emerged as a major obstacle. A large number of people living in villages and small towns are going to "*jhola chhap*" doctors to get treatment for their fever, cough and cold, and not for a COVID test.

The fear of these sections is that "those who test positive will be transferred to COVID hospitals, where no one survives". It is the fear of positive testing that is clearly preventing these villagers from taking the test and the lack of infrastructure is another major reason for the lack of tests, lack of oxygen, hospital beds

Amit Singh Kushwaha | Satna

ARE THE PEOPLE COMPLACENT?

Sir — Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on May 15 accused the Government and the people of becoming complacent after COVID's first wave, which irritated the commoners. It was the day of the Modi Government's "eighth victory anniversary day" (May 16, 2014). But the big question: Is Bhagwat's accusation of the Government truly a warning to Prime Minister

and vaccines.

There are clear instructions from the Government that there should be no loss of wages. Is it being followed? People passing through, many people, especially those belonging to the economically weaker sections, still fear losing their livelihood. Among the other major factors contributing to the vaccine hesitation are the sample collection and the announcement of the report.

There may be a long waiting period. In fact, the "fear" chasing the villagers, and even some urban people who are pushing them to refuse vaccinations or tests, was due to the ignorance and the mass proliferation of fake news, mostly. A huge wall of suspicion, rumours, fake news and fear was hesitation or outright denial for both the vaccine and the trial. The fact of the matter is that the Government and medical fraternity put "ignorance" behind the hesitation of testing and vaccines in India, social workers and most doctors felt that a massive awareness campaign was needed to combat these obstacles.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Narendra Modi and his Government or an indirect way to play cover-up with Modi?

Did Bhagwat suggest that the people became complement because Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief JP Nadda and UP's Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath asked the people to attend their political rallies? Did these same people force the Government to set up the infrastructure for the Kumbh Mela where thousands got infected and took that infection to their native towns and villages? Now, only the public has been punished for this "leniency", losing lakhs of lives and wasting crores of rupees for the mismanagement.

The Government needs to accept that it failed to health infrastructure, beds, oxygen and vaccines

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Stop the cruelty

The Hazaras, for decades at the receiving end, are still facing torture in Afghanistan

Afghanistan, a country where war and bloodshed never end, is again in the news. And for the same reason. As the US troops start withdrawing from Afghanistan, the ultra-radicals have found the right time to teach the minorities a lesson, in a bloody way, probably the only way they know. The Hazaras have always been at the receiving end in the Afghan society. They have faced discrimination but this time it was dastardly and inhumane as the attack targeted young schoolgirls. A bomb attack on Kabul's Sayed-ul-Shuhada High School killed over 60 people; most of the victims were young girls. It is still not clear which group was behind the attack. But whichever group did it, knew that it had the tacit backing of the majority of Afghanistan, or at least it assumed that. The Afghan Taliban and the Government are both condemning each other for the attack. The Taliban have all along held the Hazaras as heretics. Their Deobandi and Salafi belief system finds faults with the Hazara's religious practices and beliefs. The Hazaras are nine per cent of the Afghan population. They are considered the descendants of Changez Khan, who settled in Afghanistan.

Till the 19th century, they were being traded as slaves. Many radical groups still have the same notion about the Hazaras, a "sub-human" group that has no rightful place in that society. During the reign of Amir Abdur Rehman in the late nineteenth century, the slavery stopped but they still had to perform menial tasks. With the checks and balances provided by the US presence no longer in place, the writing on the wall is quite clear. The Hazaras are going to be targeted by the Taliban as they have always had strained relations. They supported Uzbek opponents of Gen Rashid Dostum in 1997, who massacred the Taliban trapped in Mazar-i-Sharif. Many Hazaras live across the border in Pakistan but they aren't safe either. According to a 2019 report by Pakistan's National Commission for Human Rights, at least 509 Hazaras have been murdered since 2013. In *The Kite Runner*, Hassan was a Hazara, and we all know what he had to go through. In Afghanistan's current state, not much can be done. Pakistan is no better but, for its part, it is making efforts to promote reconciliation. By all possibilities, Hazaras may be left to fend for themselves.



PRAFULL GORADIA

SOUNDBITE

The Centre has informed that Delhi will be supplied 3.83 lakh doses in May and no vaccines to be supplied for the age group 18-44 years.



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister
— Manish Sisodia



The Russian side is committing stupidity because it is a mistake to turn former friends into enemies

Czech President
— Milos Zeman

My hands and feet were either frozen, numb or burning, and pretty much useless for two weeks.



Rocker, guitarist
— Eric Clapton



Pressure, anxiety and all were always there. In my case, I realised all my preparations were there in a physical sense. After all of that, the anxiety was always there

Cricketer
— Sachin Tendulkar

Back to the jungle! Went to Mumbai to donate plasma but didn't have enough antibodies for donation.



Model, actor
— Milind Soman

FIRST COLUMN

INDIAN VIEWPOINT ON ISRAEL, PALESTINE

We proudly state that India is a secular State, but are we actually not communal?



MARKANDEY KATJU

For several days the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians has been going on. We in India have seen on *YouTube* rockets being fired by Hamas, which are often intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome, and the demolition of buildings in Gaza by the Israeli Air Force.

What do Indians think about all this?

About 80 per cent Indians are Hindus, and about 16 per cent are Muslims. Almost all Hindus, including the so called 'intellectuals' among them (academics, mediapersons, professionals like lawyers and doctors, writers, etc) support Israel in this conflict, and almost all Indian Muslims support the Palestinians. Only the so-called 'liberals' among the Hindus support the Palestinians, but these would be hardly five per cent of all Hindus. The rest believe all Muslims everywhere in the world to be trouble-makers and terrorists.



This is because despite the Indian Constitution calling India a secular country, the truth is it is highly communal. Most Hindus are communal, and so are most Muslims. This I can say from personal knowledge. When I am with my own relatives, and they are sure no Muslim is around, they often spout venom against Muslims, who are perceived as fanatics and anti-national. When a Muslim is lynched in India most Hindus are indifferent, and some even happy. One terrorist less! In fact, it is because most Hindus are communal that the BJP, which claims to represent the Hindus, won the parliamentary elections in India in 2014 and 2019, and came to power. Thereafter, polarisation of Indian society on religious lines has grown exponentially. No doubt the recent farmers agitation in India cut through caste and religious lines, and the ongoing pandemic has been a reverse to the BJP which is being blamed by the people for not properly handling it. But these are temporary phenomena. Once they are over, the country will again revert to the old status.

The truth is that secularism is a feature of industrial society, as in North America and Europe, but India is still semi-feudal, and most people here are strongly religious. The religious divide between Hindus and Muslims was fanned up by the British rulers by their policy of divide and rule (see my article 'The Truth about Pakistan' and BN Pande's 'History in the service of Imperialism' online), and continued even after Independence in 1947 by some vested interests, particularly after the BJP came to power in 2014.

Some people claim that the recent elections in West Bengal, Kerala and Tamil Nadu where the BJP and/or its ally (like the ADMK) suffered a reverse, shows that the BJP is on the decline. I do not agree. A few carefully engineered communal riots will neutralise this trend.

Unless India becomes a highly industrialised country, communalism will thrive in India. To end communalism, a radical transformation of Indian society is required, which is only possible by a mighty historical united people's struggle, culminating in a revolution, but this is as yet nowhere on the horizon.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court. The views expressed are personal.)

Rise of religions and decline of the West

In an increasingly globalised world, there is greater civilisational, social and ethnic self-consciousness. But cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people



SONAL SHUKLA

India has seen an uprising of religious consciousness, pride, assertiveness and aggression in recent years like never before. The credit or blame is reserved for the BJP generally, though now prominent parties like the AAP, TMC and Congress are also seen as following suit. But is rise of religious and civilizational identity particular to India, or is it a global phenomenon of our times? From Islamic nations to Europe, from Brazil to Philippines the phenomenon seems to be taking shape. Three decades ago, the American political scientist Samuel Huntington made such a prophesy for our times.

The post-Cold war world has changed fundamentally, so he wrote. The world has never been multipolar and multicivilizational before -- while being so interconnected - in the entire human history. The most important distinctions between people in this new world will not be ideological or economic but cultural; most important and dangerous conflicts will occur not between rich or poor but between people belonging to different cultural entities. End of Cold war has led to global resurgence of religions around the world, involving intensification of religious consciousness, rise of fundamentalist movements, escalating ethnic conflicts and ethnic cleansing.

Huntington identifies another significant phenomenon taking place in the post-Cold war world: the relative decline of the western power. East is on its way to equating with the West. The US and UN are unable to suppress bloody local conflicts and rising China is increasingly assertive. Asian civilisations are expanding economically. Economic growth creates basis for enhanced military power and political influence. As the power and self-confidence of non-Western societies increases, they assert their own cultural values and reject those imposed on them by West. Most notable cultural resurgence is happening in Asia and Islamic nations generated by their economic and demographic dynamism.

The multi-civilisational world and rise of religions: Huntington writes empires rise and fall, governments come and go, civilizations remain and survive political, social, economic, even ideological upheavals. The great religions are the foundations on which great civilisations rest (Confucianism, Hindu, Islam, Judeo-Christian). The 20th century ideological conflict between Liberal Democracy and Marxist Leninism was only a fleeting, superficial historical phenomenon, a temporary aberration in the centuries-old human history. History of the world has been the history of civilizations, and conflict between them. Religion is the most important factor in determining civilisation.

The most salient cause of religious revival is the process of social, economic and cultural modernization which has disrupted longstanding system of identity and authority. In an increasingly globalised world, there is greater civilisational, social and ethnic self-consciousness -- because people define themselves by what makes them different from others. Cultural identity is what is most meaningful to most people.

In this new world, local politics is the politics of ethnicity; global politics is the politics of civilizations. The rivalry of superpower is replaced by the clash of civilizations. Global politics began to be reconfigured along cultural lines: civilizational identities are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration and conflict. Present day conflicts between West and China, West and Islam, cohesion and unity of Islamic nations, China and Islamic connection against



THE GREATEST CHALLENGE COMES FROM ISLAM AND CHINA, THAT EMBODY GREAT CULTURAL TRADITION VERY DIFFERENT FROM WEST AND, IN THEIR EYES, SUPERIOR TO IT. THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY, WHEN A CIVILISATION'S POWER HAS EXPANDED, IT HAS ALWAYS USED THAT POWER TO EXTEND ITS VALUES, PRACTICES AND INSTITUTIONS TO OTHER SOCIETIES

The author is a public policy analyst and a lawyer. The views expressed are personal.



West, Turkish and Iranian support to Azerbaijan in conflict can all be explained on the basis of this theory. **Is western liberalism universal?** Most non-western nations take offence to the West's sitting at the jury on the level of democracy and freedom in their governing systems--while the non-western world can never judge the west. Huntington questions the imposition of western liberalism on the non-western world: its universalism. He states that western assumption that the only river of civilization is our own and all others are either tributaries to it or lost in the desert sand is an egocentric illusion of the West. Universalism justifies western cultural domination over others by making other societies ape western practices and institutions. What west calls universal, others see as imperialism. It increasingly brings West into conflict with other civilizations, most seriously with Islam and China.

He states major differences in political and economic development among civilizations are clearly rooted in their different cultures. East Asian economic success as well as difficulties in achieving stable democratic political system, has its source in East Asian culture. Islamic culture explains failure of emergence of democracy in much of Islamic world. Japan and India are the only two civilizations which had a class system paralleling that of the West; why only two non-western societies to sustain major democratic governments. The recent coup in Myanmar, dictatorial regimes in Russia and Turkey despite their proximity to the West, failure of West to import democracy to Iraq, Afghanistan,

North African nations after Arab Spring can be understood by Huntington's theory.

Huntington dismisses Fukuyama's End of History theory that predicts victory of western liberalism over all other ideologies. The collapse of communism in Soviet Union doesn't necessarily mean that other societies will import the Western ideology of liberal democracy - this underestimates the non-western culture's creativity, resilience and individuality. This thinking is rooted in Cold War perspective, that liberal democracy is the only alternative to communism. There are many forms of authoritarianism, nationalism, corporatism and market communism (China) that are alive and well in the world today. More significantly there are religious alternatives that lie outside secular ideologies.

Modernisation and Westernisation: Huntington questions that modernization essentially needs westernization. No one political ideology or set of institutions -- elections, civic associations and other hallmark of western life -- are necessary for economic growth. Non-western societies have modernised and can do so without adopting values, institutions, practices of the west. Gulf nations and East Asian economies are the living examples of this in our times.

In fundamental ways the world is becoming more modern and less western. Modernisation strengthens cultures adopting it and reduces relative power of the west. At individual level, modernisation breaks traditional bonds and social relations, creating crises of identity to which religious provides an answer.

Decline of the West: The challenge

that the west faces is not just economic but more importantly to its political influence and liberal value system. The greatest challenge comes from Islam and China, that embody great cultural tradition very different from West and in their eyes superior to it. Throughout the history when a civilisation's power has expanded, it has always used that power to extend its values, practices and institutions to other societies. The era dominated by western ideologies is over, new era will have multiple and diverse civilizations interact, compete and coexist and accommodate with each other.

Second generation indigenisation phenomenon is taking place all over the non-western world. In 1960-70s pro-west governments and west-leaning (often western educated) leaders were threatened by coups and revolutions; in 1980-90s they were increasingly in danger of being ousted by elections. Electoral competitions are won by most popular appeals of ethnic, nationalistic and religious character.

Another challenge that the West faces is the democracy paradox: democratisation conflicts with westernisation. Democracy is inherently a parochialising, not cosmopolitanising, process. As non-western societies take to democracy, or deepen democracy, they seek to assert their own value systems and rebel against the western diktats, often a change from friendly dictator to unfriendly democratic regime for the west. Regionalisation will be the central trend in post-cold war global politics. The US is not likely to have the military capability to manage regional contingencies.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE AAP IS BEHIND THESE POSTERS. I AM BEHIND THE POSTERS. ARREST ME AND OUR MLAs BUT DO NOT HARASS POOR PEOPLE WHO PASTE POSTERS.
— DURGESH PATHAK
AAP LEADER



I WONDER HOW MANY WALLS OF DELHI THE POLICE HAS THOUGHT OF CLEANING, EXCEPT THOSE WHERE PM MODI IS CRITICISED.
— ABHISHEK MANU SINGHVI
CONGRESS LEADER



My heart is in the West though I am in the East

When your country burns, there is nothing more important left to do than be with all your loved ones around, all together

For the last few days, despite the very challenging times in India, and Delhi in particular, where I have been living and working for the past two years, I haven't really "been" in Delhi. I mean: physically, I have. But while I am physically here, my thoughts, my prayers, and my fears are in Israel. My family, my friends, my co-workers, live mostly in areas that have been fired on by Hamas, and so have had to spend the last few days and nights running between their apartments and their shelters.

As a matter of fact, since last Tuesday, Hamas, the terrorist organization controlling Gaza, has fired about 3000 rockets towards Israel. Three thousand times in less than a week, the Israeli population, the elderly, the adults and children, had to move as quickly as possible and run to



ORLY GOLDSCHMIDT

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the closest bomb shelter. Or to the stairway. Or as far as possible from their apartments' windows. And then, after hearing the explosion and feeling the building shaking, they had to go back to what they were doing before the alarm started and try to keep on living their lives, as if this whole situation was normal.

It is almost impossible to understand this when you don't experience it (and God, I pray that no one has to ever experience this), but when the alarm sounds, you have less than 40 seconds (if you live in the South, you may not even have 10 seconds) to run to a shelter. Less than 40 seconds. Think about it: what can you do in less than 40 seconds? It takes me more time to put my shoes on. More time to write a text message to a friend. Much more time to wake my kids up in the morning!



I am a mother of three small children. Just to imagine -- practically -- how I would manage taking the three of

them to the shelter in the middle of the night worries me. What if I don't manage? What does it mean? And what if we

live in a place where there is no shelter?

These surreal situations and dilemmas happen day after day here. A few days ago, an Indian nurse, Soumya Santhosh, who had been working in Ashkelon in the South of Israel for the last eight years, was killed by a rocket fired at the house by Hamas. Soumya Santhosh, the mother of a nine-year-old boy, was working as a caregiver for an elderly woman, and was waiting for the woman's daughter to come home. When the alarm started, she didn't have the time to run to a shelter and unfortunately got hit. A matter of seconds...

My sister doesn't have a shelter in her apartment. When the alarm sounds, they don't have the time to run to a "public shelter". So, they remain at home all together, my sister, her husband, and

their children, and they wait until it passes. Imagine what kind of a feeling that must be, to know that you cannot protect your own children from danger, that you cannot calm them, reassure them.

When our children are born, we are quite clueless, but we all know one thing for sure: we will do everything we can to protect them and give them the best childhood possible. And no one, no one should live through what the families in Israel have been living.

My Indian friends and colleagues from Delhi have been sending me texts since Tuesday, showing love and support, and I know we are blessed to be serving in India in those times. And from here, all I can do is pray for better days in Israel and its surroundings, pray for the day that our neighbours can be our partners, and hope for more

peaceful days and for a brighter future.

There was a Jewish poet who lived in Spain in the Middle Ages, Rabbi Yehuda Halevi. He wanted one thing more than anything in his life: to be able to go to the Promised Land, to Israel. He said: "My heart is in the East and I am in the West".

This sentence reminds Israelis of those who didn't have the chance to go to Israel through the centuries but were dreaming of it. Today, this sentence resonates in me more than ever. As I am sure that it does for my colleagues, Israeli diplomats abroad too. Because when your country burns, you want nothing more than to be with your loved ones, at home, all together. So today, I am in the East, but my heart is in the West, with my loved ones.

WPI inflation hits double digits in April at 10.49 pc

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation shot up to an all-time high of 10.49 per cent in April, on rising prices of food items, crude oil and manufactured goods, and experts believe that the uptrend is likely to continue.

This is the fourth straight month of uptick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation. In March, 2021, it was 7.39 per cent.

The low base in April last year, when WPI inflation was (-) 1.57 per cent, also contributed to the spike in April 2021.

“The annual rate of inflation in April 2021, is high primarily because of rise in prices of crude petroleum, mineral oils viz petrol, diesel etc, and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year,” the Ministry of Commerce and Industry said.

Inflation in food articles in April was 4.92 per cent as



prices of protein-rich items like egg, meat and fish hardened. Inflation in this basket was 3.24 per cent in March 2021.

This was led by 10.88 per cent inflation in ‘egg, meat and fish’ basket during April, 10.74 per cent in pulses and 27.43 per cent in fruits.

In vegetables, the rate of price rise was (-) 9.03 per cent, against (-) 5.19 per cent in the previous month.

Inflation in the fuel and power basket was 20.94 per cent in April, while in manu-

factured products it was 9.01 per cent.

ICRA Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said at 4.9 per cent inflation in food articles was at a six-month high and data shows a greater impact of supply chain disruptions at the wholesale level.

“We expect the headline WPI inflation to rise further to 13-13.5 per cent in the current month before commencing a downtrend, whereas the core-WPI inflation may continue to rise over the next three prints to a peak of around 10.5

PRICES OF FOOD ITEMS, CRUDE HARDEN

per cent. “The likely trajectory of the WPI inflation supports our view that there is no space for rate cuts to support the faltering growth momentum, even as we expect the monetary stance to remain accommodative,” Nayar added.

India Ratings and Research Principal Economist Sunil Kumar Sinha said the impetus to April 2021 inflation came from all the three major groups namely primary article, fuel and power and manufactured products which recorded an inflation of 10.2 per cent, 20.9 per cent and 9 per cent respectively in April 2021.

“Within food components except cereals many major items such as pulses, fruits, eggs, meat, tea etc recorded double digit inflation. In April 2021 core inflation rose to 8.3 per cent. Even inflation ex-fruit and vegetables rose to 10.7 per cent in April indicating that the upsurge in wholesale inflation is not only due to seasonal factors,” Sinha added.

Home sales across top 7 cities up 21% in Q1 2021: PropEquity

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Sale of housing units rose by 21 per cent across top seven cities in India in the first quarter of 2021 to 1,05,183 units against 87,236 units in Q1 2020, according to a PropEquity report.

However, the new supply or launches of housing units decreased by 40 per cent in the same period to 59,737 units in Q1 2020 as against 1,00,343 units. Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, MMR, NCR, and Pune are the cities where home sales witnessed a growth in Q1 2021 versus Q1 2020 at 13 per cent, 29 per cent, 16 per cent, 26 per cent and 6 per cent, respectively. Only Kolkata witnessed downfall of 20 per cent in home sales during the same period.

“Beginning of Q1 was relatively better for Indian realty as compared to last year and there was higher demand in ready to move in units and the projects nearing completion. However, the second wave of Covid will lead to muted



demand going forward and we expect sales to pick up post second wave of Covid ending which should be around Q3 or Q4 onwards.” Founder and Managing Director Samir Jasuja said. India’s IT capital, Bengaluru saw a rise of 13 per cent in home sales in Q1 2021 at 12,263, but new launches decreased by 40 per cent at 8,492 units. Chennai saw a 29 per cent increase in home sales in Q1 2021 and new launches decreased by 8 per cent to 4,044 units. Kolkata saw an increase of 26 per cent in home sales in the first quarter at 41,323 units, whereas new launches fell by 48 per cent to 20,269 units.

Only NCR witnessed an increase in both home sales and new launches by 6 per cent and

136 per cent respectively in Q1 2021.

Ambience Group President (Sales & Marketing) Ankush Kaul said: “The current Covid wave has hit the sector when Indian real estate housing demand was on the growth trajectory in Q1 of 2021.”

“We believe the current state of lockdown is short-lived and the execution of the ongoing projects would not be impacted much in terms of delivery timelines. Our two under completion projects in Gurgaon and Noida were witnessing steady demand in Q1 and we believe once the current Covid spread in India is stabilised, the end user demand will again witness growth,” he said.

Federal Bank shares gain over 2 pc after earnings

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Federal Bank on Monday gained over 2 per cent after the company reported a nearly 59 per cent jump in its standalone net profit for the quarter ended March.

The stock closed the day with a gain of 2.45 per cent at ₹81.65 on the BSE.

During the day, it jumped 4.70 per cent to ₹83.45.

On the NSE, it gained 2.32 per cent to close at ₹81.50. Private sector lender Federal Bank on Monday reported a nearly 59 per cent jump in its standalone net profit at ₹478 crore for the quarter ended March.

The bank had posted a net profit of ₹301 crore in the same quarter of the financial year 2019-20.

The profit was higher sequentially also against ₹404 crore in December 2020 quarter.

Sensex, Nifty log best single-day gains in 7 weeks; banking shares steal limelight

MUMBAI (PTI): Equity gauges Sensex and Nifty registered their biggest single-session gains in about seven weeks

on Monday as investor optimism returned amid a consistent drop in new Covid-19 cases in the country.

The BSE benchmark Sensex zoomed 848.18 points or 1.74 per cent to end at 49,580.73; and the NSE barom-

eter Nifty surged 245.35 points or 1.67 per cent to settle at 14,923.15 -- the biggest one-day gains for both indices since

March 30. On the Sensex chart, IndusInd Bank was the top gainer, rallying over 7 per

cent, followed by SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, HDFC and Bajaj Finserv.

On the other hand, L&T, Bharti Airtel, Nestle India, Sun Pharma, PowerGrid, Maruti Suzuki and HUL were

the laggards. Of the Sensex constituents, 23 closed with gains and 7 suffered losses.

NIFTY 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY50	14756.25	14938.00	14725.35	14923.15	245.35	
INDIUSDBK	897.10	959.90	897.10	958.00	67.15	
SBIN	364.40	385.20	363.65	384.45	24.00	
ICICIBANK	603.25	634.50	601.20	623.90	26.60	
HDFCBANK	1395.15	1442.60	1381.30	1439.00	52.15	
AXISBANK	691.50	710.30	684.40	708.65	23.65	
UPL	757.00	785.00	752.05	768.50	25.20	
HINDALCO	384.50	395.35	377.25	395.00	12.20	
TATAMOTORS	315.40	323.85	311.40	321.75	9.50	
ADANIPORTS	740.00	760.00	737.50	754.20	20.65	
HDFC	2454.00	2495.00	2435.00	2490.00	68.00	
EICHERMOT	2417.00	2489.95	2410.65	2481.10	65.90	
BAJAJFINSERV	10970.00	11375.00	10942.65	11240.00	268.50	
ULTRACEMCO	6379.90	6554.25	6331.00	6522.00	153.90	
KOTAKBANK	1717.00	1755.00	1710.00	1746.50	39.85	
BAJFINANCE	5350.00	5490.00	5315.05	5437.95	107.60	
SHRECEM	26749.00	27399.95	26600.45	27250.00	536.40	
GRASIM	1373.10	1400.40	1362.45	1394.00	27.00	
TATASTEEL	1138.00	1158.20	1130.15	1153.45	21.35	
M&M	740.00	756.00	735.40	752.20	10.70	
ONGC	113.95	115.40	112.25	114.50	1.55	
HEROMOTOCO	2835.00	2884.40	2813.00	2851.00	38.65	
TATAMOTORS	660.00	657.40	640.10	653.60	8.45	
HUL	914.00	922.20	910.10	922.00	11.65	
JSWSTEEL	707.90	727.40	694.05	716.00	8.90	
RELIANCE	1937.30	1963.45	1930.40	1958.85	21.55	
DRREDDY	5250.00	5260.00	5145.00	5248.00	51.15	
INFY	1320.30	1334.95	1310.20	1328.55	12.15	
IOC	101.65	102.25	100.10	101.90	0.85	
TITAN	1462.00	1470.80	1448.00	1467.00	11.15	
TCS	3055.00	3075.20	3036.00	3072.75	21.25	
WIPRO	498.45	503.70	495.00	500.00	2.45	
DIVISLAB	4020.00	4067.00	4020.00	4039.70	19.15	
COALINDIA	147.00	149.10	144.00	147.40	0.60	
TECHN	954.00	957.95	943.95	955.85	3.65	
ASIANPAINT	2782.00	2824.20	2747.55	2782.00	7.50	
ITC	216.80	217.00	214.15	212.75	0.50	
BAJAJ-AUTO	3845.00	3924.40	3833.20	3856.45	7.65	
BRITANNIA	3518.95	3533.90	3496.05	3506.00	4.55	
BPCL	44.05	44.65	43.80	44.65	0.40	
HINDUNILVR	2385.00	2395.00	2366.50	2375.45	-1.40	
POWERGRID	23.95	24.10	23.20	23.80	-0.35	
NTPC	111.20	112.25	109.95	111.15	-0.25	
MARUTI	6716.50	6838.40	6697.55	6715.00	-21.40	
SUNPHARMA	688.00	698.50	680.00	688.55	-2.90	
HDFCLIFE	671.00	675.30	662.85	666.90	-3.70	
NESTLEINDIA	17220.00	17230.00	17000.60	17060.00	-164.15	
SBILIFE	978.40	988.80	961.20	964.70	-13.70	
LTI	1433.00	1441.00	1388.20	1388.40	-27.10	
BHARTIARTL	563.95	563.95	545.80	547.80	-12.60	
CIPLA	895.00	905.00	870.00	883.45	-20.60	

NIFTY NEXT 50						
SCRIP	OPEN	High	LOW	LTP	CHANGE	
NIFTY NEXT 50	35988.30	36278.10	35886.85	36242.35	451.55	
ADANIEN	1230.00	1299.00	1227.45	1291.00	70.65	
MOTHERSUMI	231.00	245.20	227.20	240.30	11.85	
ADANITRANS	1096.00	1200.55	1096.00	1200.55	57.15	
ADANIGREEN	1142.45	1142.45	1142.45	1142.45	54.40	
MUTHOOTFIN	1183.00	1234.00	1172.00	1225.95	58.00	
HAVELLS	1003.00	1036.95	998.00	1031.50	33.95	
DLF	252.90	261.30	250.40	258.60	8.05	
BOSCHTL	13880.00	14250.00	13722.85	14210.00	437.95	
SIEMENS	2002.00	2073.75	1965.15	2055.55	62.55	
MRF	76790.00	78464.30	76000.00	78147.80	2012.05	
VEDL	27.60	27.90	27.35	27.60	7.20	
PNB	37.20	37.80	36.85	37.75	0.95	
COLPAL	1583.55	1640.00	1560.65	1602.90	35.95	
BERGEPAINT	755.90	781.95	742.40	768.25	15.50	
DMART	2864.00	2907.90	2840.30	2899.80	55.15	
UBL	1213.80	1247.80	1210.00	1229.80	20.05	
YESBANK	13.25	13.40	13.25	13.40	0.20	
TORNTHPHM	2740.00	2782.70	2721.00	2762.95	40.65	
BAJAJHLDNG	3510.00	3570.00	3491.00	3555.00	50.80	
NMDC	186.25	188.30	179.05	188.25	2.50	
BANDHANBNK	284.50	290.75	287.40	291.40	3.55	
ACC	1877.35	1907.75	1867.40	1899.35	22.55	
HDFCAMC	2795.00	2835.00	2793.20	2830.00	30.55	
SBICARD	978.00	987.95	975.00	980.00	10.15	
PEL	1635.90	1663.80	1624.00	1650.00	16.35	
AMBUJACEM	307.90	317.00	304.55	310.00	2.90	
LUPIN	1194.00	1214.00	1170.00	1188.95	9.60	
APOLLOHOSP	3147.00	3189.95	3115.10	3158.65	17.70	
INDIGO	1694.00	1709.05	1670.00	1704.10	9.35	
ABBOTINDIA	16110.00	16284.95	16100.00	16177.00	67.00	
IGL	154.00	155.00	153.30	153.30	0.60	
JUBLFOOD	2813.00	2848.00	2790.55	2830.00	7.75	
ICICIGI	1474.00	1497.45	1461.15	1477.00	3.90	
PETRONET	243.10	244.30	240.75	242.75	0.35	
PIDILITIND	1886.00	1922.95	1855.40	1888.90	0.65	
DABUR	537.10	539.25	532.20	535.00	0.00	
MCDOWELL-N	571.00	571.00	563.00	563.00	0.00	
ALKEM	3026.00	3060.00	3025.00	3098.00	-0.35	
INDUSTOWER	245.70	245.90	239.00	243.95	-0.40	
MARICO	47.55	47.80	46.80	47.05	-1.50	
AUROPHARMA	1009.90	1017.00	1000.20	1003.00	-3.70	
BIOCON	393.65	393.65	384.60	385.90	-2.90	
NAUKRI	4300.00	4328.90	4240.00	4255.00	-36.65	
CADILAC	624.75	628.40	610.00	611.90	-5.25	
PGH	13421.00	13529.05	13380.05	13410.00	-127.60	
HINDPETRO	255.40	257.80	250.80	251.75	-2.45	
GODREJCP	853.00	857.20	836.65	842.90	-9.30	
ICICIPRULI	562.00	567.90	546.00	548.90	-11.25	

BSE 500

Script	Open	High	Low	LTP	ASHOKLEY	112.40	116.05		
SBIN	363.85	385.50	363.85	383.40	ULTRACEMCO	6393.70	6531.15	6345.00	6531.40
JINDALSTEEL	422.70	442.50	412.35	436.55	TRENT	712.75	815.00	760.10	794.30
TATASTEEL	1140.00	1158.20	1103.65	1150.65	GRLENMARK	72.62	61.40	59.20	604.15
TATAMOTORS	315.95	323.80	311.50	321.10	APOLLOHOSP	3170.60	3190.00	3114.45	3151.05
UPL	754.90	785.00	753.75	770.55	TATAMETALI	1069.00	1166.80	99.70	1144.25
SAIL	127.95	131.50	123.15	130.55	BHARATFARPO	645.15	668.00	641.80	655.10
INDUSINDBK	893.00	960.00	893.00	956.20	GRANULES	323.70	327.00	312.80	321.90
KOTAKBANK	1718.00	1753.40	1712.55	1744.00	COFORGE	3355.00	3487.15	3338.85	3363.05
HDFCBANK	1394.00	1442.00	1381.45	1439.95	JBULHSGFIN	185.70	188.55	184.55	187.65
RELIANCE	1938.70	1963.15	1931.00	1960.55	VIPIND	337.00	344.50	337.00	341.80
HDFCLIFE	670.00	675.20	661.90	666.35					
CIPLA	899.45	905.00	870.00	881.05					
ITC	216.55	217.00	211.60	212.55					
ADANIEN	1235.00	1298.55	1227.15	1289.45					
BAJFINANCE	5335.20	5489.90	5318.00	5424.40					
ICICIBANK	602.30	624.00	601.05	623.60					
BHEL	69.20	71.80	66.90	71.20					
AXISBANK	687.00	710.00	684.80	709.25					
ADANIAPORTS	740.00	759.90	737.50	754.05					
LT	1431.00	1441.05	1368.50	1386.85					
BATAINDIA	1415.00	1441.80	1372.80	1405.20					
FEDERALBNK	81.10	83.45	77.65	81.65					
MOTHERSUMI	230.00	245.25	227.00	240.10					
BALKRISIND	1925.00	2138.00	1878.35	2084.80					
INFY	1319.70	1335.00	1319.70	1329.15					
NMDC	186.90	188.25	179.00	186.55					
HFLCL	38.00	43.75	37.25	42.60					
MARUTI	6737.00	6837.60	6697.30	6723.50					
BANKBARODA	74.75	77.75	73.80	77.15					
DRREDDY	5286.75	5286.75	5143.50	5251.25					
HINDALCO	385.90	395.20	377.20	393.05					
BHARTIARTL	567.90	567.90	546.50	549.55					
PNB	37.10	37.80	36.85	37.65					
JSWSTEEL	709.90	722.20	694.50	714.40					
TCS	3060.00	3077.00	3035.65	3069.80					
POLYMED	1017.00	1035.05	982.00	1001.10					
PVR	1181.90	1181.90	1150.75	1156.65					
DEEPAKNI	1750.00	1764.90	1714.00	1718.30					
CALPAL	1590.00	1639.70	1559.20	1596.00					
TATACHEM	702.00	713.20	690.70	704.00					
ATGL	1206.50	1300.00	1206.50	1291.25					
CADILAC	628.00	628.00	609.90	611.60					
NATIONALUM	71.35	74.90	70.20	76.00					
HDFC	2445.00	2464.90	2436.00	2485.90					
ADANIPOWER	96.85	98.35	96.20	97.00					
TATAPOWER	102.80	104.25	101.70	103.40					
VENKYS	2240.00	2445.70	2103.55	2382.40					
HCLTECH	913.40	927.00	910.85	921.90					
IDEA	8.73	8.73	8.51	8.56					
ESCORTS	1170.00	1171.15	1113.05	1141.40					
SHILPAAM	462.00	519.80	462.00	509.55					
ASIANPAINT	2789.40	2822.55	2747.95	2782.75					
BANDHANBNK	282.50	285.45	278.60	284.00					
AARTIDRUGS	761.25	779.25	736.95	752.40					
POWERGRID	230.00	231.15	227.20	228.20					
ADANITRANS	1087.00	1200.65	1087.00	1200.60					
LUPIN	1194.00	1194.00	1169.85	1188.95					
MUTHOOTFIN	1175.10	1234.00	1175.00	1221.35					
SUNPHARMA	689.00	699.60	679.95	686.95					
BAJAJFINSV	10980.50	11371.40	10952.70	11247.55					
SKSTRANSFIN	1327.00	1397.95	1321.00	1389.00					
VEDL	277.00	279.70	273.35	278.80					
TATAELSI	3514.95	3697.90	3350.00	3628.35					
INDIAMART	690.00	7090.00	6648.10	7038.60					
KSCL	744.80	815.85	731.05	772.65					
ONGC	113.25	115.40	112.30	114.25					
CANBK	149.00	154.95	148.90	153.60					
GRAPHITE	721.00	759.50	708.00	741.20					
CHOLAFIN	533.70	545.00	527.75	543.00					
TECHM	933.00	956.50	943.05	953.65					
M&MFIN	153.00	156.20	150.15	155.55					
HINDCOFIN	173.10	175.20	166.25	170.15					
ZEEL	191.35	193.80	187.25	188.25					
APOLLOTYRE	210.00	212.15	206.60	210.15					
MRPL	76827.75	78386.80	76001.05	78198.95					
ADANIGREEN	1139.00	1142.55	1139.00	1142.55					
RLBANK	190.00	197.00	188.15	196.95					
IOC	101.90	102.20	100.10	102.00					
NAUKRI	4282.50	4346.15	4242.00	4255.85					
SIEMENS	1987.00	2073.25	1968.10	2060.30					
ALKYLAMINE	3689.05	3689.80	3465.00	3497.70					
CAPPL	569.00	648.10	595.90	630.45					
WOCKPHARMA	639.00	662.00	627.50	638.85					
LALPATHLAB	2662.00	2784.45	2630.65	2755.75					
CHAMBLFERT	274.00	284.00	270.40	281.10					
VOLTA	1000.00	1000.00	953.95	983.15					
TATACONSUL	649.00	660.00	641.00	653.70					
LAURUSLABS	468.25	476.00	460.00	472.00					
BAJAJ-AUTO	3848.35	3923.00	3837.75	3865.75					
COALINDIA	147.95	149.15	144.10	148.25					
TVSMOTOR	605.00	630.95	595.70	617.10					
BIRLACORPN	1055.30	1184.35	1044.40	1118.80					
DLF	3610.00	3610.00	3525.95	3585.50					
TATACOFFEE	161.00	169.00	158.55	165.95					
WSOLAR	26.40	26.40	23.60	24.60					
POLYCAP	1620.00	1688.00	1620.00	1675.30					
GAIL	153.00	154.75	150.40	153.10					
TRIDENT	16.75	16.85	16.10	16.10					
AARTIIND	1725.00	1758.00	1700.00	1743.90					
BEL	145.00	149.35	143.95	148.10					
HAVELLS	1010.00	1036.00	988.60	1031.35					
WIPRO	499.40	503.70	495.00	499.65					
TITAN	1456.00	1470.75	1438.00	1467.85					
AUBANK	955.00	955.00	929.00	942.10					
M&M	742.00	755.90	735.55	753.30					
ABCAPITAL	126.00	130.00	123.50	125.30					
GNFC	393.70	405.00	385.00	400.45					

RUPEE vs Dollar

73.22

(+7p)

73.35

(+16p)

73.34

(+1p)

73.29

(+13p)

73.42

(-8p)

73.51

(+27p)

7

10

11

12

14

17

*Provisional

RTI GRAPHICS

Inverted Scale

MAY

JUSTDIAL

749.80

749.80

707.80

729.70

IRCTC

1768.00

1581.00

1744.00

1763.55

IDFCFIRSTB

54.15

55.95

54.15

55.80

TATAMTRDVR

149.00

152.35

148.10

150.95

IOCLP

629.10

636.00

610.00

613.40

NTPC

111.90

112.15

110.00

111.50

SHBLFE

50.70

52.25

50.35

51.15

AEGISLOG

333.90

333.90

321.65

327.85

EITHERMOT

2432.00

2488.95

2425.25

2483.40

WELSPUNIND

103.70

103.90

96.55

98.30

RAJESHEXO

516.90

517.05

511.80

513.00

SOUTHBANK

11.29

11.35

10.64

10.90

SPARC

224.20

241.90

222.55

227.00

GODFREJCP

85.90

86.80

85.10

88.45

HDFCLTD

83.90

85.30

83.75

84.70

KBRL

78.30

80.60

71.80

78.60

HEROMOTOCO

2489.50

2883.00

2813.65

2854.20

MMTC

53.55

56.40

51.50

55.40

PTC

94.90

98.20

94.20

97.25

BEMIL

1287.10

1321.20

1280.75

1303.20

PILITIND

1899.00

1902.85

1890.05

1891.10

SHREECEM

26700.00

27380.00

26065.65

2728.00

MINDTREE

2107.00

2116.00

2070.80

2078.60

IDEPARRY

414.80

435.60

402.10

425.65

CMX

1525.00

1599.00

1525.00

1552.10

BAJAJCON

281.50

287.90

278.80

280.25

DMAT

2864.00

2909.00

2841.80

2895.00

NLCINDIA

63.40

64.70

60.55

62.00

MALAPPURAM

152.15

155.75

150.55

154.85

BIOCON

392.10

393.70

384.50

385.70

MOIL

181.95

186.95

175.35

179.60

BERGEPAINT

760.00

781.80

743.70

768.70

BRITANNIA

3510.15

3532.45

3490.05

3505.70

BALRAMCHIN

303.90

322.00

293.50

314.10

KPITTECH

223.95

240.60

223.20

237.65

GODREJAGRO

556.90

564.00

540.20

545.05

BSOFT

255.90

270.00

255.90

260.45

DIVISLAB

4030.00

4065.85

4022.40

4043.20

HINDUNILVR

2385.00

2394.90

2367.30

2376.00

JSWENERGY

114.50

115.75

110.25

113.10

BANKINDIA

71.00

76.30

74.55

75.50

DHANUKA

900.00

949.50

896.10

907.20

GUGAN

518.00

534.50

518.00

528.15

DABUR

538.95

539.05

530.50

538.50

PICAPRILI

564.95

567.45

545.55

548.90

EXIDEIND

182.15

184.40

181.15

183.75

HEG

1212.55

1240.90

1208.60

1223.10

GMM

4490.00

4722.25

4425.40

4575.60

HDFCAMC

2782.30

2834.00

2782.30

2823.05

IEL

381.10

385.10

370.25

371.60

PXEL

1645.00

1664.45

1625.00

1650.05

FINTECH

5343.00

5343.00

5180.50

5215.25

TPZTRPHARM

2725.00

2782.05

2719.75

2764.75

SRF

6290.00

6393.55

6255.75

6359.10

AUROPHARMA

1007.00

1016.50

1000.00

1002.10

GESHIP

412.65

429.00

403.40

409.45

IRCON

99.95

101.00

99.45

100.80

AVANTI

548.00

556.70

531.60

541.65

TANLA

866.20

912.05

862.00

912.05

RCF

84.00

84.85

81.80

82.45

CENTURYCEY

475.30

490.50

475.00

480.75

GSFC

116.30

1

Gaza tunnels destroyed in heavy airstrikes

AP ■ GAZA CITY (GAZA STRIP)

The Israeli military unleashed a wave of heavy airstrikes on the Gaza Strip early on Monday, saying it destroyed 15 kilometers (nine miles) of militant tunnels and the homes of nine Hamas commanders.

Residents of Gaza awakened by the overnight barrage described it as the heaviest since the war began a week ago, and even more powerful than a wave of airstrikes in Gaza City the day before that left 42 dead and flattened three buildings.

That earlier attack was the deadliest in the current round of hostilities between Israel and Gaza's Hamas rulers.

There was no immediate word on the casualties from the latest strikes. A three-story building in Gaza City was heavily damaged, but residents said the military warned them 10 minutes before the strike and everyone cleared out. They said many of the airstrikes hit nearby farmland.

Gaza's mayor, Yahya Sarraj, told *Al-Jazeera TV* that the strikes had caused extensive damage to roads and other infrastructure.

"If the aggression continues we expect conditions to become worse," he said.

The U.N. Has warned that the territory's sole power station is at risk of running out of fuel, and Sarraj said Gaza was also low on spare parts. Gaza already experiences daily



A Palestinian firefighter extinguishes a fire from a beachside cafe after it was hit by airstrike, in Gaza City on Monday

AP

power outages for between eight and 12 hours and tap water is undrinkable.

Mohammed Thabet, a spokesman for the territory's electricity distribution company, said it has fuel to supply Gaza with electricity for two or three days.

Airstrikes have damaged supply lines and the company's staff cannot reach areas that were hit because of continued Israeli shelling, he added.

The war broke out last Monday, when the Hamas militant group fired long-range rockets at Jerusalem after weeks of clashes in the holy city between Palestinian protesters and Israeli police.

The protests were focused on the heavy-handed policing of a flashpoint sacred site during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan and the threatened eviction of dozens of Palestinian families by Jewish

settlers.

Since then, the Israeli military has launched hundreds of airstrikes that it says are targeting Hamas' militant infrastructure. Palestinian militants in Gaza have fired more than 3,100 rockets into Israel.

At least 198 Palestinians have been killed in the strikes, including 58 children and 35 women, with 1,300 people wounded, according to the Gaza Health Ministry.

Calls mount for Gaza-Israel ceasefire, greater US efforts

AP ■ UNITED NATIONS

UN Security Council diplomats and Muslim foreign ministers convened emergency weekend meetings to demand a stop to civilian bloodshed as Israeli warplanes carried out the deadliest single attacks in nearly a week of Hamas rocket barrages and Israeli airstrikes.

President Joe Biden gave no signs of stepping up public pressure on Israel to agree to an immediate cease-fire despite calls from some Democrats for the Biden administration to get more involved.

His ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, told an emergency high-level meeting of the Security Council that the US was "working tirelessly through diplomatic channels" to stop the fighting.

But as battles between Israel and Gaza's militant Hamas rulers surged to their worst levels since 2014 and the international outcry grew, the Biden administration — determined to wrench US foreign policy focus away from the Middle East and Afghanistan — has declined so far to criticize Israel's part in the fighting or send a top-level envoy to the

President Joe Biden gave no signs of stepping up public pressure on Israel to agree to an immediate ceasefire despite calls from some Democrats for the Biden Administration to get more involved

region. Appeals by other countries showed no sign of progress.

Thomas-Greenfield warned that the return to armed conflict would only put a negotiated two-state solution to the decades-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict even further out of reach. However, the US, Israel's closest ally, has so far blocked days of efforts by China, Norway and Tunisia to get the Security Council to issue a statement, including a call for the cessation of hostilities.

In Israel, Hady Amr, a deputy assistant dispatched by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken to try to de-escalate the crisis, met with Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz, who thanked the US for its support.

Afghans who helped the US now fear being left behind

AP ■ KABUL

He served as an interpreter alongside US soldiers on hundreds of patrols and dozens of firefights in eastern Afghanistan, earning a glowing letter of recommendation from an American platoon commander and a medal of commendation.

Still, Ayazudin Hilal was turned down when he applied for one of the scarce special visas that would allow him to relocate to the US with his family.

Now, as American and NATO forces prepare to leave the country, he and thousands of others who aided the war effort fear they will be left stranded, facing the prospect of Taliban reprisals.

"We are not safe," the 41-year-old father of six said of Afghan civilians who worked for the US or NATO.

"The Taliban is calling us and telling us, 'Your stepbrother is leaving the country soon, and we will kill all of you guys.'"

The fate of interpreters after the troop withdrawal is one of the looming uncertainties surrounding the withdrawal, including a possible resurgence of terrorist threats and a reversal of fragile gains for women if chaos, whether from competing Kabul-based

warlords or the Taliban, follows the end of America's military engagement.

Interpreters and other civilians who worked for the US government or NATO can get what is known as a special immigrant visa, or SIV, under a program created in 2009 and modeled after a similar program for Iraqis.

Both SIV programs have long been dogged by complaints about a lengthy and complicated application process for security vetting that grew more cumbersome with pandemic safety measures.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken told reporters last month that the US is committed to helping interpreters and other Afghan civilians who aided the war effort, often at great personal risk. The Biden administration has also launched a review of the SIV programs, examining the delays and the ability of applicants to challenge a rejection. It will also be adding anti-fraud measures.

Amid the review, former interpreters, who typically seek to shield their identities and keep a low profile, are becoming increasingly public about what they fear will happen should the Taliban return to power.

Blinken hasn't seen any evidence on AP Gaza building strike

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Monday he has asked Israel for any evidence of Hamas operating in a Gaza building housing news bureaus that was destroyed by an Israeli airstrike over the weekend, but hasn't seen any.

Blinken spoke at a news conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, as pressure is increasing on the Biden administration to ask for a ceasefire in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel destroyed a building housing The Associated Press and Al Jazeera and claimed that Hamas used the building for a military intelligence office. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has called the building a "perfectly legitimate tar-



get" and told CBS' "Face the Nation" on Sunday that Israel passes such evidence through intelligence channels.

"Shortly after the strike we did request additional details regarding the justification for it," Blinken said Monday. He declined to discuss specific intelligence, saying he "will leave it to others to characterize if any information has been shared and our assessment that information."

Britain calls on Israel to act proportionately

London: The British government says Israel must ensure that its military activities against Hamas are "proportionate," and it is deeply concerned by the destruction of media offices and other civilian targets in Gaza.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman, Max Blain, said Britain is "in contact with our US and UN counterparts and urgently seeking more information from the Israeli government" on Saturday's attack, which destroyed a high-rise building housing the offices of The Associated Press and other media organisations.

"We are deeply concerned by U.N. Reports that 23 schools and 500 homes, as well as medical facilities and media offices, have been destroyed or damaged in Gaza," Blain said.

He added that "Israel must make every effort to avoid civilian casualties and military activity must be proportionate."

EU vows to boost efforts to end Israeli-Palestinian fighting

AP ■ BRUSSELS

The European Union will redouble its efforts to end the upsurge in violence between the Israeli military and Palestinian militants, and seek progress during a special meeting of its foreign ministers Tuesday, the bloc said.

The EU also called the weekend destruction of a building housing major international media "extremely worrying" and said safe working conditions for journalists were essential.

The EU has never had the impact Washington can wield in the region and no immediate breakthrough was expected from Tuesday's meeting. Ever since the outbreak of violence last week, the EU has been calling for restraint and condemned attacks that hit civilian populations.

Because EU policy toward the region requires unanimity among the 27 EU member nations, its actions and statements haven't had the impact

that could be expected from a bloc that has large trade and aid interests in the region.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and European Council President Charles Michel both called over the past days to call for an end to the escalation in violence and ensure that civilians get the best possible protection.

Tuesday's meeting is to seek "how best that EU can contribute to diffusing the tensions, stop the escalation and stop the ongoing violence," EU spokesman Peter Stano said.

Pro-Palestinian critics of EU policy insist the bloc has been far too lenient when it comes to imposing sanctions on Jerusalem, but since this too requires unanimity, the issue hasn't yet surfaced for Tuesday's meeting, Stano said. "Let's not jump ahead. Let's focus on trying to diffuse the situation, trying to solve the situation to normal diplomatic and political means," Stano said.

Pak Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif placed on no-fly list

PTI ■ ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Government led by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Monday added the name of Opposition leader Shehbaz Sharif, who has been charged with corruption, to the no-fly list, barring him from leaving the country for medical treatment.

Earlier this month, the Lahore High Court granted Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz — also the younger brother of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif — permission to travel abroad once for medical treatment.

Trump to speak at North Carolina GOP convention on June 5

AP ■ RALEIGH (US)

Former President Donald Trump will speak at North Carolina's annual state Republican Party convention next month, party officials announced Monday.

The former president will speak in person at the June 5 convention dinner in Greenville. Trump narrowly carried North Carolina in 2020 and held numerous events in the state toward the end of his campaign. Trump's speech will be closed to the media, and journalists won't be able to view it via livestream or alternate

Writs seeking fresh swearing in of PM Oli filed in Nepal's SC

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Four writ petitions were filed in the Supreme Court of Nepal on Monday demanding that Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli be sworn in again as he disgraced the office of the President by refusing to repeat all the words she recited during the oath-taking ceremony.

President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Oli as the prime minister at a scaled-down ceremony at Shital Niwas, the presidential palace, on Friday. During the oath-taking ceremony, Oli, the 69-year-old Chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist),

omitted the word "vow" when the President recited it, besides "in the name of God".

"I will take oath in the name of the country and the people," Oli, who has become Nepal's prime minister for the third time, said, while President Bhandari mentioned "God, country and the people."

All four writ petitions have demanded that Oli take another oath of office and secrecy as the one taken on Friday was illegal, The Kathmandu Post reported.

Senior advocate Chandra Kanta Gyawali and advocates Lokendra Oli and Keshar Jung KC have registered a joint writ while advocates Raj Kumar Suwal, Santosh Bhandari and

Nawaraj Adhkary have registered separate writs on the same issue. The petitioners claim that the prime minister disgraced the office of the President by saying "it is not necessary" even when the President repeated the word twice, the report said.

They have demanded that all the actions of the prime minister be declared null and void until he takes the oath again, it said. The petitioners said the prime minister told the president that a phrase of the oath — "I solemnly and sincerely pledge" — was not necessary and such an utterance by the prime minister during the swearing-in ceremony undermined the prestige of the President's Office.

111-year-old Australian recommends eating chicken brains

AP ■ CANBERRA

Australia's oldest-ever man has included eating chicken brains among his secrets to living more than 111 years.

Retired cattle rancher Dexter Kruger on Monday marked 124 days since he turned 111, a day older than World War I veteran Jack Lockett was when he died in 2002.

Kruger told Australian Broadcasting Corp. in an interview at his nursing home in the rural Queensland state town of Roma days before the mile-



stone that a weekly poultry delicacy had contributed to his longevity.

"Chicken brains. You know, chickens have a head. And in there, there's a brain. And they are delicious little things," Kruger said. "There's only one little bite."

France holds global talks to offer debt relief for Sudan

AP ■ PARIS

French and African leaders and international organizations were holding a conference Monday in Paris to negotiate debt relief and raise global support for Sudan's transitional leadership.

French President Emmanuel Macron was hosting the event in the presence Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan, head of Sudan's ruling sovereign council, and Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, in charge of making changes in the African nation after a popular uprising led to the military's overthrow of longtime autocrat Omar al-Bashir in 2019.

The conference is taking place along with the heads of state of neighboring Egypt and Ethiopia as well as the International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and African Union Commission Chairman Moussa Faki Mahamat.

"It is meant to be a kind of re-introduction of the new Sudan to the concert of nations, ending 30 years of international isolation," French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire said Monday.

Macron's office said the event aims at having talks on how to boost investment in Sudan and negotiate debt relief.

Sudan's transitional government has taken a set of measures in recent months to transform the country's economy and rejoin the international community after over two decades of isolation.

‘So I raped you.’ FB message renews fight for justice

AP ■ NEW JERSEY

Shannon Keeler was enjoying a weekend getaway with her boyfriend last year when she checked her Facebook messages for the first time in ages. A name popped up that stopped her cold.

"So I raped you," the person said in a burst of unread messages sent six months earlier.

"If you have a moment give me a call."

"I need to hear your voice."

"I'll pray for you."

The messages rocketed Keeler back to the life-shattering night in December 2013 when an upperclassman at Gettysburg College stalked her at a party, snuck into her dorm and barged into her room while she pleaded with him and texted friends for help. It was the final night of her first semester of college.

Eight years later, she still hopes to persuade authorities in Pennsylvania to make an arrest, armed now with perhaps her strongest piece of evidence: his alleged confession, sent via social media. But is it enough?

Before and after the attack, Keeler followed the protocols designed to prevent campus sex assaults or address them when they happen. She had a male friend walk her home from the party. She reported the rape that day, met with police and endured a painful and intrusive rape exam. And she pushed for charges. Yet, at every turn, the justice system failed her, just like it fails most college rape victims.

For all the focus on sexual



Shannon Keeler poses for a portrait in the United States

AP

violence in the #MeToo era, and on student protections under Title IX, very few campus rapes are ever prosecuted, according to victim advocates and the limited crime data available. Only one in five college sex assault victims report to police. And when they do, prosecutors often hesitate to take cases where victims had been drinking or knew the accused.

"It has bothered me over the years that I was never able to do anything," said Keeler, now 26. "If you're not going to help me, who are you going to help? Because I do have evidence."

At Gettysburg, a small school with about 2,500 students, 95 rapes were reported to campus security from 2013 to 2019 — but only 10 non-child rape cases were prosecuted in the entire county during that period, according to school data and county court records.

And that discourages students like Katayoun Amir-

Aslani, who quietly left Gettysburg after her own sexual assault in the spring of 2014, from coming forward.

She met Keeler the night she was assaulted. Then few months later, she was raped at Gettysburg by an acquaintance, she said.

She did not file a report. She did not get a rape kit. Instead, she quietly left school after that spring.

"I didn't have any witnesses, and after the experience I had ... with Shannon, and nothing happened with her, I just (thought), Well, what's the point of me going through all of this for nothing?" said the 26-year-old New Yorker. "So I just didn't really tell anyone."

For Keller, the suspect's withdrawal from school ended the campus Title IX investigation. Two years later, just after the window to file a civil suit closed, then-District Attorney Scott Wagner said he wouldn't be filing charges.

DOCYARD

DR SUBHASH CHANDRA

Chairman & HOD,
Cardiology

BLK-MAX SUPER SPECIALITY
HOSPITAL



Manage hypertension effectively



Hypertension or high blood pressure, the silent killer disease needs to be managed in an effective manner to avoid complications related to COVID-19. Apart from the regular risks associated with patients with hypertension, patients with COVID-19 were found to have a high rate of co-morbidities. Hypertension affects vital organs such as the kidneys, heart and brain even though the person has no symptoms. Heart or kidney failure, as well as a debilitating paralytic stroke, can be the first sign of hypertension. According to WHO, India accounts for over a fifth of these deaths. Undetected and untreated hypertension has been ranked as the highest risk factor for heart disease and related deaths.

Though a majority of COVID-19 patients experience mild symptoms such as fever, sore throat, cough and are able to recover fully, it has been noticed that some patients who have hypertension, Diabetes and heart diseases are at the risk of developing more severe symptoms and the resultant complications. The ICMR has thus advised extra care for these patients.

It has also been speculated that hypertensive patients may not respond to anti-covid treatment protocols in comparison to non-hypertensive patients. Therefore, hypertensive patients can become very critical with respect to COVID-19 prognosis. A majority of the hypertensive patients are given medications known as "ACE-Inhibitors". Since these drugs work via the ACE receptors, and the coronavirus binds itself to the ACE receptors located on lung cells (pneumocytes), it was being assumed that patients taking ACE inhibitors to regulate blood pressure might do worse than others. However, to the relief of the medical fraternity in majority of the trials, this hypothesis has been disproved. It is therefore advised that patients who have successfully regulated their blood pressure with these medications should continue to do so and those who have COVID-19 should monitor their blood pressure closely and try to regulate it as much as possible. They must

The highest spike in blood pressure occurs early in the morning, around 4 to 5 am and before 7 am, in a 24-hour circadian period. Therefore, heart attacks and strokes happen early in the morning

also be in regular touch with their consulting doctors and must immediately contact them in case of any major fluctuations in the blood pressure so as to manage Covid-19 more effectively.

It has been observed that in the early stages of hypertension, patients do not experience any pain or sickness and hence it goes undetected only to surface during a routine check-up. Factors that increase the risk of high blood pressure and heart diseases include unhealthy weight, obesity, an unhealthy diet, lack of physical activity, smoking, and poorly controlled cholesterol levels, among others. A doctor will look for signs such as high blood pressure, rapid heartbeat, lack of appetite, shortness of breath, ankle swelling and chest tightness while diagnosing hypertensive heart disease.

This year, the World Hypertension Day theme was "Measure Your Blood Pressure Accurately, Control It, Live Longer," with a focus on combating low awareness rates worldwide, especially in low to middle income areas, as well as accurate blood pressure measurement methods.

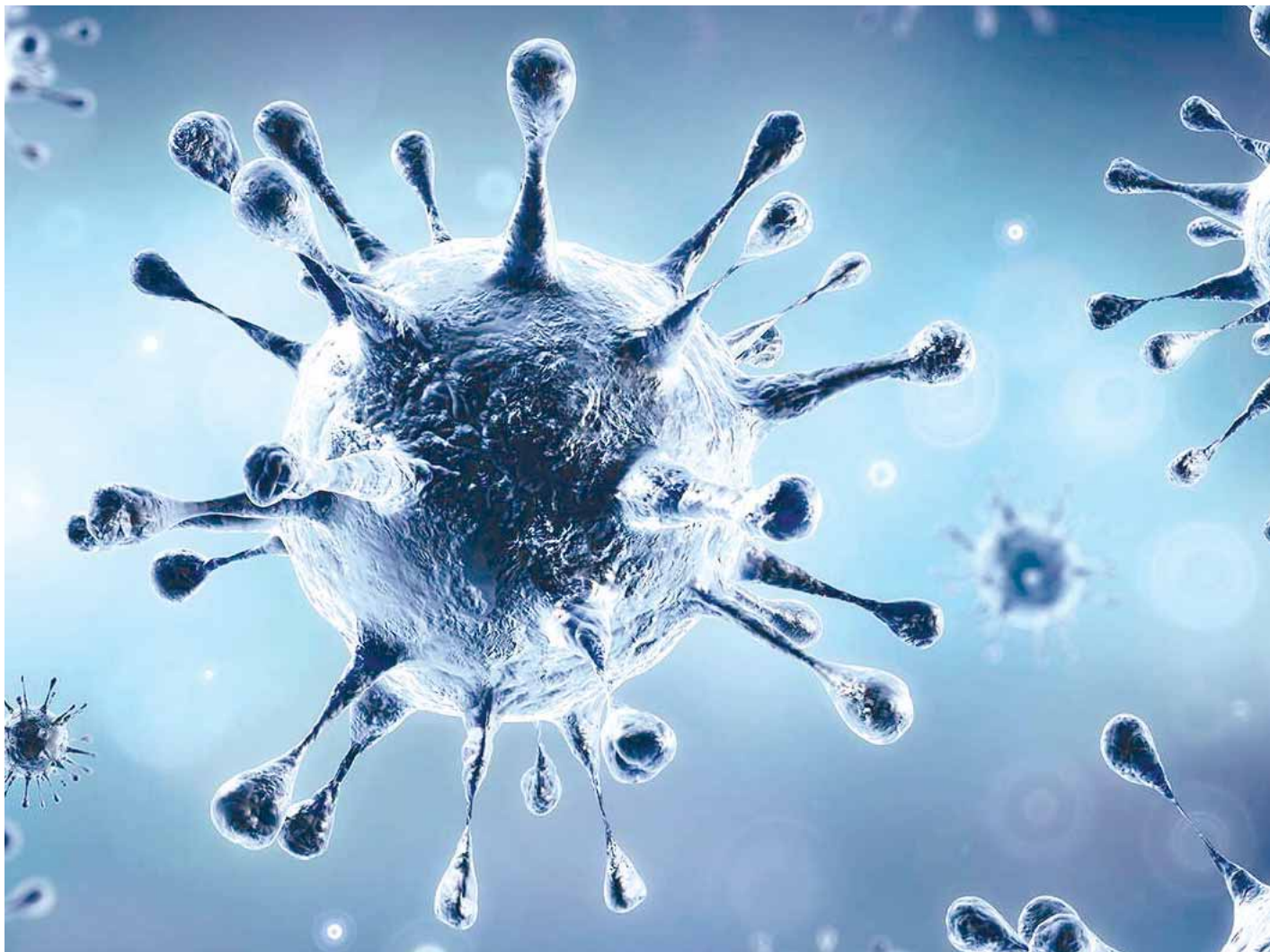
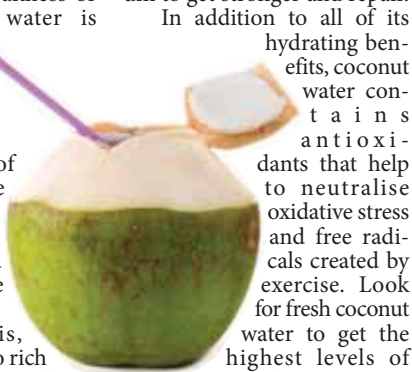
We must understand that the highest spike in blood pressure occurs early in the morning, around 4 to 5 am and before 7 am, in a 24-hour circadian period. Therefore, heart attacks and strokes happen early in the morning. The early morning surge in blood pressure is caused by a high level of catecholamines in the body. As a result, the drugs must be picked up in a way that guarantees 24-hour blood pressure regulation or delivered at a time that addresses the morning blood pressure spike. For example, if a person has a morning surge-on a 24-hour blood pressure monitor, he should be given some of the medicine in the evening, about tea time in order to avoid heart attacks, paralysis and strokes.

COVIDCARE

COCONUT WATER: If you were down with COVID, you might understand the importance of keeping yourself hydrated and what role coconut water has to play in it. Be it weakness or fatigue, coconut water is expected to give you a refreshing feel because of the presence of electrolytes, while also boosting your energy and not giving you a nausea attack at the same time.

Not only this, coconut water is also rich in Calcium, which is vital for more than just strong bones

and teeth. It helps muscles contract and work properly. As you exercise, your muscles pull on your bones and break them down slightly. As your body recovers, your bones use calcium to get stronger and repair. In addition to all of its hydrating benefits, coconut water contains antioxidants that help to neutralise oxidative stress and free radicals created by exercise. Look for fresh coconut water to get the highest levels of antioxidants.



MUTANT DANGER

World Health Organisation has termed the B.1.617 variant of COVID-19 as a variant of global concern. MUSBA HASHMI speaks with doctors to bring you a report on what makes the mutant so dangerous and the efficacy of available vaccines against this mutant

COVID-19's raging fury seems to not stop any time soon. Adding to the woes, is the rapid mutation of the virus. Why, you ask? The continuous mutations in the virus are increasing its severity and infection rate.

If this was not all, the B.1.617 variant, which was reportedly first found in India have been termed as a variant of global concern by the World Health Organisation.

"This new variant is said to have double mutation which means an increase in transmission as well as reduction in neutralisation, possibly stunting the ability of vaccines to curb them. That's why there is a Tsunami of cases in India, thereby making the country the world's second most worst-hit," Dr Yash Javeri, Critical Care, Anaesthesia and Emergency Medicine, Regency Super specialty Hospital, Lucknow, tells you.

Generally, viruses mutate all the time, as part of evolutionary biology, but some mutations weaken the virus while others may make it stronger, enabling it to proliferate faster or cause more infections. "And, latter happened in India and that's making the whole scenario worrisome," Javeri adds.

Many doctors are also terming the variant unique. "The variant is unique as it has both higher infectivity and higher severity. Unprotected exposure has lead to huge clusters in families and communities. Most of the time whole family or clusters are infected. Mutations in the spike gene can make the virus inherently better at infecting people or can help the virus to escape neutralising antibodies. This means if the virus mutates in the "right way", it can reinfect someone who has already recovered from COVID-19," he says.

While, this may answer your queries on people who are getting infected with virus in a span of just five months, this is nothing short of an alarm to not put your guards down, even if you have got COVID previously.

The variant is very infectious and easily transmissible hence, it has now passed on to fifty countries. "This virus is mutating because of expected changes in the RNA virus. The worrisome part is that this virus is directly going into lungs and hence, we are witnessing more cases of chest infection, which is increasing the need of respiratory therapy in the form of ventilators.

This new variant is said to have double mutation which means an increase in transmission as well as reduction in neutralisation, possibly stunting the ability of vaccines to curb them — Dr Yash Javeri

Other symptoms of this mutant are loss of smell and taste, fever, diarrhoea and dry cough," Dr HK Mahajan, Anaesthesiologist, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, Vasant Kunj, tells you.

The recovery and survival rate of patients depends on the stage. "Mostly 85 per cent patients recover easily (home isolation as per the doctors advice), 5 to 10 per cent need hospitalisation (oxygen bed) and remaining 1 per cent of the cases who are from moderate to

severe need extensive care including ventilator. Asymptomatic patients get recovered early, patients with moderate symptoms get recovered in two to three weeks and severe patients takes 2 to 3 months as they have to face post-Covid syndromes too," Mahajan explains.

While, there is not much data to prove the efficacy of the available vaccines against this mutant, Mahajan says, that Covaxin is said to be effective. "Recently, we got a batch of Sputnik V and we are hopeful that this vaccine will also give good results," he says and adds the only way out of this pandemic is to increase vaccination.

Not only this, but Javeri says, more mutations are likely to happen. The virus mutates constantly. "Mutations might increase or decrease lethality and infectivity and might make vaccine less efficacious. Booster doses might be needed for these mutants. The issue is multiple mutants are spreading across the globe. The challenge of mutants is ever growing and is a major deterrent in the war against COVID. Worrisome mutations could also become more common if antibody therapies aren't used wisely," Javeri opines.

BEAT STRESS AND ANXIETY



It is more important than ever to look after our mental and physical wellbeing.

EIRINI

PETRATTOU shares tips that can help ward off anxiety

The year 2020 was officially cancelled and we all were looking forward to a great 2021, but it didn't last too long. The nation has been unexpectedly hit by the second wave of COVID-19 and this time it has inched closer to home. The rising number of cases has caused a lot of misery and confusion among people and brings with it issues of anxiety and stress.

Facing the new normal of working from home, temporary unemployment, home-schooling of children, and lack of physical contact with other family members, friends and colleagues has made us prone to anxiety, stress and depression. Hence, it is more important than ever to look after ourselves and our mental and physical wellbeing. Keeping yourself safe mentally and physically is the key to staying healthy. Here are five ways to keep anxiety and stress at bay during these tough times:

Write a journal: Journaling is a form of self-expression that can enable you to understand your complex feelings and boost your mood. Journaling is known to have positive effects such as calming and clearing your mind, identifying and accepting your emotions, releasing pent-up feelings and everyday stress, and letting go of negative thoughts. The best part about journaling is that it doesn't restrict you to a format: write about how you feel, write down your goals, make lists or even doodle. Be yourself and write whatever or however you want without any fear of judgement.

Mandala colouring: Mandalas have been identified as an important tool to reduce stress, combat depression, and lower blood pressure. Also, colouring is proven to be a stress-buster, which makes Mandala colouring books your best friends during quarantine. Colour a mandala using pencil crayons, crayons, paint, or pastels, as it combines the benefits of meditation and art therapy into a simple practice that can be done at any time and place.

DIY Projects: Indulge in some Do It Yourself (DIY) projects with material available at home to keep your mind occupied in a constructive manner. DIY projects help your brain to function creatively and can help minimise any negative thoughts building up in your head. For example, make your own candles with crayons or photo frames out of old magazines and newspapers.

Reduce your time on social media: Social media has emerged as a very useful tool for people in these trying times. It has become a source for connecting, staying informed and helping each other. However, it is important to minimise your time on social media because constant exposure to negative information can trigger anxiety and stress. It is important to stay informed, but an overload of information can aggravate your emotions in a way that is not healthy.

Workout: Physical and mental health are interlinked. It is recommended that including some kind of workout in your daily routine helps release "feel good" endorphins, which can help reduce symptoms of anxiety or stress.

The writer is Senior User Research Manager, BIC

DadiKaKehna

Boosting immunity is all that matters in COVID times. ROSHANI DEVI shares a list of foods that can help strengthen your immune system and ward off infections



It is more important than ever to have a strong immune system. Feeding the body certain foods may help keep your immune system strong.

One of the most important ways to increase immunity is to include Vitamin C in the diet. Eat peppers, spinach, Kiwi, broccoli, grapefruit, strawberries and oranges. One can also take a Vitamin C supplement to boost intake of this vitamin.

Garlic can build a strong immune system. One can eat garlic in a variety of recipes. Garlic soup is a delicious way to boost

immune system. Dark chocolate, as also pointed out by the Government, can help boost the immune system by protecting the body's cells.

Eat broccoli. It is a great source of Vitamin C. Eat this vegetable regularly.

Ginger besides having anti-inflammatory and antioxidative properties, it can several illness and boost immunity.

Almonds are an excellent source of Vitamin E. Eat a small handful or a quarter of a cup of almonds to build immunity.



Keep an eye on black fungus

DR VINEET SEHGAL tells MUSBA HASHMI how black fungus is resulting in loss of eyesight, dos and don'ts to keep in mind and the treatments available

Black fungus has rung alarm bells in the Capital and several other States with a surge in cases. The rare fungal infection is now turning frequent among COVID patients.

Apart from the various other complications that the infection causes, one of the most severe is loss of eyesight. "Mucormycosis can destroy all ocular tissues and cause widespread destruction. It also can cause blockage of the arteries supplying blood to the eye (Central Retinal Artery) causing rapid vision loss. The symptoms start from mild sinusitis and nasal discharge and can lead to eye infection and blindness in no time. It doesn't stop here and can also cause damage to the brain, leading to death," Dr Vineet Sehgal, Senior Glaucoma Consultant, Sharp Sight Eye Hospitals, tells you.

While there is not much that one can do to prevent the fungal infection, Sehgal lists a few dos and don'ts.

"Wash your hands regularly. Keep regular check on your Diabetic status, since Diabetics, who have or had COVID are more prone to catching this infection. Keep wearing proper mask. Wear your glasses when you visit outside to prevent respiratory droplets going inside eye. Don't take steroids without prescription. This increases your chance of getting infected with black fungus. Last, but not the least, don't touch your eyes without washing hands," Sehgal explains.

The treatments available, he says, are Intravenous Amphotericin B, endoscopic debridement of the necrotic tissue and exenteration.

"Amphotericin B has become the gold standard in the systemic treatment of mucormycosis. Liposomal amphotericin B is the first choice of treatment, as it crosses the blood-brain barrier more effectively. Those who present earlier have better chances of survival. The Amphotericin B

should be given in doses according to the renal status of the patient as it can be a nephrotoxic drug," Sehgal tells you.

A critical stage in the treatment of mucormycosis is the endoscopic debridement of necrotic tissue by ENT specialist. This is usually accompanied by the Amphotericin B irrigation. The endoscopic clearing of all the involved sinuses and debridement of the walls that are infected is done. It is better than open surgery as it gives better visualisation and lesser morbidity.

"Exenteration is the last resort by an ophthalmologist to limit the spread of infection to the brain and rest of the body. In exenteration, the eyeball is removed with its adjoining structures like orbital fat, eyelids and periocular fascia. It is reserved in the cases when permanent damage has been caused to the eye which cannot be restored and has immediate risk of spreading intracranially," Sehgal tells you.

INBRIEF

One may have never thought that a treatment could be designed not for your hair or skin but for your clothes. You may have heard about the fire resistant clothes but mosquito repellent, anti-microbial, anti-viral or anti odour clothes is something that no one has ever imagined.

With an ambition to protect the world with the power of fabric during a pandemic, Faibr-x, a Nanochemiqs venture, has recently introduced and developed protective anti-viral treatment services in its operations for your clothing. Faibr-x treatments converts any common fabric into a tool, a life guard and a utility that helps ease our normal life. Combined with Nanotechnology we make formal, casual, linen, sports wear, undergarments, upholstery or any fabric in a smart machine and that too at the door step of a consumer, as service.

Faibr-x is a special treatment introduced for your wearable that creates an invisible yet effective shield on your clothes that make them antimicrobial, Antiviral, Anti-Odour and Antifungal. This treatment can be done on any fabric like linen, cotton, etc," says Sasha Bose, MD, sNanochemiqs.



DON'T LOCK YOUR SPIRITS DOWN

Pandemic-induced lockdowns have become a way of life. After talking to a few clinical psychologists, **CHRISTY VARGHESE** realises how important it is to change our response to reality when we cannot change our reality

While the first case of the novel Coronavirus in India was detected on January 27, 2020, it did not affect the common citizens until the end of March, when a three-week nationwide lockdown was announced. And then there were drastic changes in our lives, the way we knew it. Exams were indefinitely postponed. The academic calendar has been in a disarray since last year. For many students, online classes were a luxury because they did not have access to devices or a data connection. Offices encouraged employees to work from home, some of them even providing the equipment needed to facilitate such a change. Domestic helps were out of a job for months on end. But things gradually slipped into a routine. Families, which stayed apart for a huge portion of the day, have since gotten used to being around each other for extended periods. The maids are back at work. Children have settled into online classes even though they might not be completely happy with these.

If we say things have changed in these 14 months, it would be almost akin to an understatement. Besides observable events, there are other incidents happening in the background which are just as noteworthy, if not more. While, on the surface, children and adults have got used to being away from their peers and colleagues, other issues chipping away at their mental health. According to psychiatrist and Founder & Director of The Happy Tree, De-addiction And Mental Health Hospital, Dr Anuneet Sabharwal, "It can be easily observed that lack of structure and routine is causing significant stress among children. College students and school-going children alike are experiencing increased levels of anxiety because they are not able to meet their friends and attend classes physically. Similarly, working from home (WFH) has created many mental health challenges for the working class as it has been observed that the eponymous model has led to greater emotional exhaus-



tion and cognitive distress. The lack of physical connection and social support that one requires from ones colleagues is leading to more stress. Setting boundaries happen to be an integral part of the WFH model, the lack of which results in an increasing urge to work for longer periods leading to rising levels of stress and anxiety impacting the long term productivity of the employees."

However, clinical psychologist, author and Harvard alumni, Dr Rajat Mitra, approaches it from a different perspective and believes that it has its share of positives as well. He shared that one prominent benefit which cannot be denied happens to revolve around families, which would spend most of the day away from each other. People who constitute such families

have had an opportunity to examine themselves and their relationship with their near (pun unintended) and dear ones. "While parents are still engrossed with work, they now have a chance to observe their children the entire day, whereas earlier, they would be too tired to interact with them after getting home from work on weekdays. The lockdown has presented working parents with the opportunity to connect and engage with their children. Many parents who consult me rue the fact that their children don't experience childhood the way they did. While that is unavoidable in these times, I recommend them to have a conversation with their kids and take a break from the digital world along with them. Simple activities such as being involved in indoor games — carrom

or ludo — go a long way in dissipating while encouraging unfiltered interaction," he said.

Dr Mitra also voiced his thoughts on how the pandemic could be changing our psychological wiring. He said, "We are dealing with adaptability here. We, humans, are resilient beings and time is a testament to the fact that we can adapt at will. We will survive this pandemic, there is no doubt about that. However, we would have changed in certain aspects. For example, various studies have indicated that introverts are dealing with lockdown better than extroverts who have had to spend precious time and energy developing coping mechanisms which are more in line with these times. Introverts are being held in high esteem by employers today,

while that was not the case before the pandemic."

He also feels that there is a good possibility we have developed some new neural circuits since we have to adapt to the needs of these times. "I can't remember the last time I met my students in a classroom. Ever since the world has been made digital, I have realised that I have subconsciously learnt to recognise my students based on their respective voices. Even when I step out, just about everyone has a mask on and my psyche has been forced to adjust. While earlier one's face was their most dominant identifier, I now recognise people by their voice," Dr Mitra said.

Moreover, sitting at home in these dystopian times is underlined by confusion and disorder due to information overload. Simply put, information overload (also known as infobesity, infoxication, information anxiety and information explosion) is the difficulty in understanding an issue and effectively making decisions when one has too much information about that issue. An author and clinical psychologist, Pulkit Sharma, said, "A lot of information is easily accessible in these digital times. Most of it related to the pandemic might be true, but trust me, a lot of fake news is being circulated. Is it all relevant? Of course not. While this digital age has its boons, having access to unlimited information is turning out to be a major disadvantage. This has led to a growing sense of fatigue and pessimism among the masses. There is no need to drown yourself in the news or social media which will only lead you to worry and panic. Reports have determined that of all those who were afflicted with COVID-19, 98 per cent survived. Yes, the reality is that the pandemic has a mortality rate of just two per cent but we are blowing things out of proportion."

"We have to understand that there are times when we cannot change our reality. However, in those instances, we do have control over our response to that reality. So, in these times I believe our focus should

be on ourselves and how we can make this gift of life meaningful," he added.

A sentiment that was echoed by Dr Mitra, "During online consultations, I see that more and more people are turning inwards and indulging in introspection without any coercion. It is a global occurrence, to be honest, one which has been unheard of in recorded history."

Both psychologists agreed on the fact that it ultimately comes down to how one perceives things. "For a long time, everyone in the urban jungle felt that there was no time to do things that they wanted to do. Now that time is abundant, one should be thankful for it and make use of the same. For the working class following the WFH model, it is very important to make a schedule and stick by it. Being mindful of the things that you wish to do and incorporating them into your schedules has a very wholesome feel. On the other hand, after making a schedule if you fail to abide by it right at the beginning, the rest of the schedule goes to waste. Hence, the simple act of making or planning a schedule is an exercise in being the right frame of mind in the immediate future. This enables one to be present and constructively make use of time," expressed Dr Sharma.

Additionally, Dr Sabharwal provided a concise guide on how to keep one's self grounded in these uncertain times. He said, "Try to focus on things you can control instead of focussing too much on things you can't control. Check-in with your loved ones as often as you can. Try to regularly engage in some light exercises such as stretching, walking as they might help you feel better and will allow you to stay active. Don't forget to take a break from social media and news channels now and then as listening and watching about the pandemic might be upsetting and overwhelming."

Staying at home can be just the opportunity to take stock of your lives, be thankful for your blessings and structure your priorities.

Not against remixes: Kumar Sanu

Playback veteran Kumar Sanu is not against the current trend of remixing old songs. He says that he likes a remixed number even better if the original voice is retained. He also opened up with nostalgia on his association with composers Nadeem-Shravan.

"I was never against remixes. There are some songs that the new generation does not even know who had composed the music or who had sung them. They get to learn about it through its remix, which is a plus point. Secondly, remix is not bad if the lyrics and composition are kept intact and only the arrangement is changed. Also if a superhit song is remixed and the remix also becomes popular, it is certainly a plus point for today's music directors and producers. It is good for everyone," Sanu said.

Quizzed if he is personally fond of remixes, the singer replied: "Personally I like remixes when the remix of a song also features its original singer."

Sanu became popular in the nineties, particularly singing romantic numbers that reigned that charts back then, and among his biggest hits were songs he recorded for Nadeem-Shravan, starting *Aashiqui* in 1990. Shravan Kumar Rathod of the Nadeem-Shravan duo passed away last month. Walking down the memory lane, Sanu recalled how he has a special memory with literally every song he sang for them.

"Music composer duos like Nadeem-Shravan are rare and Shravan *ji's* demise is a great loss for our industry. I have so many memories with them. Shravan *ji* was a soft spoken and jovial person, and loved me a lot. They used to call me Tiger. I have a separate memory associated with every song I sang for them, the shows we did together, the tasty food I had at their place, the tips they shared to help me during song recording. I remember how, at times, they would try to make a song a little tougher with a classical touch while I would try to make it easier, and how we celebrated after every recording was completed. These are the things which keep flashing in my mind now," Sanu recalled.

Any Nadeem-Shravan number close to his heart? "Every song I have sung for them



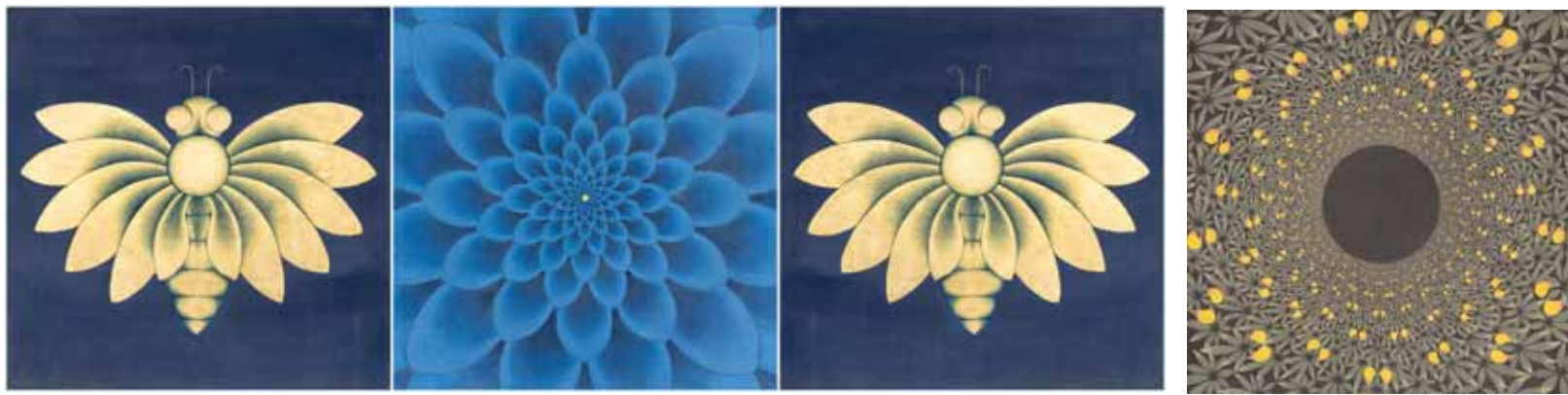
is special to me. Their songs used to have melody and good lyrics, for which people remember me. One song, *Zindagi ki talash mein hum maunt ke kitne paas aa gaye* from the film *Saathi*, is a meaningful song and really close to my heart," revealed the singer.

Times are difficult especially when the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc in India and the veteran singer suggests everyone to get vaccinated at the earliest.

"I have completed my second dose of the vaccine. It has been 12 days since I took my second dose and I haven't experienced any side effects, which people are talking about, like pain or fever. Everybody should get vaccinated. It is good for them," Sanu suggested.

What is it that he is missing the most being stuck at home during lockdown? "I miss live concerts and recordings. I enjoy doing live performances a lot and I am definitely missing it," shared Sanu.

—IANS



Solace in nature

Artist **OLIVIA FRASER's** latest exhibition — *Indian Summer* — features a selection of her latest body of works, all executed in the past year during her time spent between India and the UK. By **UMA NAIR**

Between the Amaltas, the Bmango and artist Olivia Fraser's prismatic flower and bee series, the suite of works offers succour to the soul in troubled times of sorrow and tragedy. Grosvenor Gallery London presents her exhibition — *Indian Summer* — which features a selection of Olivia's latest body of works, all executed in the past year during her time spent between India and the UK.

Being in and out of lockdown, Olivia turned to and found solace in nature. Whether it was among the blossoms of the Amaltas trees or the bounty of sweet Indian mangoes, the spiritual connections associated with nature provided a boon to the soul and a pleasure to the senses signalling a hope for the future.

"I painted these works during the first lockdown in India, just as the summer heat was notching up into the early forties (degrees). As a Northern Scot, even after all these years in Delhi, I find extreme heat challenging, but when the Amaltas trees (the Indian laburnum) burst into bloom in May, their golden boughs light up and lift the streets of Delhi out of their hot torpor," says Olivia.

She also adds that she is fascinated by the idea of harness-

ing the senses during meditation. She states that when she creates a *Bloom* with both bee and flower petals, she is drawing on the idea that the bee and flower become one as in *Bhramari*, which is a yogic asana involving the sound of the bee. Look closely and the work is more like an insignia of surreal splendour. The petals of the bloom and the wings of the bees have about them a fulsome lushness. Anatomical perfection and precision is as important as botanical meticulousness. At once you know that Olivia has a deepened sense of both the garden of earthly delights as well as yogic symbolisms and evocations.

In *Bloom*, the blue Lotus flower is surrounded by two golden bees. The lotus flower has ancient sacred associations within the art of India. As a flower that blooms out of the mud, it is associated with purity, perfection, resurrection and



spiritual growth. The lotus along with the colour blue are both used to depict Lord Krishna in Hindu mythology.

She quotes the Gheranda Samhita C 1700 and says, "Slowly draw in air and perform *Bhramari Kumbaka*, exhale it

very slowly and then the sound of the bee will arise. On hearing the sound of the bee from within, lead the mind there. *Samadhi* will occur, together with the bliss arising from the realisation 'I am that'."

The Amaltas trees and mangoes depicted in *Indian Summer I and II* are a reminder of the summer season in India and the joy the season can bring. "I watched the Amaltas tree outside my studio window come into its sunshine bloom over the course of the weeks that I was painting this." Olivia's continued interest in yoga, the different visualisations used in meditation and nature itself (an inner and outer vision) have also influenced these new works.

She first came to India in 1989 and had her first show in Delhi in 1991. Following in the footsteps of her ancestor, James Baillie Fraser who painted India, its monuments and land-

scape in the early 1800s, Olivia set out to continue where her ancestor had left off, painting the architecture of India and its people. James Baillie Fraser also commissioned local artists to paint what has become the famous 'Fraser Album' — the greatest masterpiece of Company School Painting portraying the different types of people and their jobs, crafts or castes against stark white backgrounds. This hybrid form of painting where Indian artists created something that mixed techniques and ideas from the East and West has greatly influenced Olivia's work during the 1990s.

Since then, she has studied the traditional Indian miniature painting technique under Jaipuri and Delhi masters, and now uses this in her work with its gem-like stone colours, its unique miniature brush work, and its elaborate decorative and burnished surfaces. Having been, especially influenced by Nathdwara *pichwai* painting in recent years, Olivia has been exploring its visual language, honing it down to create one of her own that seeks to convey the very essence of the Rajasthani tradition.

(The exhibition opened on May 17 at the prestigious Cromwell Place in London.)

TRENDBLAZER



'ACTORS CAN PICK UP STUFF THAT'S HATKE'

Actor **NEENA GUPTA** had no inhibition about portraying a nonagenarian in the forthcoming film *Sardar Ka Grandson*. She says nowadays, just like filmmakers, actors too have a chance to pick stuff that is "*hatke*."

Talking about actors not shying away from portraying older characters, Neena said, "Times have changed, and the way people are writing scripts. The way actors are getting a variety of roles and the most important thing is that the audience is accepting it have also helped. It is encouraging."

fairtalk
MANAV KAUL



"This was only last year but feels like I can't remember when was the last time I visited the mountains. When was the last time I had a hearty laughter or hugged someone after meeting them? Last year I thought that I will forget this like a bad dream but now we are living in this bad dream and keep reminiscing about our good old times."

dailytalk
SHILPA SHETTY



"To be able to stay united and help each other, we need to be gentle with ourselves. Prioritise what needs and deserves your attention before everything else. Please don't neglect your health, your food, your sleep or even your water intake. You can ensure everyone around you is okay only when you are okay."

DON'T HAVE INSTINCT FOR MARRIAGE: KELLY

Model-actor **KELLY BROOK** has been with her beau Jeremy Parisi for years, but is not desperate to have children or tie the knot. "I've got a bucket list and I have to say a wedding is not on it," Brook said.

"I feel like marriage and children are not things I've wanted. I like travelling and being with my partner. I like my freedom. I like being spontaneous," she said.

She added that having children is a huge commitment.



Eng Tests aren't warm-ups for WTC final: Wagner

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand fast bowler Neil Wagner on Monday said his team is not going to treat the upcoming two-match series against England as warm-ups for the World Test Championship (WTC) final versus India.

India and New Zealand will lock horns for the inaugural WTC title, at Southampton's Ageas Bowl, from June 18-22, four days after the Test series against hosts England is scheduled to conclude.

"We're not going to treat these two Test matches against England just as warm-ups (for the WTC final)," Wagner told reporters at the Auckland airport before his departure.

"I know for a fact we're going to get out there and pride ourselves the way we've been playing Test cricket and we want to win Test matches for New Zealand," he added.

A majority of the New Zealand Test players arrived in London on Monday for the two-match series against England and the WTC final against India, but Wagner was part of the second batch of cricketers to leave for their UK tour.

Wagner, ranked number three in the world among Test bowlers, trained with the Dukes ball in Lincoln before departing for England.

Dukes ball is used for Test matches in England.

He said he benefited from the camp.



NZ pacers Neil Wagner, center, and Tim Southee, right, during training camp @BLACKCAPS



A majority of the New Zealand Test players arrived in London for the two-match series against England and the WTC final against India. The players arrived on Sunday afternoon after flying from Auckland via Singapore and were transferred to the Ageas Bowl in Southampton where they will be based for the first two weeks of the tour @BLACKCAPS

"It's been quite nice, it's obviously got different characteristics to the Kookaburra," Wagner said.

"The way we've been training for the last while is something we didn't always have in the past, having the facilities and having a marquee up and getting a number of training sessions in before going to England.

"On tours in the past you rock up there and you've only got a couple of training sessions and maybe one head out with the Dukes ball before the first Test and with that you can find yourself a little bit behind."

He added, "Having had those little bit of trainings leading into it has been quite beneficial, just because it's a little bit different, and obviously adapting to it. It's been really good

preparation and everybody is excited bowling with it."

This will be Wagner's third trip to England as part of the New Zealand squad, although he played there only during the 2013 Test series, besides playing in the County Championship for Lancashire.

"Sometimes you have to control all that because there's a high expectation of the ball doing a lot and moving around but sometimes you can get there and it can be quite flat and slow as well," Wagner said.

"The nice thing about it is we've got a wealth of experience and the guys have been there before so we can feed off each other and bounce ideas off each other as well," he added.

Archer out of NZ series

London: England pacer Jofra Archer, who recently returned to action after missing the now-suspended IPL, has been ruled out of the Test series against New Zealand as his elbow injury has resurfaced.

The 26-year-old played a game for his County side Sussex against Kent but had to be pulled out of the game after bowling just five overs.

Before this match, the fast bowler had also featured in a game against Surrey last week in a second XI game, bowling 29.2 overs.

"England and Sussex seamer Jofra Archer has been ruled out of the LV= Insurance Test Series against New Zealand starting next month," an England and ales Cricket Board (ECB) statement read.

".....He was suffering from pain in his right elbow when bowling and was unable to bowl in the final two days of the match."

Archer had declared himself fit for the Test series against New Zealand, starting June 2 in London, but the pain in his elbow scuttled his and ECB's plan.

The cricket board is now pondering the right treatment for Archer. The England squad for the New Zealand series will be named on Tuesday.

PTI

► short passes

SS DAS IS EVES BATTING COACH

NEW DELHI: Gutsy former India opener Shiv Sunder Das has been appointed the batting coach of the Indian women's for the tour of England and he is looking forward to use his coaching stint at NCA to guide the youngsters during the trip. Das, who has played 23 Tests between 2000-02, has a decent average of near 35 with more than 1300 runs, including two hundreds and nine fifties.

INDIA'S TESTS WEREN'T FIXED: ICC

DUBAI: The ICC on Monday dismissed claims made by news channel Al Jazeera that India's Test matches against England (2016) and Australia (2017) were fixed, saying the passages of play identified as fixed were entirely predictable, and therefore "implausible as a fix".

DORTMUND, WOLFSBURG IN CL

BERLIN: Borussia Dortmund and Wolfsburg clinched Champions League qualification on Sunday night. Dortmund won 3-1 at Mainz & Wolfsburg drew 2-2 at Leipzig to ensure both sides will finish among the top four to qualify.

EVERTON END CL HOPES

LIVERPOOL: Everton's slim hopes of qualifying for next season's Champions League were extinguished on Sunday by a 1-0 loss to last-place Sheffield United.

AC MILAN COMPLICATE CL FATE

MILAN: AC Milan complicated their passage to the Champions League with a goalless draw at home against Cagliari. They could have sealed a return to CL with a win but dropped points with a top-four finish going down to the wire in their final game.

IGA ENTERS WTA TOP 10

ROME: Iga Swiatek, who won the Italian Open on Sunday jumped six places on the WTA Tour rankings to enter the top 10 on Monday. The 19-year-old player is now ninth. Agencies

Oz IPL cricketers return home

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Australia's IPL players, including Pat Cummins, Glenn Maxwell and Steve Smith, arrived in Sydney on Monday after a stop-over at Maldives due to travel ban from Covid-ravaged India, almost two weeks after the T20 league was suspended due to the health crisis.

Most of the 38 members of the Australian contingent, including players, officials and commentators who participated at the non-suspended league, landed at the Sydney airport Monday morning after spending 10 days at Maldives.

Australian players, however, couldn't head home immediately as the country had imposed a travel ban from India, which is battling a deadly second wave



Glenn Maxwell arrives for hotel quarantine in Sydney on Monday

AP

of the coronavirus.

They will all be spending two weeks in a Sydney hotel for the mandatory quarantine.

According to national broadcaster ABC, Smith,

Cummins, Warner and Ricky Ponting, who coached Delhi Capitals, were among the people on the Air Seychelles flight.

Chennai Super Kings batting coach Michael Hussey also

headed home on Sunday via Doha after testing negative for Covid-19 on Friday.

CA GRATEFUL TO BCCI

Cricket Australia's interim chief executive Nick Hockley on Monday said he was "grateful" to the BCCI for ensuring a "safe and quick" return of Australia's IPL contingent from India following a stopover in Maldives.

"We are delighted. We're really grateful to the BCCI for getting them home quickly and safely. I haven't spoken to them since they've landed, but obviously we've been in text exchange and I'm sure they'll be very relieved and very appreciative to be home," Hockley was quoted as saying in *Sydney Morning Herald*.

Starc back for WI tour

Sydney: Australia welcomed back their star players and picked four spinners in an extended 23-man squad named Monday for a white-ball tour of the West Indies in July.

The team will be captained by Aaron Finch and will feature the return of Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, David Warner and Pat Cummins, who all missed the recent trip to New Zealand.

The whirlwind tour starts with the first of five Twenty20 internationals in St Lucia on July 9 and ends with the third of three one-day international in Barbados on July 24 as the teams prepare for the T20 World Cup in India later this year.

AFP

Serena gets 1st clay win of season

Parma: Serena Williams brushed aside the challenge of local teenager Lisa Pigato in the opening round of WTA tournament in Parma on Monday. Williams, ranked eighth in the world, beat the 572nd-ranked Pigato, making her WTA debut, 6-3, 6-2 in the first meeting between them.

Serena made a sluggish start as the 17-year-old came up with three glorious winners to break the 23-time Grand Slam champion in the first game.

The American, however, got into gear and dropped just five more points on her serve, firing down six aces and many more that Pigato could barely reach.

Williams, however, was



Serena Williams in action during her match at Emilia Romagna Open

AP

full of praise for her teenage opponent.

"Lisa played really well," she said in her on-court interview.

"She told me she was only 17. Her future is super-bright. She handled the moment well, so I look forward to cheering for her in the future."

'No surprise': Clarke on Bancroft's revelations on ball tampering issue

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Former captain Michael Clarke won't be surprised if it comes to light that more players were aware of the ball-tampering plot in 2018 as he accused Cricket Australia of sweeping the issue under the carpet.

The scandal had led to a review of Australia's win-at-all-cost team culture and led to one-year bans being slapped on then captain Steve Smith, his deputy David Warner and a nine-month suspension on opener Cameron Bancroft, who had the sandpaper in his possession.

The issue was put under the spotlight again when Bancroft last week revealed that Australian bowlers in the team at that time might have had some knowledge about the plot.

"If you are playing sport at the highest level you know your tools that good it's not funny. Can you imagine that ball being thrown back to the bowler and the bowler not knowing about it? Please," Clarke told *Sky Sports* radio on Monday.

"I love how the articles in the paper are, 'It is such a big surprise that Cameron Bancroft has made a ...' Actually, if you read his quotes, it is not what he did say as what he didn't say in regards to other people knowing about 'sandpaperage,'" he said.

Following Bancroft's interview, Cricket Australia said it was open to a re-investigation into the incident and its integrity team has already approached the pacer for more information.

"What's the surprise? That more than three people knew? I don't think anybody who has played the game of cricket, or knows a little bit about cricket, would know that in a team like that, at the highest level, when the ball is such an important part of the game," Clarke said.

"If you'd played the game of cricket, you would know more than three people know what was going on in there. The problem Cricket Australia has is the fact they've tried to sweep it under the carpet and not come out and tell the full story.

"You don't have to have played cricket at the highest level. If you know anything about the game of cricket, you know on that day, on that field, what went down, more than three people had to know about it. Impossible not to..."

"That's why there's going to be finger-pointing until, I think until someone writes their book and tells the complete, honest truth. It will continue because it hasn't been finished, so much is left unsaid from the players and even what happened with staff."

Clarke also threw his weight behind Bancroft. "I don't think Cameron Bancroft should be smashed for what he's come out and said, he's tried to say nothing but he's doing an interview," he said.



Barcelona players hold the trophy aloft after the UEFA Women's Champions League final match between Chelsea and FC Barcelona in Gothenburg on Sunday. Barcelona won 4-0 @FCBtermeni

French title chase down to wire

AFP ■ PARIS

Lille's bid to win the Ligue 1 title will go to the final weekend of the season after Sunday's goalless draw with Saint-Etienne allowed Paris Saint-Germain to moved to within a point of the leaders.

Reigning champions PSG strolled to a simple 4-0 win over 10-man Reims to pile the pressure on Lille, who will nonetheless claim the French title for the first time since 2011 if they win at mid-table Angers next Sunday.

Christophe Galtier's Lille hit the post in the final seconds of a frustrating match with little in the way of goalmouth incident.

It was not the display the fans who had gathered to follow the team bus to the Stade Pierre Mauroy ahead of the match expected and will leave those supporters with frayed finger nails next weekend.

PSG meanwhile were gifted a perfect start at the Parc des Princes when Yunus Abdelhamid handled Kylian Mbappe's shot in front of an empty goal, conceding a penalty and being sent off in the process.

Neymar slotted home the spot-kick in the 13th minute and 11



Neymar hugs Mbappe after PSG win

AP

minutes later Mbappe pounced on a wayward pass across the area by Thomas Foket to tap home the second. Marquinhos made it three in the 68th minute with a thumping header from Neymar's corner.

Kean rounded off an easy win for PSG one minute from the end.

Monaco are also still in with a potential shout for the title after their 2-1 home win over Rennes moved Niko Kovac's third-placed side three points behind Lille with one to play.

However the Principality club have a significantly inferior goal difference to both Lille and PSG.

Chinese TT world champ left out of Olympics singles

Shanghai: Table tennis world champion Liu Shiwen has been controversially left out of China's women's singles line-up for the Tokyo Olympics and will instead play doubles and team events.

The 30-year-old won a team title as China swept all four Gold medals at the Rio 2016 Games, but she has never won the Olympic singles crown in her trophy-laden career.

China announced a six-member squad, with reigning Olympic champion Ma Long and world number one Fan Zhendong the two men's singles players. Liu, crowned singles world champion in 2019, will play the mixed doubles and women's team events. World number one Chen Meng and Sun Yingsha were named for the women's singles.

Federer excited for his comeback



AFP ■ GENEVA

Roger Federer on Monday said that he expects to return to the top tier of tennis even though the next generation of players will have gained ground during his lengthy injury lay-off.

Federer begins his comeback-proper on Swiss home soil in Geneva on Tuesday, with the 39-year-old tennis legend starting a run of tournaments including the French Open, Halle, Wimbledon and then the Tokyo Olympics.

Federer returned to the courts in March, having been out for more than a year follow-

ing two knee surgeries, winning his first match in Qatar before losing his second.

Doha was his first appearance since January 2020 and an Australian Open semi-final defeat to Novak Djokovic.

"I'm just concerned about where my game is at. The guys on tour are all in a good rhythm. The level that everybody is producing in great. I want to achieve that as well again," Federer told reporters.

His old rivals Djokovic and Rafael Nadal played out a two-hour 49-minute final in Rome on Sunday, with Nadal claiming a 7-5, 1-6, 6-3 victory to match the Serbian world number one's record of 36 Masters 1000 series titles.

"I'm excited about the comeback, that's what my focus needs to be on and not about trying to be at the same level as Rafa and Novak right now," Federer said.

But the 20-time Grand Slam title winner added: "I believe I will be part of the top tier."

Ter Stegen out of Euro 2020

AFP ■ BARCELONA

German international goalkeeper Marc-Andre ter Stegen on Monday announced that he is to undergo an operation on his right knee that will rule him out of Euro 2020.

"I have decided together with the medical team of the club (Barcelona) that I will do a complementary intervention on my knee. I'm sad that I will miss the Euro 2020 this summer with Germany," the 29-year-old said on Instagram. "For the first time in many years I will be a fan at home supporting my country. I hope we win it!"

Barca said in a statement that Ter Stegen is scheduled to go under



the knife on May 20 in Malmö, Sweden, ruling him out of the club's final La Liga game of the season next weekend.

His announcement comes a day after Barca were officially left out of the running for the La Liga title after a 2-1 home defeat by Celta Vigo left them seven points behind La Liga leaders Atletico Madrid with one game to play.

Ter Stegen has played just 24 times for his country as he has struggled to dislodge Bayern Munich stopper and Germany captain Manuel Neuer from the number one spot.

Germany are in Group F alongside world champions France, Euro 2016 winners Portugal and Hungary.

Modric to lead Croatia

Zagreb: Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic named a 26-man squad for Euro 2020 on Monday, comprising players who won Silver at the 2018 World Cup and their younger peers and led by veteran Luka Modric.

"Our latest results were not the best, but I'm an optimist. Our first goal is to get out of the group," Dalic told reporters.

Croatia have been drawn in Group D, and will play England in London on June 13.

Dalic described that opening match as the toughest in the group stage as England "have good quality and we play at Wembley".

Croatia then travel to



Glasgow where they will face the Czech Republic on June 18 and Scotland four days later.

"We have difficult opponents, but I believe in us. We are at our best when the going gets tough," Dalic said.

Captain Modric, 35, is among several players who took part in Croatia's wonderful run at the

World Cup in Russia in 2018 where they beat England in the semi-final before losing 4-2 to France in the final.

That group of experienced players includes defenders Domagoj Vida, Dejan Lovren and Sime Vrsaljko, midfielders Mateo Kovacic, Marcelo Brozovic and Milan Badelj as well as attackers Ivan Perisic, Andrej Kramaric and Ante Rebic.

BELGIUM INCLUDE WITSEL

Burssels: Belgium coach Roberto Martinez on Monday named a 26-strong squad for Euro including Axel Witsel.

Witsel underwent an operation on his achilles tendon in January and resumed running just a few days ago, leaving his availability for the June 11-July 11 tournament in doubt.