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COUNTRY HAS FOLLOWED MANTRA OF SABKASAATH, SABKA VIKAS: MODI

India reports 1.65L Covid cases, lowest since April 12

Speaking at his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Modi said, "Over these years, the country has followed the mantra of 'Sabka-Saath, Sabka-Vikas, Sabka-Vishwas'. All of us have worked every moment with dedication in the service of the country."



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On the seventh anniversary of his government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the country has followed the mantra of 'Sabka-Saath, Sabka-Vikas, Sabka-Vishwas' in all these years. Speaking at his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', Prime Minister Modi said, "Over these years, the country has followed the mantra of 'Sabka-Saath, Sabka-Vikas, Sabka-Vishwas'. All of us have worked every

moment with dedication in the service of the country." "Whatever we have accomplished in these seven years, it has been of the country, of the countrymen. Together, we have experienced many moments of national pride in these years. When we observe that now India moves ahead not with the thought and pressure of other countries but with her own conviction, then we all feel

proud," the Prime Minister said. Talking about national security, Modi said, "When we witness that now India gives a befitting reply to those who conspire against us, then our confidence soars. When India does not compromise on the issues of national security, when the strength of our armed forces increases, we feel that yes, we are on the right path." Pointing out challenges faced dur-

ing the period, Modi said, "Where there are successes, there are also trials. In these seven years together, we have overcome many difficult tests as well, and each time we have emerged stronger." Referring to Covid pandemic, the Prime Minister said, "In the form of the Corona pandemic, we are being continuously put to test. This is a crisis that has plagued the whole world, so many people have lost their loved ones. Even big countries were not spared from its devastation. In the midst of this pandemic, India is moving forward with the resolve of 'Sewa and Sehyog' (service and cooperation)." He said, "In the first wave, we fought courageously; this time too India will be victorious in the ongoing fight against the virus. Be it social distancing, rules related to masks or vaccines, there should be no letup in our efforts. This indeed is the path to our victory." The Prime Minister also talked about electricity to every village, road network in villages, opening of bank accounts, employment generation schemes, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Jal Jeevan Mission, Ayushman Yojana and other schemes.

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India reported less than 2 lakh Covid-19 cases third day in a row, with 1,65,553 fresh cases recorded in the last 24 hours. In the same time span, 3,460 patients succumbed to the coronavirus, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said. This is for the fourth time since April 12 that India has recorded less than two lakh cases of Covid. On May 25, India had recorded 1.96 lakh cases of Covid, 1,86,364 cases on May 28 and 1,73,790 cases on May 29. The fatalities have also remained below 4,000 for four consecutive days. India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,78,94,800 with 21,14,508 active cases and 3,25,972 deaths so far. According to the Health Ministry, a total of 2,76,309 people have been discharged in the last 24 hours, taking the total discharge to 2,54,54,320 from Covid till date. The Health Ministry said that a total of



21,20,66,614 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 30,35,749 who were administered vaccines in the last 24 hours. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research, 34,31,83,748 samples have been tested up to May 29 for Covid-19. Of these 20,63,839 samples were tested on Saturday. In the last 19 days, India has recorded over 70,000 deaths. On May 24, India crossed a grim milestone of three-lakh deaths due to the coronavirus infections, thus becoming world's third country after the US and Brazil to cross three-lakh

deaths. India registered record deaths due to Covid exactly a week ago with 4,529 deaths -- the highest number of fatalities from Covid infection in any country in a day since the coronavirus outbreak was reported in China's Wuhan in December 2019. It surpassed 4,468 deaths in the US on January 12, and earlier 4,211 in Brazil on April 6. After battling a brutal second wave for weeks, fresh Covid cases came down below the three lakh-mark for the first time on May 17 after touching record high of 4,14,188 on May 7.

47% Indians not happy with govt handling of Covid crisis

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Almost half of Indians showed their dissatisfaction with the Indian government's way of handling the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that began its second wave in March 2021.



A total of 46.6 per cent people in a survey said they did not "think the Indian government is handling the Coronavirus well". Of them 29.2 per cent strongly disagreed with the steps being taken by the government to handle the viral outbreak. The IANS-Cvoter Covid tracker survey, which was conducted in the last seven days on a total of 6,872 people across the country, also revealed that 48.7 per cent agreed the steps so far adopted by the Indian government

while handling Covid-19. Replying to whether they believed "the threat from the Coronavirus is exaggerated", 46.8 per cent agreed while 39.4 per cent did not. Similar survey was also conducted on 56,685 people between January 1 and May 27 this year. The survey comes at a time when India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now

stood at 2,78,94,800 with 21,14,508 active cases and 3,25,972 deaths so far. India reported less than 2 lakh Covid-19 cases third day in a row on Sunday, with 1,65,553 fresh cases recorded in the last 24 hours. In the same time span, 3,460 patients succumbed to the coronavirus, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said.

7 CRIMINAL BLUNDERS IN 7 YEARS, SAYS CONGRESS

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On completion of seven years of the Modi government, the Congress has said that Modi Govt is "Harmful for the Country" and has accused it of "committing 7 Criminal Blunders in 7 Years".



The Congress has said that the Modi government has failed on all fronts -- from economy to securing national security while surrendering to China.

Addressing a press conference on Sunday Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, "The systematic destruction of the Indian economy has failed on all fronts. Even before the pandemic, GDP Growth fell from 8.1 per cent in FY2015-16 to 4.2 per cent in FY2019-20. The Indian economy has registered a recession for the first time since Independence. The GDP growth was minus 24.1 per cent in Q1 of FY2020-21 and minus 7.5 per cent in Q2 of FY2020-21. The overall GDP growth for FY2020-21 is expected to be close to minus 8 per cent."

The Modi government promised 2 crore jobs every year. On the contrary, under the Modi rule, India saw the worst unemployment in 45 years in 2019. As per CMIE, during COVID-19, close to 12.2 crore people lost their jobs and almost 75 per cent of the 12.2 crore people were small traders and wage-labourers.

Blunders like Demonetisation and a shoddy GST implementation and a national lockdown at a 4-hour notice has hurt the Indian economy badly. As a result, even Bangladesh has now overtaken India in per capita income.

The congress alleged that all-round failure of the Modi government has ensured that prices of essential commodities like Edible Oils, Pulses and Petrol/Diesel have hit the roof. The management of COVID-19 by the Modi government has been abysmal to say the least. With over 2.77 crore infections and 3.22 Lakh deaths, India saw its PM missing in action, Congress said. At a time when experts were warning the Modi

government of a second COVID wave, it was in a rush to create a PR stunt by declaring victory over COVID-19. With shortage of beds, oxygen supply and life-saving drugs, citizens have been forced to see their loved ones dying. Thousands of bodies have been found floating in the Ganga river across UP and Bihar.

The vaccination strategy is the worst implemented against any crisis, ever. Decentralized procurement, placing orders very late, no financial support to manufacturers to enhance capacity, not approving enough sources and not procuring enough doses. At the current average of 15.34 lakh doses administered per day, it will take India till May 31, 2024 to vaccinate its adult population.

Surjewala accused the Modi Government of surrendering India's strategic interests to China and woefully compromised National Security. "The Modi government has undermined the astounding valour and insurmountable grit of our Armed Forces, who faced Chinese incursions and aggressions with indomitable courage and sacrifice."

The Modi Government has agreed to withdraw Indian Armed Forces from dominant positions in 'Kailash Ranges' (Southern Bank, Pangong Tso Lake Area), where the Chinese are at a disadvantage, without any quid pro quo by China.

Punjab Congress MLAs summoned to Delhi

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The three-member Congress committee which was constituted to resolve issues in Punjab between chief minister Amrinder Singh and Navjot Singh Sidhu, has summoned 25 MLAs to Delhi on Monday to take their feedback on the ongoing tussle in the party, sources said. The meeting is scheduled at Congress war room in Delhi.

Punjab Incharge of the Congress, Sidhu has been attacking the Chief Minister, saying that he is waiting as the high command has intervened. Sidhu dared the chief minister to prove his allegations. But seeing the fate of the committee in Rajasthan the disgruntled group says that this is to buy time as nothing much is expected and the AICC will not take risk of replacing the Chief Minister as there is nobody of his stature to face the Akali Dal specially the Badal family, the Congress will have to devise a middle path as 20 MLAs are reported to be unhappy with the Chief Minister's style of functioning.

70% PEOPLE SAY, WILL TAKE VAX WHEN IT'S AVAILABLE

New Delhi: Amid the ongoing vaccination drive in the country, 70 per cent of the respondents have said that they will take vaccine against coronavirus whenever it's available. The IANS-Cvoter survey posed a question to respondents -- if a new Coronavirus vaccine becomes publicly available, will they take it? In response to this, overwhelming 72.8 per cent strongly agreed to take it, while 10.3 per cent strongly disagreed. However, an average of 70 per cent generally agreed for the vaccine. When asked if the new Coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is safe, 48.8 per cent respondents agreed that it's totally safe while 9 per cent disagreed, however, an average of 57 per cent agreed that the vaccine is safe. A total of 67.8 per cent respondents thought that a new Coronavirus vaccine would be important. As the Covid vaccination has crossed 20 crore the Center on Sunday said that Nearly 12 Crore Doses will be available for National COVID Vaccination for the month of June and 7,94,05,200 doses were available for National COVID Vaccination Programme in May 2021



Only 6% reported major side-effects, sickness after Covid vax

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Amid reports of side effects after vaccination, a poll now shows that only six per cent of vaccinated candidates reported severe side-effects or sickness after being administered the Covid shots.



The IANS C-Voter Covid tracker also found 33.6 per cent respondents reported little side-effects or sick, while 57.2 per cent had no side-effects or fall ill after the vaccine doses.

About 3.2 per cent respondents said that they did not know or couldn't say whether they felt any side-effects or got sick after getting vaccinated.

About 32.2 per cent respondents did not know which Covid vaccine shots they got.

While 44.6 per cent respondents received doses of Covishield and 23.3 percent received Covaxine. About 56,685 respondents were surveyed from January 1 to May 27 this year. This survey is based on CATI interviews of

adult (aged over 18) respondents across all segments covering all 542 Lok Sabha segments. Margin of error is plus minus three per cent at State level and plus minus five per cent at regional level. Data weighted to the known Census profile, including Gender, Age, Education, Rural or Urban, Religion and Caste apart from the voting recalls for last Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections.

'ANTIBODY COCKTAIL' THERAPY USED FOR COVID PATIENT IN PUNJAB

Mohali: The 'antibody cocktail' therapy was administered to a 72-year-old Covid positive patient who is a diabetic with chronic kidney disease, at the Fortis Hospital here on Sunday. Administered one dose of the cocktail intravenously, the patient is reportedly stable post infusion, said the Fortis Hospital. The 'antibody cocktail therapy' is for those above the age of 65, who are isolating at home, have a saturation oxygen of 93, require no oxygen support but are at risk of developing a severe form of the infection on account of their co-morbidities such as obesity, diabetes, liver disease, heart ailments, or chronic lung disease.

Social media row: Indians refuse to be treated as guinea pigs

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After a week full of intense drama and screaming headlines as social media giants and the Indian government/law enforcement agencies took the knives out in the open over new IT rules as well as spread of misinformation, millions of Indians were left with a burning question: Where does all this lead as the spread of fake news continues unabated?



Amid an absence of a dedicate law on misinformation -- as other nations move on to penalise social media firms (Russia has just fined Twitter about \$259,000 for its failure to remove banned content) -- India currently has an insufficient IT regime to regulate social networks, which have grown so big that taming them need more than just firing notices every now and then.

spread of fake news/misinformation about themselves on the social media platforms. Leading cybersecurity experts feel that India needs to give a strong message to social media companies that users cannot be treated as guinea pigs in terms of publishing and transmission of fake news/misinformation.

"India has failed to control the spread of fake news, primarily because regulating misinformation has never been a political priority. India has allowed itself to lag behind in the race of nations in this regard, while smaller countries like Malaysia, Singapore and France have come up with dedicated legal frameworks to deal with misinformation," leading cyberlaw expert Pavan Duggal told IANS.

The Indian Information Technology Act, 2000 is not a law on fake news. Consequently, even the amendments to the IT Act, 2000 by virtue of the IT (Amendment) Act, 2008 did not deal with fake news, barring inserting Section 66A.

The Section 66A made it an offence when somebody sends any information which he knows to be false, but which is sent for the purpose of causing annoyance, inconvenience, danger, obstruction, insult, injury, criminal intimidation, emnity, hatred or ill will. However, the Supreme Court struck down the Section 66A as an unconstitutional vide judgment in the case of Shreya Singhal v/s Union of India in the year 2015.

"Since then, India has not had the political vision and determination to go ahead and fight fake news/misinformation," said Duggal, also a seasoned Supreme Court lawyer.

While moving ahead with implementing its user privacy policy from May 15 and suing the Centre over the chat 'traceability' demand, WhatsApp made it clear that it "will maintain this approach until at least the forthcoming PDP (personal data protection) law comes into effect".

The picture is transparent. They know that India lacks a strong data protection law like the GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) in the European Union (EU). India is trying to make a feeble attempt to regulate some portion of fake news/misinformation by the new IT (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021. "However, this is nothing but tantamount to provide lip-service to fight misinformation. No consequences for non-compliances for the users have been stipulated under the IT Rules, 2021," Duggal informed.



BENGAL CHIEF SECYALAPANBANDOPADHYAY MIGHT NOT GO TO DELHI ON MONDAY

In the midst of the tug-of-war between the Centre and the state over the issue of his central deputation, West Bengal Chief Secretary, AlapanBandopadhyay, is left with a day to decide his future course of action.



Team Absolute | Kolkata

Indications are that the top bureaucrat, who has got an extension of three months in service, is likely to attend a meeting convened by the Chief Minister on the Covid situation and might not go to Delhi on Monday.

Bandopadhyay, who was supposed to retire on May 31, got an extension of three months on May 24 to continue as the Chief Secretary of the state. He was given the extension by the Centre on the basis of a request of the state government but on May 28, the

Centre's Department of Personnel and Training wrote a letter to the state urging Bandopadhyay to be present before the department at 10 a.m. on May 31. The state government has also been asked to relieve him. The transfer order triggered political controversy and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made it clear that the state is not willing to release Bandopadhyay because he is needed in the state and not at the Centre. She also hinted at exploring legal action to counter the Centre's "unilateral decision" without consulting the state.

Though Bandopadhyay was not available for comment but sources

close to the Chief Secretary indicated that he is not willing to go to Delhi on Monday and continue on to work on his post in the state.

"If the state doesn't give him a release, then he cannot join any other department. So, it all depends on the state to decide the future of Bandopadhyay. So long he is not released, he is the Chief Secretary of the state and he will have work there only," a former bureaucrat said. Bandopadhyay went to Nabanna on Sunday evening at 4.50 p.m. and was in the office as of the evening. Though details of his reason behind going to the state secretariat was not known but indications are strong that Bandopadhyay might communicate with the Centre, apprising them of the present situation. The letter of recall, however, has triggered widespread controversy in the political as well as in the bureaucratic level.

A retired IAS officer, who has worked in the Union government for a long time, said: "When a person is called for central deputation, there are certain procedures that need to be followed but, in this case, nothing has been followed. The person concerned will have to give his

consent and the state will have to release him and then only he can go for central deputation but in this case, nothing has been followed. The state will not have to go to the court also but they just need to inform that they cannot release him at present."

Former Chief Secretary Ardhendu Sen also criticised the Centre on the issue. "This cannot happen. A bureaucrat cannot be transferred in this way without following any rules and the state government has every justification to go to the court," Sen said.

Another former Chief Secretary of the state said: "Alapan will retire on May 31. His extension for 3 months was only in the post of Chief Secretary as per the provision of Section 16(1) the All-India Services (Death-Cum-Retirement Benefits) Rules, 1958, whereby all 'All India Service Officers' normally retire at 60, but on the recommendation of the state government, an extension of upto 6 months can be given. If he joins the Central Government on the date he was to retire, he cannot continue beyond the date since his extension was only against the post of Chief Secretary."

37% Indians face salary deduction amid Covid crisis

Income of over 37.6 per cent Indians has decreased as their salaries are being deducted amid ongoing second wave of Covid-19 pandemic, reveals IANS-CVoter Covid tracker survey.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

This section of the group, however, said they are working under regulations and safety measures. A total of 6,872 people across the country were approached during the survey conducted in the past one week.

A total of 21.1 per cent people said their salary is same as like they were getting during normal days, but they are working under regulations and safety measures.

However, 10.9 per cent are completely laid off or

out of work during the pandemic. Of the total, 5.6 per cent Indians said they are still working from home with salary cut and their income has decreased. A total of 4 per cent Indians said they are still working from home with same salary and same income.

There was 3.7 per cent people who accepted that they were working under regulations and safety measures, but they have no income or salary.

Only 2.9 per cent people said they were not working from home but getting full salary. However, 1.6 per cent

people said they were not working from home but were getting deducted salary.

The survey comes at a time when India's overall tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,78,94,800 with 21,14,508 active cases and 3,25,972 deaths so far.

India reported less than 2 lakh Covid-19 cases third day in a row, with 1,65,553 fresh cases recorded in the last 24 hours. In the same time span, 3,460 patients succumbed to the coronavirus, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said.

58.9% healthy people died due to Covid, 36% from -45 age group

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After more than 3 lakh deaths during the pandemic, an IANS-CVoter survey showed 58 per cent people who lost their lives were completely healthy before getting infected. The respondents also said 10.9 per cent of the deceased did not have any serious ailments but were not completely healthy; 17.5 of the victims had serious ailments like heart disease, diabetes, TB, Cancer, while 13.3 per cent did not know about it. A 21.2 per cent of the deaths were in the age group of above 66 years; followed by age group of 36 to 45 which had 19.1 per cent deaths due to Covid; 18.3 deaths occurred in age group of 56 to 65 years, while 16.1 per cent lost their lives in the group of 46 to 55 years.

More and more analysis revealed that most of the deaths occurred in the age-group below 45, which was 36 per cent of the total deaths. This was followed by 34.4 per cent in age group of 46 to 65 years while 21 per-



cent died above this age group. The field survey was done between January 1 and May 27, 2021 and samples were spread in all 542 Lok Sabha seats across all states, with error of +/- 3% at macro level and +/- 5% at micro level with Sample Size of 56685 India on Sunday reported 1.65 lakh fresh Covid-19 cases in 24 hours with 3,460 deaths -- one of the lowest since April 12, the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry said.

India's overall tally stands at 2,77,29,247 with 22,28,724 active cases, and 3,22,512 deaths, so far.

In 18 days India had

recorded over 68,000 deaths. India registered record deaths due to Covid on May 21 with 4,529 deaths -- the highest number of fatalities from Covid infection in any country since the coronavirus outbreak was reported in China's Wuhan in December 2019.

It surpassed 4,468 deaths in the US on January 12, and earlier 4,211 in Brazil on April 6.

After battling a brutal second wave for weeks, fresh Covid cases came down below the three lakh-mark for the first time on May 17 after touching record high of 4,14,188 on May 7.

Why is Raje running parallel programmes to saffron party in R'sthan?

Even during the pandemic times, former Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje seems to be walking on a track parallel to the Bharatiya Janata Party, exposing her growing differences with the saffron party. She is seen escaping the programmes scheduled by BJP workers and promoting the programmes being organised under her solo banner.



Team Absolute | Jaipur

No matter if it is the question of distributing food and water in different parts of the state or attending the virtual party meetings, Raje and her team members are seen endorsing 'Brand Raje' in all these programmes.

Recently Raje and team, with the aim to distribute food and water to the needy, launched a campaign "Vasundhara Jan Rasoi" in different parts of the state in which neither the BJP symbol "lotus" nor Prime Minister Narendra Modi's pictures were seen.

What raised eyebrows is the time chosen to launch this event as the saffron party is running a similar campaign across the nation called

'Seva Hi Sangathan' to celebrate the seven years -- first term and two years of the second term -- of the Modi government on the directions of BJP National President JP Nadda.

So what is the need for Raje starting this campaign under her own name during the pandemic, questioned a senior BJP worker.

As the aim and objective of both the programmes are the same, why are they being run under two different banners in the desert state, he questioned.

On Friday MLA Kalicharan Saraf, a Raje loyalist, distributed food to the needy in Jaipur under Vasundhara Jan Rasoi.

On the same day, MP Manoj Rajauriya also inaugurated this campaign in Karauli and distributed

food packets to the needy.

In fact, Raje's campaign was recently launched in Sawai Madhopur too, but all camps had one fact in common -- none of them had any BJP symbol or any picture of PM Modi or any other leader but Raje's picture was being seen at the centre.

Besides this effort of Raje to start her own campaign, there are other issues too being discussed in political circles, which include her continuous absence from the party office, her distance during the campaigning for the by-polls held on three seats recently in the state and her silence and virtual on/ from attending party virtual video conferences.

Recently, BJP MLA Gautamlal Meena passed away and all MPs and MLAs attended a virtual meeting to pay tributes to the departed soul but Raje was absent from this meeting.

A separate message was shared by her media team condoling the death of Meena.

In fact a group called Vasundhara Raje Team 2023 actively running on Facebook since the last few months demanding Raje be the CM face was blocked recently.

However, on May 26, the group admin wrote on Facebook wall

questioning if the group should be started again.

He also informed that the group was blocked for some special reasons. While the followers were seen questioning the reasons, many amongst them expressed their desire to restart the group.

Raje, these days, is attending virtual meetings of Jhalawad workers and is taking special care of those seats since she is the MLA while her son Dushyant Singh is MP.

Also, she is attacking Congress Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on the deteriorating law and order situation in Rajasthan, retweeting tweets of BJP National President JP Nadda. She is also quite vocal on all burning issues, giving indications that her silence on her sidelining should not be taken for granted and those thinking to write her off should change their thinking.

Maybe the BJP should take cognisance of the issue and intervene to heal this rift in the party as it gets going to win the 2023 polls, said a BJP state worker.

BJP state president Satish Poonia meanwhile said that Raje has been a senior party worker and we all respect her. It is the central leadership which can speak on all these issues for she is BJP national vice president, he added.

Assam activist arrested for 'offensive posts' against CM

Team Absolute | Kolkata

Nipom Chutia is the third person to be arrested in the state for "maliciously maligning the image" of Chief Minister Sarma. He was arrested from Gogamukh in Dhemaji district late Saturday for his Facebook posts that raked up controversies about Sarma's past.

The posts rakes up police cases against Sarma for extortion on behalf of the separatist ULFA and the murder of Congress trade unionist Manabendra Sarma, in which the now Chief Minister was prime accused.

Sarma says he was cleared by the court on both cases and the Facebook posts were a "deliberate attempt" to malign him.

The KMSS is led by Gogoi who won this year's Assembly elections despite contesting from jail, where he is lodged on charges of triggering "violent agitations" against the BJP-piloted Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). The KMSS has also spearheaded an agitation against big dams in the Arunachal Pradesh-Assam region on grounds this is a seismic hotbed and a strong earthquake like the 1897 or 1950 in Assam can cause what Gogoi



A member of the Assam-based Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS), led by jailed rights activist Akhil Gogoi, has been arrested for "offensive posts" against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

describes as a "land tsunami".

Dhemaji, Assam's northernmost district bordering Arunachal Pradesh, has been the hotbed of the anti-dam agitation, which the state's BJP government has sought to crush on grounds it was "anti-development".

Sarma, initially with All Assam Students Union (AASU), joined the Congress during the tenure of late Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia and rose to become number two in late Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi's cabinet. Then before the 2016 state Assembly polls, he switched to the saffron camp.

The Congress alleged that the CBI investigating the Sarada chit fund scam, in which Sarma's name figured like the Louis Berger scandal, allegedly went easy on him.

Two journalists were arrested and three others detained in February for an alleged attempt to "malign with salacious intent" Harma after they shared a photo of him along with his daughter.

The Chief Minister's wife had filed a complaint with the Dispur police station under the POCSO Act, following which the Guwahati City Police began probing the case.

Taufiquddin Ahmad, the Editor-in-Chief of local news website 'Pratibimba Live', and its News Editor Iqbal were arrested for investigation into the "conspiracy", while three others were detained, Guwahati City Police Commissioner Munna Prasad Gupta has said.

The three employees who were detained were being interrogated to ascertain their involvement in the

case, he said. The Minister told reporters here that this was a clear case of political conspiracy but to "stoop so low and not spare even my minor daughter, reflects a very low mentality."

"I have been attacked on all fronts by my opponents but when they failed to create any impact, they have adopted a different strategy to malign my character and I have been noticing this recently," Sarma said.

He said that the photograph posted with a malafide intent was disturbing and "we could not sleep the whole night."

Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order), G.P. Singh said that the police will take strong action against all such attempts under stringent provisions of the POCSO Act, he said.

They were arrested on the basis of a case registered with the Dispur police station under IPC Section 509 (intending to insult the modesty of any woman), and Sections 14 and 21 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, he said.

"Action shall be taken against all persons irrespective of their place of residence who use any of the social media platforms to maliciously use such platforms for furthering this conspiracy," Singh added.

The website had shared a photo of the minister hugging his daughter, following which it went viral on social media.

Cong accuses BJP's Tejasvi Surya, his uncle of taking bribes for vaccines

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress on Saturday accused BJP MP Tejasvi Surya and his uncle Ravi Subramanya of making profits by being involved in an alleged vaccine commission scam in Karnataka during the second Covid wave that has struck the country hard.

Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera claimed that the Basavanagudi MLA Subramanya has been asking Bengaluru residents to get vaccinated at a particular private hospital and also referred to leaked audio clips, where the supervisor of the hospital purportedly tells a man that the price of Covid vaccine cannot be less than Rs 900 as they have to give Rs 700 to Subramanya per dose from this money.

Addressing a press conference here, Khera said, "Today, some audio recording were leaked in the local media of Karnataka, where Subramanya, third term MLA and real uncle of Surya, who is also the national president of Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha, where in those audio recordings, supervisor of a private hospital clearly tells member of the public that per vaccination he will have to pay Rs 900, not a penny less."

The Congress leader said that the supervisor also tells on telephone that Rs 700 of this Rs 900 have to be given to Subramanya. "These are shocking startling revelations. It is like getting caught red handed. This is a private hospital. There is a background to this, very revealing background to this, which seals the entire case, makes it an open and shut case."

What is that background? Earlier this week, Surya had advertised his own picture along with this hospital, which there are nursing homes also attached exhorting people to get vaccinated from this hospital, where his hoardings, banners are displayed, where in



the price per vaccination, which is Rs 900 is also mentioned," he said.

Khera said that the name of this private hospital was also mentioned, the name and photograph of the BJP MP is also there.

Firing salvos at the government, the Congress leader said, "We want to know how vaccines are available at this private hospital when they are not available in government hospitals for common people? Who is responsible for this? How are they (BJP leaders) getting vaccines?"

Khera also demanded that an FIR should be lodged against Surya.

"This is cash for vaccines. The membership of Surya from the parliament should be ended with immediately. We owe to the people of Karnataka, the membership from the Karnataka Assembly of Subramanya, should be ended right now, we owe to the people of Karnataka."

If you want to save lives of people of Karnataka, this is hardly any sacrifice for you Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is the least you can do," he said.



Crisis management committees to decide today regarding unlock:CM

Chouhan said that there is a continuous decline in corona infection in the state. In 78 thousand 437 tests of Corona, 1476 new cases have been reported. 5 thousand 59 patients of Corona have gone home healthy and the recovery rate of the state has been 95.5 per cent. Positive rate of corona today in the state is 1.8 per cent.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said in his message regarding Corona that today, Crisis Management Committees of Districts, Blocks, Wards and Villages in the entire

state will meet and decide what relaxation should be given in the Corona curfew and also regarding the process of unlocking. In Madhya Pradesh, the responsibility of corona control has been taken by the people on their own shoulders. The government will implement whatever the people decide.

Chouhan said that there is a continuous decline in corona infection in the state.

In 78 thousand 437 tests of Corona, 1476 new cases have been reported. 5 thousand 59 patients of Corona have gone home healthy and the recovery rate of the state has been 95.5 per cent. Positive rate of corona today in the state is 1.8 per cent.

Chouhan said that not a single new case has come in two districts of Agar and Bhind in the state, whereas less than 10 new cases have come in 23 districts.

Conditions are improving continuously, but utmost caution is required.

Government is with Children orphaned in Covid catastrophe: Chief Minister Chouhan

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that we will not let the orphaned children in Covid's catastrophe realize that they do not have parents. We will hold every child's finger. The education, writing, food and financial security of all the children who were orphaned due to the disaster of Corona will be taken care of. Children work hard, Make your parents' dreams come true. I am your uncle and the welfare state government is with you at every step. Chief Minister today distributed pension amount virtually from residence to the eligible children of Mukhyamantri Covid-19 Bal Seva Yojna. On the inauguration of the scheme, funds were transferred in the accounts of 173 children of 130 families with a single click of Rs 5 thousand per child per month. Principal Secretary Women and Child Development Shri Ashok Shah informed about the scheme. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan interacted virtually with the beneficiary children of the scheme and the guardians of children. Chouhan also addressed parents and children. All the Anganwadi workers of the state were associated with the program.

It is noteworthy that the Chief Minister Covid-19 Bal Seva Yojana has



been launched to provide immediate help to the children whose parents have fallen out of their heads due to Corona and for their dignified life. Under this scheme starting from May 21, 2021, financial assistance of Rs. 5000 per month will be provided to the children, free ration and education of children will be made.

Chouhan said that the state has gone through a terrible tragedy. Such an epidemic comes once in hundreds of years. The outbreak of the first wave of corona was small, but in the second wave the number of infectives increased unexpectedly and many people left us due to the high lethality of the virus. Chouhan said that it was the worst period of my life. Even after many attempts to handle, we could not save many siblings. The situation became more painful due to the shadow of the parents coming out of the heads of innocent children. There is a lot of anguish in homes where there are no longer both parents.

Chouhan said that such children cannot be left to stumble from rate to

rate. The government and society will have to take responsibility of these children. Children affected by the outbreak of Covid should not consider themselves alone. Their entire concern will be taken care of. The state government has made arrangements for financial assistance of Rs. 5 thousand per month for each child, free ration and education every month to such children and their guardians. Society is also coming forward in this direction. The initiative taken in Ratlam is commendable.

Chouhan said that free education of children will be arranged. If the child studies in a private school from 9th to 12th, then a lump sum of ten thousand rupees will be given in a year. Arrangements will also be made for children studying in government-funded colleges. Children who get admission in private engineering college through JEE Mains examination or other similar examination will be provided a fee of up to Rs 1.50 lakh by the government. The entire fee of government and private medical colleges will be borne by the state government on admission from NEET examination. Chouhan said that the state government will also consider the help of daughters at the time of marriage. In addition, the affected children will also be given the benefit of other schemes of the state government.

CM extends best wishes on completion of seven years of Prime PM Modi



Chouhan said that 'In the crisis of Corona infection, I have always found the guidance of i Modi as Chief Minister. Whenever a problem arises, Modi has resolved it immediately.'

Team Absolute | Bhopal

On the completion of seven years of the tenure of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has extended his heartfelt greetings to him today. Chief Minister Chouhan has said in his greeting message that seven years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tenure will prove to be a mile-

stone in the creation of a glorious, splendid, prosperous, flourishing and strong India. Modi is the throb of the hearts of the people of India. He has given new pace and direction to development and has started schemes for the welfare of every class and made their life better. Chouhan said that 'In the crisis of Corona infection, I have always found the guidance of i Modi as Chief Minister. Whenever a problem arises, Modi has resolved it immediately.' Chouhan said that Modi is a sensitive leader with strong will power and he has always the feelings of prosperity, progress, development and welfare of the people of the country in his heart. He has passion and zeal for the welfare of the country and the people. 'I bow to his passion of patriotism and public welfare.'

Man Arrested For Blackmailing Congress MLA After Police register case on CM helpline direction

Madhya Pradesh Congress MLA Neeraj Dixit filed a complaint in Chhatarpur on May 22 alleging that an unidentified person made a video call on WhatsApp to him and performed obscene acts, and later tried to blackmail him with the clip.

Team Absolute | Chhatarpur

The police have arrested a 19-year-old man from an interstate cyber extortion gang in Rajasthan in connection with the case of blackmailing a Congress MLA in

Madhya Pradesh, an official said.

MLA Neeraj Dixit, who represents the Maharajpur seat in Chhatarpur, filed a police complaint in Chhatarpur on May 22 alleging that an unidentified person made a video call on WhatsApp to him and performed obscene acts, and later tried to blackmail him with the clip.

Based on information received from the district police's cyber wing, a man, identified as Adil, was arrested from Nakcha Ka Vaas village under Sikri tehsil of Bharatpur district of Rajasthan, Chhatarpur's Superintendent of Police Sachin Sharma said today.

Out of three mobile phones seized from the accused, one contained the objectionable video using which the accused had made the extortion attempt, he said.

Another mobile phone used to make threatening calls for extortion was also recovered from the accused.

In the release, the police official said the accused admitted to the crime during questioning.

The accused has admitted that he used to collect information about people and their mobile numbers through Facebook, Sharma said.

The accused would pose as a woman and record WhatsApp video calls made to the victim through a screen recorder by showing pre-recorded videos of females, a release said. He used to extort money from people by threatening them to make the video call recorded by him viral on online platforms, it said. The accused told the police that he learnt this (modus operandi) from a person named Ramzan, belonging to the

same village. Ramzan and his team operates an organised racket in which they get fake SIM cards and bank accounts from people of different states, mainly Odisha, and pay them 20 per cent of the extorted money, the release said.

The interrogation also revealed that the accused had extorted ₹ 14.22 lakh from 21 people in different states, including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Haryana and Karnataka, it said.

Earlier, on the basis of the MLA's complaint, the police had registered a case under section 385 (extortion) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant provisions of the Information Technology Act.

Her son Sarthak Joshi said his mother was admitted in the hospital on April 17 and she died on April 22. Though they received her other belongings, jewellery was missing. He said he approached Kolar police station on May 5 where a cop refused to register case.

turned them away after which they filed a complaint on CM Helpline. Her son Sarthak Joshi said his mother was admitted in the hospital on April 17 and she died on April 22. Though they received her other belongings, jewellery was missing. He said he approached Kolar police station on May 5 where a cop refused to register case. He then lodged a complaint on the CM helpline on the same day. Sarthak said the jewellery was worth Rs 1.5 lakh but the police have registered a loss of Rs 60,000.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Kolar police on Saturday registered a case against unidentified person in a case pertaining to jewellery missing from a woman's body in JK hospital. The case was registered following directions from CM Helpline. The family of a woman, who died during corona treatment in JK hospital, had lodged a complaint that her jewellery was missing when they received the body. The family also alleged that when they went to police station, the cops

Woman gives birth to baby girl weighing over five kg

The woman was brought to the health centre when she was in labour pain. Instead of referring her to the district hospital then, she was admitted to the health centre, where she delivered the baby.

Team Absolute | Mandla

A 29-year-old woman has given birth to a baby girl, who weighs 5.1 kilograms, at a primary health centre in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh, a doctor said on Sunday. This

is a rare case as the normal weight of a newborn baby is between 2.5 kg and 3.7 kg, he said.

"The woman, Raksha Kushwaha, gave birth to the baby girl on Saturday in a normal delivery at Anjaniya Primary Health Centre. The baby weighs 5.1 kg, which is rare in terms of the average weight of a newborn," the health centre's in-charge, Dr Ajay Tosh Maravi, told PTL.

The girl's height is 54 centimetres, he said.

"It is good that the baby was born healthy, but tests need to be conducted on her. Around Sunday noon, the baby suffered from some issues with the urine passing. She has been referred to the Mandla district hospital," he added.

The woman was brought to the health centre when she was in labour pain.

Instead of referring her to the district hospital then, she was admitted to the health centre, where she delivered the baby. Both of them were fine then, the doctor said.

Normally, women with sugar, obesity and hormonal problems give birth to overweight babies, Dr Maravi said, adding, "But Kushwaha is not a diabetic." This is her second child as she had given birth to another baby girl three years ago, he said.

"The family is delighted on the arrival of the little chubby guest," he added. Murni Bai, a senior midwife at the health centre said, "This is the first time I have seen such a plump baby."

SIT notice to Kamal Nath over honey trap case

The honey trap scandal involves blackmailing of some politicians and bureaucrats and politicians in Madhya Pradesh by a gang of five women and a man. The gang members used sex tapes shot without the politicians' and bureaucrats' knowledge.

Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Madhya Pradesh Police on Sunday issued a notice to former chief minister Kamal Nath over his statement on the honey-trap case, news agency AO reported. The SIT has also demanded that Nath produces to pen drive that he mentioned during an online press meet on May 21.

Nath's remarks about the 2019 scandal set off a political storm in Madhya Pradesh with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) accusing him of impropriety.

The honey trap scandal involves

blackmailing of some politicians and bureaucrats and politicians in Madhya Pradesh by a gang of five women and a man. The gang members used sex tapes shot without the politicians' and bureaucrats' knowledge. The names of the politicians ensnared in the case have not been made public to date.

Nath made the remark when some Congress MLAs raised the issue of FIR against former forest minister and Congress MLA Umang Singhar in a case of suicide of a 40-year-old woman. The Congress leaders accused the BJP-led government in the state of doing dirty politics. Nath said he

still had a pen drive of the honey trap scandal but that he believed in doing decent politics.

The BJP lashed out at the former chief minister with its state president VD Sharma saying if Nath had proof (when he was the chief minister) against any politician or officer, why did he not take any action.

"Many people have the pen-drive of honeytrap case, many media people also have it. It was first on pen-drive, the matter went to court much later," said Kamal Nath, responding to the BJP's charges.

The 74-year-old politician has been attacking the Madhya

Pradesh government over handling of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19). On Friday, Nath accused the government of hiding the real Covid-19 death figures in the state.

"I believe that 80 per cent of these bodies were of coronavirus victims, while the state government has put the death toll in thousands even now," the former CM said.

As per the state government's bulletin issued on Friday, the Covid-19 fatality count was 7,891. In March 2020, Nath resigned as the state chief minister after several Congress MLAs quit the party and joined the BJP, which then came to power.

MP govt issues fresh guidelines for unlocking from June 1

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Amid declining coronavirus cases, the Madhya Pradesh government has issued new guidelines for unlocking the state in a phased manner and intensified its efforts to bring life back to normal.

Preparations are underway to open the markets in the state from June 1. The Madhya Pradesh government has formulated a special strategy to ensure unlocking the state.

Out of 52 districts in the state, only four districts -- Indore, Bhopal, Sagar and Morena are the ones where the Covid positivity rate is more than five per cent while in the remaining 48 districts it has remained below five per cent.

Depending upon the rate of infections, all districts in the state have been divided into two categories -- those with more than five per cent positivity rate and others with less than five per cent. Separate guidelines have been issued for all districts in the state. A group of ministers was formed to make necessary recommendations for opening the markets and suggesting what kind of relaxations should be provided to the common man. These ministerial groups have submitted their recommendations which have been sent to all District Crisis Management groups.

According to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, after discussing these recommendations the District Crisis Management groups would take a decision regarding the unlock process and inform the general public on May 31. Chouhan said there would be separate guidelines for unlocking of districts with more than five per cent positivity rate and those with less than five per cent. Restrictions would be imposed again if the infection spreads further.



The government has not yet taken any decision on opening of colleges, schools, coaching centres, shopping malls, cinema halls etc. However, the markets will open and close at the prescribed times. The weekend curfew will continue from Saturday night from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. till Monday.

The group of ministers has yet to give recommendations on the opening of educational institutions. Public, entertainment, religious programmes, fairs etc will not be allowed to operate. More than four persons will not be allowed to visit the temples at a time. Only 10 persons will be able to attend a

funeral and 20 persons would be permitted to attend a marriage event.

The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister said the fight against Covid-19 has to be a mass movement. Every person should follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and should get vaccinated. Every person should protect his family, village and city from the infection. Wearing face masks, maintaining social distancing norms and washing hands frequently, etc will have to be made an essential part of our lives, Chouhan added.

The emphasis of the state administration would be to ensure that not a single Covid infected patient steps out of their house. With maximum testing, every infected patient needs to be identified and would have to be kept in home isolation or Covid Care Centre and treated in the hospital if needed. Wherever infection spreads, micro-containment areas will be created as well as contact tracing of every corona positive patient would be done. Shivraj Singh Chouhan said the 'Kill Corona' campaign will continue in rural and urban areas. Patients suffering with fever, common cold, cough, etc will be identified and treatment will be provided to them by giving a free medical kit. Vaccination acts as a protective shield against Covid-19. Awareness must be spread about vaccination by removing all misconceptions associated with it. Every person between 18 years and above must get vaccinated. It should also be ensured that not a single dose of the corona vaccine gets wasted. Chouhan instructed the officials that red, green and yellow zones should be created in rural and urban areas according to the spread of the infection and restrictions should be implemented accordingly. Micro-containment zones can also be created in two or four houses. Don't let the infection spread at any cost, he added.



AT 78, DELHI'S DAILY COVID DEATHS LOWEST SINCE APRIL 12

The city's daily Covid deaths during the second wave of the pandemic crossed the 100-mark on April 14, when it had clocked 104 fatalities and since then the daily death count increased to 448 on May 3.



The city's daily Covid deaths during the second wave of the pandemic crossed the 100-mark on April 14, when it had clocked 104 fatalities and since then the daily death count increased to 448 on May 3.

Delhi also witnessed dip in daily number of positive cases below 1,000 on the second consecutive day. It recorded 956 fresh Covid infections on Saturday.

The capital's daily positivity rate has also reduced to 1.25 per cent, below 5 per cent since last one week.

Meanwhile, 1,803 more Covid patients have recovered in the capital, taking the total recovery to 13,89,341, till Sunday. Delhi now has 5,817 Covid infected people under home isolation, while the total active cases are 12,100.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi on Sunday reported 78 Covid fatalities, the lowest since April 12, as the national capital continues to fight the second pandemic wave.

According to the health bulletin, the 78 new deaths pushed the toll to 24,151.

DU teachers, students want final semester exams scrapped

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Scores of Delhi University teachers and students have appealed to the administration to scrap the final semester examinations, which are scheduled to commence on June 7, in light of the deaths of 50 professors and teachers of the varsity and its affiliated colleges due to the coronavirus.

Delhi University on May 20 postponed semester exams for final-year undergraduate and postgraduate students for the second time and announced that these will now commence on June 7.

The exams, which will now be held in the open-book format online, were earlier scheduled to start from May 15 but were postponed to June 1 owing to the spike in Covid cases.

The varsity students have said that

they will also appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding scrapping of the final semester examinations. Earlier, they had written to the Ministry of Education and the DU administration seeking postponement of the final year examinations amid the raging Covid cases.

According to Delhi Teachers' Association (DTA), an organisation of Delhi University academics, those professors who had succumbed to Covid include Vinay Gupta (Physics department), Veena Kukreja (Political Science department), Prateek Chaudhary (Music department) and SK Gupta (Faculty of Law).

Among the retired teachers, who had died of Covid, include Narendra Kohli, Narendra Mohan, K. D. Sharma, Bhikshu Satyapal, S.S. Rana, Debu Chaudhary, Ramesh Upadhyay and former Principal of Rajdhani

College, B. S. Yadav.

Hansraj Suman, DTA in-charge, claimed that DU has the largest chunk of teachers to have succumbed to the deadly virus. He said that out of the 50 fatalities, 28 were permanent teachers, 16 retired teachers and four ad hoc teachers.

Suman added that lives of several teachers could have been saved if the hospitals and healthcare facilities would have been made available to them ahead of the intense wave of Covid-19 that struck in February-March this year.

He said that the way people have endured unprecedented circumstances between April 20 and May 7, students and teachers are not mentally competent to appear and conduct examinations immediately following the danger posed by the Covid-19 infection. In such circumstances the

examination should be postponed till July. On the other hand, DU's Dean of Examination, D.S. Rawat, told IANS that the exams for final year students would start from June 7. Earlier, the examinations of the final year students were slated for June 1, but now the examination will be conducted in the open-book format online.

Chandra Mani Dev, President of Delhi University student organization, ChatraYuva Sangharsh Samiti (CYSS), has also demanded immediate suspension of exams.

He said while large number of teachers have died due to Covid, on the other hand there are still hundreds of students who have tested positive for the virus. Many students hail from native places outside Delhi where they don't even have internet facility. Therefore, it is not fair to conduct these exams right now.

Sagar Dhankar murder: Police looking for 3 associates of Sushil Kumar

Team Absolute | New Delhi

New Delhi: Even as a Delhi Court on Saturday sent two time-olympian and star wrestler Sushil Kumar to four-day police custody, the Delhi Police Crime Branch is still looking for three more persons in connection with its probe into the Sagar Dhankar murder case.

A senior Delhi Police official related to probe said, that the police has till date arrested nine people in connection with the murder case.

Delhi Police on Friday arrested two wrestlers -- Rohit and Vijender after their role in the murder case emerged. Sushil Kumar was arrested on May 23 from Delhi after he was on the run for 18 days since May 4. He was involved in the murder of Dhankar at Chhatrasal Stadium.

Dhankar was allegedly thrashed by several people in Chhatrasal Stadium over a minor tiff. He later succumbed to his injuries.



On Thursday evening, the Crime Branch sleuths had taken Sushil Kumar to Haryana and Chandigarh and was questioned about the places where he stayed during his run and who all were the persons who helped him in getting shelter. Sushil Kumar has reportedly shared several names during his questioning. The Olympian was quietly taken to Haryana and

Chandigarh on Thursday evening and returned to the national capital on Friday morning.

A crime branch source said that on the basis of the revelations by Sushil Kumar, the police is looking for Vinod Pradhan, Pradeep a.k.a. Bablu and Praveen a.k.a. Choti in connection with the murder case. The source said that all three were present during the

incident at Chhatrasal Stadium. Police also recovered a double barrel gun from a vehicle that was recovered from the stadium premises.

He said that the double barrel gun belonged to Pradhan.

The source said all the three people belong to Jhajjar district in Haryana and police is collecting information about their whereabouts.

Delhi Police has already arrested several people belonging to Neeraj Bawana and Kala Asauda gangs in connection with the murder of Dhankar. Earlier, a Delhi court had issued a non-bailable warrant (NBW) against Sushil Kumar. Delhi Police had also issued a lookout notice for Kumar who won a bronze medal in the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and silver in the 2012 London Olympic Games. The source also said that Prince, a friend of Sushil Kumar who shot the video of thrashing of Dhankar has turned a witness in the case.

Light rain, thunderstorm likely in Delhi for next 4 days, says IMD

The maximum temperature during this period is expected to be around 38 to 39 degree Celsius.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Residents of Delhi are expected to get respite from scorching heat as the national capital is likely to receive light rain over the next four days, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

The national capital may witness "light rain" on Monday, and "very light rain" on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, according to the Met department. The maximum temperature during this period is expected to be around 38 to 39 degree Celsius. Meanwhile, the national capital is likely to see a partly cloudy day with



the possibility of thunder and lightning today, the Met department said.

Parts of north and west India received heavy to moderate to intensity rain on Saturday as the remnant effect of Cyclone Yaas.

The national capital received 144.8 mm rainfall in May this year, the highest for the month in 13 years,

according to the IMD.

A record 119.3 mm rainfall had pounded Delhi under the impact of cyclonic storm Tauktae and a western disturbance earlier this month, breaking all the previous records for May. This was double the previous record rainfall of 60 mm on May 24 in 1976, according to the IMD.

ONE DEAD IN FIRE AT SAKET COURT RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX

New Delhi: An 83-year old man died in a fire at Saket Court Residential complex in the national capital on Saturday, police said. DCP South Delhi Atul Kumar Thakur said, "We have received the call at around 5.30 pm that a fire broke at the Saket Court Residential complex in C block. Immediately, police officials rushed to the spot along with other staff. Five fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze. Four Family members who were trapped in a house were rescued safely but a senior citizen who was found unconscious was immediately shifted to a nearby hospital, where he was declared brought dead," Thakur added.

According to fire officials, the man had succumbed to smoke inhalation.

NGT REFUSES TO ALLOW BRICK KILNS IN NCR DURING MONSOON MONTHS

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has junked a plea seeking a review of its order banning operation of coal-fired brick kilns in the NCR beyond June during the monsoon months.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said that under the garb of a review, a party cannot be permitted to re-open the case and to gain a full-fledged innng for making submissions.

It said the review of an order does lie merely on the grounds that it may be possible for the court to take a view contrary to what had been taken earlier.

"Even the judgment given subsequent to the decision in a case can be no ground for entertaining the review. Review lies only when there is error apparent on the face of the record and that fallibility is by the over-sight of the court.

"If a counsel has argued a case to his satisfaction and he had not raised the particular point for any reason whatsoever, it cannot be a ground of review," the bench said.

The green panel said that if a case has been decided after full consideration of arguments made by a counsel, he cannot be permitted, even under the garb of doing justice or sub-



stantial justice, to engage the court again to decide the controversy already decided.

"If a party is aggrieved of a judgment, it must approach the higher court but entertaining a review to re-consider the case would amount to exceeding its jurisdiction, con-

ferred under the limited jurisdiction for the purpose of review," the bench said.

"Accordingly, we do not think it proper to interfere in this matter. The review application is devoid of any merit and not maintainable," the tribunal said.

The tribunal was hearing a plea by some brick kiln owners contending that they can be allowed to operate during July-September (Monsoon Months) and there is no ground to exclude this period.

Earlier, the NGT in February had said that coal-fired brick kilns cannot be allowed to operate in the NCR even if zig-zag technology is used and improved procedures are followed during "severe" pollution.

Unless there is a change to a cleaner fuel (PNG), brick kilns beyond the number specified cannot be allowed in the NCR, the green panel had said.

"Those brick kilns which switch over to PNG will be entitled to operate even beyond months of March to June and even beyond limited number mentioned, subject to compliance with the law," the bench had said.

The tribunal had said that a distance of at least 500 metres is required to be maintained in the location of brick kilns.

"When brick kilns start, they should not be allowed to start simultaneously but their firing should be staggered to avoid adverse impact on the environment. Other safeguards of fugitive dust emission management need to be adopted," the bench had said.

OVER 69% INDIANS OPEN TO TAKING PART IN COVID VACCINE TRIAL



New Delhi: Over 69 per cent people said they would participate in a vaccine trial, if given a chance, according to IANS-CVoter Covid tracker. The survey, conducted on a total of 56,685 participants between January 1 to May 27, showed that 48.9 per cent said that they would be very likely to participate in a Covid vaccine trial in the country, while another 20.6 per cent said that would be likely to take part.

Meanwhile, 2.6 per cent said they were somewhat unlikely to participate, and another 23.2 per cent said they would not like to participate in a vaccine trial at all.

Junior doctors, nurses face litmus test during Covid-19

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Amid the coronavirus pandemic across the country, junior doctors and nurses have faced harrowing experiences coupled with a litmus test on a frequent basis while on duty.

A 27-year-old junior doctor Vinod Chauhan, who began his career recently, recalls a harrowing incident during the Covid-19 pandemic, and said, "On the very first day of my joining, a Covid-infected woman died whom I could not save. I have not forgotten the name of that patient till date. I had never thought of experiencing such an incident on the very first day."

Chauhan had completed his MBBS from abroad in 2018 and returned to India to practise medicine. During the Covid-19 pandemic last year, his first duty as a qualified doctor in December 2020 was in the Covid ward of Delhi's AIIMS Hospital.

He told IANS, "It was entirely a new experience for me, I was doing CPR constantly trying to save a Covid patient. But unfortunately, I could not save him."

"The process of discharge summary, death certificate etc of the deceased patient had to be completed but I was told by the hospital authorities that I have to complete this process. This experience was all new to me. It took me 12 hours to complete all formalities instead of the usual 6-hour."

During the second wave of Covid-19 infection, a friend of Vinod Chauhan asked for help in arranging medicines for his family, but he could not manage it despite all efforts, following which he had strained ties with his friend.

Vinod is not the only resident doctor who has undergone this kind of experience during the corona pandemic. A total of 550 doctors mainly young have died in the second wave across the country. However, there were some doctors who were working as interns in hospitals.

The 26-year-old Samar Ajmat, who works in the emergency ward of LNJP Hospital at New Delhi, joined the hospital in January this year and while treating Covid-19 patients also contracted the virus during the second wave. Sharing her experience with IANS, Samar said, "When I joined the hospital in January 2021, the



situation was normal at that time, but after a few months the situation changed completely. During the second wave of the pandemic, more critical patients came as compared to the first wave. Every patient had lower oxygen levels."

"While treating several Covid-19 patients, I got infected on April 27 and recovered after 15 days and joined the hospital again. As fellow doctors were constantly getting infected, the doctors looking after patients were fewer in number."

He said, "As a doctor is present in the Covid ward, there are only Covid patients lying everywhere. After wearing the PPE kit, we are unable to know who were the doctors working with us." However, there were some junior doctors who could not save the patient even after taking full care due to which they faced sleepless nights.

The 24-year-old Vishnu (a junior doctor) working at RML Hospital, told IANS, "I was about to take off my PPE kit after I moved out of the Covid ward. Suddenly I got the news that a patient was having trouble in breathing. It took me some time to wear the PPE kit again." I immediately informed my senior doctor. But even after every possible effort, that patient could not be saved. The patient was watching a movie during his last moments and told me that 'I will get well soon'."

Vishnu said, "I had not been able to sleep that night after receiving news of the Covid patient's death." Equally disturbing has been the time for nurses working in the hospitals. Due to restrictions imposed, nurses had to stay outside for 12 hours continuously as a result of which they were afraid to even touch their own children in the house. Meghna (name changed), Nursing Officer working at Delhi's RML Hospital, told IANS, "I have a three-year-old son who used to play with me. During the second wave it became so difficult that even touching my own child instilled fear in me." Due to the lockdown there was no mode of transport available to visit the hospital. I used to leave my house at 6 a.m. from Faridabad and returned home at 6 p.m." Nurse Meghna's friend Shaurya (name changed) recalls, "During the second wave there was a major shortage of beds. Many of our family members urgently required beds in the hospital but even after working in the hospital we could not help them."

"People feel as we are working in the hospital, facilities like beds are easily available to us. This is a wrong conception as we, too, have to struggle like common man." There were many junior doctors working in the emergency and Covid wards of hospitals who had to work overtime as the fellow doctors had been infected with Covid-19. Many a times they have had to sleep in the hospital.

According to junior doctors, they are giving their 100 per cent and want every patient's life to be saved but the family of the patients sometimes feel that "we are negligent after which they indulge in fights with us. It pains us to see such things".

The resident doctors and nurses have learned a lot during the second wave of the pandemic though now India is witnessing a decline in new cases of Covid-19 infection.



CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS LEVELED AGAINST SHIV SENA MINISTER ANIL PARAB

Commissioner of Police, Nashik has ordered a preliminary enquiry into the corruption allegations by an official against Shiv Sena minister Anil Parab and Maharashtra transport department commissioner.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Allegations of corruption have been leveled against Shiv Sena leader and Maharashtra transport minister Anil Parab who seemed to be closed to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. A suspended transport official has written to the police claiming massive corruption in the transport department and the involvement of Parab. The police are investigating the matter and Commissioner of Police, Nashik, Deepak Pandey has ordered a preliminary enquiry where statements of all those named in the letter and also a detailed statement of the complainant will be recorded. The complainant has been asked by the police to furnish proofs of his claims as well. DCP, Crime has been asked to investigate and two more officials will be working with him to record

the statements.

The complainant has also named transport commissioner in the matter.

The tenure of Parab has been mired in several controversies as several employees, including the ST members, have been agitating for quite some time over wages paid to them. All of these issues have been brought up in the complaint letter.

Reacting to the allegations, Parab has said that there is a conspiracy against him by the Opposition trying to bring him down and there is nothing of substance in the allegations against him. The minister is yet to give a detailed statement on the matter.

It remains to be seen when the Nashik Police will summon the minister to take down his statement over the allegations against him.



Earlier, suspended Mumbai Police Officer Sachin Waze had alleged that Anil Parab asked him to collect money from contractors. The Shiv Sena leader had then termed the allegation a plan to defame ministers of the state and said he was ready for a narco test.

Panel to probe corruption charges against Parab

The Nashik Police Commissioner has formed a three-member panel to inquire into allegations of corruption levelled against Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab and other officials.

who works as a motor vehicle inspector in the RTO. Patil was placed under suspension over charges of corruption in January 2021. According to him, this action was taken against him because he had been determinedly complaining about corruption in the department despite pressure.

He stated in his complaint that there is rampant bribery and corruption in the transport department. According to him, crores of rupees have been taken as bribes by senior and junior officials for transfers and postings. In his complaint, he has mentioned the details of these bribes.

Patil mentioned the name of a deputy regional transport officer who handled transfers and postings in the department as the kingpin of the racket. Patil alleged that Rs 5 crores were paid by this 'kingpin' to minister Parab in order to have

Dhakne appointed as transport commissioner. His complaint also mentions that two RTOs in two districts of Maharashtra violated the government and court's orders by registering BSIV vehicles. Additionally, the complainant alleged that border check posts were major corruption hubs.

Patil sent his complaint via email on May 15 to Panchvati police station in Nashik, Nashik Police Commissioner and several other senior officials and agencies. He appealed to them to lodge an FIR under appropriate sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The three-member panel formed by the Nashik Police Commissioner includes three police officers of the rank of deputy commissioner of police (DCP). It will be headed by DCP Crime Sanjay Barkund. The panel will submit its report in five days.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Nashik Police Commissioner Deepak Pandey has formed a three-member panel to inquire into allegations of corruption levelled against Maharashtra Transport Minister Anil Parab, transport commissioner Avinash Dhakne, five regional transport office (RTO) officials and a transport ministry bureaucrat. The complaint was lodged by Gajendra Patil,

SBI raises cash withdrawal limits at non-home branches

In terms of third-party cash withdrawals, the bank has increased the daily upper limit to Rs 50,000. Withdrawals for third parties would be allowed only through cheques and no cash payment would be allowed through withdrawal forms.



drawal for self through withdrawal form accompanies by savings bank passbook has been raised to Rs 25,000 per day.

Further, the ceiling for cash withdrawal by a customer for himself through cheque has been raised to Rs 1 lakh. In terms of third-party cash withdrawals, the bank has increased the daily upper limit to Rs 50,000. Withdrawals for third parties would be allowed only through cheques and no cash payment would be allowed through withdrawal forms. For cash withdrawal by a third-party using cheque, KYC of the third party concerned will be required, the bank said. The tweet also mentioned that the revised ceilings would be applicable till September 30.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The State Bank of India (SBI) has increased the cash withdrawal limits through cheques and withdrawal forms for its customers at non-home branch-

es. "To support our customers in this pandemic, SBI has increased the non-home cash withdrawal limits through cheque and withdrawal form," the public sector lender said in a tweet. The revised ceiling for cash with-

MAHARASHTRA SET TO REVISE LOCKDOWN GUIDELINES

According to sources, those entering the state would still have to produce a negative RT-PCR report, with the test having been conducted within the last 24 hours.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Though the Maharashtra government has extended the lockdown in the state for the next 15 days while considering relaxing certain restrictions depending upon the local situation in every district, it is unlikely to withdraw the requirement of producing a negative RT-PCR report for those entering the state. The rule of requiring an e-pass for interdistrict travel can also remain for now.

The second wave of the pandemic has reached its peak and the rate of infections is slowing down in most parts of the state. However, a few districts are still witnessing a surge in the



number of cases and are also reporting an increasing number of mucormycosis infections.

"There are around 15 districts in the state where the daily positivity rate is higher than that for the entire state. Thus, the situation in these districts need to be brought under control by enabling a low positivity rate and (increasing) availability of beds for treatment of Covid patients," state health minister Rajesh Tope recently said. Pointing out that the state government has decided to extend the

lockdown in the state after reviewing the situation in all the districts, he added, "There will be relaxations in some restrictions but they will be declared by the chief minister. However, the district administration would have to take a decision on whether to impose additional restrictions during the lockdown depending upon their situation."

Here's a look at the restrictions that can remain and the ones that are likely to be relaxed:

According to sources, those enter-

ing the state would still have to produce a negative RT-PCR report, with the test having been conducted within the last 24 hours.

"The Covid-19 situation in Maharashtra has improved but many states are still facing the heat. It would be safer to continue with the mandatory negative RT-PCR test report for all those entering the state till the situation improves across the country," the source said. The state government is still unable to decide on whether to allow interdistrict travel in the state without valid reason. "The e-pass was introduced for interdistrict travel for people having valid reasons like health emergencies or any urgent work. There are few districts which still have high positivity rates. So, it would be risky to withdraw this rule for the entire state," said a government official.

Shops in the essential category may get a bigger time window to operate. Also, businesses in non-essential categories may be allowed to open. However, these will depend on the local situation.

Pune Inc urges Maharashtra govt to restore oxygen supply

The surge in demand for medical oxygen had seen the government cranking up production and diverting the same from industrial usage.

Team Absolute | Pune

Industrial bodies in Pune and Pimpri Chinchwad have urged the state government to restore the supply of oxygen for industrial uses as the demand for medical oxygen has dipped significantly in the district. For want of the regular oxygen supply, the sector has faced constraints about their operations in the last two months.

The surge in demand for medical oxygen had seen the government cranking up production and diverting the same from industrial usage. The gas is used mainly for welding and



other industrial purposes, especially in the automobile sector. Given the predominance of auto and auto ancillaries in the district, the diversion has hit them hard.

In a memorandum submitted to the deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar, the Pimpri Chinchwad Small Scale

Industries Association stated that of the 11,000-12,000 small and medium scale industries in the area, around 5,000-6,000 require oxygen for their day to day activities. Since the start of the second wave in April, oxygen supply to the industrial sector has been stopped. Sandeep Belsare, president

of the Association, said since the second week of May, the need for medical oxygen has dipped. "As oxygen is not being diverted for industrial purposes, around 30-40 per cent of the gas produced remains unsold. In want of demand, the oxygen generation units at Chimbli and Ranjangaon remain closed. The combined capacity of both these plants is 1,500 cylinders. Belsare said Pawar has asked the Pune collector to calculate the unused stock left from these two plants after meeting the requirement of other districts in the state.

Meanwhile, the 14th survey conducted by the Maharashtra Chamber of Commerce Industries and Agriculture (MCCIA) about industrial activities in the district showed activities have remained flat for May. On an average, companies said that around 70 per cent of their workforce was working which was the same in April.

Mumbai Mayor Finds Covid-19 Vaccines Stored in Normal Fridge at Hotel

The mayor conducted the inspection at The Lalit Hotel in Andheri East, during which some Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials accompanied her.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar on Sunday conducted an inspection at a hotel in suburban Andheri and found several COVID-19 vaccines stored there in a normal fridge, in violation of the laid down norms. The Covaxin doses found stored there have been sealed and an inquiry has been ordered, she said.

The mayor conducted the inspection at The Lalit Hotel in Andheri East, during which some Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials accompanied her. Talking to reporters later, Pednekar

said there is a tie-up between the hotel and Criticare Hospital, a local private hospital.

The hospital had procured the COVID-19 vaccine doses from the central government, which the civic and the state authorities were not aware of, she said. "The Lalit Hotel had received a proposal from the hospital that people can be vaccinated there (at the hotel).

As per the proposal, those people, who do not have a family to look after following the vaccination, can stay in the hotel after inoculation... Here 500 people have been vaccinated," the mayor said. The hotel is not to be blamed, but the hospital has not adhered to the norms concerning the cold storage of vaccines, she said.

"How did they get Covaxin doses when many BMC centres don't have them? I found doses, which were stored in a normal fridge. This can result in side-effects to those vaccinated. The recovered vaccines have been sealed and an inquiry will be carried out," Pednekar added.

Maharashtra Cong holds demonstrations: 'Modi-led govt failed people on Covid-19'

State Congress president Nana Patole said, "In the 2014 general elections, Modi showed false dreams to people and won. But in the last seven years, they have failed to deliver the results to people."

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The state Congress on Sunday held demonstrations across Maharashtra against Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre, stating that it had failed to properly tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, farmers' issues and inflation.

State Congress president Nana Patole said, "In the 2014 general elections, Modi showed false dreams to people and won. But in the last seven years, they have failed to deliver the results to people."

Patole said the "biggest failure" of the Modi government was the Covid-19 pandemic, and that the prime minister should own up to pushing people into a situation where they are now battling for their lives as well as livelihoods.

"In the first Covid wave, the Modi government was busy with the 'Namaste Trump' event. In second wave, they were busy campaigning for the Assembly elections. The concerns of 130 crore people were never their priority," he



said. Demanding Modi's resignation, Patole said, "Modi owes people an explanation for not comprehending the Covid situation seriously. He has to take responsibility for letting people down."

Party workers assembled across cities and towns, and raised slogans against price rise. Petrol prices have touched Rs 100.

"Petrol, diesel, LPG, fertiliser prices have sharply increased. Economic growth has dipped. Lakhs of people died due to shortage of oxygen and medicine for Covid," Patole said, adding, "had the government organised vaccine stock and planned distribution, people would not be forced to stand in long queues for several hours outside vaccination centres. Even now, there is huge shortage and people are not being administered the vaccine."

State Congress leaders and workers wore black badges on their arm as a mark of protest. Senior leader and former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, revenue minister Balasaheb Thorat, PWD minister and former CM Ashok Chavan, minister for medical education Amit Deshmukh, minister for relief and rehabilitation Vijay Wadhetwar, energy minister Nitin Raut, minister of state for home Satej Patil also took part in the protests and interacted with the media in Pune, Nashik, Aurangabad, Latur, Amravati, Nagpur, Kolhapur.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Taapsee Pannu has shared a post workout



selfie saying that she is loading her dose of happy hormones.

TAAPSEE'S DOSE OF 'HAPPY HORMONES'

Taapsee posted the picture on her Instagram Stories. In the image, the actress is drenched in sweat as it seems she clicked the photograph after a gruelling workout routine. Taapsee sports a post workout glow, lying down on the floor dressed in a black vest. "Loading my dose of 'happy hormones' to keep going through this lockdown," she wrote on the image. On the professional front, the actress has several films lined up, including "Loop Lapeta", "Rashmi Rocket", "Haseen Dillruba", "Shabaash Mithu".

Sunny Leone 'got no moves' but still 'owning' it

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Sunny Leone shared a video, showcasing her hilarious moves and owning it too. Sunny posted a video on Sunday on Instagram. In the clip, she is seen walking on a hallway in an exaggerated manner. The actress is dressed in a metallic gold coloured lehenga. "When you got no moves but own it anyway #SunnyLeone #behindthescenes#OnSets," she wrote as the caption. The actress did not share what the behind-the-scenes video is from. Talking about her

work, Sunny is all set to step into the digital world with the web series "Anamika", directed by Vikram Bhatt.

The actress will engage in action sequences in the series. The series co-stars Sonnalli Seygall. She is currently in Kerala shooting for the upcoming psychological thriller film "Shero". Directed by Sreejith Vijayan, the film is slated to release in Tamil, Hindi, Telugu and Malayalam.

Paras Arora: A good meal is my happy place

Team Absolute | Mumbai

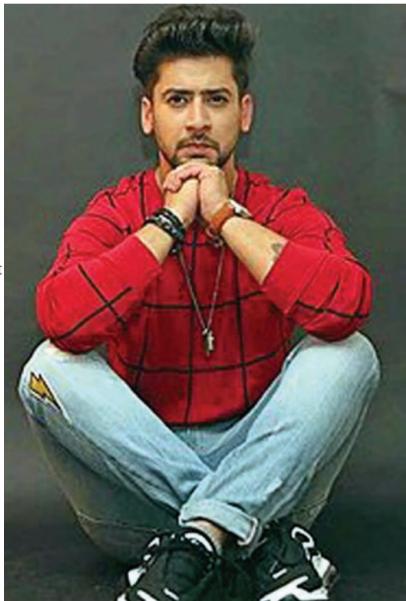
Actor Paras Arora confesses being a big foodie. Besides trying out different cuisines, he says cooking can be a great mood-lifter.

"I am a big-time foodie and I love exploring different cuisines since my childhood. So, whenever I get some free time, I ensure to try my hands on cooking and enrich my taste buds. I feel that a good meal is my happy place whenever I am low or feel sad, it makes me feel happy and uplifts my mood," says the actor.

While he is careful about what he eats, he ensures he has his days, too.

"As an actor, I always try keeping a tab on my food habits but I prefer having cheat days in between to explore and try different dishes. During these days, I experiment with cuisines and try Indian street food to have the real flavour of our country's food. The spicy flavour of street food makes me crave for it when I am on a strict diet, but cheat days are my favourite days of the month when I genuinely enjoy eating," he says.

Food cooked by his mom is naturally a favourite. "Comfort food for me is maa ke haath ka khana and paneer. Whenever I am sad or upset, I prefer eating either, to cheer myself up," says Paras, who is seen as Dr Pramod Hautala in the Sony Sab show, "Kaatelal & Sons".



KIARA ADVANI FLAUNTS 'MERMAID' SKILLS IN LATEST PICTURE

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Kiara Advani channeled her inner mermaid spirit in a new picture she posted on Sunday on social media. Kiara posted a throwback picture on Instagram. The image is taken underwater, where the actress is seen floating on her back dressed in a neon green bikini. "You can't stop the waves but you can learn to swim #Throwback," Kiara captioned the image. Kiara was last seen on screen in "Indoo Ki Jawaani", which revolves around a dating application. The actress has three films lined up over the next months -- "Shershaah" opposite Sidharth Malhotra, the Kartik Aaryan-starrer "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 2", and "Jug Jugg Jeeyo" co-starring Anil Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor and Varun Dhawan.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Singer Adnan Sami got his second jab of Covid-19 vaccine and encouraged everyone to get the shot to return back to normal life. "Stop obsessing over which vaccine to take, his advice: Just get it over with. Adnan posted a picture on Instagram on Saturday night, where he is seen getting his shot in a hospital. He captioned the picture: "2nd Dose Done! Get yourself Vaccinated & return back to your normal life my lovesies!! Stay Safe!! #adnansami #bollywood#vaccinationdone #covid_19 #covid#coronavirus #corona #staysafe"

Adnan Sami has a message for 'all pseudo delusionals'

#love#life"

The singer on Sunday morning shared a note on the photo-sharing websites asking all netizens to take whatever vaccine is available. He wrote on the note: "There's this obsession of asking everybody which vaccine did you take? And then they go on to say... Oh I'm waiting for such and such vaccine...or...I'm waiting for that ONE dose vaccine etc etc!! "Listen 'Sherlocks', if you have a headache, you will take whichever medication you can lay your hands on... This is not a frickin restaurant... It's a crisis and it's life threatening -- Take whatever is available and get safe ASAP!! Period!" Adnan captioned the note: "For all the 'Pseudo Delusionals' out there.."



5 reasons to include a workout in your child's routine

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A workout doesn't mean spending hours in a gym or sweating on a treadmill. The foundation of working out should be laid at a young age. Delhi-based fitness and sports nutritionist Hasti Singh shares top five reasons to include workout in a child's daily routine.

- * **Stronger muscles and bones**
- * **Fit and lean posture**
- * **Lower risk of becoming obese**
- * **Lower chance of attracting diseases**
- * **Controlled B.P and cholesterol.**

Singh says, to start with, parents can ask their child to do yoga or meditation for at least 1 hour daily. The trick is that parents should also do with them as then they will try to imitate and will enjoy doing the exercise.

Kids can also do aerobics as it strengthens the heart and helps in circulating oxygen to the cells. Aerobics can be done at home and parents can also participate in these exercises like playing

basketball, swimming, jogging, running, cycling.

Singh points out: "When I say workout, don't confuse it with weight-lifting. Kids could do push-ups, crunches with stomachs, stretching, and other exercises to give a shape to their physique and gain strength. These exercises don't include much hard work and are also good from the kids' perspective. By doing push-ups, the child would learn to tackle weight and it will improve his shoulder

and arm connection."

Rope Skipping is another good activity that you can introduce to your child. Skipping strengthens hand and leg muscles.

Kids can also join any dance classes which is an ultimate form of exercise. It helps in the complete movement of a kid's body and hence gives a complete

opportunity to work out.

Exercise not only improves a child's abilities but will also help him/her to gain concentration. Kids nowadays spend a lot of time taking online classes and hence expose themselves to uncalled problems like strain, headache, and health issues.

Taking out time and doing workouts daily can save your child from these issues. Also, a regular workout helps in better sleep and makes your child energetic.





BORIS JOHNSON MARRIES CARRIE SYMONDS SECRETLY!

London | Agencies

Boris Johnson and Carrie Symonds gaze into each other's eyes in the first pictures released of their wedding today.

Sweet images taken in the Downing Street garden emerged after No10 finally confirmed that the PM and his new bride tied the knot in a 'small ceremony' at Westminster Cathedral yesterday afternoon - with a bigger celebration planned for next summer.

The event was conducted under cover of an extraordinary

cloak-and-dagger operation, with aides spending hours refusing to comment on the Catholic service before it was revealed by the Mail on Sunday.

Ministers, Tory MPs and Keir Starmer have been congratulating the premier on his nuptials - although some Labour MPs have been less gracious and claimed the timing was an effort to 'bury bad news' about Covid.

A Downing Street spokesman said: 'The Prime Minister and Ms Symonds were married yesterday afternoon in a small ceremony at Westminster Cathedral. The couple will celebrate

their wedding with family and friends next summer.' Mr Johnson, 56, exchanged vows with Ms Symonds, 33, in front of a handful of close friends and family - becoming the first Prime Minister to marry in office since Lord Liverpool married Mary Chester in 1822. It comes just six days after the couple - who became engaged on the Caribbean island of Mustique in December 2019 and have baby Wilfred, aged one - sent out save-the-date cards to guests telling them to keep Saturday, July 30, 2022 free for a marriage celebration.



NOEL GALLAGHER DISAPPOINTED HIS ALBUM WITH AMORPHOUS ANDROGYNOUS NEVER RELEASED

Los Angeles | Agencies

Oasis legend Noel Gallagher says he was disappointed that his album with Amorphous Androgynous never released. The album, which was due to be released in 2012, was stalled because he was not happy with how it turned out.

Noel credits Amorphous Androgynous for "opening a lot of musical doors" for him after he split with his brother Liam

Gallagher. "That's one regret I have, that thing never being fully realised. I credit them, along with (electronic musician) David Holmes, with opening a lot of musical doors for me, music I would never have heard of," Noel said in an interview with Record Collector magazine, according to contactmusic.com. Amorphous Androgynous comprised Garry Cobain and Brian Doungans.



Ant McPartlin to wed fiancée Anne-Marie Corbett in low-key ceremony in August

Los Angeles | Agencies

ANT McPartlin is to wed fiancée Anne-Marie Corbett in a low-key ceremony in August, we can reveal. The couple, who got engaged at Christmas, will tie the knot in front of just their close friends and family. Ant's telly sidekick Declan Donnelly, 45, is expected to be his best man at the church wedding in London. A source said: "Neither of them want the razzmatazz of a showbiz wedding. They just want their nearest and dearest with them. "It will be a simple but beautiful ceremony, without the glare of the spotlight. The couple are said to have looked at getting wed abroad but thought it too unpredictable due to Covid. The wedding will be in sharp contrast to Ant's lavish, star-studded nuptials with Strictly make-up artist ex, Lisa Armstrong. They got married in 2006 at Cliveden House Hotel, Bucks, in front of 150 guests - followed by a huge fireworks display. 4

HEIDI KLUM 'IN BITTER LEGAL CLASH' WITH FATHER GÜNTHER

Los Angeles | Agencies

Heidi Klum is seemingly in a legal battle with her estranged cosmetics executive father. Günther Klum, 75, has trademarked 47-year-old Heidi's daughter Leni's name, causing potential issues with her career as a model. Günther has also trademarked the 17-year-old's nickname, 'Mausekatze' or 'Mousecat'. The spat could see Heidi's father jailed for six months. It's said the pair fell out in 2019, after the America's Got Talent judge remarried, following her divorce from Seal. She wed Tokio Hotel guitarist Tom Kaulitz, 31. Günther has plastered various documents on his Instagram page, and in his most recent post mocks the prospect of facing prison.

He captioned a legal document: 'Who will send me the cake with the baked-in file? It's thought that if the trademarking - which was filed in March - can be proven to have been done with 'malicious intent', he'll face jail or a hefty £250,000 (£214,808) fine. German lawyer Stephan Ruben told Bild newspaper: 'Should Günther Klum violate the rights of third parties he will be threatened with an injunction which, if granted, will cost him £250,000 or six months of jail.'



Primal Scream plan reissue of their debut album

Los Angeles | Agencies

The rock band Primal Scream have planned a reissue of their debut album "Sonic Flower Groove". The album is expected to have an unreleased track as well as new versions of the original songs.

The band's frontman Bobby Gillespie said in an interview with Uncut magazine that he revisited memories of the album while writing his memoir, "Utopian Ashes".

"I wrote a lot about that record and the experience of recording it -- we recorded it twice -- and our inexperience. I re-listened to the record a lot and had a new respect for it. We're maybe going to reissue it. We'll add two songs - there's 'Black Star Carnival', which was a B-side, and also this unre-

leased track called 'Tomorrow Ends Today'. It sounds like it could have been on the first Stone Roses record. I'm going to re-sequence the album and do a new record sleeve," Gillespie said, according to contactmusic.com.

Talking about what he would change, he added: "At that point, everyone had the '80s drum sound -- the Bunnymen, The Smiths, everybody. So, it would be good if we take the '80s drum sound off it and maybe we could add some harmonies, because when I listen to it now, I think, 'Why didn't we do harmonies there?' So, we might tinker with it, maybe we won't. But 'Tomorrow ends today' sounds like a single. Why did we leave it off the album? It's so good!"



Raindrops keep fallin on my head' singer B.J. Thomas passes away



Los Angeles | Agencies

Grammy Hall of Fame inductee and award-winning country singer, B.J. Thomas, known for hits such as "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on my Head" and "Hooked on a Feeling", has passed away at the age of 78. Representatives confirmed that Thomas died at his home in Arlington, Texas, on Saturday due to complications from stage-four lung cancer, reports variety.com.

He had first announced the diagnosis in March. Thomas at that time had said in a statement: "I'm so blessed to have had the opportunity to record and perform beautiful songs in pop, country, and gospel music, and to share those wonderful songs and memories around the world with millions of you."

Over his career, Thomas won five Grammys, sold 70 million albums worldwide and has eight No. 1 hits and 26 Top 10 singles.

Among his hits were "(Hey Won't You Play) Another Somebody Done Somebody Wrong Song", "I Just Can't Help Believing", "Don't

Worry Baby," and "Hooked on a Feeling".

Thomas' hit single "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head", written by Burt Bacharach and Hal David, won the best original song award at the Academy Awards as part of the classic Paul Newman and Robert Redford film "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid". Thomas fell into substance abuse. He cited meeting his wife Gloria as a turning point, at which point he became a born-again Christian, quit drugs and turned to gospel music as a way of expressing his faith. His 1976 album, "Home Where I Belong", earned a Grammy and a Dove Award. Thomas also sang the theme song for the sitcom "Growing Pains", "As Long As We've Got Each Other," and voiced several commercials. He also appeared in the film "Jory and Jake's Corner", and penned his autobiography, also titled "Home Where I Belong." He is survived by Gloria, who he was married to for 53 years; their three daughters, Paige Thomas, Nora Cloud and Erin Moore and four grandchildren, Nadia Cloud, Keira Cloud, Ruby Moore and Billy Joe Moore.

ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Rose Huntington-Whiteley



EDITOR'S SPECS

Ancient Tradition of India

Behl enlightened top international dignitaries including over two dozen global ambassadors, historians and experts, the significance of the Badami Cave Temple 6th century painting - Queen and her attendants - in what is a UNESCO

IN AN EPOCHAL EVENT MARKING THE REVELATION OF THE LOST TRADITIONS OF ANCIENT INDIAN ART, THE EARLIEST SURVIVING HINDU PAINTING, PHOTOGRAPHED AND DIGITALLY RESTORED BY BENOY K. BEHL, WAS UNVEILED BEFORE A GLOBAL AUDIENCE HERE, THE ORGANISERS SAID HERE ON SATURDAY.

World Heritage site in northern Karnataka. Behl explained how India has a continuous tradition of paintings, coming through ancient and medieval times and he himself had documented Indian paintings from the 2nd BC till 13th AD, and the lost ancient Indian mural painting styles. The online event on Friday

evening saw a galaxy of personalities like ICCR President Dr. Vinay Sahasrabudhe and India's Sherpa to G7 and G20 Suresh Prabhu, ex-Cabinet Minister of Guyana Manniram Parshad, Guinea Bissau Minister Rajeshwar Prasad, UITV Chairman Balkrishna Choolun in London, Sapio Analytics CEO Ashwin Srivastava, authors, corporate and media bigwigs, among others. According to Behl, the ancient murals are the foundations of the manuscript paintings and miniatures of the medieval period which was significant as until now the world has been studying the tradition of Indian paintings starting from the medieval era. Prabhu discussed "the dependence of the progress of a nation on its culture, and art being the manifestation of its culture", while Sahasrabudhe pointed out that "one can know who we are through ancient Indian art", and the need to create academic courses to prepare experts in digitization and ancient art preservation. Behl said much of the Badami paintings, as described in the 1950s, was lost when he went to photograph it in 2001, and seven years later, the National Geographic magazine could hardly even see anything in 2008 when its team went there for a major story. "Therefore, this photography (of Badami) and the restoration are of considerable importance in the documentation of the tradition of Indian paintings," Behl pointed out. Sapio Analytics will now show these path-breaking pictures and their restored digital versions to the world at exhibitions around the world starting next year, marking the 75 years of India's Independence, informed Srivastava.

Raman Suri

India, like the rest of the world, is facing a pandemic, which till today has affected 168,599,045 people and resulted in 3,507,477 deaths worldwide.

Amid this crisis, the world has also started vaccinating people against Coronavirus and so far, administered 1,545,967,545 jabs to the beneficiaries. India, which has been on the forefront of developing vaccines, has so far administered vaccine doses to about 20.1 crore people and there are 4.24 crore people who have been fully vaccinated without any chaos. This achievement is hailed by the world leaders who know the capabilities and acumen of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Narendra Modi started his first tenure as Prime Minister of India from May 26, 2014 and was again sworn in as the PM on May 30, 2019, thereby completing seven glorious years in the service of nation this year.

The journey had not been a smooth ride for the simple reason that he had to fight more enemies within than those across the borders. Opposition parties and a section of society that has been

tutored to see ill, talk ill and then spread ill won't digest but the fact remains that Modi has awakened the nation by showing people how to govern without corruption and how enemies are shown their places without letting this all affect development. Unlike Congress and other past rulers, these seven years didn't see even an iota of corruption, coal blocks were auctioned in the most transparent manner, spies within the system were weeded out, defence forces were strengthened by making all the necessitated purchases like Apache helicopters and Rafale jets besides building tanks and missiles indigenously, country was made to hold massive cleanliness drives, all central schemes reached deserving sections without pilferage and all mega infrastructural projects were completed beforehand for socio-economic development and empowerment of Indians. It was the vision of Narendra Modi that several new initiatives were taken up to help India have an access to minimum basic facilities that Congress and its allies had been denying to our people for the past seventy years without any regret. Central schemes including Beti Padhao, Beti Bachao, Jan Dhan Yojana for enabling poor to have access to banking system,

COVID-19 MANAGEMENT STRATEGY:

Public Participation Model in Madhya Pradesh

Suresh Gupta

The Covid-19 pandemic has led to a dramatic loss of human life across the world, posing an unprecedented challenge to public health. The impact of the pandemic has not just been limited to public health but also extends to the devastating social and economic disruption across the world, with tens of millions of people at risk of falling into extreme poverty. The restrictions on movement of persons and goods have put enterprises at risk with individuals struggling to maintain their incomes during the lockdown. Considering the widespread and long-term impact of lockdown on social and economic prosperity on one hand and the rapid spread of Covid-19 on the other hand, it is essential to critically evaluate the merits and demerits of imposing restrictions on the community before decision making takes place. Hence, it is essential that the community - including consumers, traders, industry, civil society organizations along with local leaders together evaluate the steps that should be taken for effective Covid-19 management at a local level, instead of blanket policy decision making at the state/district level. This would help ensure delivery of tailor-made solutions to issues specific to the locality instead of one size fits all solutions that could have long-term impact on both the public health and economy.

Hence, to effectively control the spread of COVID-19, it is paramount that while generating community awareness, community participation is encouraged as well in mission mode. It is also imperative that COVID-specific and COVID-sensitive programming, which is strategic, systematic and customized to the needs of the state is ensured while planning steps to mitigate further growth of the pandemic.

The present approach by GoMP is aimed at reducing the rate of transmission of the virus, ipso facto lowering the number of everyday cases in the state via generating community awareness pertaining to the necessary precautions for acceptance and subsequently integrating appropriate COVID-19 behavior into the daily lives of the people of MP.

Further, community participation is vital in ensuring two-way communication to-and-from the community while consequently leading to enhanced inclusion, building local ownership and accountability, build confidence across communities, influence attitudes and practices along with enhancing capacity to deal with misinformation inter alia.

Taking the above merits of community participation into account, Government of Madhya Pradesh, in its ever-untiring endeavor, to reach

every sect and segment of its citizens, has taken few successful initiatives as illustrated in figure 1 below:

1. Creation of Crisis-Management Groups at various levels: In order to empower the community and ensure public participation in decision making, crisis management groups have been formed at different levels across urban and rural areas as illustrated in Figure 2 below.

The key responsibilities of the crisis management groups include the following:

- Decision making on imposition of Janta Curfew
- Decision making regarding the graded or phased manner of lifting the restrictions during lockdown including deciding on permissible activities in each area

While constituting the Crisis Management Groups, the state has ensured the widest representation of public representatives across urban and local bodies along with Civil Society Organisations. The constitution of each of these groups have been detailed below.

District Level: At the district level, in addition to District Level Officers the CMG comprises of representatives of social organizations, reputed registered private medical practitioners, businessmen and other local community leaders and representatives.

Block level: Crisis-Management groups at block level have block level officers from various departments, representatives of Member of Parliament and Member of Legislative Assembly, and members from self-help groups. There are 1676 members in 125 block-level crisis-management groups formed till date.

Village level: The crisis management groups at the village level comprise of President of the administrative committee of Gram Panchayat, Secretary, Gram Panchayat, Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Women's self-help groups, political and community workers, village employment assistant, ASHA worker, Anganwadi workers, Anganwadi Sahayika and village kotwar. 197539 members have been included in the 20661 crisis management groups created at village level in the state.

Ward level: In urban areas, these crisis management groups have been constituted in each city along with ward. The groups at the ward level are headed by the officer in-charge of the ward, and comprises of public representatives including MP and MLAs, along with people nominated by Commissioner, Nagar Nigam/Chief Municipal Officer comprising of representatives of



social organizations/groups, reputed registered private medical practitioner identified from within each ward, self-help groups, Jan Abhiyan Parishad and other workers from political and community groups. 6152 such ward crisis management groups have been formed in MP.

With the creation of these crisis-management groups at district, block and village level for rural areas and district, city and ward level for urban areas as mentioned above, Government of MP also ensures effective implementation of the state guidelines to manage COVID-19 exigencies at the ground level, along with active community engagement and participation in preventing the spread of COVID-19 pandemic.

Members included in the Crisis Management Groups in rural areas are summarized in the following table:

The members of CMGs created so far have been equipped with COVID-specific scientifically credible information material for appropriate dissemination within the communities and to empower every citizen with COVID specific knowledge.

2. "I am Corona Volunteer" Campaign - Jan Abhiyan Parishad formed under the Department of Economics & Statistics, GoMP promotes the activities of various social groups and volunteer organizations in the state of MP. In addition to strengthening the activities undertaken for active prevention of COVID-19 and efforts directed towards it, it also ensures active community participation.

GoMP has initiated "I am Corona Volunteer" campaign from 5th April 2021. Registration of Corona Volunteers/Social Volunteers has begun, and can be categorized into the following groups:

Vaccination Volunteers - This group includes vaccination center volunteers, vaccination motivators and vaccination helpers

Healthcare Facility Volunteers - This group includes volunteers providing information on healthcare facilities and assistance in health-

care associated transport facilities
Mask awareness volunteers - Includes distribution of face masks, enforcing the correct usage of mask and stopping people from stepping outdoors without a mask

Mohalla-toli groups volunteers - This group includes home isolation helpers, quarantine facility helper and volunteers taking responsibility of their own mohalla/street/colony.

Donation categories include cash donations, medical equipment donations, food-packet donations, plasma donations and yoga training services.

The groups of volunteers created with different roles and responsibilities are illustrated below:

In the above categories, to date, 1,18,291 volunteers have registered successfully with 59,032 volunteers already delivering their services in districts of MP. Figure 3 below illustrates the number of active volunteers against each volunteer category

3. Impact created: GoMP through its various initiatives as outlined above has been successful in including the public in not just on-ground implementation of Covid appropriate behaviour and Government instructions but has been able to create an efficient feedback loop for the government, whereby the society has been given a platform to raise their concerns and recommend solutions.

The state administration including the Hon'ble Chief Minister regularly connect with the Crisis Management groups at each level to decode issues at the grassroots level, while also empowering them with de-centralized decision-making powers. One of the leading examples of how critical public participation has been for covid management in MP is illustrated by the way Janta Curfew was imposed across the state in a staggered, decentralized, need basis.

The rise in cases was first noticed in March in villages bordering Maharashtra. The concerned village Crisis Management Groups swiftly highlighted the influx of infected

individuals from the state borders and decided to barricade the borders along with imposing strict restrictions on movement of individuals from Maharashtra to MP.

Soon, cases started rising across districts bordering Maharashtra along with big cities including Bhopal, Indore, Jabalpur and Gwalior. Keeping a close track on key indicators like positivity, daily new cases and hospitalization the respective Crisis Management Groups in these districts came to a conclusion in mid-April that it would be essential to impose a curfew to be able to control the rapid rise in cases and not overwhelm the health infrastructure in the respective districts.

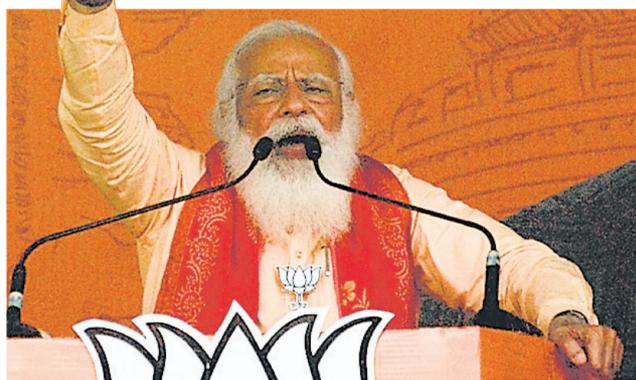
The timely imposition of curfew across these districts went a long way in breaking the chain of transmission to bordering districts and flattening the curve at a state level, while the decentralized decision making ensured the buy-in and wellbeing of all stakeholders involved. Hence, came about the term "Janta Curfew" - referring to Covid-19 restrictions imposed by the public, for the public.

Further, below are a few examples from districts that are testimonials to the meritorious work being done by the above-mentioned groups and volunteers.

Persons on streets without a reasonable motive were reported and temporarily put in police van or jail

Some shops which were open despite the lockdown were reported and the shopkeepers were asked to close down Unreasonable crowding at medical stores led to breach in social distancing, guidelines were laid-out to avoid the same. Such instances were reported by the groups and volunteers enforcing social distancing, making sure the persons are in queue, as per social distancing norms. Above examples are instances from within the community wherein behavior crucial for prevention of and further transmission of infection came from the community and its people itself. This also testifies that the risk-perception in the community has changed for good.

Seven years of 'statesmanship'



bills which are taking middle men out of the affair. The biggest wound that Congress and its allies had ever given to India was the Partition and with that had come into existence Jammu and Kashmir's so-called special status, taking advantage of which, the stakeholders used to blackmail the Centre and created mountain out of a hill by describing Article 370 as an indelible mark. It took the Indian Parliament no time to ward-off all rumours and the controversial Article was abrogated without any violence and along with that, Article 35-A was also gone that denied our daughters their rights. This was a major achievement that insane persons won't even dare to recall or be reminded of. It was Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru who chose to take oath as first Prime Minister of India at a time when over two million innocent Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims were being massacred and about twenty million people were being displaced along religious lines, creating overwhelming refugee crises in the newly-constituted dominions in 1947. Contrarily, Narendra Modi chose not to harm a single innocent soul in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and yet gave Ladakh its due share of being a Union Territory (UT) while abrogating controversial articles and simultaneously showing Pakistan our India's military might by striking within its territories that's known as 'Surgical Strike'.

Today, when some bad elements are still trying to flare up communal hatred by instigating particular communities in the name of Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), Farm Laws or are disapproving the handling of COVID-19 crisis, our Prime Minister is showing utmost restraint. He is doing this only to ensure that his aim to empower people, bring home persecuted Hindus and Sikhs from Pakistan and other such nations, increase income of farmers and vaccinate entire India stands accomplished. Taking a strong decision of demonetisation to check black money, bringing home from abroad all the stranded people during COVID-19 crisis, handling foreign affairs meticulously, bringing all the NRIs on a common platform, boosting their morale and ensuring that country stands by them, tightening

noose around crooks who looted Indian banks but were not paying back and giving country a fair and effective education policy to ensure that no educational qualification, even that of drop-outs goes waste, is the end result of seven years of statesmanship, which the opposition is unable to digest. In seven years, how Modi has changed India is an example to reckon. He, by empowering culturally rich Indians, ending corruption and redefining the nationalist consensus, has given India a new vision. Having sailed through the turbulent waters, he faced allegations of polarisation yet emerged as winner. Today, when the entire opposition is pitted against just one name 'Modi' and not the issues confronting people, it establishes that Narendra Modi is rewriting history - history of commitment, national self-esteem and self-reliance. India, post-independence, had become colony of a chosen few families and bureaucrats, and liberating the nation from their hands is what a statesman like him has done. After the verdict of Supreme Court, Ram temple is being built at Ayodhya. BJP today is the largest political group in the world and in seven years' time, Narendra Modi has changed the perception of people towards governance.

Blemished by corruption at every step, people were dejected and there was a brain drain. Today things are the other way round with more and more youth indulging in start-ups and becoming job givers than job seekers. Facing the pandemic, while BJP and Narendra Modi as PM are providing maximum relief to people affected with pandemic or cyclones through 'Seva Hi Sangathan' programme, he continues to be humbled and indebted to people at all times for letting him take over the reins of power to serve the country and not rule it. Lastly, a message for those who are into Modi-bashing that this won't lead to his defeat even in 2024 general elections because undeterred and far away from these hate speeches or divisive politics, he is going strong and building a strong nation. They must read the signboard ahead, "Work in progress".

(Raman Suri is an Executive Member of the BJP's J&K unit. The views expressed are personal)



ISRAELI FM IN EGYPT FOR TALKS ON GAZA TRUCE

Ashkenazi said he would discuss in Egypt a permanent ceasefire with Hamas and the rebuilding of Gaza that was largely devastated during 11 days of bloody fighting with Israel earlier this month.

Cairo | Agencies

Israeli Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi arrived in Cairo on Sunday for talks with senior Egyptian officials over the ongoing ceasefire in place between Israel and the Islamist Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The trip is the first formal visit by an Israeli Foreign Minister to Egypt in nearly 13 years, dpa news agency reported. Ashkenazi is due to meet



with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukri. Ashkenazi said he would discuss in Egypt a permanent ceasefire with Hamas and the rebuilding of Gaza that was largely devastated during 11

days of bloody fighting with Israel earlier this month. A ceasefire, mediated by Egypt, has been holding between Israel and the Hamas since May 21. The 11-day conflict in an around the Gaza Strip left at least 243 Palestinians and 12 Israelis dead. "We will discuss establishing a permanent ceasefire with Hamas, a mechanism for providing humanitarian aid & the reconstruction of Gaza with a pivotal role played by the international community," he said on Twitter. He added that Israel is "fully committed" to the return of its soldiers being held by Hamas. Egypt was the first Arab country to recognise Israel in 1979. Egypt, which borders Gaza, has mediated in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict on several occasions.

6 people dead in Colombia protests

President Ivan Duque on Friday night sent additional military assistance to support police in the Valle del Cauca district, the epicentre of the protests of which Cali is the capital, after several people died in protests earlier in the day. Overnight he extended the order to seven other districts.

Bogota | Agencies

At least six people have died in protests in the Colombian city of Cali, local media reported. Newspaper El Tiempo said there were six deaths on Saturday, while RCN Radio put the toll at seven, reprtsdpa news agency. President Ivan Duque on Friday night sent additional military assistance to support police in the Valle del Cauca district, the epi-



centre of the protests of which Cali is the capital, after several people died in protests earlier in the day. Overnight he extended the order to seven other districts. Four people died on Friday in Cali in armed clashes over street blocks which have been affecting the mobility of residents and goods, local media reported. Since the end of April, there have been numerous protests in different cities in the South American country. At least 44 people have died in connection with the demonstrations, according to the national ombudsman's office.

Russia to support Belarus with \$500 mn in credit

Moscow | Agencies

Russia will support Belarus with \$500 million in credit over the coming weeks, the leaders of the two countries have agreed. During a meeting in Sochi on Saturday, Russian President Vladimir Putin and his visiting Belarusian counterpart Alexander Lukashenko agreed the sum would be paid out by the end of June, dpa news agency quoted Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov as saying. This is the second tranche of a credit package that was agreed before the controversial forced landing of a passenger aeroplane in Minsk on May 23 in order to arrest a dissident blogger, Roman Protasevich, and his partner Sofia Sapega. During their meeting, Putin and Lukashenko spoke about trade and economic cooperation, Peskov said. Belarus' economy is weak, and it has already borrowed billions of dollars from Moscow. During the opening of the meeting, both leaders complained about pressure from Western countries on Belarus.



After the incident with the plane, the Ryanair commercial flight between Athens and Vilnius that was forced to reroute and land in Minsk, the European Union (EU) and the US imposed fresh sanctions on Belarus, which the Kremlin slammed as an emotional reaction. Peskov emphasized that the fate of Sapega, who is a Russian national, mattered to the Russian authorities, but said the 23-year-old had a residency permit in Belarus. Meanwhile President of the EU Parliament, David Sassoli, said he wants to keep up pressure Belarus in order secure the release of the blogger and his girlfriend.

Netanyahu opponents likely to form coalition for new govt

Tel Aviv | Agencies

Opponents of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are expected to form a coalition in order to establish a new government ahead of a deadline which would otherwise mean new elections. Israel has held four elections in the past two years but all have failed to produce a clear majority, reports dpa news agency. Former Defence Minister Naftali Bennett of the pro-settler Yamina party has decided to opt for an alliance with opposition leader Jair Lapid of Yesh Atid, Israeli radio reported on Sunday. An official announcement is expected soon. Bennett was reportedly planning to inform party members on Sunday. He agreed with Bennett that the two would share the office of Prime Minister, with Bennett initially to take the role for two years, and then to be replaced by Lapid. Lapid's centrist party came in second in the elections on March 23, behind Netanyahu's right-wing



Likud. After the March elections, Netanyahu had

failed to form a government, so President Reuven Rivlin appointed Lapid to do so. Lapid's pro-reform party planned to continue coalition talks Sunday with Gideon Saar's right-leaning New Hope. It has already reached agreements with the left-liberal Meretz Party, the Labour Party and former Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman's nationalist Yisrael Beiteinu party. Lapid is trying to ensure the support of several small parties that are far apart on the political spectrum, in order to form a minority government that would be acceptable to Arab deputies. They are united above all by their rejection of Netanyahu, who is currently being tried for corruption. However, the smaller parties have widely diverging political goals. Lapid's mandate to form a government will run out on Wednesday midnight. If he succeeds, it would end bring an end to the era of Netanyahu, in office since 2009. He was also Prime Minister from 1996 to 1999.

Pak FM meets Iraqi leaders to boost bilateral ties

Baghdad | Agencies

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi held meetings with Iraqi leaders during his official visit to Baghdad to strengthen bilateral ties in various fields. Iraqi President Barham Salih met with Qureshi on Saturday, and the two sides discussed bilateral relations and stressed the importance of cooperation in combating terrorism and extremism to stabilise the region and the world, Xinhua news agency reported. "The world and the region, in particular, are facing the challenges of terrorism, extremism, and the escalation of tensions that affect global security and stability," Salih said. "Iraq's close relations with the Arab world, Islamic neighbouring countries, and its relations with the international community



are a cornerstone of security, stability, and development in the region." For his part, Qureshi affirmed "his country's commitment to supporting Iraq's security and sovereignty and expressed aspiration towards consolidating bilateral relations and cooperation in various fields with Iraq". Qureshi also met Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi, as the two discussed ways to enhance cooperation between Baghdad and Islamabad in the security, economic and military fields. They also discussed the file of religious visits as Pakistan wants to facilitate

visa procedures for Pakistani visitors to Iraq. Moreover, Qureshi conveyed an invitation from the Pakistani leadership for al-Kadhimi to visit Pakistan. Qureshi also met his Iraqi counterpart Fuad Hussein. At a press conference after the meeting, Hussein said that he discussed with Qureshi "the export of Iraqi oil to the Pakistani market, cooperation in the agricultural and industrial fields, in addition to encouraging religious tourism between the two countries". For his part, Qureshi told reporters that his country is looking forward to more cooperation with Iraq in the fields of combating terrorism and religious tourism, stressing Pakistan's commitment to supporting Iraq in all fields. Qureshi arrived at Baghdad airport on Friday and was received by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Salih al-Tamimi.

AZERBAIJAN OPEN TO RUSSIAN MEDIATION IN ARMENIA BORDER DISPUTE

Damascus | Agencies

Baku: Azerbaijan has shown openness to possible Russian mediation in establishing a demarcation line with its hostile neighbour Armenia. "Azerbaijan is ready to constructively resolve the issue of the border line with Armenia," Prime Minister Ali Asadov said at a meeting with other heads of government of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In this context, he said on Saturday, they supported a proposal by Russia to form a trilateral commission, reports dpa news agency. Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan had previously spoken out in favour of a withdrawal of Armenian and Azerbaijani troops and the deployment of international observers. Since the recent war over the disputed region of Nagorno-Karabakh, there have been repeated tensions in the border area.

EU accused of being 'partner in war against Syria' over sanctions extension

Damascus | Agencies

The Syrian Foreign Ministry has accused the European Union (EU) of being a "partner in the unjust war against Syria", as the bloc decided to renew sanctions on the war-torn country. "Once again, the European Union proves its complete distance from reality, its full partnership in the unjust war on Syria, and its responsibility for the bloodshed of Syrians and destruction of their achievements," the Ministry said on Saturday. The EU recently said it will renew its sanctions against the Syrian government for another year, reports Xinhua news agency. The EU sanctions were introduced in 2011 as a response to the alleged violent repression in the country. Currently, 283 individuals and 70 organisations are on



the sanctions list, which includes a ban on entry to the EU and a freeze on European assets. The 27-member bloc also has a ban on oil imports from Syria. The EU's decision comes as Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has won his fourth seven-year term in office in last week's presidential election. The Ministry further said the "renewal of unilateral, inhuman coercive measures against Syria affect the Syrian citizens in their life, health, and livelihood, and constitute a flagrant violation of the most basic human rights and principles of international humanitarian law". It further charged that the EU has lost credibility due to its "wrong approaches and its blind subordination to the US policy".

LEBANON LOOKS FORWARD TO STRENGTHENING TIES WITH SYRIA

Beirut: Lebanese President Michel Aoun said that his country looked forward to strengthening bilateral ties with Syria in all areas. His remarks were included in a letter sent to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad on Saturday to congratulate the latter on winning his fourth seven-year term in last week's presidential election, Xinhua news agency. "I sincerely congratulate you on the occasion of your re-election as the president of the brotherly Syrian Arab Republic, hoping efforts will continue in the next phase to stabilize your country and restore cohesion among all its areas," Aoun said. The Lebanese leader also confirmed deep historical ties between the two countries. He also wished for the return of the displaced Syrians to their homeland to participate in the development of Syria.

New Nepal budget highlights Covid control, economic recovery

Kathmandu | Agencies

Nepal Finance Minister Bishnu Prasad Paudel has presented a budget of 1.64 trillion NPR (\$14 billion) for the 2021-22 fiscal year that starts in mid-July, with focus on controlling the Covid-19 pandemic and recovering the economy. It is the second year in a row that the health sector has got special focus in the budget for the new fiscal year as the country is facing a devastating impact of a second wave that hit the country in early April, reports Xinhua news agency. Nepal has reported a total of 553,422 Covid-19 cases with the death toll standing at 7,163. Even though the number of new infections has come down in the last few days, health facilities in the country have been pushed to their limit. Paudel presented the annual budget in a televised address on Saturday as it could not be done at the House of Representatives, which was dissolved by President Bidhya Devi Bhandari on May 22 for fresh elections. For the government, the priorities are saving lives from the pandemic, recovering the economy damaged in the epidemic, promoting social security and utilising pub-



lic and private resources to boost the productive sector, the Minister said. The fund for the Ministry of Health and Population is increased by 35 per cent to 122.77 billion NPR. By allocating \$230 million for the procurement of vaccines against Covid, the government is committed to bringing vaccines from manufacturers and countries and inoculating people free of charge, Paudel said. Nepal has so far administered first dose of vaccines to 2.11 million people, while another 654,851 people have got both jabs,

according to the Ministry of Health and Population. As to relief and recovery for the people and enterprises hurt in the pandemic, Paudel announced that no bill would be charged on drinking water for use up to 20,000 liters per month. The exemption of electricity bills up to certain units for households is implemented only during the lockdown period, which runs through June 3 in the Kathmandu Valley for now. The continuation of a rehabilitation fund established last year to provide relief to small and medium-sized enterprises and the tourism sector is also suggested in the budget, which includes tax exemptions to enterprises affected by the pandemic. In addition, the budget is prioritizing job creation through the development of skills for the youth. Through the budget, the Nepal government has set a growth of 6.5 per cent for the next fiscal year, hoping a vaccination drive could help economic recovery. As to the 4 per cent growth projected last month for the current fiscal year, Paudel acknowledged that it would be challenging now to achieve the goal due to the devastating impact of the pandemic.

SOMALIAN ARMY KILLS 37 AL-SHABAB MILITANTS

Mogadishu: The Somali Armed Forces have said that it killed 37 al-Shabab militants in the Middle Shabelle region amid the ongoing military operations to flush out the extremists in the southern part of the country. "The Somali National Army (SNA) last night carried out a planned operation in the Galka-Harare area of Middle Shabelle where the militants were based, killing 37 al-Shabab militants and capturing two others," the armed forces said in a statement issued here on Saturday. The incident came after the government forces killed 15 al-Shabab militants, including key members, during an operation in Gal-labashir village in Middle Shabelle region on Friday. The government forces have intensified security operations against the Al Qaeda allied terrorist group as the country prepares to hold presidential and parliamentary elections within 60 days.



INDIAN WOMEN CRICKET TEAM'S NEW TEST JERSEY UNVEILED

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India T20 captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Sunday shared photos of the new Test jersey that the players would wear during the tour of England, starting next month.

The white jersey has the player number at the back, as is the new fashion with all the teams. Hard-hitting batswoman Harmanpreet's shirt is No.7. She posted photos of the front and the back of the new jersey on Instagram, and captioned it: "Loving this already."

Harmanpreet is also in the ODI squad, besides the Test and T20



teams.

The women's team will play a one-off Test against England, starting on June 16 in Bristol, followed by three ODIs and three T20 Internationals, ending on July 15.

The Indian men's Test jersey and sweater for the World Test Championship final, against New Zealand, have also been unveiled. While Ravindra Jadeja showed the new sweater on social media, Pujara displayed the jersey.

Chelsea outwit Manchester City to win Champions League



Porto | Agencies

Kai Havertz's goal earned Chelsea a second Champions League crown nine years after their first with a deserved 1-0 final victory over domestic rivals Manchester City in Porto.

On Saturday, thousands of Chelsea fans were in the crowd of 14,110 to see their team lift the trophy in the Dragao Stadium as the final had been moved from Istanbul, with Portugal operating under less severe coronavirus restrictions.

Havertz sparked the celebrations with his 42nd minute goal, created by a super pass from Mason Mount, which split the

defence and allowed the 21-year-old German to escape keeper Ederson and tap home, reports dpa news agency.

City won the domestic championship by a distance but lost to Chelsea both in the league and FA Cup as Blues manager Thomas Tuchel completed a whirlwind story of success since taking over from Frank Lampard in January.

Defeat in their first Champions League final means City remain without the biggest prize in European football despite billions of dollars being spent over the years by their Abu Dhabi owners.

Chelsea are kings again and Tuchel has glory at the

second attempt, having lost in the final with Paris Saint-Germain last season. Like in 2012, the Stamford Bridge club won having changed managers mid-season.

"To share it with everybody is incredible," Tuchel told BT Sport. "I don't know what to feel. The (players) were determined to win this. We wanted to be a stone in their shoe. We encouraged everybody to step up and step out, to be more brave and create dangerous counter-attacks." Pep Guardiola was coaching in the Champions League final for the first time since his second triumph with Barcelona in 2011 but paid the price for a City line-up which was incredibly attacking.

Asian boxing: Marykom loses in 51kg final, settles for silver

Dubai | Agencies

Six-time world champion MC Marykom failed to win her sixth Asian Boxing Championship title as she lost 2-3 to Nazym Kyzaibay of Kazakhstan in the final of the 51kg category here on Sunday, and settled for silver. Despite having huge experience, Marykom, 38, failed to tame Nazym, who is nearly 11 years younger to her.

Nazym won the first gold for her team.

The Kazakh boxer began the contest on the aggressive note and with a good combination of right and left punches that unsettled Marykom, who went off balance twice in the second round.

In the third and final round, Marykom made desperate attempts to recover the lost ground, but Nazym proved a hard nut to crack.



Javelin ace Chopra gets visa to travel to France for competitions

New Delhi: Indian national javelin record holder Neeraj Chopra has received a visa to travel to France to compete in events before the Tokyo Olympic Games, the star athlete announced on Sunday.

"Granted visa to travel to France. I am very happy that I am getting a chance to compete in international competitions before #Tokyo2020," Chopra tweeted.

The Olympic Games are scheduled to be held from July 23 to August 8.



It's not advantage New Zealand vs India in WTC final: Gavaskar

Team Absolute | Kolkata

A discussion about New Zealand having an advantage over India in the World Test Championship (WTC) final next month because they are playing two Tests against England before the title clash is academic, feels former India skipper Sunil Gavaskar.

The Kane Williamson-led New Zealand will take on England in the first Test from June 2-6 at Lord's, London, and the second in Birmingham from June 10-14. They will then play India in the WTC final from June 18-22 in Southampton.

However, Gavaskar debunked the acclimatisation theory



"The pessimists are suggesting that playing two Tests before the WTC finals will be a huge plus for the Kiwis as they will be match ready and better acclimatised to the conditions," Gavaskar wrote in a column in The Telegraph. "The flip side of playing those two Tests is that New Zealand could get beaten and thus be low on morale when they take on India and there could be some injuries and niggles to some of their key players

which can happen in early June in England." Gavaskar said the main thing that will go in India's favour is their "sheer energy" and "enthusiasm" of returning to action after more than a month. "The other factor that will work in the Indian team's favour is that they will be fresh and raring to go and that sheer energy and enthusiasm to be able to play the sport they love after a month's gap will more than make up for any lack of match practice," he wrote. "This is a team that has tasted success and that too in adverse circumstances, so any adversity will be looked upon as an opportunity to show they have the gumption to rise above it and conquer it."

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Elite Indian athletes, including the national women's 4x100 metres relay team, aiming to make the cut for the upcoming Olympics Games are looking ahead to compete in next month's Qosanov Memorial meet in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

The two-day competition, an Olympic qualifying event, is scheduled to be held on June 19 and 20 and is part of the World Athletics continental tour series.

"It would be a good opportunity for the top Indian athletes if they get a chance to compete in Kazakhstan. We have a good chance to qualify for the Olympics in the women's 4x100m relay," a national team coach told IANS. While the coaches and athletes

Olympic qualification: Indians fancy chances at Qosanov athletics



are hopeful of competing in the Asian circuit, escalating coronavirus cases in India prevented the core group of athletes to compete on the European circuit this month.

"The situation is changing so rapidly due to the pandemic in India that we cannot guarantee competing at the international level. The national men's 4x400m and women's 4x100

relay squads couldn't compete in the World Relays on May 1 and 2 in Chorzow, Poland, due to travel restrictions by the Netherlands government," said the coach.

Last month, javelin throwers, including Neeraj Chopra, couldn't travel to Europe for a training-cum-competition programme. The Athletics Federation of India had shortlisted six top women's sprinters, including national champion S Dhanalakshmi and Dutee Chand, for the relay team. "Since the top two runners in the team have sub-11.50 seconds time for 100m we stand a good chance to qualify for the Olympics," AFI president Adile Sumariwalla had said. Archana Suseendran, Hima Das, T Daneshwari and Himashree Roy are the other sprinters in the 4x100m squad.

French Open: Naomi, Paula win; Angelique loses to qualifier

Paris | Agencies

World No. 2 Naomi Osaka of Japan got her French Open campaign off to a strong start with a 6-4, 7-6(4) win over 63rd-ranked Romanian Patricia Maria Tig on Sunday.

The four-time Grand Slam title winner, seeking her first second-week showing at the clay court major, fended off a spirited challenge from Patricia in one hour and 47 minutes.

Naomi, the reigning US Open and Australian Open champion, is playing in Paris for the first time since 2019, after withdrawing from last year's event with a hamstring injury prior to the tournament. In other first-round matches on Day 1, No. 33 seed Paula Badosa of Spain continued her fine clay court season with a 6-2, 7-6(3) win over Lauren



Davis of the USA. Paula has reached the semi-finals or better in her last three clay-court appearances -- at Charleston, Madrid, and Belgrade, where she won her maiden WTA singles title.

Former world No.1 Angelique Kerber of Germany was upset by Ukrainian qualifier Anhelina Kalinina 6-2, 6-4 in an hour-and-a-half long contest.

The 139th-ranked Anhelina came into the French Open qualifiers in exceptional form, having won back-to-back ITF Challenger events in Portugal and Croatia. Anhelina broke the world No. 27 Angelique six times en route to her first ever win over a player ranked inside the top 30.

Naomi was superb on serve during her encounter with Patricia, winning 89 per cent of the points behind her first delivery. The former world No. 1 reeled off 39 winners, compared to 19 from her opponent as Naomi improved to 2-0 against the Romanian.

In another match British No.1 Dan Evans's search for a maiden French Open title will continue after he went down to 21-year-old Serbian Miomir Kecmanovic 1-6, 6-3, 6-3, 6-4 in the first round of the championship on Sunday.

Teenaged Swiss rider Dupasquier passes away after crash

Mugello (Italy): Swiss Moto3 rider Jason Dupasquier has succumbed to injuries sustained in a crash at a qualifying race at the Italian Grand Prix on Saturday, organisers



Florence's Careggi hospital where he underwent chest surgery for a vascular lesion. Dupasquier's team, Pruestel GP, has withdrawn from Sunday's race.

Focused completely on AFC Asian Cup 2023 qualifiers: Suresh Singh Wangjam

Doha | Agencies

India football team midfielder Suresh Singh said on Sunday that the squad was focused completely on qualifying for the AFC Asian Cup 2023 during their campaign here where they will play three matches, beginning June 3.

The Sunil Chhetri-captained side will play Qatar (June 3), Bangladesh (June 7) and Afghanistan (June 15) in the combined qualifying tournament for the World Cup 2022 and the AFC Asian Cup 2023.

"These are extremely significant matches and tough at the same time. Our aim is to qualify for the AFC Asian Cup in 2023. Owing to the pandemic, we are making up for lost time in the camp (at Doha)," said the 20-year-old from Manipur.

"The positive part stays that we have a full-strength team at our disposal. The mindset in the squad is extremely positive. As a newcomer, I am hearing stories about how we held Asian champions Qatar in their own den the last time here (September 2019 during the World Cup 2022 Qualifiers).

"That motivates me and everyone else, but at the same time, we understand that all of that is past. On June 3 when the two teams meet again, it will be a new start. So you cannot rest on past laurels. In fact, the last time India played against Qatar, Bangladesh and Afghanistan, all were drawn matches," said Suresh, who came into prominence during the FIFA U-17 World Cup held in India in 2017.

On whether he was expecting a call-up to the Igor Stimac-coached side for the Doha matches, Suresh said: "It was never in my hand. I kept on focusing on myself, and my play. My logic is simple --- if I am not called then I need to understand that either I am not ready, or good enough.

"Being in Bengaluru FC helped a lot simply because I regularly trained with five national team players. That helped me grow in confidence," said Suresh, who has been with Indian Super League side Bengaluru FC since 2019."



Diya, Swastika confirm medal for India in WTT tournament

Tunis | Agencies

Indian table tennis players Diya Chitale and Swastika Ghosh confirmed a medal in the U-19 girls' doubles category and also made it to the knockout stage in singles, at the 2021 World Table Tennis (WTT) Youth Star Contender here on Sunday.

This is the first international youth event where India TT players are competing in since the Covid-19 pandemic. The Maharashtra duo of Diya and

Swastika, who received a bye in the opening round, won 11-5, 6-11, 11-9, 11-8 against local favourites Fadwa Garci and Maram Zoghliami in the last-eight encounter and secured at least a bronze with an entry into the semi-finals.

The pair will now take on Czech Republic's Linda Zaderova and Croatia's Hana Arapovic in the last-four match.

Diya and Swastika also progressed into the U-19 singles last-16 stage after finishing on top in their respective groups with an all-win record.

Diya, the national youth champion, dominated during her 3-0 victories against Belarusian Darya Vasilenka (11-7, 11-7, 11-8) and Algeria's Narimene-Hind Siddeki (11-3, 11-4, 11-7) in Group-VI.

Junior national champion Swastika defeated Greece's Malamatenia Papadimitriou and Portugal's Ines Matos by identical 3-0 margins in the Group-I.

In the boys' U-15 singles, Preyesh Raj Suresh bowed out in the quarter-finals.

Civil aviation now under ECLGS, norms eased to support smaller businesses

The modifications in ECLGS, would enhance the utility and impact of ECLGS by providing additional support to MSMEs, safeguarding livelihoods and helping in seamless resumption of business activity. These changes will further facilitate flow of institutional credit at reasonable terms.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Centre has modified the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to bring the civil aviation sector under the ambit of the scheme. Announcing ECLGS 4.0 on Sunday, the Finance Ministry also said that the current ceiling of Rs

500 crore of loan outstanding for eligibility under ECLGS 3.0 will be removed, subject to maximum additional ECLGS assistance to each borrower being limited to 40 per cent or Rs 200 crore, whichever is lower. The move would bring in more small businesses under its ambit. An official statement said: "The modifications in ECLGS, would enhance the utility and impact of ECLGS by providing additional support to MSMEs, safe-

guarding livelihoods and helping in seamless resumption of business activity. These changes will further facilitate flow of institutional credit at reasonable terms."

Further, as the country faced a severe shortage of medical oxygen amid the second wave of Covid-19, the Centre has decided to offer 100 guarantee cover to loans up to Rs 2 crore to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation

plants. The interest rate for such loans has been capped at 7.5 per cent.

The statement further said that borrowers who are eligible for restructuring as per RBI guidelines of May 5, 2021 and had availed loans under ECLGS 1.0 of overall tenure of four years comprising of repayment of interest only during the first 12 months with repayment of principal and interest in 36 months thereafter will now be able to avail a tenure of five years for their ECLGS loan.

The government has also announced additional ECLGS assistance of up to 10 per cent of the outstanding as on February 29, 2020 to borrowers covered under ECLGS 1.0, in tandem with restructuring as per RBI guidelines of May 05, 2021.

Validity of ECLGS has been extended to September 30, 2021 or till guarantees for an amount of Rs 3 lakh crore are issued. The Centre has permitted disbursement under the scheme up to December 31, 2021.

Hospitals get 100% loan cover for on-site O2 generation

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As the country faced a severe shortage of medical oxygen amid the second wave of Covid-19, Centre has decided to offer 100 guarantee on loans up to Rs 2 crore to hospitals, nursing homes, clinics and medical colleges for setting up on-site oxygen generation plants.

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Civil aviation sector will be eligible under ECLGS 3.0.

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The modifications in ECLGS, would enhance the utility and impact of ECLGS by providing additional support to MSMEs, safeguarding livelihoods and helping in seamless resumption of business activity. These changes will further facilitate flow of institutional credit at reasonable terms, the ministry said.

470 infra projects report 'cost overrun' of Rs 4.38L cr

Team Absolute | New Delhi

As many as 470 infrastructure projects reported cost overrun of over Rs 4.38 lakh crore as of May 1, 2021.

The Flash Report on Central sector projects for April published by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation showed that 525 projects are running behind schedule.

Out of the 1,737 projects, only 11 projects are ahead of schedule, 213 are on schedule, showed the report.

"Total original cost of implementation of the 1737 projects was 22,33,409.53 crore and their anticipated completion cost is likely to be 26,71,440.77 crore, which reflects overall cost overruns of 4,38,031.24 crore (19.61



per cent of original cost)," it said. The expenditure incurred on these projects till April 2021 is just over Rs 13.16 lakh crore, which is 49.26 per cent of the anticipated cost of the projects, as per the ministry's report. It, however, added that the

number of delayed projects decreases to 375 if delay is calculated on the basis of latest schedule of completion. Further, for 988 projects neither the year of commissioning nor the tentative gestation period has been reported.

LIC'S HOLDING AT ALL TIME LOW ON PROFIT BOOKING

Team Absolute | New Delhi

LIC's holding across 296 companies where its holding is more than 1 per cent, slipped to an all-time low of 3.66 per cent as on March 31, 2021, down from 3.70 per cent as on December 31, 2020 and from all-time high of 5 per cent as on June 30, 2012, as per primeinfobase.com, an initiative of PRIME Database Group.

According to Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, Prime Database Group, this was on account of profit booking by India's largest institutional investor.

In INR value terms though, it reached an all-time high of Rs 7.24 lakh crore in quarter ending March 31, 2021, an increase of 6.30 per cent over previous quarter. Sensex and Nifty rose by 3.70 and 5.10 per cent respectively during this period. LIC also continues to command a lion's share of investments in equities by insurance companies (76 per cent share).

Holding of Insurance companies as a whole also declined to a 5 year low of 4.80 per cent as on March 31, 2021



down from 5.00 per cent as on December 31, 2020. In INR value terms, it went up by 3.09 per cent from the previous quarter to an all-time high of Rs 9.48 lakh crores as on March 31, 2021. Holding of domestic Mutual Funds in companies listed on NSE also reduced to 7.23 per cent as on March 31, 2021 down from 7.42 per cent as on December 31, 2020.

According to Haldea, holding of Mutual Funds has now declined for four consecutive quarters, after 24 quarters of continuous rise (from 2.81 per cent as on March 31, 2014 to 7.96

per cent as on March 31, 2020). Net outflows by domestic Mutual Funds stood at INR 26,810 crore during the quarter, as retail investors booked profits. In INR value terms, the holding of domestic Mutual Funds went up by 4.81 per cent to Rs 14.30 lakh crore as on March 31, 2021 from INR 13.64 lakh crores on December 31, 2021.

Holding of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) stood at 22.60 per cent as on March 31, 2021, down from 22.74 per cent as on December 31, 2020, despite net inflows of Rs

55,741 crore during the quarter, according to Haldea. In INR value terms, FPI ownership also reached an all-time high of Rs 44.66 lakh crore as on March 31, 2021, up 6.77 per cent from Rs 41.83 lakh crore as on December 31, 2020.

According to Haldea, retail holding (individuals with up to Rs 2 lakh shareholding) in companies listed on NSE remained the same at 6.90 per cent as on March 31, 2021. In INR value terms though, retail holding in companies listed on NSE also reached an all-time high of Rs 13.63 lakh crore from INR 12.69 lakh crore on December 31, 2020.

On an overall basis, retail holding went up in 863 companies listed on NSE in the last 1 quarter. The average stock price of these companies in the same period increased by 5.52 per cent. On the other hand, retail holding went down in 713 companies. The average stock price of these companies increased by a much higher 15.57 per cent. According to Haldea, this further validates the oft-used phrase that retail buys at the peak and sells at lows.

Record company registrations in April; Covid-hit Maha, Delhi, UP lead charge

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Notwithstanding the Covid-19 pandemic, corporate activities have maintained their momentum in the country.

And a testimony to the strong entrepreneurial spirit of the Indian people is the growing number of companies that are getting registered in the country.

During the peak of the second wave of the pandemic in April, a whopping 12,554 companies were registered in India, including 839 one-person companies with authorised capital of Rs 1,483.41 crore. According to the latest data released by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), Maharashtra, one of the worst Covid-hit states in the country with high infection and death rates, reported the highest number corporate registrations in April at 2,292.

Two other states which saw rapid rise in Covid infections in April -



Delhi and Uttar Pradesh -- saw the highest number of company registrations from Maharashtra.

While 1,262 companies were registered in Delhi in April, as many as 1,260 companies got registered in Uttar Pradesh.

"It's not unusual to see high number of corporate registrations in April, as it is the first month of the new financial year. But like last year, the situation in April this year has not been good for business due to the pandemic. However, the entrepreneurial spirit of Indians seems to be

undeterred with several people also seeing the pandemic as an opportunity," said a chartered accountant with independent practice, asking not to be named.

Business services topped the economic activity-wise classification (3,442) of the newly registered companies. This was followed by manufacturing, trading and construction. Business services comprise infor-

mation technology, research & development and other business activities such as law, audit, accounts and consultancy. In April, 12,482 (out of 12,554) firms were registered as companies limited by shares with an authorised share capital of Rs 1,483.41 crore. With the new additions, the total number of companies registered in the country as on April 30, 2021 stood at 21,63,829. Of them, 7,59,572 companies were closed.

In all, 2,274 companies were assigned dormant status as per the Companies Act, 2013; 6,906 were under liquidation; 39,572 companies were in the process of being struck-off. The Active in Progress status is now invalid and companies under this category lies under Active Status.

Taking the above into account, there were 13,55,505 active companies as on April end, including 2,19,559 companies incorporated in the last 18 months, mostly during the pandemic.

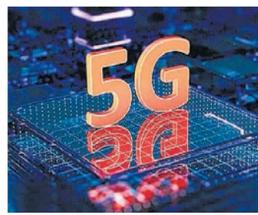
5G to grow strongly despite radio component shortages: Report

New York | Agencies

The market for radio components used in cellular user equipment grew in 2020 despite the pandemic and will continue to grow 8 percent per year through 2025, according to a new report. The radio component revenue reached an all-time high in 2020 and strong growth will continue, according to latest research from Strategy Analytics.

The radio components include baseband processors, RF transceivers, power amplifiers, RF filters, switches, antenna tuners, drain modulators, tuners, and other RF front-end components. "Despite the pandemic, RF component revenue, including baseband processors and the RF front-end (RFFE), reached an all-time high in 2020, and we predict that the cellular radio component market will grow 8 percent per year through 2025," said Christopher Taylor, Director of RF and Wireless Components at Strategy Analytics.

In the wake of stagnating device shipment growth and to help counter increasing radio complexity with 5G, "suppliers of RFFE com-



ponents have continued to develop system-in-package modules with more capabilities, allowing companies to capture more RFFE content per design-win while making design and assembly of mobile phones easier for OEMs," he explained. The on-going semiconductor shortages are likely to persist through 2022, validating strong underlying demand.

"However, mobile phone OEMs face supply constraints that could keep them from reaching full upside device sales potential this year," said Sravan Kundojjala, Associate Director, Handset Component Technologies.

Semiconductor foundries including TSMC, UMC, GlobalFoundries, SMIC, Samsung Foundry and compound semiconductor foundries have responded with efforts to increase capacity as quickly as possible.

Strategy Analytics predicts that "robust demand for both sub-6 and mmWave 5G RF components along with new 5G opportunities beyond smartphones will drive significant cellular radio component growth over the next few years," Kundojjala said.

SMARTPHONE SHIPMENTS TO REACH 1.38 BN IN 2021, HIGHEST SINCE 2015

New Delhi: The shipments of smartphones are forecast to reach 1.38 billion units globally in 2021, an increase of 7.7 per cent over 2020 and its highest-ever level since 2015, a new report has showed. This trend is expected to continue into 2022, when year-over-year growth will be 3.8 per cent with shipments reaching 1.43 billion, according to International Data Corporation's (IDC) "Worldwide Quarterly Mobile Phone Tracker". Smartphones are seeing competition for consumer spending from adjacent markets like PCs, tablets, TVs, and smart home devices, yet that hasn't slowed the market's path to recovery," said Ryan Reith, program vice president with IDC's Worldwide Mobile Device Trackers. With 5G shipments expected to grow nearly 130 per cent in 2021, almost all regions outside of China will see triple-digit growth by the end of this year. However, in terms of market share, China will lead the way with nearly 50 per cent share of 5G shipments in 2021 while the US will follow with a 16 per cent share. Other significant markets such as Western Europe and Asia/Pacific (excluding China and Japan) will combine for a 23.1 per cent share of the worldwide 5G market by the end of 2021. "2021 will represent the largest year-over-year growth the market has witnessed since 2015, as the shift towards 5G across all price tiers continues to accelerate," said Anthony Scarsella, research manager with IDC's Worldwide Mobile Device Trackers.

GOA CM PERPETRATED MISDEMEANOUR BY NOMINATING GODINHO: TN MIN



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Mocking Goa Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho, his counterpart in the GST Council, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister PTR Palanivel Thiagarajan said that Goa Chief Minister had perpetrated

a misdemeanour on Goas citizens, and the GST Council, by nominating Godinho to represent Goa. "I also charge the CM of Goa with perpetrating a misdemeanour on Goa's citizens, and the GST Council, by nominating him (Godinho) to represent your beautiful State," Tamil Nadu FM said in a statement on Sunday while rejecting Godinho's charge that he should apologise to the people of Goa. He added further that the BJP should exercise minimal quality control in its MLA Acquisition procedures. "Finally, I sincerely request the BJP, even across the political divide, to impose some minimal quality control on its 'MLA Acquisition' procedures. If it had done so, Goa, and the nation would be saved a lot of pain," Thiagarajan added.

He said Godinho's statements at the meeting "were highly repetitive, largely vacuous, hectoring, mostly redundant to others' inputs, supercilious, and with inputs from the Minister from Uttar Pradesh". Thiagarajan said there was no need for him to apologise to the people of Goa.

Thiagarajan stuck to his position that "One State-One Vote" mode of the GST Council was fundamentally unfair and he always believed in a truly federal governance model. "Every statement I made during the entire meeting was entirely consistent with these two principles," he said. Godinho on Saturday had demanded an apology from Tamil Nadu Finance Minister for insulting small states, Goa in particular, during the 43rd GST meeting chaired by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, Godinho, who represents the Goa government at GST Council meetings, said that the TN Finance Minister's alleged comments dismissing the stature of small states in the Indian Union were condemnable, a day after Godinho and Palanivel Thiagarajan clashed with each other. "The Finance Minister of Tamil Nadu should apologise. What is he trying to tell me? That he is against the Constitution of the country? Does he not believe in the Constitution of India? Does he not believe in

equality before law? Does he not believe that whatever your status, whatever your standing in society, whether your constituency comprises of lakhs of voters or a few thousand voters, everybody has got one vote," Godinho said. "I want to remind the new Finance Minister of Tamil Nadu Palanivel, refrain from conducting yourself in a manner as a big brother versus small brother or big state versus small state. We all have equal rights. His attitude should be condemned by one and all right-thinking people. He should not target Goa," Godinho said. The Goa Minister said that during the meeting, Palanivel allegedly said that more attention should be paid to the sentiments of bigger states, rather than smaller states like Goa.

"I took offence at yesterday's meeting because he said 'what is Goa, it is a small thing, it is a small population. You should listen to me', he was trying to tell the Union Finance Minister," Godinho said, recounting the incident at the GST Council meeting on Friday.



AMITABH BACHCHAN BECOMES COVID WARRIOR FOR FREELANCE JOURNALISTS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan has lend a hand of support to the freelance journalists dedicated towards entertainment industry.

Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the entire human kind and this includes the entertainment journalists fraternity too especially those who belong to the freelance category.

In such difficult situation, a group of freelance journalist decided to approach few known filmstars who always lend their support in difficult times and Big B is one among them whom they approached. A list of these journalists was send to senior bachchan for help and to everyone's surprise within 48hrs the list was approved after basic enquiry.

One of the senior journalist expressed that "I was worried of how would I repair the leakage of my roof as I didn't have much source of income. Big B's help and support is like blessing in disguise.

All the freelance journalists had their story to tell and how happy and blessed they feel to have received the financial help from the legend.



SHILPA SHETTY SHARES FUNNY 'HUNGAMA 2' VIDEO ON PARESH RAWAL'S BIRTHDAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra took to Instagram on Sunday to share a funny behind the scenes video from her upcoming film Hungama 2 with co-star Paresh Rawal on his birthday.

Shilpa wished the veteran actor on his birthday saying "there's never a dull moment with you around" and used the hashtag #legend. Shilpa shared a video on Instagram where she can be seen sitting behind Paresh Rawal on a scooter and the actress laughs speaking to someone standing beside, saying he doesn't know how to ride it!

"Happy birthday, @PareshRawal ji!!

I love how there's never a dull moment with you around. May the year ahead be filled

with great health, loads of love, and happiness. Biggggg hugggg! #LaughRiot #legend #funtimes #hungama2 #onset," Shilpa wrote alongside her video.

Several friends and industry colleagues of the actor also took to social media to wish Paresh Rawal on his birthday.

"Happy birthday to my dear friend & a great actor @SirPareshRawal bhai. I will always cherish our journey since college theatre days. You r an inspiration to all of us. May you continue to shine as bright as ever. Can never forget your performance in aTokhar' with Shafi Inamdar," tweeted producer Ashoke Pandit. "A very very happy birthday to you Paresh-ji @SirPareshRawal. Wish you a year full of laughter, good health and good memories," posted Suniel Shetty.

Allu Sirish's next titled 'Prema Kadanta'

Team Absolute | Hyderabad

Telugu actor Allu Sirish has redefined the meaning of love in the new posters as he announced the title of his upcoming film "Prema Kadanta" on Sunday.

Sirish had been treating his fans and followers with pre-looks of the film but he announced the title on his birthday on Sunday.

He also unveiled two new first looks of actress Anu Emmanuel and himself from the upcoming movie.

The first poster has the two actors posing in front of the mirror as Sirish kisses Anu's forehead.

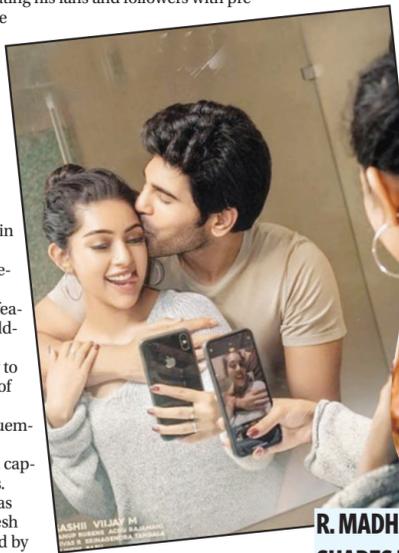
The second image features both of them holding each other.

"Excited and happy to share the 2 first looks of 'Prema Kadanta'.

#PremaKadanta @anuemmanuel @ga2pictures @rakeshsashii," Sirish captioned the two images.

"Prema Kadanta" has been directed by Rakesh Sashii and is presented by his father Allu Aravind.

Sirish, who was last seen on the big screen in "ABCD: American Born Confused Desi" captioned the image as: "Here's our second pre look. Can't wait to share the first look tomorrow at 11am. Mark the date and time." The actor was recently seen in the music video of Darshan Raval and Neeti Mohan's song "Vilayati sharaab" alongside Heli Daruwala.



R. MADHAVAN SHARES PLANS AHEAD OF HIS B'DAY

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor R. Madhavan has shared plans for his birthday this year. The actor took to social media on Sunday to share that he wants to have a quiet birthday with his close ones, which is on June 1, amid the ongoing pandemic.

"Hello my lovely Tweeples. Thank you for all the love from the bottom of my heart. Considering all that is happened & happening around us, I cannot imagine celebrating anything let alone my Birthday. I want to keep it very quiet and spend the day with my close ones," Madhavan tweeted on Sunday. On the work front, Madhavan is all set for his debut directorial film "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect". The film is based on the life of scientist and aerospace engineer S. Nambi Narayanan. Apart from directing the film, Madhavan also essays the protagonist Nambi Narayanan. "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect" will release in Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, Tamil, English and Kannada languages. Commenting on Madhavan's tweet on Sunday, fans shared advance birthday wishes for the actor and expressed curiosity about his upcoming film.



Janhvi Kapoor's painting skills reminds Dia Mirza of Sridevi

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actress Janhvi Kapoor took to social media on Sunday to flaunt her painting skills, which reminded another Bollywood actress Dia Mirza of Janhvi's mother, late superstar Sridevi. Janhvi shared a couple of photographs on Instagram on Sunday, one in which she can be seen painting on an easel and in the other photo, Janhvi has displayed her artworks. Captioning the photos on Instagram, the actress wrote: "Can I call myself a painter yet?" Commenting on her post, Dia Mirza hinted that Janhvi has inherited her talent for painting from her mother, late superstar Sridevi. Dia wrote: "Like mother like daughter. Keep painting." Janhvi's "Roohi" co-star Varun Sharma also commented on her post asking her to gift him one of her paintings. "Wooooooh! Which one are you gifting me?" the actor asked. On the work front, Janhvi's latest release is the horror-comedy film "Roohi" which released in March. The film directed by Hardik Mehta, also features Rajkumar Rao and Varun Sharma in the lead. Janhvi will next be seen in the upcoming romantic-comedy film "Dostana 2".

Varun says Ananya Pandey gives best movies, TV show recommendations

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood actor Varun Dhawan has shared that it is actress Ananya Pandey, who gives him the best movies and television show recommendations.

Varun on Sunday treated his fans to a question and answer session on Instagram, where one user asked him: "Who gives the best movie and TV show recommendations?"

To which, Varun shared a picture of Ananya and wrote "what an angel (angel emoji)".

A fan also asked Varun what diet he follows. To which, the actor replied: "I try to do an intermittent fasting for 14-16 hours start with 1. Coffee, 2. Egg white omelet/oats, 3. Veggies and chicken, 4. Makhana, 5. Veggies and chicken and lots of water." "What does Varun do in lockdown?" asked another.

"Stare", he quipped.

One asked how he staying productive these days? Varun said: "I think that is something I

think about as well. I try to read a lota I try.. I watch a couple of films, play Playstation, workout, I irritate everyone.

Has he watched the much talked about "Friends: Reunion"? Varun revealed that he did and was "super emotional".

Is Shraddha Kapoor, Varun's best friend?

Varun shared a picture with Shraddha and wrote: "I wish we could hang more but we are in a pandemic." On the work front, Varun will be seen in the film "Jug Jugg Jeeyo". He will share the

screen with actors Anil Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor and Kiara Advani. The actor was also recently shooting in Arunachal Pradesh for the supernatural thriller "Bhediya". The film is directed by Amar Kaushik and it also stars Kriti Sanon and Deepak Dobriyal.

"Bhediya" is slated to hit screens on April 14, 2022. The film has been penned by Niren Bhatt.



ARUN MANDOLA: HAVE BEEN GETTING TV OFFERS BUT NOT GOOD ENOUGH

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Arun Mandola, who played Lakshman in "Sankatmochan Mahabali Hanuman" and "Vignaharta Ganesh", says roles he is being offered on television do not interest him anymore and cites that as the reason why he hasn't taken up anything new. "I want to do something more now. I have been getting TV offers but they are not good enough. Hence, I did not take anything up yet. I am waiting for the right offer and also trying my luck in web space. I enjoy watching web series and find the space to be thriving," he told correspondent. The actor is aware of the competition in his profession and accepts it. "Competition has always been there in the industry. In fact, it's there in every field of work. I never think about competition. I concentrate on my work and believe in myself. Before I got the opportunity to play Lakshman, I had faith that I would get the roles I wanted to do and I got it. Moving ahead, I am sure I will get opportunities in films and OTT too. Our industry takes our test and once you clear those exams, you reap the benefits," he says.



INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Aamna Sharif