

# absolute india

VOL. 8, ISSUE 177, MUMBAI | TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021 ₹5 | PAGE 12

PUBLISHED SIMULTANEOUSLY FROM MUMBAI, BHOPAL AND NEW DELHI

**NATION** > 02

**CWC postpones elections for Congress President...**



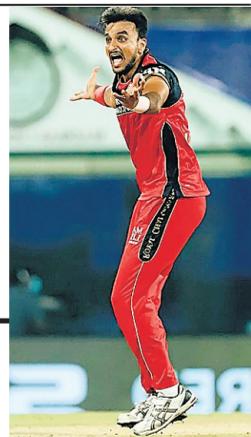
**HOLLYWOOD** > 07

**Seth Rogen won't work with James Franco after sexual...**



**SPORTS** > 10

**Virat's message made me realise I can perform at RCB: Patel...**



## Centre defends its vaccination policy on Suo Moto of Supreme Court

# DON'T NEED JUDICIAL INTERFERENCE

In a late night affidavit submitted in the Supreme Court, the Centre defended its Covid vaccination policy, which has been criticised for differential pricing, shortage of doses, and slow rollout. The Centre added that the price factor will not have any impact on the ultimate beneficiary namely, the eligible person getting the vaccine since all state governments have already declared their policy decision that each state will be administering vaccine to its residents, free of cost.

- On April 30, the top court while hearing a suo moto matter in connection with Covid-19 management issues, had called for revisiting the Centre's vaccine policy.
- The top court had remarked that the manner in which the current policy has been framed would prima facie result in a detriment to the right to public health, which is an integral element of the Article 21 of the Constitution.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Urging against judicial interference on its vaccine policy, the Centre's Sunday night affidavit said: "Any overzealous, though well-meaning judicial intervention may lead to unforeseen and unintended consequences, in absence of any expert advice or administrative experience, leaving the doctors, scientists, experts and executive very little room to find innovative solutions on the go."

The Centre said it is most respectfully submitted that in the times of such grave and unprecedented crisis which the nation is fighting the disaster of an unprecedented magnitude, the executive functioning of the government needs discretion to formulate policy in larger interest. The affidavit said with a view to



ensure that there is no disparity between the states inter-se, with active consultation of the Centre with both the manufacturers, the

central government has successfully fixed uniform price to be paid by all the State Governments.

The Centre said the policy was framed keeping in mind limited availability of vaccines, vulnerability of age groups, and the fact that vaccinating the entire country was not possible in one go due to the suddenness of the pandemic, as the prime considerations. The affidavit added that the new 'Liberalized Pricing and Accelerated National Covid-19 Vaccination Strategy' would further ramp up the pace of COVID-19 vaccination."

## Gave some financial aid for vaccine trials, not R&D

New Delhi: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that no governmental aid, assistance or grant was made either for research or development of either Covaxin or Covishield vaccines but some financial assistance was given for conducting clinical trials. In an affidavit, the Centre said that Covaxin has been developed under public private partnership (PPP) between the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Bharat Biotech International Ltd (BBIL). The PPP was executed under a formal MoU between the ICMR and the BBIL which includes a 5 per cent royalty clause for the ICMR on net sales and other clauses like prioritisation of in-country supplies, and the product intellectual property rights are shared. The Centre said the Department of Biotechnology, under the DBT-BIRAC Covid-19 research consortium is supporting the research and development of 11 vaccine candidates by industry and public sector laboratories. The Centre said the current procurement price is based on the price negotiated by the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVAC).



# 45 decomposed bodies found in Ganga in Bihar

"Chausa is located on the Bihar-Uttar Pradesh border. These dead bodies are definitely thrown in districts in Uttar Pradesh. We have deployed guards at Mahadev Ghat and cremations of dead bodies are underway."

Ashok Kumar, BDO, Chausa



Patna: Amid the Covid surge that is wreaking havoc across India, the administration in Bihar's Buxar district on Monday found at least 45 dead bodies, most in a decomposed stage, in the Ganga, and claimed they had been thrown into the river in upstream Uttar Pradesh.

Ashok Kumar, the Block Development Officer of Chausa in the district, said that the administration has spotted 45 dead bodies at Mahadev Ghat. Some unauthenticated reports claim the figure of more than 150.

Despite the district administration of disposal of dead bodies is underway in a prop-

er manner, the situation in Mahadev Ghat is extremely shocking, with the dead bodies floating in the river being torn apart from street dogs and vultures.

Anjoria Devi, the wife of the Dom Raja of Mahadev Ghat in Chausa, alleged that relatives of the deceased are also coming to the Ghat and throwing the dead bodies into the Ganga without cremation.

"Around 10 dead bodies are being thrown in every day. When they were asked not to do so, they assault us. They also argue who would bear the expenses of cremation," she told reporters.

## India sees dip in infections, records 3.66L cases & 3,754 deaths



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Witnessing a decline, India on Monday recorded 3,66,161 fresh Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours with 3,754 fatalities, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said.

On Sunday, India recorded 4.03 lakh cases for the fifth time after May 1. On Friday, India recorded the highest ever 4,14,188 cases.

In the past 18 days India's daily Covid tally has risen by

over three lakh cases and over 3,000 casualties have been reported for the last 12 days. India's total tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,26,62,575 with 37,45,237 active cases and a total of 2,46,116 deaths so far.

According to the Health Ministry, a total of 3,53,818 people have been discharged in the last 24 hours, while 1,86,71,222 people have been cured from Covid till date.

The Health Ministry said that a total of 17,01,76,703 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 6,89,652, who were administered vaccines in the last 24 hours.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 30,37,50,077 samples have been tested up to May 10 for Covid-19. Of these 14,74,606 samples were tested on Sunday.

## J&K IS NOT INDIA'S INTERNAL MATTER: PAK FM



Hamza Ameer | Islamabad

Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi has said that when it comes to the dispute over Jammu and Kashmir, no decision on the subject can be India's internal matter.

Qureshi said the final settlement of what he called 'Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK)' dispute lies in the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) resolution, calling for a free and impartial

plebiscite under the UN auspices.

"Let me be clear: Jammu & Kashmir is an internationally recognised dispute on the @UNSecurity Council agenda. Final settlement of the dispute lies in #UNSCresolution calling for free and impartial plebiscite under UN auspices. Nothing about J&K can be India's internal matter," Qureshi tweeted on Monday.

He also said that the possibility of talks with India at any level would only happen if the situation in Jammu and Kashmir improves, insisting that the J&K dispute is an internationally recognised issue.

## Saudi Arabia offers intervention in reducing Indo-Pak tensions

Islamabad: The Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia has said that his country could play an important role in reducing tensions between the two nuclear-powered arch-rivals India and Pakistan. Saudi Arabia Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud praised India and Pakistan for re-enforcing the ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC), terming the move as an "excellent step in the right direction". It is pertinent to mention that the UAE Ambassador to Washington, Yousef Al Otaiba, had recently confirmed his country's role in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan.



## India beats US, China in fastest Covid inoculation; 17 Cr in 114 days



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India has achieved the landmark of being the fastest country globally to administer 17 crore Covid-19 vaccines in the least number of days, defeating the US and China, the second the third runners-up respectively.

India achieved the goal in 114 days, while the US touched the figure in 115 days and China took 119 days for reaching the same landmark.

A total of 20,31,854 beneficiaries under 18-45 age group have so far received the first dose of vaccine. The people aged between 45 and 60 years included 5,51,79,217 first dose beneficiaries and 65,61,851 who got their second dose. A total of 5,36,74,082 first dose beneficiaries are in the age group more than 60 years and 1,49,83,217 of them who have received the second dose.

A total of 2,46,269 beneficiaries of the age group 18-44 years received their first dose of Covid vaccine on Sunday and cumulatively 20,31,854 across 30 states and UTs during the last 24 hours.

## Deadly fungal infection found among Covid patients in Hyd

Swelling around the eyes, one-sided facial or eye pain, decreased sensation over cheeks, blood-stained nasal discharge, among others are symptoms of mucormycosis infection and such cases should be reported immediately for medical attention. Such patients will be administered with certain antifungal drugs or a surgical debridement will be performed depending on the condition to reduce the disease burden," said Dr Dushyanth Ganesuni, Consultant, ENT, Head & Neck Surgeon and Laryngologist, Continental Hospitals.



19 positive patients who are suffering from mucormycosis, a deadly fungal infection, and a silent killer.

In the past 3-4 weeks, a total of five patients have been reported with this infection at Continental Hospitals, indicating rise in the condition among the Covid-hit, the hospital said on Monday.

According to doctors, prolonged hospitalisation and continuous use of corticosteroids, which has become standard for Covid-19 treatment, is resulting in lowering immune system. This could lead to susceptibility to infections like mucormycosis causing irreversible damage to organs and threatening life of infected patients.

## MAHA SCIENTIST'S 'STEM-CELL' REMEDY KILLS COVID NATURALLY

- Navi Mumbai-based Urologist-cum-regenerative medicine researcher Dr Pradeep V. Mahajan said that the stem-cell/lyophilised platelet remedy is a proven protocol for COVID and post-COVID patients on OPD basis, without requiring hospitalization for targeting the primary lung disease.
- Navi Mumbai-based Urologist-cum-regenerative medicine researcher Dr Pradeep V. Mahajan said that the stem-cell/lyophilised platelet remedy is a proven protocol for COVID and post-COVID patients on OPD basis, without requiring hospitalization for targeting the primary lung disease.

Quaid Najmi | Mumbai

Concerned over the massive COVID-19 surge in the country, a Maharashtra researcher-cum-scientist has developed

a unique stem-cell/platelet-based remedy to kill the Coronavirus "naturally, with anti-inflammatory bodies" and reduce the need for hospitalization of COVID patients by 65-75 per cent. Dr Mahajan - Chairman of StemRx Biosciences Solutions Pvt Ltd - said that the lungs are the prime target of Covid, causing maximum morbidity, highest stay in ICU/ventilators and deaths, and post-treatment, the patient requires oxygen for several months as lungs develop fibrosis. "We take the platelets from regular blood banks or donors, they are lysed, (to remove its walls to extract the granules), convert them into a powder and administer as a mixture through a Nebuliser or a Rotahaler directly into the lungs - similar to any asthma patients," Dr Mahajan said. These pumps (Nebuliser-Rotahaler) are easily available for between Rs 250-Rs 1,500 apiece, while the stem-cell concoction used in them is prepared in a special lab machine. Presently, Dr Mahajan has installed one such small capacity machine at the StemRx facility, Seven Hills Hospital in Andheri, Mumbai. "At current costs, a patient would have to pay around Rs 600-700 per vial, needs 14 vials for a week, and then 1 vial daily



smiled. In the early phase of the disease, he claimed that the stem-cell/lyophilised platelet remedy works like a miracle, reduces hospitalization needs by over 50 per cent, axes a massive load off the government-private health network, besides preventing mutations of the virus and slashing post-Covid complications, as are being witnessed now.

"Most drugs, medicines, various forms of treatment and even vaccines fail to give the desired success rate as they are targeting the virus, not its environment. So, to survive, it keeps mutating, and we fumble for newer remedies. My protocol is simple - I tackle and strengthen the environment which kills the Coronavirus naturally."



# CWC POSTPONES ELECTIONS FOR CONGRESS PRESIDENT DUE TO COVID

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Congress Working Committee on Monday decided to postpone the presidential polls of the party due to the surge in Covid-19 cases. "The CWC considered the election schedule for electing the AICC President as proposed by Central Election Authority of the party. "In view of the nationwide emergent conditions prevailing on account of unprecedented corona pandemic, the CWC was unanimous that all our energies should be channelised towards saving every life and helping every Covid affected person. The CWC, therefore, unanimously resolved to defer the elections temporarily in the midst of these challenging times," the Congress' top decision-making authority said in a resolution. Party General Secretary Randeep Surjewala, however, clarified that its a



temporary deferment due to the present pandemic. In the CWC meeting held on Monday, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot demanded the postponement of the election which was supported by senior party leader Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was the

prime mover in the demand for elections in the organisation in August last year. Digvijaya Singh, meanwhile, demanded Rahul Gandhi be brought back as chief, sources said. The party's Central Election Authority headed by Madhusudan Mistry will now draw up a new

schedule after the pandemic subsides. The CWC in January had decided that the party will go for organisational polls after the elections in five states are over. General Secretary, Organisations, K.C. Venugopal had said on January 22 after a crucial CWC meeting that the Congress will have an "elected" party President by June. The decision to hold the elections for the party President was taken after group of leaders wrote to Sonia Gandhi and demanded "a more visible and permanent" President for the party after Rahul Gandhi stepped down from the post following the party's defeat in the 2019 general elections. The rift in the Congress between the dissenting leaders (G-23) and Team Rahul Gandhi was out in the open since then, and led to the exclusion of the former from the Congress campaigners' list in the five state elections - where the Congress was again out of the reckoning.

## 11 COVID PATIENTS DIE AS OXYGEN SUPPLY DELAYED AT TIRUPATI HOSPITAL

Tirupati: Tragedy struck the renowned Ruia Hospital in Andhra Pradesh's Tirupati on Monday as 11 Covid patients lost their lives due to an interruption in oxygen supply, Chittoor District Collector Harinarayan said. The district authorities attributed the deaths to a five-minute delay in the arrival of an oxygen tanker at the hospital. However, with the oxygen supply restored immediately, a major tragedy was averted, the Collector said. Around a thousand patients are undergoing treatment at the hospital. As the oxygen supply got affected all of a sudden, many patients began to choke. Doctors were seen attempting CPR procedures to revive the oxygen-starved patients, while kin of the patients used cardboard pieces to fan and revive them. An inquiry has been initiated into the incident. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy, who was apprised of the tragedy, has asked for a report.

## HIMANTA BISWA SARMA SWORN-IN AS 15TH ASSAM CM

Team Absolute | Guwahati

Himanta Biswa Sarma was on Monday sworn-in as the 15th Chief Minister of Assam, a day after he was named as the leader of the newly-elected BJP legislators in the state. Sarma was administered the oath of office by Governor Jagdish Mukhi at the famous Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra in Guwahati. Besides the Chief minister, 13 newly-elected MLAs of the BJP and its allies, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and United People Party Liberal (UPPL), were also sworn in. The 13 Ministers comprised Ranjeet Kumar Dass, Atul Bora, U.G. Brahma, Parimal Suklabaidya, Chandra Mohan Patowary, Keshb Mahanta, Ranaj Pegu, Sanjay Kishan, Jogen Mohan, Ajanta Neog, Ashok Singhal, Pijush Hazarika and Bimal Bora.



Neog, who joined the Bharatiya Janata Party weeks before the recently-held Assembly polls, was a Congress Minister in the previous Tarun Gogoi-led governments. State BJP President Dass, Pegu and Singhal have been inducted as Ministers for the first time. BJP President J.P. Nadda, former Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Ministers from other north-eastern states and a host of top dignitaries were present in the hour-long swearing-in ceremony.

## Mamata's 43 ministers take oath sans festivities

Kolkata | Agencies

Amid a raging Covid-19 pandemic, 43 Trinamool Congress ministers comprising 24 cabinet ministers, 10 Ministers of State with Independent charge and nine MoS took oath at an austere ceremony held in the Raj Bhawan on Monday. While three ministers Amit Mitra, Bratya Basu and Rathin Ghosh took their oath virtually. The rest -- 40 ministers were divided into three groups -- Cabinet, MOS (Independent Charge) and MoS and they took their oath together to cut short the program. Mitra has not been well for a long time and the other two ministers have Covid.



Later Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee allocated the departments to the ministers. Banerjee kept with herself important departments like Home and Hill Affairs,

Health and Family Welfare, Information and Cultural Affairs, Land and Land Reforms and Refugee Rehabilitation. The chief minister will also take care of North Bengal.

## PUDUCHERRY CM HOSPITALISED AFTER TESTING POSITIVE

Chennai: Puducherry Chief minister N. Rangasamy tested Covid positive and has been admitted to a private hospital in Chennai according to Puducherry Lieutenant Governor Dr Tamilai Soundararajan's office. Rangasamy, who was sworn in as Chief minister of Puducherry on May 7 tested positive on Sunday evening after a test at the Indira Gandhi Government Medical College hospital, Puducherry. He left for Chennai to get treatment and was admitted to a private hospital. All the public programmes of the Chief minister stand cancelled.



## Police files case against crowd at Islamic cleric's funeral in UP

Badaun | Agencies

Amid the surging Covid-19 cases across Uttar Pradesh, a large gathering was witnessed at the funeral of an Islamic cleric, Qazi Hazrat Abdul Hameed Mohammed Salimul Qadri, in Badaun district. The police have filed a case against unknown persons after an alleged video of the funeral went viral on social media. Thousands of followers of the cleric were seen flouting social distancing norms and other Covid protocols prescribed by the state government while attending funerals. Thousands of people joined the funeral procession



without wearing a mask. There was also a ruckus among the followers of the Islamic cleric over taking his body for the funeral. The Uttar Pradesh police and dis-

trict administration failed to take action against the crowd at the funeral. The attendees thronged the madrasa Alia Qadria from Monday morning. To control the spread of the Covid-19 infection, the state government had ordered a strict 'Corona curfew' till May 17 but the crowd at the funeral procession continued to swell with the police failing to stop them. Apart from the city, thousands of people from all over the district attended the funeral. Additional Superintendent of Police, Pravin Chauhan, said that due to it being a religious matter and a funeral the police maintained restraint. But a case has now been registered against unknown persons and an investigation is underway. Salimul Qadri, 65, of Dargah Alia Qadria died early morning on Sunday.

## Rahul slams Centre over foreign aid amid pandemic



Team Absolute | New Delhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday slammed the union government over the foreign aid to India amid pandemic and alleged that the government did not do its job properly. Rahul Gandhi tweeted, "GOI's repeated chest-thumping at receiving foreign aid is pathetic. Had GOI done its job, it wouldn't have come to this." Rahul Gandhi on Sunday had hit out at the Narendra Modi-led Central government for poor handling of the Covid situation. "Shehron ke baad ab gaon bhi parmatma-nirbhar

(After cities, villages also left to the mercy of God," he said in a tweet, attaching an image of a Hindi caption reading "Covid-19: Mahamari ki dusri lahar ab gaon mein barpa rahi hai kehr (Covid-19: The second wave of the pandemic now overwhelming villages)". Gandhi had earlier tweeted the country doesn't need a new house for the PM but needs oxygen, attaching photos of people in line for the life-saving gas, and work on the Central Vista. In another tweet which displayed a graph on the Covid surge and falling vaccinations, he had termed the situation "The Movid pandemic."

## NEW MODE OF GOLD SMUGGLING BUSTED BY CHENNAI CUSTOMS

Chennai: Chennai Air Customs on Monday said it had busted a new modus operandi of smuggling in gold. In a statement, the Commissioner of Customs, Chennai International Airport said officials found gold granules mixed in an instant drink mix that had arrived in a postal parcel. Based on intelligence that smugglers may resort to smuggling of gold in postal mode, a high alert was maintained at the Foreign Post Office (FPO), and a parcel which arrived from Dubai a few days ago was intercepted on suspicion of containing gold. The parcel was declared to contain "seeds" and addressed to a Chennai-based person. On cutting it open, the parcel was found to have four big containers (2.5 kg) each of TANG Orange instant drink mix, along with packets of white oats and chocolates. As the officials found the containers to be unusually heavy, the contents were examined and found to have gold granules mixed with the orange powder. The gold granules were then segregated from the orange powder mix by using a sieve, and a total 2.5 kg of gold granules valued at Rs. 1.20 crore was recovered and seized under the Customs Act. Searches were carried out and it was found that the address of the receiver has been misused. The role of the postal staff is being investigated.



## Covid victim's wife alleges molestation, O2 scams in Bihar hospitals

Patna | Agencies

The wife of a Covid patient, who succumbed in a private hospital in Patna on May 8, has alleged that a doctor there had molested her, while the hospital administration deliberately switched off the oxygen supply in the ICU, to force people to buy oxygen cylinders, and this caused her husband's death. Sharing her plight, the woman said that the entire family, living in Noida, came to Bhagalpur to celebrate Holi, and decided to stay back as Covid cases began increasing across the country. "On April 9, the health of my husband Raushan Chandra deteriorated and we conducted his RT-PCR test which came negative. My husband was admitted in ICU of the hospital in Mayaganj. He

was not in a position to interact with anyone. He was on oxygen support in ICU and only communicated through signals. Whenever he made a missed call, it was his way of informing us whenever he wanted something," she said. "One day, his health deteriorated and he informed me through a missed call, and when I forcibly entered the ICU, I found that the pipe of the oxygen mask was not attached. I shouted for help, then doctors came and connected the pipe with a mask. That incident created fear in my husband's mind. When I complained to a senior doctor, he threatened me to tear my eyes out. A ward boy named Jyoti Kumar snatched my dupatta in front of my husband in the ICU and put his hand in my hip," she said.

## Asaram now seeks bail for 'ayurvedic treatment' of Covid

Jaipur | Agencies

Self-styled godman and rape convict Asaram, who is undergoing treatment at AIIMS after testing Covid positive in Jodhpur jail, on Monday moved the Rajasthan High Court for two months interim bail to continue his treatment further via ayurveda. Hearing his plea, a bench of Justice Sandeep Mehta and Justice Devendra Kachhwaha ordered the AIIMS to submit his medical report and posted the next hearing in this case to May 13. Senior advocate Jagmal Singh Choudhary, appearing for Asaram, argued that Asaram is suffering from many diseases and wants to get his treatment done through ayurveda system, so he should be given interim bail of two months. Asaram had earlier also sought interim bail for treatment at an ayurveda centre in Kerala, claiming he had 12 diseases, but the court did not accept his plea. Asaram was taken to the MG Hospital with other detainees from Jodhpur jail as his oxygen level started falling after he tested positive a few days back. He was later shifted to Jodhpur AIIMS two days ago due to security reasons where his health is constantly improving. Asaram was sentenced to life in prison in 2018 after a court here found him guilty of raping the girl in his ashram in 2013.



## 3 more, including Arogya Mitra, held in 'cash-for-bed scam' in Bengaluru

The Bengaluru central crime branch police on Monday arrested three persons, including a health department official, who talked about the 'cash for bed scam' in hospitals at a time when the Covid second wave is sweeping across the state.

Team Absolute | Bengaluru

With the arrests the total number of arrests touched seven with the CCB having arrested four persons on Friday, a CCB press release stated here on Monday. According to the police, the three arrested on Monday have been identified as Shashidhar, an Arogya Mitra, apart from Venkat Rao and Sudhir Umarani, who were working in two separate private hospitals and used to coordinate with Shashidhar to block and unblock beds of the hospitals they represented.



Meanwhile, four others accused who have links with this scam are identified as Rohit Kumar, Nethravathy, Rihaan, and Shashi Kumar. In Bengaluru the Arogya Mitras are responsible for coordinating with SAST (Suryavarna Arogya Suraksha Trust) and counselling the Covid and non-Covid patients

seeking treatment at the empanelled hospitals. Karnataka's (SAST) has appointed Arogya Mitras in all private hospitals to look after the admission of Covid and Non Covid patients and to ensure 50 per cent of beds are reserved for patients referred by the state government. The Arogya Mitras (health offi-

cial) have to ensure that the beds are reserved for government quota patients. "Shashidhar worked as an Arogya Mitra, Rao and Umarani were working as staff members at Sparsh Hospital (RR Nagar) and Punya Hospital (Basaveshwar Nagar)," Bengaluru's Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sandeep Patil told reporters. CCB sleuths said that these three accused allegedly blocked real-time data entry to the Central Hospital Bed Management System hosted by the Bengaluru Civic Body. "Even after patients were discharged either after recovering from Covid-19 or succumbing to the infection, these accused did not forward the data to their jurisdiction BBMP war room to be updated into the bed management system. Instead, they blocked such beds and allowed admission to other patients which is illegal," an investigating officer said. The police officer added that this has led to many other deserving patients suffering without timely treatment and in some cases patients have even succumbed to the deadly virus. According to the CCB, a total of 18 persons were questioned on Friday with regard to the bed allotment scam, including doctors in war rooms, hospital staff, and staff in charge of the ambulance app. The police have registered a case and are investigating.



MAHARASHTRA MAY EXTEND LOCKDOWN TILL MAY 31: TOPE

Maharashtra government had imposed lockdown-like restrictions in the state from April 22 to May 1 to curb the spread of coronavirus.

cases and the rising death toll in the state.

It is now expected that the existing curbs under the 'Break The Chain' would remain in place till May 31 as the daily COVID-19 cases are still between 50,000 and 60,000 in the state.

"If the strict restrictions will be lifted then the situation may get out of hand once again. The government is geared up to tackle the third wave and is in the midst of ramping up the bed capacity, availability of Remdesivir and other medical facilities and also to achieve self-sufficiency in oxygen through Mission Oxygen. The government is also increasing the pace of vaccination," Press Journal quoted Tope as saying. Tope, however, added that the situation will be reviewed by the government and a final call on lockdown extension will be taken after that. "The state government is stressing on tracking, tracing and treating COVID-19 patients to curb the outbreak," Tope added.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

As coronavirus COVID-19 cases are slowly declining in Maharashtra, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope has hinted that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray-led government in Maharashtra may extend the COVID-19 lockdown till May 31.

It is to be noted that Maharashtra government had imposed lockdown-like restrictions in the state from April 22 to May 1 to curb the spread of coronavirus and break the chain of transmission. The lockdown was later extended till May 15 owing to the huge spike in COVID

Ministers call for full lockdown in home districts to break Covid chain

The 7-11 am relaxation for people to attend to essential requirements is being perceived as a hurdle to curbing movement and breaking the virus chain.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Amid the Covid-19 case surge, cabinet ministers and elected representatives are mounting pressure on the district administration to impose a complete lockdown in their respective areas.

The 7-11 am relaxation for people to attend to essential requirements is being perceived as a hurdle to curbing movement and breaking the virus chain.

Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar last week declared a complete lockdown in his home town and Assembly constituency of Baramati in Pune district. It came with a warning of extending these measures across Pune district.

The call for a hard decision was also voiced by Energy Minister Nitin Raut, the guardian minister of Nagpur. He said, "To tackle the spurt in Covid-19 cases, we have to ensure harsher restrictions like sealing our district borders. We will have to stop movement of people from other districts or states in the city and rural Nagpur. We will have to impose a complete lockdown for eight days."

In Amravati district, District Collector Shailesh Nawal announced a complete lockdown for the next eight days. There was pressure from all political parties and elected members to clamp restrictions.

Although CM Uddhav Thackeray had



announced restrictions on April 22 and extended them till May 15, the rise in Covid cases and increase in deaths have prompted the district leadership and legislators to seek stricter restrictions.

Minister for Water Resources Jayant Patil said, "The statistics emerging from our home constituency are alarming and we cannot negotiate when it comes to saving the lives of people. We have enforced complete lockdown for the next eight days in our district."

Exactly a year ago, Patil who is also the state

NCP president, was praised for the containment zone model, which took the Covid cases in the district to zero in the first wave.

"Partial lockdown has not helped in reducing cases. So we have to strictly implement total lockdown to break the chain," Patil said. "The administration will ensure all essential services reach the people."

In neighbouring Satara district, Minister of State for Home Sambhuraaj Desai took to the streets to enforce lockdown.

Meanwhile, with the situation in Nashik dis-

trict also causing concern, Minister for Food and Civil Supplies and Guardian Minister Chhagan Bhujaal advocated an extended lockdown. There were calls for complete lockdown in Beed, Latur and Aurangabad districts, too. Earlier, Health Minister Rajesh Tope had expressed concern over high positive cases and deaths. "If the situation does not improve, we have to initiate stricter measures. An extended lockdown across the state beyond May 15 is under consideration," he had said.

JOBLESS IN LOCKDOWN, MAHA MAN KILLS WIFE, KID AND SELF



Pune: The incident happened on Sunday when the bodies of the deceased - Hanumantha Daryappa Shinde, 38, his wife Pragya, 28, and their infant son Shivtej - were recovered from their home.

Unemployed during the lockdown, a Maharashtra man committed suicide after killing his wife and a 14-month-old son in Kadamwak area on the outskirts of Pune, police said on Monday. The incident happened on Sunday when the bodies of the deceased - Hanumantha Daryappa Shinde, 38, his wife Pragya, 28, and their infant son Shivtej - were recovered from their home.

Shinde's father, Daryappa A. Shinde lodged a complaint with Loni Kalbhor Police Station, said Investigating Officer Bhagwat Shendge. As per preliminary investigations, the Shinde family hailed from Solapur and had come looking for work to Kadamwak a few months ago.

They were living in a rented chawl and eked out a living doing odd jobs in the vicinity which stopped after the latest phases of lockdown were implemented.

Feeling depressed and helpless due to unemployment, around noon on Sunday, Shinde strangled his wife, slashed his son's throat, before ending his own life by hanging himself with a dupatta from the fan. The three bodies have been sent for an autopsy, an accidental death report has been lodged and further probe is underway, said Shendge.

MAHARASHTRA RECEIVES 6 LAKH DOSES OF COVISHIELD, 36,000 SHOTS OF COVAXIN



Mumbai: Of the six lakh doses, 2.5 lakh are for the 45+ age group while 3.5 lakh have been allocated for people between 18 and 44 years of age

Maharashtra received six lakh doses of Covishield and 36,000 doses of Covaxin on Monday, state Additional Chief Secretary Dr Pradeep Vyas told The Indian Express.

Of the six lakh doses, 2.5 lakh are for the 45+ age group while 3.5 lakh have been allocated for people between 18 and 44 years of age.

The state pays for the procurement of vaccines for the 18-44 age group while the Centre allocates vaccines procured from Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech for those above 45.

Till May 9, a total of 1.80 crore beneficiaries have been administered Covid 19 vaccines across Maharashtra. Of this, 4.36 lakh are among the 18-44 age group who have been administered the vaccine since the drive began on May 1. An analysis of the data shows that till May 9, a total of 6.68 lakh healthcare workers have been administered both doses of a Covid 19 vaccine, while 6.19 lakh frontline workers have got both shots. At 20.67 lakh, the age group between 45 and 59, and 60 years and above are the ones to have received bulk of the shots. Mumbai has inoculated 27.48 lakh beneficiaries, while Pune has given shots to 24.43 lakh people.

Pune district received 39,000 Covishield doses for the 45 and above age group while another 23,000 doses were procured from the state for the 18-44 age group, Dr Sanjay Deshmukh, Assistant Director of health of Pune circle, said.

Of these, 16,000 doses will be allocated for the 45+ age group at vaccination centres under the Pune Municipal Corporation, while 10,000 will be used to inoculate those in the 18-44 age group.

Dr Deshmukh admitted that they have only 2,400 Covaxin doses while the actual count of the beneficiaries requiring the second dose stands at 80,000 in Pune district. "In the next few days, the situation will be eased out. We have at least 600 vaccination centres and a capability to administer one lakh doses daily," he added.

OVER 26 LAKH POOR COVID PATIENTS TREATED FREE OF COST SO FAR: MAHARASHTRA GOVT TELLS BOMBAY HC

The Maharashtra government told the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court that 26.48 lakh underprivileged patients have been treated free of cost in Covid care centres under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana (MJPIAY).

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Maharashtra government told the Aurangabad bench of the Bombay High Court that 26.48 lakh underprivileged patients have been treated free of cost in Covid care centres under the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana (MJPIAY).

The court had earlier told the government that Covid-19 patients from weaker sections of society should get all medical facilities to the "optimum" level. It is "high time" the state strictly implemented the Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Aarogya Yojana, which is designed to offer free medical care to the underprivileged, the court had said. The court had said this after a petitioner's lawyer mentioned the non-availability of benefits of the scheme

declared by the state under various government resolutions (GRs) issued in May 2020. The advocate argued that the scheme had "laudable object", but was not being properly implemented. He told the court that he knew instances of at least 25 Covid-19 patients living below the poverty line being charged about Rs 1.34 lakh for treatment.

The lawyer further said that these patients possessed all necessary documents but Covid-19 hospitals recognised by the government did not admit them. Meanwhile, Additional Government Pleader SG Karlekar said 20 packages allow eligible Covid-19 patients with moderate and severe symptoms -- and not just those on ventilators -- to get treatment under the integrated scheme. He submitted that patients' grievances, who were charged exorbitant rates, have been registered and show-cause notices issued to the hospitals. After hearing arguments from all sides, the bench observed, "The only problem is about the implementation of the said scheme. A greater responsibility would be upon the government and its authorities to implement the benevolent scheme more fruitfully in this exceptional time. We would be more concerned with the immediate treatment of such patients."

NCP calls for 'one nation, one policy' to tackle COVID-19

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The ruling NCP and Congress in Maharashtra on Monday hit out at the Centre over its handling of the COVID-19 situation in the country and called for "one nation, one policy" to fight the pandemic.

State Minority Affairs Minister and NCP leader Nawab Malik also demanded that the Narendra Modi government convene an all-party meeting to chalk out the policy.

"The coronavirus cannot be eradicated only through advertisements at a time when there is a need to work out 'one nation, one policy' considering the current COVID-19 situation in the country," a statement said quoting Malik.

He claimed the situation in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar was such that the last rites of COVID-19 victims were being performed in rivers instead of crematoriums. "The COVID-19 pandemic cannot be tackled until there is one policy for the country. The Modi government should call an all-party meeting to decide the policy," he said. There is no doubt in anyone's mind that "the Centre is not able to handle the COVID-19 situation," he claimed.

Malik also referred to the constitution of a 12-member National Task Force of top medical experts by the Supreme Court to formulate a methodology for oxygen allocation to states and Union Territories and to facilitate a public health response to the pandemic.

"The Centre is not carrying out works which it is supposed to. So, these are



being carried out by court orders.

This means the (central) government is falling short of discharging its duty," the NCP leader alleged.

Maharashtra Revenue Minister and senior Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat targeted the Centre over its vaccination programme, saying it has unfortunately been proved that the Modi government "does not have" any proper policy and planning to inoculate people.

"The Centre earlier talked about successfully tackling the first wave (of COVID-19)...(but) the way elections were held, the way Kumbh Mela was organised...the entire country is suffering consequences of the same," Thorat told reporters here. "The central government, its leadership, Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji are completely responsible for it, he claimed. The SC had to intervene and form the task force, Thorat noted and asked what exactly was the Centre doing.

"It is being seen that it (the Centre) is

not serious about anything," he claimed.

Thorat also claimed that an adequate number of vaccine doses were not being made available to states to inoculate people in the age group of 18 to 44 years. He charged the Centre with not giving permission to foreign players willing to provide vaccines to India.

Thorat also demanded that the Centre allow states to develop their own apps for people to register for vaccination.

The Shiv Sena, which shares power in Maharashtra with the NCP and Congress, also hit out at the Centre, saying the SC took the step of forming the task force considering the COVID-19 situation, but "those ruling the country are engaged in politics". They were busy in appointing the chief minister of Assam (after the recently held Assembly polls) and "in conspiring" to not let the Trinamool Congress-led government in West Bengal do its work, an editorial in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' alleged without naming the BJP or its leaders.

Maha sees Covid deaths, cases fall; state toll crosses 76K

Team Absolute | Mumbai

For the second day running, Maharashtra saw Covid-19 cases and fatalities drop even as the Mumbai situation visibly improved, health officials said on Monday.

Compared with 572 deaths on Sunday, fatalities went down to 549, taking the state's toll to 76,398.

The number of new infections remained below the 50,000 level, going down from 48,401 on Sunday to 37,236 now, taking the total tally to 51,38,973.

The Mumbai position continued to be encouraging, with infections remaining below the 5,000 level, at 1,782, as the tally rose to 677,412. Daily deaths rose up from 68 on Sunday to 74 now, taking the total fatalities in the country's commercial capital to 13,855 now.

For the ninth day straight, the state death rate remained stable at 1.49 per cent, while the number of active cases fell below the six lakh mark, to 590,818.

Meanwhile, 61,607 fully cured patients -- higher than the number of fresh infections -- returned home, taking the total up to 44,69,425 now, and



the recovery rate increased from 86.04 per cent to 86.97 per cent now.

The Mumbai circle - comprising Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad districts - recorded a steep drop in new cases, to 4,883, taking the tally to 14,51,787, and with 132 more deaths, the toll reached 24,863 now.

Of the new deaths, apart from Mumbai's 74, 51 succumbed in Latur, 42 each in Thane and Beed, 29 in Nanded, 28 in Ahmednagar, 26 in Kolhapur, 25 each in Buldhana and Nagpur, 22 in

Solapur, 20 in Chandrapur, 19 in Amravati, 17 in Jalna, 16 each in Raigad and Yavatmal, 15 in Jalgaon, 12 each in Sangli and Akola, 11 in Osmanabad, 10 in Pune, eight in Nandurbar, seven in Parbhani, six in Satara, four in Washim, three in Sindhudug, two each in Dhule, Ratnagiri, and Gondia, and one each in Nashik, Wardha, and Bhandara.

Meanwhile, the number of people sent to home isolation stood at 36,70,320 now, while those shunted to institutional quarantine at 26,664.

BMC TO FLOAT GLOBAL TENDERS FOR VACCINES: MUMBAI MAYOR

Mumbai: In a major initiative, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) will issue global tenders to procure around five million Covid-19 vaccines, Mumbai Mayor Kishore Pednekar announced here on Monday.



She said that the tenders would be floated in two days and the doses procured shall be used to administer free jabs to all Mumbaikars. Last month, the Maharashtra government had indicated that it would issue international tenders to procure various drugs like Remdesivir and Vaccines, to tide over the shortages here. Earlier on Monday, a delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Leader of Opposition in the Council, Pravin Darekar called on BMC Commissioner I. S. Chahal and demanded the civic body should issue independent global tenders to enable free vaccination for the people of the city. The vaccination drive in Mumbai and other parts of the state has been erratic in view of short supply of doses in the past few weeks, and the load has increased after the 18-44 age groups were cleared for the jabs from May 1. Till date, 27,48,683 people including healthcare workers, frontline workers, and general citizens, comprising the age groups above 45 and 18-44 age, as per official data. In order to avoid rush at vaccination centres, the BMC has also introduced 'drive-in' facility for senior citizens at Kohinoor Parking Lot and a few more similar centres shall come up shortly.



# AFTER BEDS AND OXYGEN, DELHI STARING AT VACCINE SHORTAGE

Team Absolute | New Delhi

After battling for hospital beds and oxygen for nearly a month amid the raging second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, the national capital is now struggling to get adequate supply of vaccines.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) led Delhi government said on Monday that the city is not getting adequate supply of vaccines and the stocks of Covaxin in Delhi would run out in the next 24 hours, while the stocks of Covishield are likely to get exhausted in the next three to four days.

"Delhi has stocks for just one day for one, and for three or four days for the other vaccine. Covaxin stock will last a day and Covishield for three or four days," Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Monday.

Meanwhile, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that the Centre has replied that the national capital will get only 3.5 lakh doses of



vaccine in May against its demand for around 3 crore vaccines in the next three months. The Delhi government had on Sunday informed the Centre that it would need 60 lakh doses of vaccine per month to vaccinate around 93 lakh people in the 18-45 age group between May and July.

Sisodia also slammed the BJP for making a 'false claim' that Delhi government did not order for adequate doses of vaccine in advance.

"After the Centre had made it clear that the state governments could directly approach the companies for placing vaccine orders, the Delhi gov-

ernment had in April ordered 1.34 crore vaccines," Sisodia said.

A large number of youth in the country have died during the second wave of the pandemic, Sisodia said, adding that their lives could have been saved had vaccines been administered to them instead of exporting the doses to other countries. He said the Centre should ensure that the vaccines manufactured in the country are provided to the states that are facing shortage.

He also reiterated Delhi government's stand that it can vaccinate everyone in the city within three months provided adequate doses are made available to it.

In a letter to the Union Health Ministry, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had on Sunday requested the Centre to direct the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech to increase monthly supplies of Covid vaccines to Delhi to 60 lakh a month for the next three months.

# Recoveries outnumber new cases in Gurugram for 4th straight day

According to the health bulletin, there are 35,738 active cases in Gurugram now out of which 33,185 patients are in home isolation. So far, 1,22,914 people in Gurugram have recovered from the dreaded infection.

GURUGRAM | Agencies

The Covid recovery rate in Gurugram has reached 77.18 per cent, according to the district health bulletin issued on Monday.

The district reported 2,749 new Covid cases in the past 24 hours, while as many as 4,422 persons recovered from the disease during the same period. For the fourth consecutive day, recoveries have outnumbered new cases in the district. According to the health bulletin, there are 35,738 active cases in Gurugram now out of which 33,185 patients



are in home isolation. So far, 1,22,914 people in Gurugram have recovered from the dreaded infection. Also, around 12,761 persons were administered Covid vaccine doses on Monday, taking the total figures to 5,48,279.

Meanwhile, 12 more patients succumbed to the virus on Monday, taking the district's overall Covid death toll to 599.

# Delhi govt may get additional time to prepare for CBSE Class 10 results

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Delhi government may get additional time to prepare for the CBSE Class 10 board exam results.

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has accepted the request made by the Directorate of Education of the Delhi government to extend the deadline for the Class 10 results.

According to the CBSE, a results committee comprising the school principal, five teachers, and two external examiners, can hold a special programme to send the result sheet of Class 10 students. CBSE exam controller Sanyam Bhardwaj said that CBSE gives top priority to the safety and health of teachers.

The internal work of the Class 10 results is to be prepared by June 5.

On the other hand, many government school teachers in Delhi are either on Covid duty or have tested positive for the virus.

In view of this situation, an appeal has been made to CBSE to extend the time.

Rita Sharma, Additional Director of Education, Delhi, has written to CBSE and



informed it about this situation. Sharma said in her letter that teachers are engaged in various duties during the current situation. Many schools have also been converted into vaccination centres. In such a situation, there is an appeal to CBSE to review the deadline of CBSE Class 10 results. Bhardwaj has said in response to the letter from Sharma that the safety and health of CBSE teachers will be given priority by the board.

In view of the Covid pandemic situation, the CBSE's Class 10 board examinations were cancelled all over the country.

# RTI activist, family booked for Rs 15 cr fraud in Gurugram

GURUGRAM | Agencies

An RTI activist and his family members were arrested for a Rs 15 crore property loan fraud in Gurugram.

Police said that the activist Harinder Dhingra, his two sons Prashant Dhingra and Tarun Dhingra were arrested while his wife Poonam Dhingra is absconding.

According to the police, a complaint was received on April 16 that the Dhingra family had taken a Rs 15 crore bank loan on their house located in the upscale DLF Phase-1 in Gurugram through their firm Elegance Fabrics Pvt. Ltd. and mortgaged the property to the OBC bank in 2003.

"Despite this Dhingra's son Tarun had again taken a bank loan on the same property on the basis of forged documents on his firm Tarun Exports in 2007. Thereafter, the RTI activist had fraudulently prepared the fake transfer deed of the property in the name of his second son Tarun Dhingra and his



grandson Garv Dhingra and embezzled the loan amount," said a senior police official requesting

anonymity. The official said that Poonam Dhingra and her son Prashant Dhingra through their company M/s Elegance Fabrics Pvt Ltd had taken different types of loans and later due to not repaying the loan amount they became Non-performing Assets (NPA). "Despite having NPA and the proceedings of the said property pending in the Hon'ble Punjab and Haryana High court the accused and his family members had adopted several tactics so that nor they have to pay bank loan amount and neither could bank auction their property," the officer said.

Police investigation also revealed that Harinder Dhingra along with his associate Ravindra Yadav, took advantage of the RTI Act with the intention of pressurising banks/government employees/officers to extort money. "Earlier multiple cases have also been registered against Harinder Dhingra and his associate Ravinder Yadav at the Sadar police station and the DLF phase-1 police station in Gurugram under relevant sections of the IPC," the officer added.

# DDU hospital gets its own oxygen plant

In a major boost to Delhi's fight against Covid-19, the Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) hospital at Hari Nagar has acquired a captive Pressure Swing Absorption (PSA) Oxygen plant ensuring a dedicated oxygen supply for up to 115 beds.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

With a capacity of 35 NM3 per hour (equivalent to 5 jumbo cylinders per hour), the plant will contribute to uninterrupted oxygen supply at DDU hospital, which is one of Delhi's crucial Covid care centres.

The plant has been installed by

leading PSA Oxygen generator manufacturer MVS Engineering at record speed to help address the oxygen crisis in the capital.

The need for captive oxygen generator plants at hospitals has been felt like never before at a time when hospitals across Delhi are reeling under the shortage of external oxygen supply. MVS Engineering has since last year installed PSA Oxygen plants in 40 hospitals across the country, including 4 in the National Capital Region (NCR) in the last two weeks.

"Given the everyday crisis being experienced by hospitals across the capital, we worked at record speed to complete the manufacturing and installation of the PSA Oxygen plant at DDU. We started the building of the machine two weeks ago and had to work very closely with our supply chain partners to expedite the process," said Siddharth Rastogi, Executive Director at MVS Engineering Pvt Ltd. "Normally, it takes between 3-4 weeks to complete



the manufacturing for a plant. However, given the crisis situation in Delhi, we ensured this plant was built and installed in record time."

The installation of the plant at DDU was facilitated with the joint efforts of the Bansuri Charitable Society and the Delhi Government's Dialogue and Development Commission. The plant has been manufactured and installed at an investment of Rs 91.84 lakh,

mobilised by the Bansuri Charitable Society with support of a group of donor organizations including Democracy People Foundation, Martin and Harris Laboratories Ltd, Advance Valves Pvt Ltd, Members of the Rotary Club Delhi Premier, Fancy Fashions Pvt Ltd and DCM Shriram Industries Ltd.

"This collaboration to set up an oxygen plant is a great example of Public Private Partnership. Remarkably, the plant was set up from concept to execution in 15 days. We thank the Delhi Government, MVS engineering and Mr. Roshan Shankar for successful execution of this critical project," said Alok Shriram, CEO and Senior MD of DCM Shriram Industries Ltd.

Rahul Agarwal, Trustee at Democracy People Foundation said: "We at mission oxygen are very happy to be associated with this project that will ensure unhindered oxygen supply at a key Delhi hospital in these difficult times."

# Since last year, Railways lost 1,950 employees in Covid crisis: Chairman

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Since the Covid pandemic hit the country last year, more than 1,950 personnel of the Indian Railways have succumbed to the virus and around 1,000 are getting infected on a daily basis, officials said here on Monday.

The Railways is one of the largest employers not just in the country but in the world with around 13 lakh employees. Addressing a press conference, Railway Board Chairman and CEO Suneet Sharma said, "Railway is not different from any other state or territory and we are also getting Covid cases. We are in the business of transport. We have to move freight and people. Around 1000 cases are reported daily. We have our hospitals. We have augment-

ed the number of beds, we have built oxygen plants in rail hospitals. We take care of our staff."

"As of now we have 4,000 beds currently occupied by staff and their families. Our effort is to see that they recover quickly. As of yesterday, 1,952 rail employees have died due to Covid 19 since March last year," he said. Sharma said that the Railways was concerned about the safety of all railwaymen and took all necessary steps to minimise their exposure. Commenting on the Oxygen Express, Sharma said that the Railways had delivered nearly 4700 Tonne of liquid medical oxygen in more than 295 tankers to various states across the country since April 19. He said that on Sunday, the 'Oxygen Express'

delivered 831 Tonne of LMO, a record for one single day. So far, 75 'Oxygen Express' trains have completed their journey.

Till now, 293 M Tonne of LMO has been offloaded in Maharashtra, 1334 Tonne in UP, 306 Tonne in MP, 598 Tonne in Haryana, 123 Tonne in Telangana, 40 Tonne in Rajasthan and 2011 Tonne in Delhi. The first Oxygen Express to Karnataka has also started its journey from Tatanagar in Jharkhand and is on the way to Bengaluru with 120 Tonne of oxygen. A few days ago, the All India Railwaymen Federation, a rail union, had written to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal demanding compensation at par with frontline workers for railwaymen who lost their lives while working during the Covid crisis.

# 400-bed Covid centre at Rakabganj Gurudwara attached to LNJP hospital

Team Absolute | New Delhi

A new 400-bed isolation and treatment centre for Covid patients at Rakabganj Gurudwara has been attached to Lok Nayak Jai Prakash (LNJP) hospital, wherein in case a patient develops critical symptoms he will be shifted to the hospital.

The isolation and treatment centre has been set up by the Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) for Covid patients. "I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the DSGMC for setting up this fully air-conditioned infrastructure. The Delhi government has taken care of the medical facilities and equipment. Other than that, all facilities have been set up by the DSGMC itself," Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said during an inspection visit on Monday. "We do have ample number of beds and in case a patient who is admitted here becomes critical, they will be shifted to the ICU ward of the hospital," Jain added. Speaking about the declin-

ing Covid cases in the national capital in the last few days, the health minister stated that the drop in the daily cases can be seen as a ray of hope for Delhi. In the past few days, not only the daily positivity rate, but a downturn in the number of cases is also being reported.

Delhi has reported 12,651 new Covid cases and 319 deaths in the last 24 hours. The daily positivity rate has come down to 20 per cent, with 19.10 per cent reported on Sunday. "When there was a time Delhi was recording approximately 28,000 cases, this has fallen to around 12,000. The 36 per cent positivity rate has now fallen to nearly below 20 per cent. We hope the spread will reduce. Nevertheless, we should not cut back on our preparations, and need to continue to protect ourselves in every possible way," Jain added. Jain stated that Delhi is facing an acute shortage of vaccines. "For Covaxin, we have stock left only for one day, and for Covishield, only 3-4 days' stock is available.

# Delhi court refuses interim relief to Kalra in O2 black-marketing case

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delhi court on Monday refused to grant any stay on coercive action against businessman Navneet Kalra in connection with hoarding of oxygen concentrators after seizure by Delhi Police from his restaurant 'Khan Chacha'.

Kalra had moved the Saket court seeking anticipatory bail in the case. Delhi Police Crime Branch had launched a manhunt against him.

A special judge has directed the investigating officer (IO) to file the reply on Kalra's application by Tuesday.

Kalra moved the court seeking interim relief of no coercive action by Delhi Police and also denied the allegations of hoarding of oxygen concentrators. The Delhi Police had registered a case under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code and also Essential Commodities Act for recovery of over 500 oxygen Concentrators from some restaurants in the national capital last week. The case was transferred to the Crime Branch.

During the course of the hearing, public prosecutor Atul Shrivastava opposed the pre-arrest bail application.



The prosecutor submitted before the court that it is a case of the Crime Branch. The prosecutor said: "Is this a suitable court for it?"

The counsel for the accused submitted before the court that his client is being 'hounded'.

The Delhi Police have issued look out notice against Kalra, who has been absconding. A senior Crime Branch source related to probe told IANS, "We have issued look out notice against Kalra, who has been absconding after the recovery of Oxygen concentrators from several famous restaurants."

The action comes almost four days after the police recovered the oxygen concentrators from Delhi's eateries.

On Friday, during searches at Khan Chacha restaurant in Khan Market, 96 oxygen concentrators were recovered, while nine concentrators were recovered from Town Hall restaurant. Khan Chacha restaurant is known for its melt-in-the-mouth kebabs, while Town Hall restaurant specialises in pan-Asian cuisine. On Thursday, the police recovered 419 oxygen concentrators after conducting a search at Nege & Ju Restaurant and Bar in Lodhi Colony.

# 4Ts will break corona infection chain: Gurugram official

Team Absolute | Gurugram

With Covid-19 cases spiking in Gurugram, the district health department will focus on testing, tracking, tracing and treatment.

For this, the district health facilities have started intensive testing in urban as well as rural areas of Gurugram, said the health officials.

District Magistrate-cum-Deputy Commissioner Gurugram, Yash Garg said that to prevent the spread of deadly virus every possible steps are being taken by the district administration to break the chain of corona infection.

"There is a continuous increase in the supply of liquid oxygen and other life saving medicines for Covid patients in Gurugram. Along with ensuring the lockdown rules are being enforced in the district, cooperation is being sought from the public to follow the rules of lockdown, wear face

masks, wash hands frequently and maintain social distancing," Garg said. The Deputy Commissioner said that teams of dedicated officials are constantly monitoring other medical facilities, including oxygen supply, so that the Covid patients in the district do not face any problem during treatment.

Apart from this, the government has also revised the rates for the Covid treatment and ambulance fares in the district. "If we receive any complaint against any private hospitals or ambulance for taking more money than the prescribed rate, immediate legal proceedings will be initiated against them. People can report the complaint on the district helpline number 1950," Garg added.

During the last one week, 93 people have been booked by Gurugram police for violating the lockdown rules and 313 people have been challaned for not wearing face masks.



## HAVE TO WORK AS A TEAM TO PREVENT CORONA INFECTION: CM CHOUHAN

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that it is necessary for the participation of public representatives, society and general public along with the administration and administration in the fight against Corona, that together we can defeat this global epidemic. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan was addressing the meeting of District Disaster Management Committee during his stay in Jabalpur today.

Chouhan said that strict and strict action will be taken against the hospitals who are negligent and disturbing in the treatment of Corona patients and those involved in fake injections and medicines business. Under no circumstances will such people who commit crimes against humanity be spared.

Chouhan said that there has been a decrease in Corona cases in the state for the last few days. The government will leave no stone unturned to protect the general public from this epidemic. He told the representatives of all political parties that he would have to work as a team in the fight against Corona and that Jabalpur and the state would have to be freed from Corona. He said that he has come to Jabalpur to discuss with the representatives



of all the political parties involved in the Crisis Management Committee with a positive mind and to cooperate with them in the fight against Corona. Chouhan expressed satisfaction over the efforts being made to control the corona in Jabalpur district. Seeing the possibilities of the third wave of Corona being announced, he said to start preparations from now. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan said that keeping in mind the future, work will have to be done from now on to increase the number of oxygen and ICU beds. There is a need to pay attention to this in rural areas as well, so legislators will have to lead it in their respective areas.

Chouhan gave instructions to officers to pay special attention to proper treatment of coron infected Ayushman card holders. He also

instructed to make Ayushman cards immediately for all eligible persons, so that free treatment of poor and middle class corona-infected people can be done. He expressed satisfaction with the work of making Ayushman cards of eligible persons in Jabalpur district.

Chouhan, while discussing the Kill Corona campaign, stated the need to connect local public representatives and social workers with the government staff for its effective implementation in rural areas. With the help of these, during the house-to-house survey, people suffering from cold, cough, fever can be identified and treatment kits can be started on time. Chouhan also reviewed the vaccination work in the district. He said that not a single dose of the vaccine should go in vain, it has to

be ensured by all. He said that the government will bear the cost of applying Corona vaccine to the youth above 18 years of age. The government is trying to get the corona vaccine administered to the youth as soon as possible. For this, vaccine orders have also been placed as per the requirement and soon the vaccine will start getting from the manufacturing companies. The Chief Minister said that awareness campaign should be conducted to clear the misconceptions and rumors being spread in rural areas about the vaccine. Chauhan inspected a temporary bed covid care center of 500 beds constructed recently with the help of the state government and public in Madhotala area of Jabalpur city. This temporary Covid Care Center, newly constructed in the name of Veerangana Rani Durgavati, has been prepared with the help of district administration, public representatives and society. Corona patients with asymptomatic and mild symptoms will be provided free treatment and care in this Covid Care Center. Chouhan said that this Covid Care Center, formed in collaboration with the government, the people of Jabalpur and social organizations, is the best example of social participation for the treatment of infected people in this era of Corona epidemic.

## Free medical consultation at home through "Vaidya Aapke Dwar Yojana"

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Through the "Vaidya Aapke Dwar" scheme launched by the Department of AYUSH, free AYUSH medical specialists can be consulted through live video call from home. The three disciplines of AYUSH, Ayurveda, Homeopathy and Unani, can be availed under the scheme. Citizens can take advantage of this facility by downloading the AyushQure App from the Google Play store on Android phones. The Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Ramkishore Kaware, had launched the scheme virtually on May 7.

The Department of AYUSH has made this scheme available through the telemedicine app with the aim of making AYUSH health service accessible to the common people even at home. In today's era of information technology, telemedicine is the harmonizing form of medical sciences, engineering. Under this, both the patient and the doctor will be able to use specially designed

app "AyushQure". Through this, patients will be able to consult with the doctor directly through video call. If required by the doctor, they will be able to conduct various tests and upload them. Based on this, doctors will be able to give advice. The doctor will call the patient in the hospital only if it is more necessary.

"Ayush Qure" is an app based on Android. It can be downloaded from Google Play Store. After registration / sign up with the mobile number and verification through OTP, AYUSH will be able to book appointment by choosing doctor and time according to medical system Ayurveda, Homeopathy or Unani. Medical advice will be given by making a video call through the app as per the time prescribed by the selected doctor and a consultation letter can be sent.

This facility will prove to be a boon in the corona crisis period for the patients living in remote areas and who cannot visit hospitals as they can benefit from AYUSH health facilities.

## MP govt focuses on children before third wave of Covid-19

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said an arrangement for 360 beds reserved for children in ICU wards is being made in hospitals set up by medical colleges in the state. An ICU of 50 beds for children will be created at Hamidia hospital in Bhopal.



Team Absolute | Bhopal

The Madhya Pradesh government has intensified its efforts to ramp up medical facilities with the possibility of more newborn babies and children being infected with Covid-19 during the third wave of the pandemic. A 360-bed facility will be created for children in the Intensive Care Units (ICUs) across 13 medical colleges in the state. Medical

Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said an arrangement for 360 beds reserved for children in ICU wards is being made in hospitals set up by medical colleges in the state. An ICU of 50 beds for children will be created at Hamidia hospital in Bhopal. Sarang has issued strict orders to ensure the availability of medicines, injections, consumables, etc. for the treatment of newborn babies and children.

## ACS Home instructs to form Crisis Management Groups in block, village level and urban wards

Team Absolute | Bhopal

It has been decided by the state government that ward-level crisis management groups should be formed at the block level, village level, and urban areas to effectively prevent the infection of the Covid-19 pandemic. District Crisis Management Group has been formed at the district level in the past and they are playing an active role in the prevention of coronavirus infection.

Additional Chief Secretary Home Dr. Rajesh Rajora has written a letter to the district collectors to effectively prevent the infection of the Covid-19 pandemic and directed to form ward-level crisis management groups in block level, village level, and urban areas. Action will be taken by these groups at the block, village, and urban ward level to effectively implement the guidelines issued by the state government for the control of

the emergency situation arising out of Coronavirus infection and to ensure social participation for the prevention of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Rajora informed that the sub-divisional officer (revenue) will be the chairman of the development block Crisis Management Group. In this group, sub-divisional officer (police), chief executive officer, Janpad Panchayat, block medical officer, representative of urban area commissioner of block headquarters or chief municipal officer, project officer, women, and child development department, regional MP and MLA representative Public representatives, distinguished citizens and voluntary organizations of the development block nominated by the collector will be members. Rajora said that village crisis management groups should be formed in every village. The chairman of the village crisis management group will be the chairman of the

administrative committee of the village panchayat. Secretary of Gram Panchayat, Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Women Self-Help Group, Political, and Social Worker, Administrative Committee member residing in the respective village, Village Employment Assistant, Asha Worker, Anganwadi Worker, Anganwadi Sahayika and Kotwar / Patel Group Members of Village Will be present.

Instructions have been given to constitute ward wise crisis management group in urban areas. Dr. Rajora informed that the ward in-charge officer will be the chairman of the ward crisis management group in urban areas. A representative appointed by Regional MP and MLA, Public Representative nominated by Municipal Corporation / Chief Municipal Officer, Representative of Social Organization, Eminent Private Physician of Ward, Voluntary

Organization, Jan Abhiyan Parishad, Worker of Political and Social Organization, Women Self-help Groups will be members.

Additional Chief Secretary Home Dr. Rajora informed that the order of the Block Crisis Management Group, the order of the District Collector, the Urban Ward Crisis Management Group, the order issued by the concerned Commissioner, Municipal Corporation / Chief Municipality Officer, and the order of the Village Crisis Management Group, by the Chief Executive Officer, District Panchayat Will be done. It will be ensured that the said groups have at least one meeting in a month. A review of the work of these groups will also be ensured by them. Dr. Rajora said that the crisis management groups formed at the block, ward, and village level in the past will be included in the groups formed by this order.

## Fire and lift safety audit of all hospitals in 7 days

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Urban Development and Housing Minister Bhupendra Singh has said that in the context of the current transition of Covid-19, there has been an increase in the number of patients in government and private hospitals. Due to this, the load of power consumption will also increase. In the present situation, the importance of fire and lift safety is further enhanced. In this context, MP In view of Rule-87 (5) of Land Development Rules, 2012, fire audit and lift safety audit of all government and private hospitals should be done within 7 days and send the report. He has said that any shortcomings found in the Fire and Lift Safety Audit should also be reported to the concerned hospital operator for fulfillment in writing. Necessary instructions in this regard have already been issued.

It is noteworthy that 'Hospitals and Nursing

Homes' fall under the category of 'Institutional Buildings' as per Part-04 of National Building Code 2016, and provisions of Fire Safety Measures such as type, height and area in these Hospitals and Nursing Homes would be provided as per rules. For example, for hospitals and nursing homes with an area less than 15 meters high and less than 1000 square meters, a fire extinguisher and a roof tank of 5000 liters water capacity are required to be installed. Similarly, clear provisions have also been made for other categories.

Registration of fire engineer and engineer manufacturer is to be done by competent authorities. If the registration of Fire Engineer / Lift Engineer has not been done in any of the bodies, then any competent fire officer posted in the concerned urban body or any of the list of 17 fire consultants registered on the e-municipality portal www.mpenagarpalika.gov.in Along with conducting the work of fire audit from the engineer, the electrical engineer of the body and the building officer of the concerned area should also be formed and the lift audit should be done within 7 days in the context of Rule-83 (7). That is, by the date of May 17, 2021, the audit was completed and the compliance e-mail id. Be sure to make it mandatory available at ranbir@mpurban.gov.in. Divisional Joint Directors should ensure compliance of these instructions in their divisional bodies by continuous monitoring and submit division-wise compliance reports in the prescribed form. For any kind of technical advice in this regard, Contact LS Baghel Project Manager (Mobile No. 9425015429). Written notice should be given to the hospital operators to correct the deficiencies found in the audit within the time-limit. Compliance report should also be taken within the time-limit.

ducting the work of fire audit from the engineer, the electrical engineer of the body and the building officer of the concerned area should also be formed and the lift audit should be done within 7 days in the context of Rule-83 (7). That is, by the date of May 17, 2021, the audit was completed and the compliance e-mail id. Be sure to make it mandatory available at ranbir@mpurban.gov.in. Divisional Joint Directors should ensure compliance of these instructions in their divisional bodies by continuous monitoring and submit division-wise compliance reports in the prescribed form. For any kind of technical advice in this regard, Contact LS Baghel Project Manager (Mobile No. 9425015429). Written notice should be given to the hospital operators to correct the deficiencies found in the audit within the time-limit. Compliance report should also be taken within the time-limit.

## Police party attacked in Shivpuri for enforcing Covid protocols

The incident happened in Rajgarh village under Amola police station in Shivpuri district on Sunday evening. A special puja was performed by the villagers to stop the coronavirus from entering their village. The police went to enforce the lockdown measures when they were attacked by the villagers who thrashed the policemen with sticks in which six policemen received injuries.



Team Absolute | Shivpuri

In a shocking incident, a police party was attacked by villagers after they went to stop a religious gathering organised to ward off coronavirus in Shivpuri district of Madhya Pradesh. Several policemen received injuries in the attack.

The incident happened in Rajgarh village under Amola police station in Shivpuri district on Sunday evening. A special puja was performed by the villagers to stop the coron-

avirus from entering their village. The police went to enforce the lockdown measures when they were attacked by the villagers who thrashed the policemen with sticks in which six policemen received injuries. Station in-charge Raghavendra Singh Yadav said that he got a call from Rajgarh village that a large number of people were organising a bhandara (religious gathering) at the Mata temple in the village. There was every possibility of the spread of coronavirus infections. After the police reached the village, villagers took up cudgels and started a fight with the policemen. Police asked the villagers to disperse, telling them about the Covid protocols. While some men dispersed, 8-10 people remained at the temple. When police asked them to go home, they threw stones at the police party and beat them with sticks.

## Sarang visited rural areas to inspect Corona curfew

Team Absolute | Bhopal

Medical Education Minister Vishwas Kailash Sarang visited village Baidakheri and Khadihat in Ashta district and reviewed the action being taken to prevent corona infection. After this, the Crisis Management Group met in Ashta. In the meeting, he reviewed in detail the activities being done to prevent Covid infection in Ashta district.

Sarang asked public representatives to play an active role in making the Corona curfew effective. In the meeting, he took information from the members present about the situation of treatment and prevention of infection of Covid patients by the district administration. Sarang said that strict action will be taken in the treatment of Covid patients on receipt of complaint of recovery of more than the package prescribed by the private hospitals. He said that necessary equipments will be made available for hospitals as per their requirement. Sarang said that the administration, pub-



lic representatives and citizens will have to work together to deal with this epidemic. He said that the Corona curfew would have to be strictly followed from urban areas to rural areas to break the corona transition.

He said that people should be made aware that they themselves should come forward and ensure that their village, their locality and their wards are completely closed. He said that the Corona curfew will be followed

by the public on its own, then it will get quick and meaningful results and the corona transition will be broken. He asked all the public representatives to play an active role in preventing corona infection by forming a committee at the village and ward level.

Sarang visited the village Bedakhedhi and Khadihat in Ashta district and observed the actions being taken to ensure compliance of the Corona curfew. He also inquired from the villagers about the survey being carried out under the Kill Corona campaign in the village. Sarang told the villagers that the mask should be put in place immediately if the mask is compulsorily followed and social distancing can be done. He said that in case of cold, cold, fever, take initiative and reach the survey center or health center and get treatment at the earliest. He asked the staff posted in the rural area to make people aware about the prevention of corona infection. Sarang inquired about the survey under the Kill Corona Campaign from the officials present.

## Auqaf e Shahi provides ambulance service for Covid patients and dead bodies

Team Absolute | Bhopal

In the tumultuous times of today when Corona is taking an excruciatingly heavy toll and the number of deceased keeps rising on a daily basis, the cemeteries all over, with their limited boundaries are finding it increasingly difficult to cope with these swelling numbers. Apart from this, the bodies are being sent to the cemeteries directly from the hospital. To help people send off their loved ones with appropriate religious rites, Auqaf-e-Shahi, has completed a Ghul-e-Mayyat (Bathing the dead body) facility in Bada Bagh cemetery. It is worthwhile to note that with the efforts of Mutawalli Saba Sultan, a shed had been constructed earlier at Bada Bagh at the

Sindhi Colony intersection in some time ago with the help of people to offer Namaz-e-Janaza and free of cost arrangements of shrouds of poor and unclaimed bodies were made here. A facility of bathing the dead bodies was planned but could not be put into action.

Amid the raging Corona disaster, when the corpses were sent directly from the hospitals to the graveyard, people demanded to construct a facility for bathing the dead in the Bada Bagh to solve this problem. When this demand reached the Mutawalli of Auqaf-e-Shahi, Saba Sultan, she instantly gave her approval for the same and instructed the Auqaf-e-Shahi Office in Bhopal to get the work completed expeditiously.



**SONAKSHI SINHA GETS THE JOB, SHARES PHOTO**



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Sonakshi Sinha on Monday took the vaccine for Covid-19 prevention. The actress shared a photograph on Instagram where she is seen getting the jab on her left arm. "#Vaccine manjhe #Victory!!!" Sonakshi captioned the

photo, encouraging fans and followers to get vaccinated. The actress' post comes at a time when India is battling a deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the number of positive cases are rising every day. As per data revealed by the Union Health Ministry on Monday, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh

are among the top 10 states that accounted for 73.91 per cent new Covid-19 cases registered in the last 24 hours. The data further shows that ten states account for 72.86 per cent of the new deaths, and Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (572). Karnataka follows with 490 daily deaths.



**VIJAY VARMA SHARES A GLIMPSE OF HIS 'NEW WIFE'**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Vijay Varma, who rose to fame playing Moeen in "Gully Boy", has shared the look of his "new wife" and it's not what you imagine! Vijay posted an Instagram picture on Monday seated on a chair, dressed in a white T-shirt and holding a PS5, a visual gaming console. The actor is seen holding on to the controller and posing for the camera as he flashes a big smile. "Hi guys, Bye guys. Meet my new wife PS5," he wrote as the caption. Vijay was recently seen in the sci-fi comedy web series "Ok Computer", co-starring Jackie Shroff and Radhika Apte. The actor will be seen in multiple projects over the next months, including "Darlings" with Alia Bhatt and "Fallen" with Sonakshi Sinha.

**NORA FATEHI'S WET-HAIR LOOK SETS MERCURY SOARING**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress-dancer Nora Fatehi looks like a million bucks in a new set of photos she has shared on social media on Monday. She posted the images with a cryptic caption. Nora posted a series of pictures on Instagram in an embellished colourful blazer and identical pants. She looks seductively into the camera flaunting a wet-hair look. "I know my enemy prey on me, so pray for me..." Nora captioned the image, which currently has over 9,38,900 likes on the platform. On the work front, Nora plays a spy in the upcoming film, "Bhuj: The Pride Of India", co-starring Ajay Devgn, Sanjay Dutt, Sonakshi Sinha, SharadKelkar, Ammy Virk, and PranithaSubhash.



**Kangana 'waiting to be banned' from Instagram**

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress KanganaRanaut, whose Twitter account has been permanently suspended, said on Monday that she is waiting to be banned from Instagram, claiming it would be a badge of honour for her. She wrote, "On Instagram everybody is a victim of capitalism, an entire generation of youth eaten up by the termite of capitalism and consumerism their indifference and disdain for the nation and its crisis is appalling, lack of human values, empathy and nation-

alism makes them ugly shallow and useless" Kangana further claimed that the photo-sharing platform never appealed to her. "This platform never appealed to me and I am eagerly waiting to be banned here, it will be a badge of honour. ... When I look back I will remember I did not fit in I made them uncomfortable" she said. On Sunday, Kangana took a jibe at Instagram saying there is a Covid fan club and alleged that the platform deleted her post where she speaks about demolishing Covid. Earlier on Saturday she had shared the news that she has tested positive for Covid-19 and has quarantined herself.

**TO KEEP YOUR IMMUNE SYSTEM IN ITS PRIME**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

At the personal level, the fight against the Covid-19 virus begins with strong immunity. As the second wave turns out to be more alarming and devastating than the previous one, many are turning to strengthening their immune system using home-grown plants, 'kadhas', and a nutrient-rich and diverse diet. The world is waking up again to the importance of a balanced diet, and according to AseemSood, Managing Director, Proveda India, it is necessary to follow a diet that includes foods rich in iron, protein and vitamins C, B12 and A. While patients must strictly follow their doctor's advice, Sood believes that, "to combat this deadly disease is also to opt for the age-old ayurvedic immunity drinks and kitchen ingredients in Indian households that have the necessary nutrients to cure a lot of ailments like cold, flu and fever. Make sure that your immunity is in its prime and working at its full capacity to fight against allergens and pathogens attacking your body." Here's what he suggests to help you boost your immu-



nity and complete your diet, so your body builds up the strength to put up a fight against foreign pathogens. Giloy and tulsi: Studies have proved that Giloy possesses immune-o-simulator properties. It helps to flush out the toxins from the body. Giloy also contains Antipyretic (fever controlling) properties. Tulsi is known as the "the queen of herbs". Tulsi is said to prevent disease, promote general health, well-being and longevity and assist in dealing with the stresses of daily life. Combination of these two superb herbs gives you a healthy and long life. GiloyTulsi Plus is a traditionally-known herb that boosts immunity level and balances all three 'doshas'. Panchtulasi with ginger drops: It is one of the best examples of ayurveda's holistic lifestyle approach to health. Considered as a potent adapto-

gen, Panchtulasi and ginger have a unique combination of pharmacological actions that promote well-being and resilience. This combination increases anti-oxidant molecules such as glutathione and enhancing the activity of antioxidant enzymes such as superoxide dismutase and catalase, which protect cellular organelles and membranes by mopping up damaging free radicals in the body. Immune drops: Immune drops is a mixture of ramatulasi, kala tulsi, vish-nupriyatulsi, sweet lemon tulsi, bis-vatulsi, curcumin. It is an instant immunity booster, gives you good health, protects you from diseases and helps you to live a good healthy life. Sood also suggests taking in dissolvable Vitamin C tablets in water as it is an antioxidant which strengthens body's immune response. Finally, if one is advised, they can also take in multivitamin capsules. "Modern day food habits don't provide proper nutrition and that's why we need multivitamin supplements to re-vitalize the body and to keep you protected from the damage caused by harmful free radicals."

**Kubbra Sait reveals her idea of perfect old age**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

'Sacred Games' actor KubbraSait says that in her sixties or seventies, she would like a tiny home with a little garden probably growing cabbages. "Oh yeah, if it faces the beach, then that will be amazing," quips Kubbra. The performer, who left behind a successful corporate career for a career in acting, recently featured on the 'My 3 Secrets To Success' audio series on Audible Suno. Answering a question on what her 60s or 70s should look like, she adds: "So, some clean air to breathe, a book to read and probably my fingers entwined with someone I love. I think that would be an ideal 60s-70s to me. We're not chasing every day. "I don't think I'm chasing today either I'm thinking of the opportunities that come to me at the moment but there isn't a chase anymore, and I think if you stop chasing things you



automatically reach a point of calmness and that's very different from being numb from the chase," said Kubbra.

On the work front, Kubbra shared her excitement about 'Foundation' that's about to release this year. "It's I think one sole project that I

have put in about a year and a half of mine, and that feels extremely valuable." She adds: "I don't think today your currency is money. Your currency is time. So if I have been able to break out of that mental block and invest time in a project that I believe in, I think it's going to pay off pretty well and I'm quite excited about it. Apart from that, I've got three work projects in process and when they come to realisation, I'll share them with you. But otherwise I can say that, I've got a book coming, I've got a show coming out, I've been on this Audible podcast." Finally, speaking about her Zen mode: "I'm being in a state of solitude in a state of Zen. I am being that person. And it's just allowing you to recognise the past, the present and the future as it's going to be. I think it's very important to be in a state of Zen so that you can allow the future to unfold. It's exciting. So, what's keeping me busy, my Zen is keeping me busy."

**WILL WELLNESS TOURISM GROW DUE TO COVID-19?**

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The roller coaster ride that was 2020 brought the biggest dip in modern history, forcing individuals to adapt to major lifestyle changes while the world shifts focus to taking preventive measures so that people will not get infected by Covid-19. People have started to look for ways to help improve their physical health and pay attention to their mental health, leading to the rise of wellness tourism and health-centered vacations, says Homer Lim, Medical Director of The Farm at San Benito. As more and more people turn towards nature-inspired and wellness-focused stays away from urban buzz, especially as many countries begin to cautiously reopen borders, Lim foresees medical wellness resorts like The Farm contributing to the national tourism industry in terms of medical travel and wellness tourism -- bringing in new stream of travellers such as wellness enthusiasts, health seekers and conscious consumers. "Aside from being an eco-sustainable business and green destination, The Farm also offers various medically-supervised health promotion, disease prevention, immune support programs, and healthcare insurance accredited medical services. The Farm secured the necessary permits and managed to reopen its doors since May of last year to continue its services as a medical wellness facility," says Lim. The property, surrounded by a green forest, is part of CG Hospitality -- the hospitality arm of Nepal-based conglomerate CG Corp Global. It has also become a favourite for celebrities and entrepreneurs who have adopted the concept of well-



ness workation, where they combine wellness, work, and holiday. A certain population of people who developed Covid-19 infections may suffer from "Post-Covid Syndrome" that can last up to six months from infection. This is characterized by persistent symptoms that may include mental fog, cough, loss of taste and smell, fatigue, occasional difficulty breathing, muscle and joint pains as well as digestive issues, according to Lim. To address this, the wellness resort's team of medical experts came up with a post-

Covid recovery program inclusive of daily nutrient-rich organic vegan meals and detox juice, holistic consultation, brain biofeedback, live blood analysis, colon cleansing, acupuncture, vitamin infusion, liver compress, energy healing, immune cell renewal, steam therapy, ozone therapy, with daily complimentary mindful and functional fitness activities such as yoga, mandala flower meditation, sound healing, power walk, wellness talks and more, says Lim. Requiring a swab test upon arrival to maintain its Covid-free status, The Farm in the Philippines is an example of how the booming wellness industry might change in coming years, with it offering programs for the immune system. Like other holistic programs, it includes psycho-emotional sessions that attend to the guests' mental health and emotional state -- two things that can be severely affected as people feel isolated while following quarantine protocols, says Lim. It also has programs to manage work-related chronic pain issues, as well mental health for work-related depression, stress, and anxiety. Programs are planned and conducted by internationally trained integrative medical doctors and mental health experts. "Now that vaccines are being distributed to the public, one must not forget the importance of the immune system for these to work, as well as other preventive measures like wearing masks in public, avoiding crowds, and handwashing. The pandemic still poses a threat at this point, and using all the tools available is the only way to ensure victory. Through proper planning and observing the right precautions, people can triumph without having to put their life at a standstill. In time, the world will be sure to overcome this global issue that is Covid-19," concludes the medical expert.





# Seth Rogen won't work with James Franco after sexual misconduct charges

Los Angeles | Agencies

Actor-comedian Seth Rogen says he doesn't intend to work with actor James Franco again after allegations of sexually inappropriate behaviour cropped up against the latter.

Rogen and Franco have had a long association on screen, having worked together in films such as "Pineapple Express", "The Interview", "The Green Hornet", "The Disaster Artist", "Sausage Party", "This Is The End", "The Sound And The Fury", and "The Night Before".

Rogen's assertion came in an interview he gave to The Sunday Times, London, reports variety.com. He opened up about the of the allegation against Franco, as well as his 2014 "Saturday Night Live" opening monologue where he had joked about a 17-year-old girl's allegation that Franco had directly messaged her on Instagram to meet up.

"I decided to prank James Franco. I posed as a girl on Instagram, told him I was way young. He seemed unfazed. I have a date to meet him at the Ace Hotel," Rogen had said in his monologue.

"What I can say is that I despise abuse and harassment and I would never cover or conceal the actions of someone doing it, or knowingly put someone in a situation where they were around someone like that. However, I do look back at a joke I made on 'Saturday Night Live' in 2014 and I very much regret making that joke. It was a terrible joke, honestly," Rogen told The Sunday Times.

Franco had faced allegations of sexual misconduct in 2018, too, when many students at his former acting school accused him of intimidating them into sexual situations. Franco has denied all such allegations, but it led to a lawsuit that was settled in February. After these allegations, Rogen had said he would work with Franco, but has now changed his stance.



# Kylie to daughter Stormi: I love being your mommy

Los Angeles | Agencies

Reality TV star and make-up mogul Kylie Jenner has shared a set of pictures with her daughter Stormi on Monday, saying she loves being mommy.

Kylie shared the pictures on Instagram. The images capture the mother-daughter duo in various moods -- at the poolside, in bed, and Kylie brushing Stormi's teeth with a tiny toothbrush, besides a solo picture of the little girl.

"I love being your mommy," Kylie wrote as the caption. Stormi was born in 2018 and is Kylie's daughter with the reality star's former partner, rapper Travis Scott.

Recently, Kylie made a contribution of over \$500K to a new hospital lounge designed for adolescent and young adult cancer patients.



# Jason Statham's 'Wrath Of Man' kicks off with \$8.1mn haul

Los Angeles | Agencies

Jason Statham's latest action starrer "Wrath Of Man", has opened to \$8.1 million collections since its US release on Friday. It would be still a while before the film hits screens in India, given the grim Covid pandemic situation here.

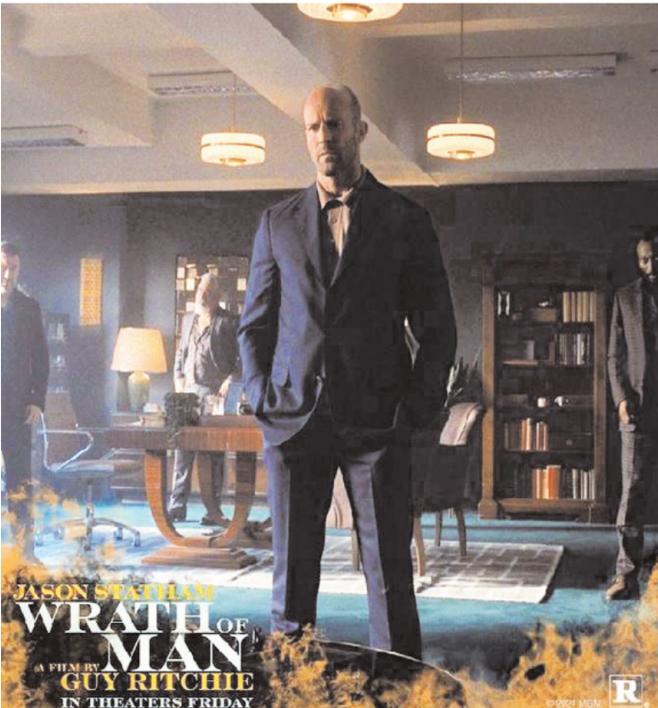
Meanwhile, the modest three-day collection has been enough for the Guy Ritchie directorial to top the box office charts for the May7-9 weekend in the US.

The Hollywood trade considers the opening of Statham's film a cautious start, expecting things will improve. The US exhibition sector was hoping for a typically huge first release for the summer with Marvel's "Black Widow".

According to variety.com, the Scarlett Johansson superhero adventure, originally scheduled for May 7, will now release on July 9.

The sci-fi monster action thriller "Godzilla Vs. Kong" has been the big earner of 2021 so far. The film has earned \$93 million so far, said a report in forbes.com.

"Black Widow" apart, other talked-about Hollywood releases lined up for summer 2021 include "Fast & Furious 9", "Cruella", "A Quiet Place Part II", "In The Heights", and "The Hitman's Bodyguard's Wife".



KELSEY STRATFORD AND ELLA RAE WISE AMP UP THE GLAMOUR IN BODYCON MINI DRESSES AS THEY LEAD THE CAST MEMBERS STEPPING OUT TO FILM SCENES

## Hot 'N' Blue

London | Agencies

They have been embroiled in heated arguments since the recent demise of their friendship.

And, Kelsey Stratford and Ella Rae Wise, both 20, amp up the glamour in bodycon mini dresses to film scenes for TOWIE in Essex, on Saturday.

Brunette beauty Kelsey slipped into a form-fitting vibrant blue number boasting cut-out sides which further showcased her enviable frame. Kelsey's high-necked frock featured subtle bell sleeves and a ruched front-and-back element to the skirt section and she boosted her height with gem-adorned stilettos. Her leggy stunner styled her brunette hair extensions into glamorous waves and opted for a bronzed make-up look, reports dailymail.co.uk.

Meanwhile Ella opted for a white form-fitting mini dress with a stencil design artfully positioned to highlight her curves. The blonde beauty teamed her frock with mesh shoe boots and a black handbag, while styling her locks into a pretty half-up 'do.



JOE JONAS AND SOPHIE TURNER ARE THE PICTURE OF HAPPINESS AS THEY ENJOY A SHOPPING TRIP IN BEVERLY HILLS DURING FIRST MOTHER'S DAY SINCE WELCOMING BABY WILLA



## Picturesque: Happy & enjoying

Los Angeles | Agencies

They welcomed their first child, daughter Willa, last summer. And on Sunday, Joe Jonas and Sophie Turner were the picture of happiness as they enjoyed a shopping trip in Beverly Hills, Los Angeles during their first Mother's Day since welcoming nine-month-old Willa.

The pop star and his actress wife looked more in love than ever as they put on a cosy display during the outing, with Sophie wrapping her arms around her beau as they strolled along together, reports dailymail.co.uk.

The Game Of Thrones star looked effortlessly chic in a black and cream striped shirt and coordinating pareo wrapped around her waist.

Ensuring her modesty was protected, Sophie wore indigo coloured hot pants beneath her silky ensemble, and kept safe with a cream coloured face mask.

The actress carried her belongings in a small black doctor's bag and kept things simple with a pair of woven slides. Meanwhile, Joe sported his signature look of oversized trousers, a tank top and vintage look shirt worn open.

Martha Kalifatidis threatens to split with boyfriend Michael Brunelli via text message after he pranks her by shaving off his beard

## Beard is more important for Martha

Los Angeles | Agencies

Married At First Sight star Martha Kalifatidis threatened to end her relationship with boyfriend Michael Brunelli after he pranked her on Monday.

Michael shared a video to Instagram, explaining how he played a joke on Martha and pretended to shave off his beard.

"Yesterday my girlfriend sent me a message saying 'you look hot' and I did what any good boyfriend would do and decided to prank her and almost end our relationship," he said.

"I went on Snapchat and got the no beard filter and sent her a message saying 'So I trimmed my beard and I went too short so I just cleaned shaved to start again, like it?'" Michael explained he had a quick shower and then noticed he had five missed calls and 10 messages from his girlfriend. According to dailymail.co.uk, Michael explained he had a quick shower and then noticed he had five missed calls and 10 messages from his girlfriend. "I just text you saying you look so good with the hair cut. Everything was perfect. This is a f\*\*king joke. FaceTime me now!" After he failed to reply, Martha sent Michael a message ending their relationship. "I don't believe you'd be that dumb and shave like this. Michael, you're single now. Do you."



ABSOLUTE PIC OF THE DAY



Katherine Ryan



## EDITOR'S SPECS

## Covid jabs won't protect everybody

The study, led by researchers at Johns Hopkins University in the US, showed that after two doses of Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 -- the virus that causes Covid 19, just 54 per cent people who have received solid organ trans-

**PATIENTS, WHO HAD ORGAN TRANSPLANTS, REMAIN VULNERABLE TO COVID-19 INFECTIONS EVEN AFTER A SECOND VACCINE DOSE, FINDS A STUDY THAT URGES PEOPLE WHO ARE IMMUNOCOMPROMISED TO STRICTLY ADHERE TO WEARING MASKS, AND MAINTAIN PHYSICAL DISTANCING, EVEN AFTER VACCINATION.**

plants produced sufficient antibodies. The findings are published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. "Transplant recipients should not assume that two vaccine doses guarantee sufficient immunity against SARS-CoV-2 any more than it did after

just one dose," said Dorry Segev, Professor of Surgery and Epidemiology at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. "Based on our findings, we recommend that transplant recipients and other immunocompromised patients continue to practice strict Covid-19 safety precautions, even after vaccination," added lead author Brian Boyarsky, surgeon at the varsity. People who receive solid organ transplants (such as hearts, lungs and kidneys) often must take drugs to suppress their immune systems and prevent rejection. Such regimens may interfere with a transplant recipient's ability to make antibodies to foreign substances, including the protective ones produced in response to vaccines, the researchers said. The study evaluated this immunogenic response following vaccination from either Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech in 658 transplant recipients, none of whom had a prior diagnosis of Covid-19, between December 16, 2020, and March 13, 2021. The team found that only 98 of the 658 study participants -- 15 per cent -- had detectable antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 at 21 days after the first vaccine dose. At 29 days following the second dose, the number of participants with detectable antibodies rose to 357 out of 658 -- 54 per cent -- had no detectable antibody at all while 259 -- 39 per cent -- only produced antibodies after the second shot. So far, India's total tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 2,26,62,575 with 37,45,237 active cases and a total of 2,46,116 deaths so far. The Health Ministry said that a total of 17,01,76,703 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 6,89,652, who were administered vaccines in the last 24 hours.

# INDIA'S COVID-19 CHALLENGE: A CRISIS MANAGEMENT PERSPECTIVE

Major General S.B. Asthana

India is in a state of biological war against an invisible enemy (coronavirus), which has imposed unprecedented health emergency of this century. While the magnitude of cases and sudden spike, in second wave, has pushed many countries into unsurmountable shortages, but it does put a question mark on handling of the pandemic this time, in comparison to much better handling of pandemic last year during first wave by India. While specialists may cite many reasons for such hike, from double mutation to casualness by all, including election rallies, religious gatherings, and slowing down of momentum in capacity building for forthcoming second wave; hence, revisiting existing management responses, in context of indigenous best practices/structures is necessary to improve the situation.

Centralised Versus Decentralised Control  
An unending spike in current Covid-19 infections with almost 4 lakh people getting affected daily, adding close to approximately 1 lakh cases and 4,000 deaths per day, for over a week, despite recoveries, has put the entire Covid-19 management system in India out of gear. While every agency in the country is struggling to make up shortages and develop capacities, a large number of friendly foreign countries have also dispatched health appliances and material, which have been/are being distributed.

During first wave last year India was grossly unprepared, but the control of Covid-19 management system was central. The centralized lockdown and management helped India to control the spread and generate requisite capacity to handle the case load during the process of unlocking. It did save many lives and the response was well appreciated globally, giving a hope that India could be the savior of the world in managing the pandemic. Unfortunately, in a democracy, the credit seeking politics echoed the voice of health being State subject, need to decentralise, together with problems of migrant labor, forced the country to adopt decentralised management system, as India unlocked.

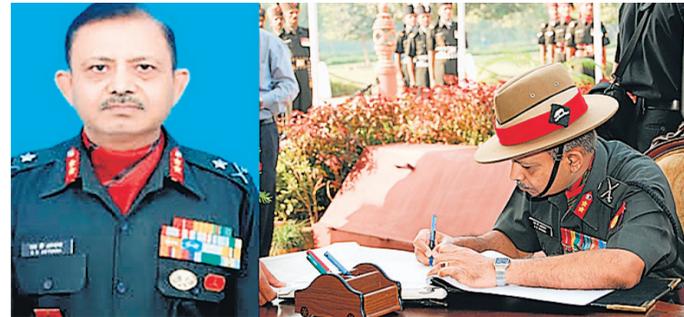
It is understandable that the unlocking was essential for livelihood and getting the economy back on track, but stretching it to heavy crowding for events like elections was gross casualness, which coronavirus was in no mood to pardon. It also brought a weakness in response with Centre and State governments waiting for other to take actions and blaming each other for shortages and follies, along-with the reasons mentioned earlier.

Today a common man is suffering from shortages of Oxygen, hospital beds, ventilators, and other appliances besides inadequate number of vaccines. Cases of hoarding/black-marketing of health appliances, Oxygen, and hospital beds, indicate leakages and inadequacy of system of management of this crisis.

Despite increase in national availability, shortages at the level of common patient raises question mark on efficiency and transparency of existing logistics system. Currently every agency is working hard, but in silos without visible central co-ordination putting the desired output to sub-optimal level. A case in point is people dying because of shortage/over hiked prices of ambulances in Delhi, which has innumerable flatbed vehicles with movers and packers, which can be made into makeshift ambulances by putting few mattresses and oxygen cylinders inside, provided the RTOs are tasked for it by appropriate authorities.

How can India Manage it Better?  
With third wave of pandemic on the horizon India needs to acknowledge it as warlike situation and everyone has to respond accordingly. Currently a large number of agencies are working hard for Covid-19 management at national as well as state level in silos, without a centralised strategic plan, with little coordination, resulting in leakages, inadequacies and non-availability of resource to patient requiring it most. The fact that Honorable Supreme Court of India appointed National Task Forces to control allocation and distribution of Oxygen, justifies need for centralized control of scarce resource. There is a need to declare it as 'National Health Emergency' and activate the existing system and infrastructure of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) under Prime Minister, suitably modified for handling coronavirus pandemic, with minimum turbulence in ongoing effort.

It is necessary to have this central agency activated with state representatives for collective strategic decision making at two levels; firstly, at strategic level with CCS (Health Minister included) to co-ordinate work of various ministries to improve capacity building, medical resource generation and policy guidelines; secondly at operational level National Crisis Management Committee under Cabinet Secretary with senior representative of all stake holders including Centre (Health, Home, Defence Ministries and Intelligence agencies) and States (Nominated secretaries), expert professionals from various fields, doctors, public and private players, manufacturers and Defence Services, involved in Covid-19 management to issue



implementable instructions for similar set up at state levels. It needs to be understood that pandemic management, besides medical care requires sound logistics management and information management.

There is a need to activate NDMA Resource Centre (suitably modified for pandemic) in New Delhi, with every possible information on smartboards regarding patient load, availability of hospital facilities, progress of vaccination, production of vaccines, health appliances, purchases, aids and every information to make a viable strategic and operational, implementable plans, through a process of collective decision making, nominating the agency to execute, which should be held accountable. It must have a media outlet to keep the nation informed of policy guidelines and allocations, as inadequate information leads to rumors, panic and related actions like hoarding. If allotments are done through digitized models using latest management techniques (like transportation model) by participative decision making, then the centre-state blame game can be reduced to a level that it doesn't obstruct response mechanism and makes last man delivery faster. All purchases and delivery must be on digital transaction mode to reduce leakages.

How can Defence Forces Help?  
Currently Defence Forces are assisting the national effort in fight against Covid-19 pandemic. Air Force and Navy is extensively involved in transportation of health-related equipment from abroad and within the country. Indian Army has opened many additional make shift covid hospitals, besides opening the existing ones to civil patients. Efforts are also underway to recall some of the retired medical personal to join in and add on to the effort. There is also a scope to incorporate logistics expertise of services during crisis management in improving the supply chain management during such criticalities. The

engineering resources of Railways and Defence Forces can be utilized for diverting manufacturing assembly lines of other gases to Oxygen in the country to tide over shortages. For better synergy of efforts with civil authorities, it is necessary to keep defence services in information and decision-making loop. Currently out of 11 empowered groups, none had any representative from military, despite some states wanting Army to step in. While defence forces must support national effort, but unlike some other disasters, it's not recommended that a state or district be handed over to military for covid management.

Conclusion  
The second wave of coronavirus as has established that health security is inseparable part of national security and the pandemic will have to be fought like a war, on a mission mode, with each agency playing its part in a coordinated manner to economise on efforts and resources. Health workers and most agencies are contributing to the best of their capabilities, but there is a need for better coordination to minimize shortages, leakages, and improve overall efficiency to minimize wastages, as lot of reserve resources will be required for third wave as well. Centralised planning, coordination, digitized allocation of meagre resources and decentralised execution at State level, is the need of the hour. The security agencies and courts have to be ruthless in punishing hoarders/black marketers with fast-track trials. Foreign help is welcomed, but the future case load demands self-reliance in capacity building to defeat the pandemic, at an unprecedented speed.

(Major General S.B. Asthana is a strategic and security analyst, a veteran Infantry General. He is the Chief Instructor, United Service Institution of India. The views expressed are personal)

## INDIA'S CENTRAL VISTA MUST DEDICATE A MEMORIAL TO "LIVE. AND LET LIVE"

Robinder Nath Sachdev

The Central Vista Redevelopment Project in the heart of New Delhi has run into a sharp controversy, especially over its timing and continuing construction during the peak times of Covid-19 in India.

The project will see a complete revamp of India's central and iconic administrative area, including the construction of a new Parliament, new buildings to House of the central ministries, and new residential complexes for the Prime Minister and Vice President of India.

The controversial project may continue, or may be paused, but in any case, in next 3 or so years, India will have a new central administrative district. The renovation is fairly justified since there is a reasonable case that many of the old buildings of the government and the present Parliament are running out of spacers upgrades, and hence, a revamp of some degree is needed in next 4 to 5 years.

This column today is not going into the merits or de-merits for or against halting the project, or into the timing. On the other hand, this column of today is an earnest request that whenever this new vista is unveiled after completion, it should also showcase a majestic memorial monument dedicated to the lessons learnt during the historic Covid-19 times.

Live. And let Live. A global pledge to Mother Earth and Humanity.

Covid-19 times have been cruel to all of humanity  $\frac{1}{2}$  in India and in the world. A memorial to the lives lost, a salute to the health and frontline workers, a testimonial to the spirit of common citizen helpers, and a reminder of pain and grief of families who lost their loved ones these are some values that the monument should radiate, globally.

The monument must also express a national and global resolve of peoples and governments that never again would we let our fellow citizen on this planet earth fall into such dire conditions, as have been wrought by Covid-19.

Via this monument, the people and governments globally must take a pledge, and commit to upholding the respect and value of every human life. To radically commit themselves to strengthening public health infrastructure. To prepare public institutions and supporting social frameworks as may be needed to safeguard human lives from any national or global calamities that humankind may face in the future.

Last but not the least, this memorial must serve as a deafening and clarion call, that resonates across planet earth, and that plants a seed in every heart for the supreme principle of "Live. And let Live".

Covid-19 times are a strong message from Mother Earth to the humanity I will let you live, if you let me live. We are teetering on the edge of this cardinal principle, and unless we mend our ways and learn to "live and let live" with Mother Earth, we may very well get smacked hard, again. The memorial must be a testament to this spirit.

Apart from a behaviour and humility to co-exist with Mother Earth, and to respect her life while she nurtures us in her womb, Covid-19 times have additionally re-shown us the value of life, and loved ones. And, have also served a stark reminder that each human life, of any faith, race, color, or creed, first and foremost wants to, needs to, live and to live healthy.

Covid-19 times have also brought forth a tsunami of strangers helping strangers. This spirit to help others to live, and be healthy, must be elevated as a heroic character trait that is celebrated, and that becomes a core and abiding belief for us in present, and in future generations across the world.

To live is the most innate, guttural instinct for any living being. This guttural instinct needs to be welded to the belief that lets the other (Mother Earth, and fellow humans) live. The mantra and a lifestyle of "Live. And let Live", is the only beacon that can help humanity navigate the 21st century else dark storms are on the horizon.

The memorial complex, tentatively named as "The Live. And let Live. Monument", must stand up as a shining beacon that sparkles and inspires all of us on planet Earth, and sends a message to the cosmos that we on Earth are stepping up our game to learn to live, and let live, amongst us, and with Mother Earth.

The onus on India  
The Parliament of India shall soon convene for its next scheduled session. Per usual custom, one can estimate that the first meeting of the Parliament will be a joint session of the Lower House (Lok Sabha), and the Upper House (Rajya Sabha), which will be addressed by the President of India.

It is a humble request of this column that the President of India, in his address also announce that given the humanity-shaking experience of Covid-19, it has been decided that the Central Vista Project will incorporate and dedicate a memorial monument to, "Live. And let Live". India must shine this light for its own, and global, good.

In these historic times, destiny calls upon India to inspire, cajole its own people, and the global community, and to remind all of us that there is no other philosophy, no other behaviour that is as paramount to human life on planet Earth other than to live, and let live.

## Election saga: How BJP lost the plot in Bengal polls

Saibal Gupta

The defeat in Bengal Assembly polls is surely going to be a big lesson for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In a rare electoral setback for the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah combine, the duo failed to crack the sentiments of the people of West Bengal, resulting in a convincing loss for the saffron brigade.

While several reasons might come out in the party's internal introspection meetings, IANS lists some factors that helped Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee cruise to a landslide victory over the saffron brigade, which used all its resources in the run-up to the high-octane Assembly polls to wrest power from the Trinamool Congress in the state. Double-engine Sarkar and the Outsider tag

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held 23 election rallies in 14 days in Bengal, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah held 79 rallies, roadshows and town halls in 20 days in the run-up to the polls. The ruling party at the Centre deployed over 52 Union ministers, MPs, CMs and Cabinet ministers of BJP-ruled states to campaign in Bengal. Around 15 to 17 senior BJP and RSS leaders were stationed in Bengal for more than three months. The BJP leadership stressed on the need



for a synchronised government both at the state and the Centre, making it obvious that the state would get better benefits from the BJP ruled Central government if Bengal has a similar government in the state as well. However, this gave Mamata Banerjee a point to prove her allegation that the Centre was adopting a step-motherly attitude towards Bengal. It also gave Banerjee the opportunity to advocate her 'outsider' theory, pushing her Bengali image to make a dent in the hearts of the middle and lower middle-class Bengali population. Her campaign 'Bangla Nijer Meyeki Chai' (Bengal wants her own daughter) was not only a successful effort to push out the 'outsider', it was also a delicate attempt to showcase her own image that worked wonders.

Mamata's women-centric schemes  
This was Trinamool's best ever performance in the last three Assembly elections, with the

party securing 213 of the 292 seats in the state. Elections are due in two seats as the candidates died after testing positive for Covid-19. The mandate was overwhelmingly against the saffron party with an incumbent government of 10 years securing 47.95 per cent votes in its third term.

What worked wonders for Banerjee is that the women voters came out in larger numbers in support of the Trinamool, primarily because of a number of women-centric schemes launched by the ruling party.

One of the most talked-about schemes started by Banerjee is the Kanyashree scheme launched in 2013, which provides cash handouts to girls between 13 and 18 years of age, provided they remain unmarried and in school.

Another scheme, Rupashree, launched in 2018, provides a one-time financial grant of Rs 25,000 to the economically stressed families at the time of their adult daughters' wedding.

Swasthya Sathi, the health insurance scheme, offers a family health card issued in the name of the household matriarch, giving authority to the women members of the family.

The Muslim voters  
In the recent Assembly elections, the Trinamool received unprecedented backing of the Muslim voters. The party won all the seats which had minority influence and literally fin-

ished the Left and the Congress. In the Congress bastions of Murshidabad and Malda, Trinamool won 18 of 20 and eight of 12 seats, respectively. In South 24 Parganas, a district where many seats have substantial Muslim majority, Trinamool won 30 of 31 seats. In all these places, the BJP failed to strike a chord with the Muslim voters.

According to the 2011 Census, Muslims comprised 27 per cent of the state's population. The Muslim votes transferred to the Trinamool primarily out of the fear that if the BJP came to power, it would implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Tribal and SC voters  
There are two areas where the Trinamool made substantial inroads into the tribal and SC votes - Janglemahal and North Bengal.

In the last Lok Sabha elections in 2019, the BJP was ahead in all the 40 Assembly segments in the Janglemahal area comprising four districts -- Purulia, Bankura, Paschim Medinipur and Jhargam. But this time the Trinamool bagged 24 seats in the area against the BJP's 16, which was a major setback for the saffron camp.

As far as North Bengal is concerned, the BJP managed to get win 30 out of the 54 seats while the Trinamool bagged the remaining 24 seats. Though the saffron brigade held back its ground in the four districts of Cooch Behar, Alipurduar,

Jalpaiguri and Darjeeling, getting 21 out of the total 26 seats, in the rest of the three districts, namely North Dinajpur, South Dinajpur and Malda, it managed to win only 9 out of the 28 seats.

Positive Mamata vs Negative Mamata  
Banerjee's battle in the 2021 elections was more with herself and her own party than with the BJP. She not only had to fight with the mighty BJP, but also had to do her shadow fighting with the incumbency factor that crept into the roots of the party and the government. When BJP targeted the negative factors of the party and the Chief Minister's family, Banerjee tried to rectify the mistakes and reached out to the people of the state.

When the Modi-Shah team continuously tried to hit back at 'tolabaji' (extortion), cut-money, loot by the Trinamool leaders during Amphan, high-handedness of the Trinamool leaders and the 'Bhaipo' (Abhishek Banerjee) controversy, Banerjee not only tried to rectify the mistakes by handing the relief money to the Amphan victims, but also silently launched her 'Duare Sarkar' (government at your doorstep) and 'Parai Parai Samadhan' (solution of problems at your own neighbourhood) campaigns. The two schemes launched by the state government created a positive impression which was eventually reflected in the elections.



# 15 DEAD IN AFGHANISTAN AS TALIBAN ANNOUNCES EID CEASEFIRE

All Taliban fighters are instructed to cease offensive operations across the country from the first to the third day of Eid-al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan, a Taliban statement published late Sunday read.

Kabul | Agencies

At least 15 people, mainly civilians, were killed in Afghanistan on Monday, the same day Taliban militants announced a nationwide three-day ceasefire for the upcoming Eid-al-Fitr holidays. The holidays are due to start either on Wednesday or Thursday depending on the sighting of the new moon, but the latest violence, which officials blamed on the Taliban, cast a pall over the news of any short-lived reduction in violence, reports dpa news agency. All Taliban fighters are instructed to cease offensive operations across the country from the first



to the third day of Eid-al-Fitr, the Muslim holiday marking the end of Ramadan, a Taliban statement published late Sunday read. Taliban fighters are prohibited from visiting government-controlled areas or giving "enemy personnel" access to areas controlled by the Islamists. A response from the government in Kabul is still pending. The Taliban has declared cease-

fires to mark the end of Ramadan in the past. There have been growing concerns about the security situation in Afghanistan since May 1, the date that international troops officially began their withdrawal. The process is due to be completed by September 11 at the latest. Highlighting the dangers, at least 11 civilians were killed after a roadside bomb hit a passenger bus in

Zabul province, in the south, the Interior Ministry said on Monday. Another 28 passengers were wounded in the explosion, which happened around midnight. Meanwhile, in Parwan province, two people were killed in an explosion that targeted a minibus with 25 passengers onboard, according to a provincial police spokesperson and a local politician. Nearly a dozen people were wounded in the bombing. In Farah province, militants detonated an explosive-packed armoured vehicle near an army checkpoint just a few km away from the provincial city centre, several officials confirmed. There were conflicting reports about the casualty figures. Provincial governor Taj Mohammad Jahid told dpa that two soldiers were killed and five others were wounded in a checkpoint. However, provincial councillor Shah Mahmud Naimi said that the bodies of six soldiers were found under the rubble and four others have been taken captive, with the fate of the remaining force members unclear. Government officials have blamed the Taliban for the incidents.

# Dozens injured in fresh clashes in Jerusalem

The situation in the West Bank and in the Arab-dominated eastern part of Jerusalem has been tense since the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan, which is set to end later this week.

Jerusalem | Agencies

Fresh fighting between Israeli security forces and Palestinian protesters left dozens injured on Monday as a clash about access to parts of the Old City and attempts to evict a Palestinian family from their home reached one of Jerusalem's holiest sites. The Red Crescent organization reported multiple injuries, with at least 50 sent to hospital, after the fighting at the al-Aqsa Mosque, known to Jews at the Temple Mount and Muslims as the Noble Sanctuary, reports dpa news agency. The situation in the West Bank and in the Arab-dominated eastern part of Jerusalem has been tense since the beginning of the fasting month of Ramadan, which is set to end later this week. Many Palestinians are angry because Israeli police had cordoned off areas of the Old City to prevent gatherings. In addition, some Palestinian families in Sheikh Jarrah are facing eviction from their homes by Israeli authorities, further heightening tensions. A Supreme Court ruling on the evictions expected for Monday was postponed. Adding to the tension, Israel marks Jerusalem Day on Monday, when the country commemorates its annexation of East



Jerusalem during the Six-Day War of 1967. Palestinians see East Jerusalem as a potential capital of any independent country and contest Israel's claim. In an effort to minimize violence, Israeli authorities have banned parades by Jewish groups through the old city and to the Temple Mount. The UN Security Council was set to meet in an emergency session on Monday to discuss increasing violence, the Times of Israel reported, citing Israeli diplomats. The council is to meet behind closed doors after a request from Tunisia, three security council diplomats told the newspaper. Members of both the Muslim and Jewish faiths attach strong religious significance to the mosque and its surrounding areas, making the potential for clashes there high. Images relayed by local media on Monday showed security officers using flash grenades against protesters, with Palestinians responding by throwing rocks. A police spokesperson said that the police will not allow "extremists" to threaten public security. The clashes have grown more intense in recent days. On May 7, about 300 Palestinians and 20 police officers sustained injuries.

# Iran confirms direct talks with Saudi

Tehran | Agencies

Iranian authorities have confirmed reports that direct talks had taken place with Saudi Arabia on Monday. "There have been talks and they have been about bilateral and regional issues," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Saeed Khatibzadeh told a press conference. He said it was too early to talk about results, but said that "it is well known that we have always welcomed talks with the Saudis in any form and at any level", reports dpa news agency. Saudi and Iranian officials have met at least twice in Iraq in recent weeks, according to media reports. Tehran had not previously confirmed the meetings but Iraqi President Barham Salih said his country had hosted several rounds of talks between the two countries' representatives. Sunni Saudi Arabia

and Shia Iran view each other as arch-enemies and have been competing for decades for economic and political primacy in the region. The two countries severed diplomatic relations in 2016 and are currently facing off in multiple proxy conflicts, including in Yemen. Saudi Arabia has been leading a military alliance supporting the Yemeni government in its fight against the Iran-linked Houthi rebels. However, Saudi and Iranian officials have softened their language recently, and said they are prepared for reconciliation. Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told state television that Riyadh seeks positive and special relations with Iran if Tehran ended negative behaviours. Iran followed by saying it hoped for constructive dialogue to resolve differences between the countries, in a marked change of tone compared to past years.

# Aus FM meets Ghani in Kabul to discuss troops withdrawal

Kabul | Agencies

Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne on Monday met Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in Kabul to discuss the withdrawal of troops from the war-torn country. The Foreign Minister said in a statement that in meetings in the Afghan capital she also discussed the handling of alleged war crimes committed by Australian troops, reports dpa news agency. Payne, who is also Australia's Minister for Women, said she met Afghanistan's Minister for Women's Affairs Hasina Safi, the head of the country's National Reconciliation Council, Abdullah Abdullah, and the commander of the US and NATO forces in the country, US



General Austin Scott Miller.

"During these meetings, we discussed the sacrifices made by the Afghan people, as well as those international military forces killed or wounded, including those Australians who made the ultimate sacrifice and the many who still bear the impacts of their service in Afghanistan both physical and mental," Payne said. The Minister said that with the departure of

Australian troops from the country, the Australia-Afghanistan relationship is "beginning a new chapter," pledging to "continue our close friendship, and support our shared aspiration of peace, stability and prosperity." Payne's visit to Kabul, which according to Australian media was unannounced, followed explosions near a school in the Afghan capital over the weekend which killed more than 50 people, many of them teenage girls leaving class. "I expressed our deepest condolences for the cowardly terrorist attack on teenage girls at school," Payne said in a tweet after meeting Ghani. The Taliban were quick to reject their involvement in the attack, however the government has blamed the militant group.

# Libyan Navy denies shooting at Italian fisherman

Tripoli | Agencies

The Libyan Navy has denied shooting at an Italian fisherman off the country's coast during an operation against four boats from Sicily. The navy said in a statement on Sunday that four Italian fishing boats were spotted on May 6 about 48 km off the coast of Khoms city, some 120 km east of the capital Tripoli, reports Xinhua news agency. A Libyan Coast Guard vessel went to the location and issued orders to the Italian boats to be inspected, but they did not respond, the statement said. One of the Italian boats was captured and inspected in the presence of an Italian

navy vessel and was then released after the crew signed a pledge not to fish in the area, the statement said. It added that a member of the Italian boat's crew was injured "when he hit one of the windows of the boat". Italian Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio condemned the Coast Guard's actions but also warned against crossing into Libyan waters. "We have been advising against going there not just for months but for 10 years," he said. Salvatore Quinci, mayor of the fishing port of Mazaro del Vallo in southwestern Sicily, said members of the Coast Guard shot at the fisherman's boat, the Italian news agency Agf reported.

# 'Seoul to find way for restored inter-Korean, Pyongyang-US talks'

Seoul | Agencies

South Korean President Moon Jae-in said on Monday that his government will seek to find a way for restored talks between Seoul and Pyongyang and between North Korea and the US. "I will consider the remaining one year of my term to be the last opportunity to move from an incomplete peace toward one that is irreversible," Moon said in a televised address to mark the fourth inauguration anniversary of his five-year tenure. He took office in May 2017, reports Xinhua news agency. "It is time to take action," Moon said hailing US President Joe Biden's North Korean policy, which he said aimed to "achieve the primary goal of the Korean Peninsula's complete denuclearization via diplomacy with

a flexible, gradual and practical approach by building upon the foundation of the Singapore Declaration". North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and former US President Donald Trump held their first summit in Singapore in June 2018, agreeing to the complete denuclearization of and the lasting peace settlement on the Korean Peninsula. Denuclearization talks between Pyongyang and Washington have been stalled since the second Kim-Trump summit ended without agreement in February 2019 in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Moon is scheduled to visit Washington for summit talks with Biden on May 21 in a bid to restore the deadlocked dialogue between the two Koreas and between Pyongyang and Washington.

"We (he and Biden) will restore dialogue between the two Koreas and between the United States and North Korea and find a way to step once again toward peaceful cooperation by more closely coordinating policies toward North Korea," Moon said. "If there is an opportunity to restart the clock of peace and advance the peace process on the Korean Peninsula, I will do everything I can. I look forward to North Korea responding positively." "We have seen clear potential for issues to be solved diplomatically," the president said, citing the three inter-Korean summits and the two North Korea-US summits during his tenure that failed to achieve a complete success but maintained peace. "If we make a little more effort, the issue will be able to be solved through diplomacy.

I found a possibility for and had confidence in the Korean Peninsula's complete denuclearization and the lasting peace settlement," he added. Following Biden's first Congressional speech in which he called North Korea's nuclear program a "serious threat", Pyongyang warned earlier this month that Washington will "face a worsening crisis" if it holds on to the outdated hostile policy. Moon said he did not interpret the North Korean response as a refusal to dialogue. He said the prolonged dialogue deadlock will never be desirable, adding that his concern was shared by the Biden administration, which rapidly established its North Korean policy through close coordination and consultations with Seoul.

# UK names David Attenborough as 'People's Advocate'

London | Agencies

With six months to go before the UK brings world leaders together for key UN climate talks, renowned natural historian and broadcaster David Attenborough has been named People's Advocate for the country's Presidency of the UN climate change summit in Glasgow named COP26. Attenborough, who turned 95 on May 8, will put forward the compelling case to global leaders, key decision makers and the public for why climate action matters, to evidence the progress underway, and to highlight the actions decision makers will need to take ahead of and at the talks. He will address world leaders at major international events over the next six months, including the G7 Summit in Cornwall next month, to firmly put climate and the protection of nature at the top of their agenda.



He has also been invited to address world leaders and the public at the Glasgow Summit -- the most important climate meeting since the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said: "David Attenborough has already inspired millions of people in the UK and around the world with his passion and knowledge to act on climate change and protect the planet for future generations."

"There is no better person to build momentum for further change as we approach the COP26 climate summit in November. I am hugely grateful to Sir David for agreeing to be our People's Advocate." On being appointed COP26 People's Advocate, Attenborough said: "I am greatly honoured to be given the role of People's Advocate. There could not be a more important moment that we should have international agreement. The epidemic has shown us how crucial it is to find agreement among nations if we are to solve such worldwide problems. But the problems that await us within the next 5-10 years are even greater. It is crucial that these meetings in Glasgow, COP26, have success, and that at last the nations will come together to solve the crippling problems that the world now faces." He has also previously stressed the importance of COP26.

# UK PM INVITES DEVOLVED LEADERS TO UNION SUMMIT

London | Agencies

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has invited the leaders of the devolved nations to a summit on how "Team UK" can recover from the Covid-19 pandemic. The latest development came after Scotland's First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on Saturday pledged to push for a second independence referendum as Scottish National Party (SNP) party secured a "historic and extraordinary" fourth consecutive victory in last week's parliamentary election, reports Xinhua news agency. Johnson's invitation came also after the main opposition Labour Party's win in the Welsh Parliament during the May 6's election. After his re-election, Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford called on Johnson to "reset relationships" with the devolved nations.



The Prime Minister congratulated Sturgeon and Drakeford on their re-elections and invited them to a meeting to discuss such shared challenges as the pandemic and how to overcome them, according to the BBC. Johnson has telephoned

Drakeford on Saturday and will later speak to Sturgeon, who has already confirmed she will attend the summit, said the BBC. Johnson will be sending a similar letter to Northern Ireland's first and deputy first ministers, according to Sky News.

"I believe passionately that the interests of people across the UK... are best served when we work together," Johnson said. Sturgeon has said the result of the election meant there was "no democratic justification whatsoever for Boris Johnson or anyone else seeking to block the right of the people of Scotland to choose our future". She insisted that holding a referendum was now "the will of the country". Johnson has told the Daily Telegraph newspaper that it would be "reckless and irresponsible" for Scotland to hold a referendum right now. "I don't think this is anything like the time to have more constitutional wrangling, to be talking about ripping our country apart, when actually people want to heal our economy and bounce forward together. That's what people want," he said.

# 7 KILLED IN US B'DAY PARTY SHOOTING

Washington | Agencies

Six people were killed when a suspect opened fire at a birthday party in the US state of Colorado, police said, adding the perpetrator killed himself at the scene. The incident took place on Sunday in the city of Colorado Springs, reports Xinhua news agency. The Colorado Springs Police Department (CSPD) said in a statement that they responded to a shooting call at the Canterbury Mobile Home Park at 12.18 a.m. "Upon arrival, officers located six deceased adults and one adult male with serious injuries who was transported to a local hospital where he succumbed to his injuries," the statement said. The CSPD said that through an initial analysis of evidence and preliminary interviews they believed the mass shooting incident occurred when a birthday party was



being held for one of the victims. The suspect, a boyfriend of one of the female victims, drove to the residence, walked inside and began shooting people at the party before taking his own life. The children at the scene were not injured by the suspect, police said, noting they were still investigating to determine a motive. Colorado Springs Mayor John Suthers called it a "senseless act of violence", saying: "Today we find ourselves mourning the loss of lives and praying solemnly for those who were injured and those who lost family members." Sunday's shooting incident was the second in the state so far this year. In March, 10 people were killed in a mass shooting inside a grocery store in older city. The suspected gunman was later arrested and now faces 10 counts of murder.



## INDIA COULD TOUR SRI LANKA FOR LIMITED-OVER SERIES IN JULY

Kolkata | Agencies

India could play a three-match ODI and five-match T20I series against Sri Lanka in July, the Indian cricket board president, Sourav Ganguly, has said. Going by the ICC's Future Tours Programme (FTP), India are scheduled to play three T20 matches in Sri Lanka this July. India were also due to play three T20Is and an equal number of ODIs last June in the island nation, but that tour was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic.

As a 20-member Indian squad is set to leave for England in early June to play the World Test Championship (WTC) final against New Zealand and the five-Test series against England, starting on August 4, it's unlikely that India would be able to send their best team to Sri Lanka.

In all likelihood, it could be a completely different squad, without several first-choice cricketers, if the tour takes place in July at all. Sri Lanka, too, will be playing three ODIs and three T20Is in England between June 23 and July 4, and given the Covid quarantine norms, it would be interesting to see how and when the series with India takes place.

In an interview with Sportstar, when Ganguly was asked if there was a possibility



of the remainder of the postponed IPL season being completed in England on either side of India's Test series there, he said: "No".

"India is supposed to go to Sri Lanka for three ODIs and five T20Is. There are lots of organisational hazards like 14-day quarantine. It [the IPL] can't happen in India [either]. This quarantine is tough to handle; too early to say how we can find a slot to complete the IPL."

Ahead of the T20 World Cup, scheduled to be held in India in October-November, and after the conclusion of the England Test series on September 14, India will have a small window in their schedule -- sometime in mid-October. But given the pandemic situation, there is a possibility that the remainder of the IPL will be shifted. Sri Lanka and the UAE will then become an option for hosting the remaining IPL matches.

## MALINGA COULD RETURN TO SRI LANKA SIDE TO PLAY WORLD T20

Kandy: Sri Lanka fast bowler Lasith Malinga could return to the national team for the T20 World Cup, said the national selection committee chairman Pramodya Wickramasinghe. "We will talk to Lasith soon. He is in our plans for the forthcoming T20 tours, including the T20 World Cup coming up in October," said Wickramasinghe.



"We are working out a long-term plan aiming at the 2023 (50-over) World Cup. There, our main focus is to adjust ourselves to forming an accurate average in terms of two main aspects. Those are the age and the fitness," Wickramasinghe told Morning Sports.

Malinga, who has announced his retirement from ODI cricket, was released by his IPL franchise Mumbai Indians (MI) ahead of the 2021 auctions. He is the lucrative league's leading wicket-taker, having taken 170 wickets in 122 matches.

The 37-year-old slinger was with MI since joining the team in the inaugural edition in 2008. With back-to-back T20 World Cups scheduled in 2021 and 2022, Sri Lanka would need an experienced bowler like Malinga to marshal the attack.



## Babar, Healy wins ICC Player of the Month awards

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Pakistan captain Babar Azam and Australia women's wicketkeeper-batter Alyssa Healy were on Monday announced as the International Cricket Council's (ICC) players of the month for April.

Azam managed scores of 103 and 94 in three ODIs against South Africa, which won him two Player of the Match awards, as Pakistan won the series. His performances helped him move ahead of Virat Kohli as the No.1-ranked ODI batsman, becoming the fourth Pakistan player to do so after Zaheer Abbas, Javed Miandad, and Mohammad Yousuf.

Azam also played seven T20Is in April, four against South Africa and three against Zimbabwe, scoring a total of 305 runs at 43.75 with a strike rate of 126.55 with two half-centuries and a 59-ball 122 at the Centurion. Among the highlights was a 197-run partnership with Mohammad Rizwan, the highest partnership in a T20I run chase.

Healy played three ODIs versus New Zealand, scoring 155 runs at an average of 51.66 and a strike rate of 98.72. Her efforts saw her finish as the leading run-scorer in Australia's series victory over New Zealand that extended their record-winning streak to 24 ODIs.

## Shotgun World Cup: Khangura makes a promising start

Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's Gurjoat Singh Khangura made a promising start by shooting 74 out of 75 in the opening three rounds of the men's skeet event of the Shotgun World Cup in Lonato, Italy, on Sunday.

But Angadvir Singh Bajwa, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympic Games, shot a sub-par 71 in the opening three rounds. Despite his good score, Khangura is lying at the 13th spot out of 55 competitors while Bajwa is at the bottom of the table. His position is 53rd.

The competitors will compete in two rounds more on Monday. The top six qualify for the finals. Both Indians have to give their performance to finish among the top six who will enter the finals.

World Championship silver medallist and world number nine Tammaro Cassandro of Italy shot 75 to lead the field. Three other shooters also shot 75 to stay in the race for



the finals.

The National Rifle Association of India did not pick any shooter for the women's category. A total of 399 athletes from 56 countries are competing in the Lonato World Cup, the last shotgun competition before the Olympic Games, schedule to begin on July 23.

## PAKISTAN CRUSH ZIMBABWE IN 2ND TEST, CLEAN SWEEP SERIES 2-0

Harare | Agencies

Pakistan completed the formalities on Monday, crushing Zimbabwe by an innings and 147 runs on Day 4 and made a clean sweep of the two-Test series at the Harare Sports Club here. Zimbabwe were bundled out for 231 in their second innings, after adding only 11 runs to the overnight score of 220 for nine wickets. Pakistan had defeated the hosts by an innings and 116 runs in the first Test. This is Pakistan's second series clean sweep on the trot, having defeated South Africa in a two-Test series at home this year.

Pakistan fast bowler Shaheen Afridi snared the last wicket -- Luke Jongwa (37) -- on the last ball of the fifth over of the day. Afridi recorded his



career's second five-wicket haul (5 for 52), which is also his best figures in a Test innings. This was also the seventh instance of two Pakistan bowlers sharing 10 wickets equally in an innings.

Pakistan opener Abid Ali was named Player of the Match for his unbeaten 215, which propelled the visitors to a massive 510 for eight declared. The right-handed batsman's score is the best by a Pakistani player in Harare.

Pace bowler Hasan Ali, who has enjoyed a great comeback to international cricket since

January, was named Player of the Series. He took 14 wickets in the two Tests at a stunning average of 8.92.

### Brief scores

Brief scores: Pakistan 510 for 8 decl in 147.1 overs beat Zimbabwe 132 in 60.4 overs & 231 in 68 overs (Regis Chakabva 80, Brendan Taylor 49, Luke Jongwa 37; Nauman Ali 5-86, Shaheen Afridi 5-52) by 147 runs

## Virat's message made me realise I can perform at RCB: Patel

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Virat Kohli's message to Harshal Patel when he was traded to Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) made him realise that this is a team where he can finally showcase his skills, the fast bowler said.

Patel, who was traded to RCB by the Delhi Capitals before the 2021 Indian Premier League season started, was a revelation in the seven matches that he played. Before the tournament was indefinitely postponed, Patel was the runaway leader in the Purple Cap standings with 17 wickets.

"The moment I was traded, Virat sent me a message, 'Welcome back, you are going to play here'. That made a big impact in my confidence, and I realised this is a team where I can finally showcase all my skills," Patel told the Hindustan Times. Patel had his fair share of bad days in the short season, particularly when Ravindra Jadeja smashed 37 runs off him in a match between RCB and Chennai Super Kings.



## KKR'S CHAKRAVARTHY, WARRIER RETURN TO CHENNAI AFTER QUARANTINE

New Delhi: Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) bowlers Varun Chakravarty and Sandeep Warrier, who both tested positive for Covid-19 during the postponed Indian Premier League (IPL), reached their homes in Chennai on Monday after serving mandatory quarantine in Ahmedabad. Warrier confirmed to IANS that the two returned to Chennai from Ahmedabad where they were kept in isolation after testing positive. KKR were stationed in Ahmedabad when the decision to postpone IPL was taken by BCCI.

The two were the first players to test positive for Covid-19. Following their positive tests, players from three other teams - Delhi Capitals in Ahmedabad and Chennai Super Kings and SunRisers Hyderabad in New Delhi, tested positive for Covid-19. KKR reported a further two cases with New Zealander Tim Seifert and India pace bowler M Prasidh Krishna testing positive.

While Seifert is being treated in Chennai at the same hospital as Chennai Super Kings' batting coach Michael Hussey is being treated in, Krishna is in Bengaluru in home quarantine and isolation.

Krishna is part of the India Test squad as one of the four standby players who will travel to England for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand and five Test matches against England.



Team Absolute | New Delhi

India's tennis ace Sania Mirza battled depression after she had to pull out of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games due to a wrist injury.

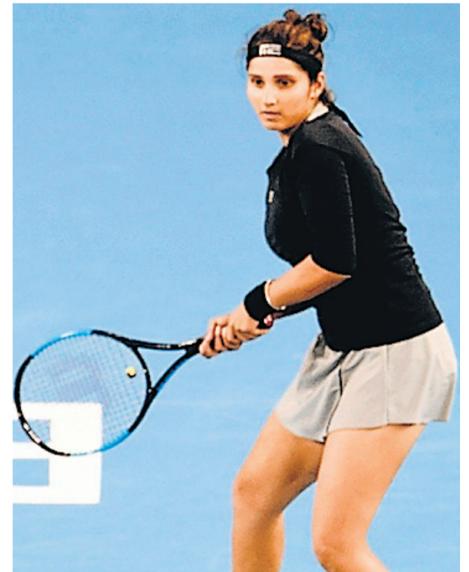
The injury, which kept the six-time Grand Slam winner in doubles out of competitive tennis for a year, left her a mental wreck, unable to 'come out of my room to even eat a meal for over a month'.

In an interview to

## Battled depression, anxiety after wrist injury at 2008 Olympics: Sania

YouTube channel, Mind Matters, Mirza said, "That day -- when I had to pull out of the 2008 Beijing Olympics because of a bad wrist injury -- I went into depression for 3-4 months. I remember crying for no reason. I mean, I used to be absolutely fine and then I would just burst into tears. I remember not coming out of my room to even eat a meal for over a month."

"I felt I will never be able to play tennis again. I am a bit of a control freak, so for me not being able to do something not on my terms was very difficult to digest," said Mirza, who recently was part of the Indian contingent which competed in the Billie Jean King Cup in Latvia. The 34-year-old said that for a 20-year-old, on the threshold of making it big, it was a major blow.



## 1962 Asian Games gold medallist Franco passes away

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Fortunato Franco, the former football player who was part of the Indian team that won gold at the 1962 Asian Games in Jakarta, passed away in Goa on Monday. Franco is survived by his wife, son and daughter.

Playing as a midfielder, Franco was an integral part of the Indian team that beat South Korea 2-1 in the final at Jakarta. He was also part of the team that finished second in the 1962 Asian Cup, and



played in the 1960 Olympics as well.

Additionally, Franco was also part of the Indian team that finished

runners-up in the 1964 Merdeka Cup in Kuala Lumpur, and third in the 1965 edition of the tournament.

## IPL: Practice options in Delhi, Ahmedabad may have led to breach

Khurram Habib | New Delhi

The Indian cricket board's decision to host the second phase of the Indian Premier League (IPL) matches in cities with no alternate T20-specific practice facilities may have caused the breach in Covid protocols, it has emerged.

Delhi and Ahmedabad -- cities with rapidly increasing Covid cases -- hosted the second phase and the positive cases among players and staff that led to the postponement of the tournament emerged during matches in those cities. Besides, the two cities struggled for alternate practice facilities for teams.

"There is a belief within many Board of Control for Cricket of India (BCCI) and state officials that the



decision to take the second phase to Delhi and Ahmedabad was wrong.

There were four teams in each city and except for the main ground, which is an international-level facility and hosted matches, the alternate facilities meant for practice were open to exposure to Covid-19," an official in the know of things told correspondent. While in Delhi, teams like the Chennai Super Kings used the Roshanara Club grounds for practice, those in Ahmedabad were forced to use Gujarat College ground.

Both venues are in congested or old parts of the city. The practice facility at the Motera ground in Ahmedabad has another problem. Since the construction of annex grounds and full facilities isn't complete, the available facility is not suited to practice big shots needed in T20 cricket.

## SENSEX ENDS ABOVE 49,500, METAL STOCKS SURGE

The Sensex settled at 49,502.41, higher by 295.94 points, or 0.60 per cent, from its previous close of 49,206.47 points. It had opened at 49,496.05 and touched an intra-day high of 49,617.47 and a low of 49,412.05 points. While the Nifty50 on the National Stock Exchange closed at 14,942.35, higher by 119.20 points, or 0.8 per cent, from its



mark. Healthy buying was witnessed in metal and healthcare stocks. The Sensex settled at 49,502.41, higher by 295.94 points, or 0.60 per cent, from its previous close of 49,206.47 points. It had opened at 49,496.05 and touched an intra-day high of 49,617.47 and a low of 49,412.05 points.

The Nifty50 on the National Stock Exchange closed at 14,942.35, higher by 119.20 points, or 0.8 per cent, from its previous close. "The markets have closed

well above the 14,700 levels. The Nifty should be headed to 15,200-15,250 with strong support at 14,700. Any dip or correction can be utilised by traders to buy into this market for higher targets," said Manish Hathiramani, Proprietary Index Trader and Technical Analyst, DeenDayal Investments. The top gainers on the Sensex were Larsen & Toubro, Tata Steel, and Sun Pharmaceutical Industries, while the major losers were UltraTech Cement, Infosys, and Reliance Industries.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

The Indian stock market rose on Monday with the BSE Sensex closing above the 49,500

# Fuel prices start rising again, petrol up 26p, diesel 32p/ltr

Team Absolute | New Delhi

On the expected lines, oil companies did not wait long and raised the price of petrol and diesel steeply across the country on Monday.

Accordingly, Petrol and diesel prices were increased by 26 paise and 32 paise a litre to Rs 91.53 and Rs 82.06 per litre respectively in Delhi.

Prior to the increase, petrol and diesel were being retailed at Rs 91.27 and 81.73 per litre respectively in the national capital. The two auto fuel prices were static for two day week-end period prior to this increase.

Across the country as well the petrol and diesel price increased on Monday but its quantum varied depending on the level of local levies in respective states.

Petrol prices in some states including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and in some places in Maharashtra have



breached the Rs 100 per litre mark while premium petrol has been hovering above that level for some time now. Prior to holding back auto fuel prices on Saturday and Sunday, its pump rates had increased sharply on previous four days. Petrol and diesel

prices rose by 15 paise and 18 paise per litre respectively on Tuesday, by 19 paise and 21 paise per litre on Wednesday, by 25 and 30 paise on Thursday and by 28 paise and 31 paise per litre respectively on Friday after 18 days break.

IANs had written earlier that OMCs may begin increasing the retail price of petrol and diesel post state elections as they were incurring losses to the tune of Rs 2-3 per litre by holding the price line despite higher global crude and product prices. The oil companies had already increased the ATF prices by 6.7 per cent effective this month.

OMCs benchmark retail fuel prices to a 15-day rolling average of global refined products' prices and dollar exchange rate. In the last fortnight global oil prices have hovered in \$66-67 a barrel range higher than the levels when petrol and diesel prices were last revised. Crude prices have jumped around \$69 a barrel now.

The price of the two auto fuels had fallen by 16 paise and 14 paise per litre respectively on April 15 after a 15 day break when OMCs kept its prices static. Thereafter revision of fuel prices was halted.

## MFI delinquencies to increase by June: Acuite Ratings

Team Absolute | New Delhi

Delinquencies of micro-finance institutions (MFI) are likely to increase by June amid the severe Covid crisis, according to Acuite Ratings & Research. "Acuite expects 30 day delinquencies to increase at least by 30 per cent by June 2021 even if the pandemic intensity starts to taper down from the middle of May and may more than double if there is no taper down of the pandemic intensity and the local lockdowns continue till end of Q1FY22," said a report.

It noted that the impact of the second wave has not only been in the large cities but also in the hinterland, sparking a crisis in healthcare infrastructure. While no national level lockdown has been contemplated yet as in



last year, the virulence of the second wave has led to lockdowns at local levels in various states and the intensity of such lockdowns may increase if the case load continues to increase further.

This has already started to impact the improving trend in collections and disburse-

ments particularly from the second half of April 2021.

Given the wider coverage of the virus across semi urban and rural areas in this cycle, the risks of a sharper impact on the lives and livelihoods of the micro-finance borrower is higher in the near term, it said.

## RAPIPAY TO FACILITATE COVID-19 VACCINATION SEARCH AND REGISTRATION THROUGH ITS WEBSITE AND APP

New Delhi: RapiPay Fintech has reiterated its commitment to the society by facilitating Covid 19 vaccination registration through its agent app and website. Currently, RapiPay's B2B app has more than 5 Lakhs installs from retailers and merchants.

RapiPay has used a tool on its website and app that redirects users to Covid vaccination data available on CoWIN website on live basis. Lakhs of RapiPay agents access this app daily to serve crores of customers for payments, AEPS and remittance services. Using the same app, the agents will be able to seamlessly assist their customers to check vaccination availability in their area and accordingly register for the vaccination slot.

The second wave of COVID-19 has hit the country at a faster pace and to overcome this pandemic, the public at large needs to get vaccinated at the earliest.

Commenting on this announcement Yogendra Kashyap, CEO, RapiPay said, "Millions of non tech users, especially in the rural markets, might not be able to register on CoWIN or AarogyaSetu app on their own. With this initiative, their vaccination registration can be facilitated through our direct business outlets (DBOs) who use RapiPay daily for their business. We are hopeful that with this facility a lot of people will not crowd the immunization center and help maintain social distance which is the need of the hour."

## IDBI Bank sale: Officer's Association mulls legal recourse



Chennai | Agencies

Rao said contrary to Delhi High Court's judgement, the IDBI Bank management had unilaterally amended the service conditions of Officers to the detriment of their interests.

The All India IDBI Officers' Association (AIIDBIOA) on Monday said it would seek legal and other recourse against the government's decision to privatise the IDBI Bank.

Opposing the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) AIIDBIOA's General Secretary Vithal Koteswara Rao A.V. said it will adopt various routes of agitation including but not limited to the legal recourse to derail the Govt motives to divest its stake and transfer of management control in IDBI Bank. Rao said contrary to Delhi High Court's judgement, the IDBI Bank management had unilaterally amended the

service conditions of Officers to the detriment of their interests.

According to Rao, the Association has valid ground to approach the Delhi High Court challenging the change in service conditions. He said in case the bank is sold there would not be any regulatory obligation on the Bank for selection and promotion of reserved category candidates to ensure their minimum representation at desired levels.

## Advice Goa govt to restrict banking hours: AIBEA to FM

According to Venkatchalam there is a need to restrict the business hours of Banks in Goa to reduce the footfall and thus reduce the chances of spread of the infection.

Team Absolute | Chennai

The All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) on Monday requested Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to advise Goa government to restrict the banking hours in the state to prevent coronavirus spread.

In a letter to Sitharaman, AIBEA General Secretary C.H.Venkatchalam said: "As you well aware, the number of



people getting affected by covid infec-

tion is on the high side in Goa. Number of bank employees have also got affected by the virus. Hence employees and officers working in the Branches in Goa are highly worried and concerned and are presently working in the Banks with lot of fear and apprehension."

According to Venkatchalam there is a need to restrict the business hours of Banks in Goa to reduce the footfall and thus reduce the chances of spread of the infection.

While in many other states the State Level Bankers' Committee (SLBC) have given advisories and guidelines restricting the number of employees attending the banks daily, the Goan government nor the SLBC there have any such guidelines adding to the anxiety of the bank staff, Venkatchalam said.

## ACER DONATES OXYGEN CONCENTRATORS TO HELP INDIA FIGHT COVID-19 CRISIS

Bengaluru: Acer announced on Monday that it is donating oxygen concentrators help India fight the COVID-19 crisis. Leveraging its global presence, the company is procuring oxygen concentrators for India at this time of need and the first batch of oxygen concentrators has arrived in the country for immediate distribution. Commenting about the contribution Harish Kohli, President & MD, Acer India, said, "While the doctors and hospitals are doing everything, they can save precious lives, the country also needs an immediate and coordinated response from every corporate to render whatever help they can."

## FADA Releases FY20-21 & April'21 Vehicle Registration Data

Team Absolute | New Delhi

The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) on Monday released Monthly Vehicle Registration Data for FY 20-21 as well as April'21.

Unlike other months, we can't represent a YoY comparison since India was under complete lockdown in April 2020 and not a single vehicle could be sold. Hence, all comparisons for this month has been done on MoM basis.

Commenting on how April'21 performed, FADA President, Vinay Gulati said, "India is currently facing one of its toughest times with 2nd wave of covid creating a havoc in everyone's life. This time, the spread is not only limited to urban markets but has also taken rural India in its grasp."

Auto Registrations for the month of April witnessed double digit fall to the tune of -28% MoM, as most of the Indian states started going under lockdown (partial as well as full) beginning April 5th onwards.

The spread started with Maharashtra followed by Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Rajasthan and other Indian States following the suit. Not surprisingly, all categories hence closed the month in red with 2W down by -28%, 3W by -43%, PV by -25%, Tractors by -45% and CV by -24% respectively on a MoM basis.

Unlike last year, the lockdown this time around has been imposed by State Governments and not the Central. Due to this, there has been no relief announcements which has come out till now either by the Center or RBI and Auto OEMs.

FADA humbly requests Auto OEMs (our Principals) to handhold their dealers the way they did last year during the 1st phase of pandemic as situation is very grim in most of the states and Dealer Principals as well as their teams are fighting for their survival from Covid. FADA also requests OEMs to not burden dealers with high billings all the states where lockdown has been announced.

## Students from Aakash Institute Top Indian Olympiad Qualifier in Biology (IOQB) Exam;

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In an impressive result, students from Aakash Institute, the national leader in test preparatory services, have topped the prestigious Indian Olympiad Qualifier in Biology (IOQB) Exam. Five Aakashians have secured ranks in the Top 10 (AIR 1, 2, 6, 8 and 10) at IOQB which is the second stage exam of the Indian National Science Olympiad. The examination is organized by the Association of Teachers in Biological Sciences in association with Indian Association of Physics Teachers and Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE). Each year over 30,000 students of 12th Standard or below, sit for this examination.

Aakashians who have secured top ranks are Dhiren Bhardwaj AIR 1, Anshul AIR 2, Sahil AIR 6,

Darsh Kaustubh AIR 8 and Divyansh Soni AIR 10. Dhiren and Anshul will be representing India at the International Biology Olympiad (IBO) to be held between July 24-28, 2021. A total of 19 students from Aakash Institute have cleared the part 2 of the exam.

Congratulations to the students on the impressive results, Aakash Chaudhry, Managing Director, Aakash Educational Services Limited (AELS) said: "We are very proud of our students who have made exemplary results even in this tough situation. We would like to congratulate all those who have cleared the IOQB, IOQC, IOQP and INMO exam 2021. This is a huge step towards achieving their NEET/JEE dreams. We would also like to thank the parents for extending support."

# Partners receiving payment from a firm not liable to pay service tax

What this effectively means is that partners would not be liable to pay GST on the remuneration received by them from a partnership firm but would account for such payment as income where income tax may be payable.

Team Absolute | New Delhi

In a big relief to individuals operating as partners in partnership firms, the Ahmedabad bench of the Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) has held that any remuneration received by them, as per the obligation of the partnership deed, would be treated as share of profit and not as service under service tax law.

What this effectively means is that partners would not be liable to pay GST on the remuneration received by them from a partnership firm but would account for such

payment as income where income tax may be payable. The CESTAT has further held that the self-assessment of service tax need not be challenged in the appeal to claim refund of service tax paid wrongly.

The decision that the ITC (input tax credit) ruling will not apply to self-assessment under service tax, after analysing the difference in the provisions under the customs law and service tax law, is noteworthy and can be applied in similar situations where the revenue authorities challenge the refund, PwC said in note on CESTAT ruling.

The CESTAT order came in a case where the appellant entered into a partnership agreement with a partnership firm (firm), wherein the appellant is a partner with 96 per cent share. As a partner, the appellant provided services related to the promotion and marketing of the firm's product. The appellant paid service tax and interest towards the remuneration received from the firm for these services. Upon realising that the services provided by a partner to a firm



do not fall under the ambit of services as per Finance Act, 1994, the appellant filed refund claims, which were rejected. The appellant preferred an appeal before the CESTAT seeking for refund of the service tax paid.

The CESTAT held that partners and partnership firm cannot be treated as two distinct persons, since the same persons, who are partners in the firm, are individually

called as partners and collectively called as firm. It said that the firm is not a different entity or person in law than its partners; it is merely an association of individuals, and a firm name is only a collective of those individuals who constitute a firm. As the activities carried out by the appellant for the firm are part of its duties as a partner, it cannot be said that the appellant partner and the firm have a relationship of service provider and service recipient. In this arrangement, it cannot be said that the partner is a service provider and the firm a service recipient, CESTAT said rejecting the revenue's contention to classify the service under business auxiliary service, since the appellant, being a partner, had discharged its duties pursuant to the partnership deed and held that all the activities performed by the appellant in the capacity of partner to the firm are not liable to service tax. It held that remuneration paid to partners is a special share of profit and not consideration for service.



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra on Monday shared a piece of advice for netizens saying should somebody feel overwhelmed by all that is happening around us, they ought to take time off for themselves, as the battle is not easy.

Shilpa took to Instagram to share a photograph of herself that shows a smile on her face and her hands folded in a namaste.

"If you're feeling overwhelmed by whatever is happening around us, it's okay to take a break from social media. For everyone who is dealing with someone battling Covid-19, or has been helping others find the resources they need, I understand that this battle is not easy for any of us. Take some time off. You need to mentally be in a place that allows you to think on your feet and be fit enough to help others. Do whatever allows you to strengthen yourself and come back stronger to do what you can. Stay strong, stay safe!" Shilpa shared in the Instagram post.

Shilpa's advice comes at a time when her husband Raj Kundra, children Samisha and Viaan, and her mother Sunanda Shetty, as well as in-laws are battling Covid-19. The actress, however, has tested negative. The family is living in isolation at home.

## SHILPA SHETTY: STRENGTHEN YOURSELF AND COME BACK STRONGER



## Neha Dhupia, Angad Bedi isolated in different towns on 3rd anniversary

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Bollywood couple Neha Dhupia and Angad Bedi are isolated from each other in two different towns on their third wedding anniversary. On Monday, Neha shared an Instagram post stating how she missed hubby Angad, along with photographs of the couple.

The actress wrote: "The many moods of loving you my love... I wish we were together, I wish we were not isolated, I wish I could hold you, I wish we could lie down under the shade of a big tree and talk about sweet nothing... I wish I could watch our baby girl jump on you with uncontrollable excitement... I wish for so much but then again all I wish for is for you and everyone, everywhere to be healthy and happy. Happy anniversary my love... see you on the other side... stronger #thistooshall-pass."

Husband Angad also shared a touching note missing Neha and their daughter Mehr. Sharing a few photographs from their wedding day on Instagram, he wrote: "Not the right time for any celebration. But since we completed 3 years today as man and wife. And yet we are isolated in two different towns away from each other. The hope of seeing you and mehr someday very soon brings a smile on my face in these trying times. Happy 3 my love... here is too many more god-willing @nehadhupia #10thmay." Neha and Angad tied the knot in a hush-hush ceremony on May 10, 2018. Daughter Mehr was born six months later in November.



## SUNIL GROVER'S LOOK IN 'SUNFLOWER' UNVEILED



Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor-comedian Sunil Grover look in the upcoming crime comedy series "Sunflower" has been revealed. In the first-look poster, Sunil points at what seems like a squint eye.

The web series drops on June 11. Written by Vikas Bahl and co-directed by Rahul Sengupta and Vikas Bahl, the show tells the story of a middle-class housing society in Mumbai called Sunflower, with quirky characters.

Sunil has a leading role in "Sunflower" as Sonu, which also stars actor Ranvir Shorey as Inspector Digendra, Girish Kulkarni as Inspector Tambe, Ashish Vidyarthi as Dilip Iyer, Mukul Chadda as Mr. Ahuja and Radha Bhatt as his wife Mrs. Ahuja.

The cast is joined by Ashish Kaushal as Raj Kapoor, Shonali Nagrani as Mrs. Raj Kapoor and Saloni Khanna, amongst others. Produced by Reliance Entertainment and Good Co., the series will release on Zee5.

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actor Tanmay Singh, after his debut musical hit film and & Sayonee song by arijit singh, now can be seen in the latest single 'Patthar Wargi' with actress Hina Khan. This song is an emotional romantic genre that depicts the girl's love for her partner.

About the song Tanmay said, "The song comes from a great musical team. National Award winner B Praak, Lyricist Jaani duo and my talented friend Ranvir have worked hard for the song. Generally, singles and music videos songs mostly cast models, but the director Kamal Chandra wanted an actor for this song Patthar Wargi, thus my casting was done.

The actor also shared his feelings about working with Hina. He said, "For the vision of the song Patthar Wargi, Hina was the perfect choice. She is excellent and if your co-actor is excellent then the performance also comes well.

The song 'Patthar Wargi' is produced by Anurag Chauhan and Vinay Gupta and will be released under the banner of T-Series. This romantic single is directed by Kamal Chandra and is set to release on 14th May 2021.



## Tanmay Ssingh and Hina Khan's romantic pair in "Patthar Wargi"

## Giorgia Andriani talks of her favourite Punjabi songs of the moment

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Actress Giorgia Andriani, who has featured in the song "Little star" with "Big Boss 13" star Shehnaaz Gill's brother Shehbaz Badesha, has spoken about some of her other favourite Punjabi songs.

"I am a very big fan of Punjabi music, that's what draws me close to it. My favourite Punjabi songs of the moment are 'Bombay to Punjab' by Divine and 'Mexico koka' by Karan Aujla. And of course, the Hindi song that I'm drawn to the most at the moment is 'Little star'," Giorgia said.

She added: "I can say that it's been the most spontaneous and fun work experience I've had so far, I enjoyed every bit of it. Shehbaz and Shehbaz are such loving, genuine and fun people. It's been a great experience working with them." The song is presented by Shehnaaz, and has lyrics by Monty Hunter. The music is produced by G Skillz.



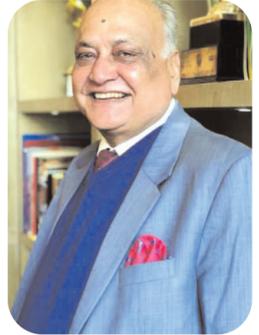
## FILM PRODUCERS BODY IMPPA EXTENDS FINANCIAL HELP TO ITS NEEDY MEMBERS

Team Absolute | Mumbai

Indian Motion Picture Producers Association has extended its help to its needy members. The President of the association, TP Agarwal has sent out mails to all members especially those in financial distress to avail the help of amount of 3000 INR."

Agarwal also has requested the members that those who have work and getting regular incomes should avoid apply for help.

Prime official of association Anil Nagrath said, "Someone or the other including their own association is looking after all the members of the the Film Industry but no one looks after the Producer who is the fulcrum running the Industry. When he faces bad times no one supports him and in critical time like these IMPPA provide relief to all needy members who applies for help."



## INSTAGRAM PIC OF THE DAY



Priyanka Chopra