

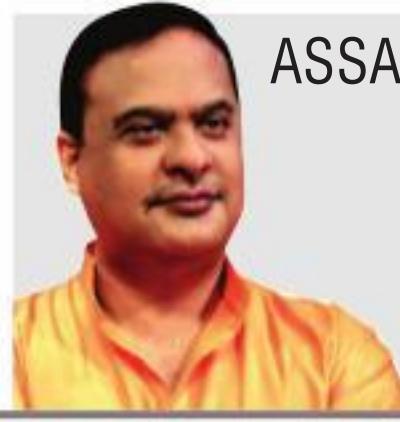


PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



SHARE VACCINE FORMULA
WITH PHARMA COMPANIES:
KEJRIWAL TO MODI

P2



ASSAM'S NEW CM

P6



BORIS SEEKS TO BOLSTER
ECONOMY, UNION IN NEW
PARLIAMENT

P10



'NEW WINDIES LOT
WON'T BRING
GLORY DAYS BACK'

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky with light rain. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 70% Min: 27%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 40.5°C (+1) Min: 24.2°C (-1)
SUN RISES 05:32 hrs SUN SETS 19:03 hrs
MOON RISES 06:26 hrs MOON SETS 19:38 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A Covid patient at Guru Teg Bahadur Covid Care Centre of the Gurudwara Rakab Ganj Sahib, in the Capital on Tuesday.

Kerala's K R Gowri Amma no more: Legendary Marxist firebrand and former minister K R Gowri, one of the founding leaders of the Communist movement in Kerala and the lone woman member in the state's first cabinet, died at a private hospital here on Tuesday. She was 102 and had been suffering from various age-related ailments for some time, party sources said. She was the lone surviving member of the first Kerala legislative Assembly and the only woman in the first state Cabinet.

Lower GDP growth forecast: Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for the current FY to 9.3 per cent, from the 13.7 per cent projected earlier, on account of the negative impact of the second wave of Covid-19. India is experiencing a severe second wave of infections which will slow the near-term economic recovery and could weigh on longer-term growth dynamics, it said.

PTI



SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The total active Covid-19 cases in the country dipped to 37,15,221 on Tuesday with a net decline of 30,016 cases being recorded in a span of 24 hours for the first time after 61 days, the Union health ministry said on Tuesday.

The total recoveries in a span of 24 hours too outnumbered the daily new Covid-19 cases after 61 days. India's cumulative recoveries have surged to 1,90,27,304 with 3,56,082 recoveries being registered in a span of 24 hours.

A total of 3,29,942 infections were reported in a span of 24 hours, taking the total tally of cases to 2,29,92,517 while the death toll climbed to 2,49,992 with 3,876 fresh fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Meanwhile, the cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has increased to 17,27 crore.

According to the ministry, 5,24,731 beneficiaries in the 18-44 age group have received their first jab in the last 24 hours and cumulatively 25,59,339 across 30 states and UTs since the start of the phase-3 of vaccination drive.

More than 25 lakh vaccination doses were administered in a span of 24 hours. Besides, 8,900 oxygen concentrators, 5,043

oxygen cylinders, 18 oxygen generation plants, 5,698 ventilators/BiPAP machines and more than 3.4 lakh Remdesivir vials received as part of global aid to India have been delivered/dispatched to states and UTs to bolster Covid combat, so far.

Delhi's Covid toll tops 20K: The national capital today reported 12,481 new coronavirus cases and 347 fatalities, while the positivity rate dipped to 17.76 per cent. Its Covid caseload rose to 13,48,699 and the death toll mounted to 20,010.

The number of new single-day infections is the lowest since April 12, while the positivity rate is the lowest since April 14 when it had stood at 15.9 per cent.

SEE P2

PTI

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Modi cancels UK visit for G7 summit over Covid-19 crisis

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Johnson as special guests. Last week, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar had visited the UK to attend the G-7 foreign ministers' meeting.

Two members of Jaisankar's delegation had contracted Covid-19 during the visit, forcing him to cancel the meet in person and deliver his speech virtually.

Johnson, it was learnt, was keen on Modi attending the G-7 Summit as a special invitee, given the prevailing Covid situation, it has been decided that the Prime Minister will not attend the G-7 Summit in person," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said in response to questions.

The summit of the leaders of the world's biggest economies will be held in Cornwall, UK, between 11 and 13 June.

The UK, US, Germany, France, Canada, Italy and Japan make up the G-7.

Leaders of India, Australia and South Korea were invited to this year's summit by

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 11 MAY

Telangana today decided to impose lockdown from 10 am tomorrow for the next 10 days and invite global tenders to procure vaccines on a warfooting to tackle the spread of Covid-19 even as the High Court directed police to allow patients coming in from other states as stopping them violated Articles 15 and 21 of the Constitution.

The court also pointed out that announcing a lockdown at such a short notice would bring hardship to migrant labourers who might choose to leave for their native places. The lockdown will be enforced between 10 am and 6 am on the next day but every morning between 6 am and 10 am shops, ration shops, public transport including Metro and state-run buses would be allowed to run.

However, for the rest of the

OXYGEN SCARCITY CLAIMS 11
Eleven patients died at Sri Venkateshwara Ramnarain Ruia Government General Hospital in Tirupati of Andhra Pradesh after a disruption in oxygen supply due to delayed arrival of an oxygen tanker from Tamil Nadu.

Angry relatives then barged into ICU as videos surfaced of patients gasping for breath.

The district collector M Hari Narayana said though 11 patients on oxygen support died they were able to save others in the largest government facilities of Rayalaseema. Chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy in two separate letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought technology transfer of Covaxin to other manufacturers to ramp up production and increase allocation of oxygen to the state. CM has announced Rs 10 lakh compensation for the kin of deceased and ordered an inquiry into the incident.

The very fact that out of all these construction activities going on simultaneously for different projects by different agencies, the petitioner has chosen to be a public spirited citizen only with regard to one project only speaks volumes about his intentions and motive behind filing the present petition," the Cen-

PIL another attempt to stall Vista project: Centre to HC

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Centre has told the Delhi High Court that the PIL seeking stay on the construction of Central Vista here amid the raging Covid pandemic was just another attempt to stall the project which has been facing such attempts from the beginning on one pretext or another.

The "intentions and motive" behind filing of the plea are evident from the fact that the instant project has been singled out by the petitioners despite several other agencies, including Delhi Metro, carrying out construction activities across the national capital, the Centre has alleged.

"The very fact that out of all these construction activities going on simultaneously for different projects by different agencies, the petitioner has chosen to be a public spirited citizen only with regard to one project only speaks volumes about his intentions and motive behind filing the present petition," the Cen-

tre's affidavit has contended. Since the affidavit was not yet on record, a bench of Chief Justice DN Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh listed the matter for hearing on May 12.

The court also allowed the early hearing application moved by the petitioners Anya Malhotra, who works as a translator, and Sohail Hashmi, a historian and documentary film maker who have contended the project was not an essential and therefore, can be put on hold for now during the pandemic.

"The facility provides for strict implementation of Covid protocol strictly and also adherence to Covid appropriate behaviour, such as sanitization, thermal screening, physical/social distancing and masking," the government has said in its affidavit.

It has also said that contractor has provided health insurance to all concerned workers against Covid and a separate facility for conducting RT-PCR test, isolation and medical aid has also been set up at the site.

Covid calamity: Racketeers see 'opportunity' in tragedies, fleece victims

MANOJ CHAUHAN
PATNA, 11 MAY

The global pandemic has failed to "sensitise" the society. Even as the vicious virus continues to reel humanity, people have been caught involved in the black-marketing of oxygen cylinders, medicines and even sexually harassing family members of Covid victims.

What, however, shocked everyone was the ordeal of a woman while she was trying to get treatment for her sick

software engineer husband from one hospital to another in the state. In the video which has now gone viral on social media, the woman who finally lost her husband narrated her harrowing tale of how the hospital staffs—from ward boys and compounders to even doctors—mocked her misery and allegedly sexually harassed her.

On 16 April, she admitted her husband, a software engineer in Noida, to a private hospital in Bhagalpur when his chest CT scan showed 60 per cent lung infection. He had contracted Covid-19 when he came to visit a relative in the town.

"My husband was lying on a dirty bed for three hours but none came to change the bedsheet. Instead, the ward boy pulled my dupatta (scarf) and touched my waist promising to help me," she said. "My husband kept on watching all these lying helplessly on the bed. I too didn't react since my only concern was his treatment," she narrated, breaking down before the camera.

Eventually, she shifted her husband to the local medical college and hospital in Bhagalpur after his condition didn't improve. According to her, at this hospital too authorities were indifferent to the patient's condition. "While nurses misbehaved with the patients' attendants, doctors were rather busy watching movies on their mobiles," she alleged.

Again, she shifted her husband to another private hospital in Patna but encountered the same apathy. "A doctor at the hospital often rubbed his

hips against me but I didn't react. I would have hit him with my slippers if my husband was not admitted at the hospital. But now that he is no more, I have decided to fight against such vultures," she said. Taking the matter seriously, Bhagalpur SP Natasha Gudia has formed a three-member team to probe the incident.

This, sadly, is not the end of the story. The authorities have arrested a gang of nine who had charged Rs 1.10 lakh for providing an oxygen cylinder to the relative of an NRI.

The NRI's relative had contracted Covid and urgently required oxygen cylinder but when he contacted a local youth, a hefty sum was demanded. The NRI who stays in the US transferred the amount to the man's bank account but later he reported the matter with the Economic Offences Unit.

Police have also arrested an ambulance owner who had charged Rs 9,000 against Rs 1,700 fixed by the government for transporting a patient from Patna to Bihta town, a dis-

tance of mere 40 km. A case has also been registered against Buddha Hospital, a private healthcare facility in Patna, for charging Rs 50,000 for a day's treatment against Rs 18,000 fixed by the government and also collecting Remdesivir injection from district administration after his release from the hospital.

As such, for many hospitals the catastrophe is "opportunity". The general complaints are that private hospitals have been fleecing victims over treatment.

Clear mass production of Covid vaccine: Kejriwal to PM

Centre must get more pharma firms for it: CM; Delhi to float global vax tender: Sisodia

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY



With many states including Delhi reeling under an acute shortage of Covid vaccines even as a catastrophic second coronavirus wave rips through India, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, stating that the Centre should share the vaccine formula of the two manufacturers with other capable pharmaceutical companies to scale up its production in the country.

In his letter to Modi, Kejriwal said the entire country could be provided a "safety cover" by allowing more companies to manufacture the Covid vaccines on a war footing ahead of the third wave of the pandemic.

He said the Centre can also terminate the monopoly on vaccine production through the patent law.

There are currently two Covid vaccine makers in the country—Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute of India—which are manufacturing Covaxin and Covishield vaccines respectively.

The two vaccine manufacturers could be given roy-

alty from the profit of other companies for the use of their original formulas, Kejriwal said.

"Presently, only two companies are manufacturing vaccines in India. Providing vaccines to the whole country through two companies only is not possible. It requires ramping up vaccine manufacturing at war footing. I request you to grant permission for mass production of the vaccines," the Delhi CM wrote in his letter to the PM.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal told an online press briefing that the Centre has the power to do so at such difficult times.

There is an urgent need to ramp up the manufacturing of vaccines on a war footing while developing a national policy to inoculate everyone in the next few months, he said.

"Delhi is facing a shortage of vaccines. Some states have not even started inoculation because they do not have the required number of doses. The vaccine shortage has become a big challenge for the country," Kejriwal said.

He said the Centre should ensure that all the vaccine manufacturing plants in the country start producing Covid vaccines.

"The two vaccine companies in the country are currently producing around 6-7 crore doses per month. At this rate, it will take two years to vaccinate everyone. Who knows how many waves of COVID will pass us by then and what will be extent of the destruction."

"The Centre should take the vaccine formula from these two companies and provide it to all those companies that can safely manufacture the vaccines," Kejriwal said.

"We have excellent industrialists, pharmaceutical companies that are the largest in the world and the best scientists. I believe that if given a chance, they will extend their full cooperation," he added.

Delhi has started inoculating people against the viral disease at a rapid pace and currently, around 1.25 lakh

doses of the vaccines are being administered daily, the CM claimed, adding that this will be scaled up to over three lakh doses in the coming days.

"We aim to vaccinate everyone in Delhi in the next three months, but the shortage of vaccines is a major problem," he iterated.

Kejriwal also pointed out that the national capital was left with Covid vaccine doses for only a few more days, adding that his government has been working on ramping up the oxygen and ICU facilities in the city for the last few days.

Meanwhile, Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia said that the Delhi government will float a global tender for procuring coronavirus vaccines.

Addressing a press conference here, Sisodia alleged that the BJP-ruled Centre was "forcing" state governments to invite global tenders for vaccine procurement.

The Central government wants the states to compete and fight with each other in the international market for vaccines, he charged. Sisodia also urged the Centre to launch a nationwide Covid vaccination drive on the line of pulse polio campaign.

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The national capital today reported 12,481 new coronavirus cases and 347 fatalities, while the positivity rate at 17.76 per cent was the lowest in nearly a month.

The number of single-day infections is the lowest since April 12, while the positivity rate was the lowest since April 14 when it had stood at 15.9 per cent.

The positivity rate has remained above the 19 per cent mark since April 17. It was 19.10 per cent yesterday, 21.67 per cent on Sunday and 23.34 per cent on Saturday.

On April 22, a positivity rate of 36.2 per cent, the highest so far, was recorded.

Delhi had reported 12,651 cases yesterday, 13,336 on Sunday, 17,364 on Saturday, 19,832 on Friday, 19,133 on Thursday, and 20,960 last Wednesday.

The city had logged 319 Covid deaths yesterday, 273 deaths on Sunday and 332 deaths on Saturday. The highest single-day count of 448 deaths was reported on May 3.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of 70,276 tests, including 54,619 RT-PCR/CBNAAT/True Nat tests, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

As many as 13,583 peo-

ple recovered from the infection during the last 24 hours, the health bulletin said.

There were currently 83,809 active cases, down from 85,258 the previous day, and 51,480 of them were under home isolation.

Delhi's cumulative tally of Covid cases rose to 14,48,699 and the death toll mounted to 20,010, the bulletin said.

Over 12.44 lakh Covid-affected people have recovered from the disease so far, the bulletin stated.

Of the 22,953 hospital beds meant for coronavirus patients in the city, 3,890 were vacant, it claimed.

Meanwhile, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain today said that while the number of daily new infections in the capital has started reducing, one cannot be at ease till the

positivity rate drops below 5 per cent.

"The number of cases has dipped to around 12,500 from a high of around 28,000. The positivity rate has also reduced to 19 per cent from a maximum of 36 per cent in April," he told reporters.

"But we cannot be at ease till the positivity rate drops below five per cent and the number of new infections is less than 3,000 to 4,000," Jain said.

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal had yesterday expressed hope that the peak of the second Covid wave has passed in Delhi. However, no concessions could be allowed just yet, he had said.

Jain today said the Delhi government has made all the preparations to ramp up vaccination but there were no vaccines available.

He said the hospital bed occupancy in the capital rose to around 22,000 this time as compared to the previous wave's high of around 9,500.

The situation with respect to oxygen supply has improved, but around 20,000 beds are still occupied, he said.

The health minister attributed the dip in the number of testing over the last few days to the restricted movement of people due to the lockdown.

Two brothers held for allegedly manhandling Police ASI

PTI
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Two brothers were arrested for allegedly manhandling an on-duty assistant police sub-inspector who had to pull out his service revolver in self-defence, officials said Tuesday.

They said the incident happened at the Kalyanpuri Central Market on Sunday when ASI Devender and constable Manoj were on patrol duty and asked the two brothers riding a motorcycle to show their document which they allegedly could not.

The two accused then started arguing with the police, but constable Manoj seized their motorcycle and deposited it at the police station, a senior police officer said.

Meanwhile, the accused called their accomplices and they started manhandling and assaulting Devender who was still in the market when Manoj went to park the seized motorcycle. Some of them also threw stones at the ASI who sustained an injury in his right hand, the officer said.

The officer said the ASI pulled out his service revolver to save himself from the assailants. There was no misuse of the service weapon which was taken out in self-defence, police claimed.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

(ORDER 5, RULE 20 OF THE CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE)

PUBLICATION NOTICE

DEFENDANT

IN THE COURT OF

Sh. Harish Dandan

District Judge

(Commercial Court)

South-West District,

Court No. 503 6th Floor

District Courts, Dwarka

New Delhi

Suit No. CS (Comm):

205/2019

Punjab & Sind Bank

Versus

Khan Chand

—Defendant No. 1

Sh. Khan Chand, s/o Sh.

Bhagwan Singh, Smt. Poonam, w/o Sh. Khan Chand.

—Defendant No. 2,

Both At: R/o A-117, First

Floor, Gulab Bagh, Uttam

Nagar, New Delhi-110059.

Business Office: M/s. Shri

Sai Enterprises

Plot No. 140, Matiyala Village, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059.

Whereas You are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby noticed that if you shall not defend the case on the 01-06-2021

the day fixed for the final dis-

posal, it will be heard and determined ex-parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 07-04-2021.

District Judge (Commercial Court)

South-West District, District Courts, Dwarka New Delhi

Seal of the Court

CHANCE OF NAME

I, PIKAK GIRI, R/o. VILL. PAIK BARH, DIST: PURBA MEDINIPUR, PIN-721427, declare that 'Priti' GIRI and 'Preethy' GIRI is same and identical person, vide affidavit before LD. 1st Class Judicial Magistrate Alipore dated: 15.03.2021.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

THIS is to all concern that my clients (1) Sukeesh Choudhury Bhattacharya, (2) Parul Rani Bhattacharya and (3) Kakali Bhattacharya, all of 70/2, Selimpur Road, Kolkata-700031 have lost or misplaced three numbers of original registered Deed of Conveyances being Deed No. 6451 for the year 1952 registered in the Office of the District Sub-Registrar,

Falguni Ray Advocate Mob.: 9674291301

Defendant No. 3

Sh. Sanjay Dutt Morya, r/o C/o Sh. Sh. Bhagwan Singh, D-100, Sector II, Noida, UP-201301.

Whereas You are intentionally evading service of summons it is hereby noticed that if you shall not defend the case on the 01-06-2021

the day fixed for the final dis-

Alipore, recorded in Book No. V, Vol. No. 108, Pages 96 to 102, in favour of Smt. Rani Bhattacharya, for a land measuring about 1 cotta 8 chittacks and another deed being No. 6054 registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Alipore, recorded in Book No. I, Vol. No. 90, Pages 275 to 279 in favour of said Sulata Rani Bhattacharya and Parul Rani Roy for a demarcated land measuring about 4 cottahs, all and another Deed being No. 8152 for the year 1955. A Deed of Partition registered in the Office of the Sub-Registrar, Alipore recorded in Book No. I, Vol. No. 134, Pages 164 to 167 in respect of 2 cottahs of land with Mouza Dhakuria, CS Kathian No. 83, Dag No. 1233, J.L. No. 18, now known and numbered as premises No. 70/2, Selimpur Road, Kolkata-700031 and despite repeated search the said abovementioned could not trace out the above-mentioned original deeds and could not find out the original owner of the said Deed handedover to me or to my clients and my clients shall reward properly to that effect.

The remarks were

made after the Delhi government apologised for making an incorrect state-

ment on May 10 about the COVID facility in the hos-

pital.

The bench was informed by the Delhi government that for want of oxygen cylinders and concentrators the beds have not yet been opera-

tionalised.

Taking note of the sub-

missions, the bench directed

the Delhi government offi-

cials to be cautious in future with regard to incor-

rect statements being made before the court.

It said such statements

would erode the court's

confidence in the offi-

cials.

Senior advocate Rahul

Mehra, appearing for the

Delhi government, said

that 150 beds would be

operationalised during

the day and another 100

would be ready by Wednes-

day.

The court directed the

Delhi government to give

category wise -- with oxy-

gen, without oxygen, ICU

and non-ICU -- details of

the beds at the hospital for

COVID-19 patients and listed

the matter for hearing on

May 18.

During the hearing, a

Delhi government offi-

cials told the court that

oxygen cylinders delivered

to the hospital could not



We cannot be at ease till the positivity rate drops below five per cent.

DELHI HEALTH MINISTER SATYENDRA JAIN

ON THE NUMBER OF DAILY NEW INFECTIONS REDUCING

Haryana gets oxygen tankers airlifted from Bhubaneshwar

CM Khattar claims there is no shortage of O2, but says Covid has now spread to rural areas

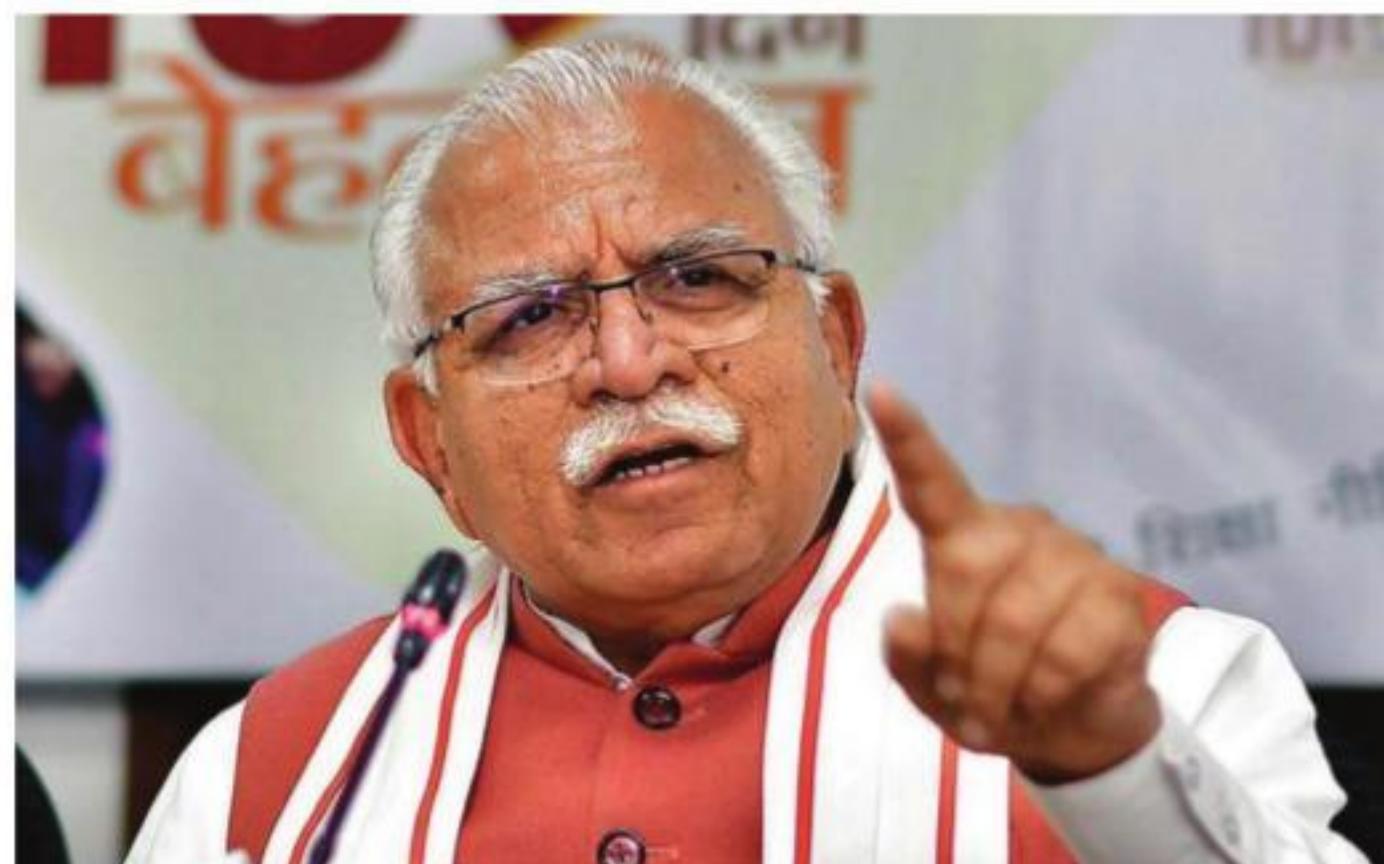
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 11 MAY

Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Tuesday flagged off two tankers from the International Airport in Chandigarh that were to be airlifted by an Indian Air Force (IAF)'s cargo plane for bringing oxygen supply to Haryana. These tankers have been sent to Bhubaneshwar and will carry about 45 tonnes of oxygen.

The CM said tankers are being airlifted daily for oxygen supply so that uninterrupted oxygen supply can be ensured and the Covid-19 patients in Haryana do not have to face any problem. He said that the tankers will return next day with liquid medical oxygen supply from the Tata Steel plant in Odisha.

The CM said that the supply of medical oxygen is coming from many places such as Rourkela, Jamnagar, Angul etc. by train or is being airlifted. So far the aircraft has made 19 rounds and 436 metric tons of medical oxygen



has been supplied through 36 tankers.

Khattar claimed that the oxygen supply was being ensured for patients in all districts without any hindrance and "hence in this way an extraordinary initiative has been taken by the government to save human life".

The CM said the Indian Air

Force is doing commendable work during the Covid-19 pandemic and thanked the IAF for this. Khattar said 500-bed hospitals are being set up in Panipat and Hisar. Army's cooperation is also being taken in this work, he said.

Besides this, the number of hospital beds was being increased in all the districts of

282 MT. Apart from it, the demand for getting additional oxygen has also been made to the Centre, he said.

Khattar also claimed that the state government was supplying oxygen to all hospitals as per their requirements. At the same time, an oxygen cylinder refilling facility was being made available to the patients staying in home isolation. A portal has been made for this system, on which patients are also applying and social organisations are also getting themselves registered.

The CM said that till now the coronavirus outbreak was limited to urban areas but the disease has now started spreading its wings in rural areas too.

"Therefore everyone has to remain vigilant. Teams have been constituted to conduct door to door investigations in the villages and every department is cooperating for this," the CM said. He said all those who are taking part in agitations should be made to stay in isolation centres and should be allowed to go back to their respective villages only after proper medical screening.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 11 MAY

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)'s Punjab president and Member of Parliament (MP) Bhagwant Mann on Tuesday accused the Captain Amarinder Singh-led state government of "forcibly snatching" the land of the farmers of Punjab for the construction of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway under the Bharatmala project.

In a statement, Mann said that the Amarinder government's "decree to forcibly occupy the lands of the farmers should be cancelled immediately and the problems of the farmers should be solved before acquiring the land".

He alleged that the Congress-led Punjab government had issued a notice to put the amount of the land under the Expressway in the accounts of the farmers forcibly and at the same time, the farmers had been warned that if they do not take the government price of the land within 60 days and do not give possession of the land, then the land will be occupied with the help of Punjab



Police.

Mann said the AAP strongly condemns the "dictator's decree" of the Amarinder government and that his party will not allow any farmer's land to be taken away forcibly.

He said the Narendra Modi-led Central government wants to buy the farmers' land at throwaway prices only at the collector rates for the construction of Expressways and national state routes across Punjab under the Bharatmala Project, but the farmers are strongly opposing the collector rates.

He said that even though this Expressway has to be built by the Central government, the land for this route has to be purchased by the Punjab government. "To appease his boss PM Modi, Amarinder is forcibly giving

the land of the Punjab farmers on collector rates, while the farmers are demanding to fix the price of their lands on the common market price," Mann charged.

He said fixing the price of the land without talking to the farmers was a "big fraud" with them. Mann said that the demands of the farmers are valid. The AAP leader said the farmers should get the price of the land as per the market rate and normal roads from the newly constructed Expressways should be made for them. Also, the condition of taking no objection certificate for doing any business on the land adjacent to the Expressway should be abolished, he added.

Mann said with increase in the height of the road, the water gets accumulated in the fields thus spoiling the crops. Therefore, better management of drainage of rain water should be made from the Expressway, he said. He also said that every member of the family of the farmers whose land comes under the Expressway should be given a government job.

DRDO to help set up O2 plants in HP hосps: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 11 MAY

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Tuesday said the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) will establish oxygen plants in civil hospital Palampur, zonal hospital Mandi, civil hospitals of Khaner and Rohru in Shimla, regional hospital Solan and medical college Nahan.

Thakur said these oxygen plants were sanctioned by the Central government and presently oxygen plants were functional at zonal hospital Dharamshala, DDU Shimla, medical colleges of Chamba, Shimla, Tanda, Ner Chowk, Hamirpur and MMU Kumarhatti.

"Recently, the government of India has sanctioned 13 more PSA oxygen plants for the state which are being established at Palampur, Mandi, Ghumarwin, Hamirpur, Reckong Peo, Ratti, Rampur, Sarahan, Kullu, DDU Shimla, IGMC Shimla, Dharamshala and Ner Chowk," he added. He stated that there was adequate supply of oxygen in health institutions and efforts were being made to enhance the supply by setting

up more oxygen plants, besides increasing the bed capacity to facilitate Covid patients.

The Chief Minister said the state was producing 75.81 metric tonne oxygen per day while the consumption was 27.83 metric tonne per day.

The state presently had 4,729 D-type oxygen cylinders and 1,535 B-type cylinders.

At present, eight industrial units were also working for manufacturing oxygen in the private sector in the state and the production was 57.03 metric tonne per day, the CM stated.

He further stated that the state had urged the Government of India to provide 5000 D-Type and 3000 B-Type cylinders to the state.

"The Union ministry of health and family welfare has provided 75,000 PPE kits and 75,000 N-95 masks to the state," he added.

He added the state government was also making all out efforts to enhance bed capacity keeping in view the rise in the number of Covid patients in the hospitals.

Presently there are around 3,700 beds available in various health institutes of the state and almost half of them are unoccupied.

HP's Covid positivity rate spikes to 26.3 per cent

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 11 MAY

Amid a spike in Covid cases in Himachal Pradesh, the state's positivity rate has increased to 26.3 per cent in the first week of May (3 to 9 May) as compared to 20.04 per cent in previous week (26 April to 2 May). HP National Health Mission, mission director Dr Nipun Jindal said the positivity rate in the last week from 3 to 9 May had come out to be 26.3 per cent while it was 20.04 per cent in the week from 26 April to 2 May.

"The districts of Bilaspur, Hamirpur, Kangra, Mandi, Shimla, Sirmour and Solan have recorded a positivity rate of more than 20 per cent in the last week," he added.

Jindal stated that the weekly testing conducted in the last week had crossed one lakh tests (1,02,455) as compared to 84,351 tests that were conducted in the previous week.

This was the result of the state government's efforts to drastically ramp up the testing across Himachal.

If the case fatality rate was to be compared between the last two weeks, the case fatality had decreased from 1.38 percent to 1.17 percent in the last week, he said.

It is worth mentioning that 3,093 Covid cases and 55



During the Covid vaccination drive in the tribal Lahaul Spiti district.

deaths were reported in the state in the last 24 hours, taking the total of active cases to 32,469 with 1,872 fatalities.

Jindal said the state level Covid Clinical Committee was conducting a virtual capacity building session for all the stakeholders.

In addition, a training session for judicious and appropriate use of Remdesivir and oxygen was organized for medical professionals, and besides, they were also trained on management of patients in home isolation.

A panel discussion of

experts on the treatment to be started and precautions to be taken during home isolation was also held, he added.

He stated that the Health department had also issued directions for administering second dose of Covid vaccine free of cost at government Covid vaccination centres (CVC) to those prioritised groups who had received their 1st dose in the private CVC on or before 30 April. The prioritized group includes health care workers, frontline workers and persons aged more than 45 years, he added.

'Covid report not necessary for essential healthcare'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 11 MAY

Himachal Pradesh Health department on Monday issued directions to all Chief medical officers and medical superintendents of all hospitals to not delay essential health services to any patient for want of Covid negative test report.

A state government official said all the health care providers should follow precautions, observe infection control procedures and get themselves vaccinated against Covid.

"Strict action will be taken if any case of denial of services to the patients reaching the hospital comes to notice," he added.

Besides, to ensure good quality maternal health services in the field, advisory has also been issued for treatment and care of pregnant women and they will be provided access to four antenatal check-ups during pregnancy as was the case earlier," he added.

HP Red Cross starts counselling for Covid patients, families

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, 11 MAY

Himachal Pradesh State Red Cross on Tuesday started doctor's counselling service for people living in home isolation due to the Corona epidemic and their family members so that they do not suffer from any kind of depression.

A spokesman of the State Red Cross said a control room has been set up at the headquarters level where the staff and volunteers of the Red Cross will be stationed from 9 am to 5 pm.

"Anyone living in home isolation can contact the control room on phone numbers 0177-2621868, 0177-2629969 and 94599-77733 wherein the staff members and volunteers will provide the contact number of the doctor available.

The specialist doctors from various faculties will also be available in this team of doctors and this counselling service will be available from 9 am to 5 pm," he said, adding patients can also send audio or video clips so that they can be assessed for advice.

He stated that the doctors besides giving advice on Corona pandemic will also answer queries of such persons.

The control room will also provide the contact number of the Red Cross Center of the concerned district so that any assistance can be taken in collaboration with the district administration.

HP Governor Bandaru Dattatraya lauded the Red Cross for starting the service and said that the patients and the people taking care of them will be benefited.

The chairperson of the State Red Cross Hospital Welfare Branch Dr Sadhna Thakur thanked the doctors for playing an active role in Covid pandemic and said despite being busy in performing their duties in the pandemic, they had decided to provide this service.

Thakur also appealed to the people of the state especially the youth aged above 18 and who were going to be administered Covid vaccination to come forward for blood donation and said this will help in saving many precious human lives.

"In the current crises of Covid pandemic, vaccination is proving very effective. The vaccination of youth aged 18 and above would be rolled out soon and stocking blood before it would help in saving many lives in future," she added.

HC raps JNU for 'apathy' towards students, faculty pleads for Covid facilities on campus

PTI

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY



a question of taking interest in doing so," it added.

The court said such a conduct of the varsity, in not responding to the requests, "would constitute gross neglect by the JNU administration in a situation which is completely alarming".

"The University is bound to take care of the health of the students and teachers, and make available the facilities, to the extent possible, within the campus, especially considering the prevalent shortages for hospital beds etc.," Judicial notice can be taken of the fact that various organisations and institutions have gone out of their way, during the current pandemic, to make various facilities available to their employees and other stakeholders, in order to safeguard their health during the current surge of the

production of oxygen, given by the School of Life Sciences.

"The authorities in JNU to consider if there is any modification required to the said proposals as has been suggested by the students and teachers associations. The modalities for creation of COVID care facility shall be mentioned in the report."

The direction was passed as the petitioners, represented by advocate Abhik Chinni, had told the court that despite submitting a proposal for creation of COVID care facility and generation of oxygen within the campus, no response was received from the administration which amounts to "dereliction of duty" by it.

He also told the court that letters to the Secretary of Ministry of Education, the Secretary of the University Grants Commission and the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) of the area evoked no response from any of them.

The lawyer for the SDM told the court that since the entire campus is within the control of the JNU administration, they are unable to do anything.

"However if the administration permits, they are willing to coordinate with the faculty, students and the administration, in order to set up a COVID care facility, which would be attached to some hospital," the SDM's lawyer

told the court.

In view of the submission, the court directed the SDM/ADM of the area to file a status report on whether a COVID care facility can be created at JNU in accordance with the applicable guidelines, and if so, to indicate the manner in which the doctors and paramedics, as also nurses, would be made available there and whether the facility would be tied up with any particular hospital.

If it can be linked to a hospital, then the name of the hospital will also be indicated in the report after obtaining its concurrence, the court directed the SDM.

The JNU Registrar was also directed to convene a meeting in the evening of the VC, other internal administrative staff, SDM/ADM concerned along with six representatives of the students and the teachers unions, as also the departments which have given the proposals, at 11 AM tomorrow i.e. May 12, to discuss the proposals/ letters for setting up of a COVID care facility in the JNU campus.

A second meeting shall also be convened by the Registrar chaired by the VC, other internal administrative staff, SDM/ADM concerned along with six representatives of the students and the teachers unions, as also the departments which have given the proposals, at 11 AM tomorrow i.e. May 12, to discuss the proposals/ letters for setting up of a COVID care facility in the JNU campus.

5 of 13 Covid +ve inmates who escaped from Rewari Jail held

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, 11 MAY

Haryana Police has arrested five of the thirteen Covid-19 positive prisoners, who escaped from Rewari Jail on Saturday.

Giving this information on Tuesday, a spokesperson of Haryana Police said those who were arrested were identified as Naveen Sharma alias Golu, Ajit alias Neta, Rajesh alias Kalia, Ashish and Abhishek.

The spokesperson said efforts were on to nab the other inmates. All were lodged in the section designated for Covid patients and fled after cutting grilles of their barracks. These inmates were sent to Rewari jail after they tested positive for Covid.

While nine of them were brought here from the Naraul jail, four from Rewari city jail three days ago. They are accused of various heinous crimes.

The Fideri jail is functioning as a dedicated Covid care centre to isolate and extend medical treatment to Covid-positive inmates. In all, 493 inmates from various districts were lodged here on Saturday.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one female was admitted for treatment in Sanjay Gandhi Hospital, Delhi on 28.04.2021 from Half Way Home, Sector-3, Rohini, Delhi. During treatment she died on 29.04.2021. The dead body has been kept preserved for 72 hrs. for identification. In this regard a DD No. 45A, Dated 30.04.20



Covid patients over-staying in hospitals 'unnecessarily' should go home to make way for serious ones to get treatment.

KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER B S YEDIYURAPPA

WHILE SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER VISITING A COVID WAR ROOM

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2021

04

THUMBNAILS



Connaught Place wears a deserted look during the ongoing lockdown in New Delhi on Tuesday. AGENCY

Doctors warn against cow dung 'therapy'

Gujarat doctors say smearing of cow dung on body does not give protection against coronavirus but may cause other infections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, WASHINGTON
11 MAY

Doctors in Gujarat have warned against a so-called 'cow-dung therapy', saying smearing of cow dung on the body does not give protection against coronavirus but may cause other infections including mucormycosis.

A small group of people has been visiting a cow shelter run by Shree Swami in arayan GurukulVishwaidya Prathishthan here to take the therapy, believing that it increases immunity against Covid-19.

The shelter houses over 200 cows. For the last one month, around 15 persons visit it every Sunday to apply cow dung and cow urine on the body. It is then washed off with cow milk, said an SGVP official. Those taking the therapy include some frontline workers and people working at medical stores, he said.

"Since cow dung also car-

ries several fungi, they may enter into the body and infect you. I urge people to be little aware and not put their lives in danger," said Desai.

US Customs finds cow dung cakes in Indian passenger's bag:

The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) agents discovered cow dung cakes in a leftover baggage of a passenger from India at an international airport in the suburb of Washington DC, according to officials. Cow dung cakes are prohibited in the US as they are considered to be potential carriers of the highly contagious foot and mouth disease.

They were destroyed, the US CBP said on Monday.

That is not a typo. CBP agriculture specialists found two cow dung cakes in a suitcase that was left behind after passengers from an Air India flight cleared CBP's inspection station on 4 April, a media release said on Monday.

The visibility for the forthcoming fortnight is conveyed to them in advance to enable better and more effective planning by them, the statement said.

Prioritise vaccinating those due for second dose: Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

The Centre appealed to states on Tuesday to prioritise vaccinating those due for second dose of Covid vaccine and reserve at least 70 per cent of the shots supplied from the Central pool for the purpose.

States have also been urged to minimise wastage of vaccine doses, the health ministry said in a statement.

All wastage more than the

national average hereafter is to be adjusted from the subsequent allocations to that state or union territory.

The urgent need to address a large number of beneficiaries waiting for second dose of vaccine was stressed in a meeting held by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan and Dr R S Sharma, the Chairman of Empowered Group on Technology and Data Management to Combat Covid-19, with state officials to review the status of Covid vaccination on Tuesday.

States were urged to "ensure all beneficiaries who have taken the first dose are prioritised for the second doses", the ministry said in the statement. In this regard, states can reserve at least 70 per cent of the vaccines supplied to them from the Government of India channel for second dose vaccination and the remaining 30 per cent for first dose.

Presenting details of states who have ensured high coverage of priority groups (like population aged 45+, front-line workers and healthcare workers) and the others, the Union Health secretary urged states to ensure that priority groups are vaccinated.

In several cases, the sole bread winner of the family has succumbed to Covid-19, Chavda said while emphasising the need for paying compensations.



A health worker gives vaccine dose to a woman at a vaccination centre in Hyderabad, on Tuesday. AGENCY

CORONA NEWS

Karnataka gets its first Oxygen Express: Karnataka government heaved a sigh of relief on Tuesday following the arrival of its first 'Oxygen Express' containing 120 tonnes of liquid oxygen from Tatanagar, Jamshedpur, at the inland container depot in the city. In another development, chief minister B S Yediyurappa, on Tuesday launched an OxyBus service to aid Covid patients. Each makeshift bus can support up to eight patients. About 20 units would be set up near government hospitals in the city for now with plans for additional buses under way to cover the state. Meanwhile, two crore Covid vaccine doses will be procured through global tender to meet the increased demand and facilitate vaccination of age group of 18-44 years. SNS/PTI

JMC offers food to stray dogs, cattle during lockdown: The Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) has come to the rescue of stray dogs and cattle that were virtually starving due to closure of roadside eateries and restaurants because of Covid-19 lockdown. JMC is ensuring that no stray animal is left unfed and is daily providing vegetable waste sourced from Narwal market to stray cattle. Also, stray dogs are being fed biscuits and other food materials on a daily basis. JMC has appealed to the general public to feed as many strays and help these animals survive. This will help to prevent aggressive behaviour of the strays. SNS

Restrictions being enhanced in Kargil: Ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr festival, authorities in Kargil district of Ladakh decided to further enhance restrictions on the public to prevent the spread of Covid pandemic, officials said on Tuesday. The unanimous decision was taken at a joint meeting of various stakeholders, including representatives of religious and political organisations in Kargil, they said. Kargil has recorded 44 Covid-related deaths among the 2,680 positive cases since the outbreak of the pandemic. PTI

Shrouds selling more than new clothes: Zainul Abedin Ali Khan, the spiritual head of Ajmer Dargah, on Tuesday called upon the community to observe Eid with simplicity, saying there can be no celebration when more shrouds than new clothes are being sold due to the pandemic. He said no gathering should be there and all guidelines issued by the government should be followed strictly. PTI

Covid: J&K govt to give life-long pension to senior citizens: As the graph of those dying due to Covid-19 is rising in Jammu and Kashmir, the Lt- Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday announced that senior citizens who have lost the only earning member of the family will be provided life-long special pension. Announcing a slew of measures for families severely hit by the pandemic, Sinha said children who have lost their parents to Covid-19 pandemic will be provided with special scholarship by the government. He said the government will reach out to each and every affected family and provide them financial assistance. SNS

Guj Cong demands ₹4 lakh each for Covid-19 victims

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 11 MAY



Three-wheeler auto union starts Auto Ambulance service for Covid patients in Lucknow, on Tuesday. AGENCY

In a populist move, the Opposition Congress in Gujarat has demanded that Rs four lakh each should be paid as compensation to the kin of victims of Covid-19 pandemic.

Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) president Amit Chavda said at a press conference on Monday that the compensation be paid as per the provision of the Disaster Management Act in force for last one year.

This demand by the Congress comes in the wake of widespread resentment among the people regarding the plight of Covid-19 affected.

As per the GPCC estimates, nearly 8,400 people have died due to Covid-19.

in Gujarat till Sunday last.

The Congress would soon launch a state-wide drive to collect all information about the victims entitled for the compensation, said the GPCC chief. He said that Section 12 of the Disaster Management Act has the provision for disbursement of ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life.

There are precedents of the government paying such compensations in the events of natural calamities and accidents, said the GPCC president.

In several cases, the sole bread winner of the family has succumbed to Covid-19, Chavda said while emphasising the need for paying compensations.

States were urged to "minimise vaccine wastage", the statement said. While the overall levels have considerably reduced, Union Health Secretary pointed that there were many states which still needed to substantially reduce the wastage.

"All wastage more than the national average hereafter is to be adjusted from the subsequent allocations to that state and UT," the statement said.

In this context, it was also pointed out that certain states are able to report a negative wastage because the well-trained health workers can extract maximum doses per vial than what is otherwise generally earmarked.

States were briefed about procurement from the 'Other' channel which has been opened in the Liberalised Phase-III Strategy of Vaccination.

Stalin, newly elected MLAs take oath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 11 MAY

Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin, his Cabinet colleagues, AIADMK top leader K Palaniswami - who is set to be leader of the Opposition - on Tuesday took oath as MLAs in the Assembly.

As soon as the House convened with pro-tem Speaker K Pithchandhi in the chair, Stalin was the first to take oath.

Following him, other ministers, beginning with senior legislator and water resources minister Duraimurugan took the oath.

Two ministers, S Sivasankar (Backward Classes Welfare) and M Mathivathan (Tourism), did not take the oath as they were being treated for Covid-19. Former chief minister K Palaniswami took the oath after the ministers. While Stalin, his Cabinet colleagues and DMK MLAs made a solemn affirmation, most AIADMK members, including Palaniswami and former deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam took the oath in the name of God. Some other members, including AIADMK's KPMumusamy, made the affirmation in the name of their conscience.

Assam gets first woman FM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, 11 MAY



Dr Hiranta Biswa Sarma, Assam's first woman Finance Minister.

Assam follows the footsteps of the Centre with a new woman finance minister in Dr Hiranta Biswa Sarma's Cabinet. Ajanta Neog, MLA from Golaghat, has been allocated the important portfolio in the BJP-led alliance government in Dispur.

The former Congress minister in Tarun Gogoi's Cabinet, Neog creates history by becoming the first FM of Assam (like Nirmala Sitharaman in PM Modi's Union Cabinet).

Taking oath as a Cabinet minister yesterday, Neog, who had left the Congress to join BJP, was given the finance department by chief minister Sarma, who himself served as an influential minister in both Gogoi and his predecessor Hiteswar Saikia's Congress Cabinet.

Widow of former Congress minister Nagen Neog, Ajanta Neog, creates history by becoming the first social welfare portfolio in the new government.

Sarma has kept home, personnel, Loknirman (PWD) and any other departments not allotted to the ministers. In Sanbaranda Sonowal's Cabinet (2016-2021), he served many important departments like finance, health, education, PWD, etc. State BJP president Ranjeet Kumar Dass has been allotted the panchayat & rural development, public health engineering, food & civil supplies, consumer affairs, etc.

Atul Bora, president of Assam

BARE FACT



Deserted roads during a curfew imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19 in Jammu on Tuesday. AGENCY

71 bodies fished out from Ganges in Bihar so far

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA, 11 MAY

ies had flown downstream from neighbouring Uttar Pradesh.

"The Bihar government is seized of the matter of unfortunate case of floating mortal remains in River Ganga..

The bodies have floated into Buxar district, where these were found floating in the river, triggering suspicion that the abandoned corpses could be those of Covid patients.

He said the chief minister was pained at both the tragedy as well as the "harm" to river Ganga.

"He has always been par-

ticular about the purity and uninterrupted flow of the river and has asked the administration to intensify patrolling to ensure this is not repeated.

"Last rites of 71 bodies performed as per protocols. A net has been placed in the Ganges in Ranighat, bordering UP and Bihar. We have advised the UP administration to be vigilant. Our administration is keeping vigil, too.

Advise all to give respect to the dead and also to Maa Ganga," Jha added.

A large number of bloat-

ed corpses were seen floating in the river bed in Chausa block of Buxar district on Monday, triggering shock waves.

Though some news channels claimed these were of Covid patients who might have been abandoned by resource-starved family members or dumped by callous officials, the local administration had strongly denied the same, asserting that none of the deceased was a local resident, and the bodies had flown downstream from adjoining UP districts.

Cong creating false panic in Covid battle: Nadda to Sonia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY



The BJP president also accused Congress leaders, including a chief minister, of trying to actively create vaccine hesitancy during the "once-in-a-century" pandemic. Under Modi, the fight against the pandemic is driven by unwavering belief in science, support to innovation, trust in Covid warriors and cooperative federalism, he said.

The BJP president also hit back over the criticism of his party for holding big poll ral-

lies in April even as Covid cases surged across the nation and also of the ongoing construction of the Central Vista project. Congress leaders, he said, held massive election rallies in Kerala causing a spike in the Covid cases and are now "grandstanding" about poll rallies elsewhere.

Hitting back at the Congress over the CWC criticism that the Centre had abdicated its responsibility on the vaccination and left the matter to states, Nadda wondered if there is so much gap between the party and its leaders in power in some states as he noted that its top functionaries in April had called for decentralisation of the inoculation programme.

Rahul to PM: Remove rose-tinted glasses

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the Covid situation in the country, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he should remove his rose tinted glasses through which nothing is seen except the Central Vista," Gandhi tweeted.

The former Congress president also asked people to join the 'SpeakUpToSaveLives' campaign to strengthen the fight against Covid, and urged them to provide a helping hand to the needy in these distressing times.

The party has been arranging oxygen, beds and essential medicines for those in need and has also called for free vaccination for all in the country.

TENDER

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान (एस), भुवनेश्वर
ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES (AIIMS), BHUBANESWAR
Sijua, Post : Dumuduma, Bhubaneswar - 751019
File Ref No: AIIMS/BBSR/EE (AC&R)/55/2020/17 Dated: 10th May 2021
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Bhubaneswar invites e-Tender for "Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Air conditioning System for UPS Rooms at AIIMS HOSPITAL, BBSR". Detailed description, terms & conditions and document for processing e-Tender along with last date of submission can be viewed and downloaded from e-Tender portal of AIIMS, Bhubaneswar website www.aiimsbhubaneswar.nic.in.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer (AC&R)
AIIMS, Bhubaneswar



Introduction of e-vehicles will not only enable us to improve the pollution level in the city but will also be helpful to the operators in times of soaring fuel prices by the Centre

STATE TRANSPORT MINISTER, FIRHAD HAKIM
ON USE OF MORE NUMBERS OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

THUMBNAILS



A Covid survivor flashes victory sign with a health worker, during his discharge from a government-run Covid hospital, in Kolkata on Tuesday. **IANS**

IAF delivers O2 concentrators at Kolkata airport: The Kolkata airport authorities on Tuesday informed that an IAF aircraft delivered 244 pieces of oxygen concentrators at the airport. The movement of the equipment by the airport's Covid warriors was completed on time following all safety measures. **SNS**

Sitalkuchi killings: The six CISF personnel, summoned by the West Bengal CID in connection with the Sitalkuchi killings, did not turn up for questioning on Tuesday, a senior officer said. The investigating agency is yet to get an explanation from the CISF on their absence at the CID headquarters, he said. A Special Investigating Team of the CID is probing the incident. **PTI**

Eastern Command provides medical assistance to other states: In line with the Indian Armed Forces' comprehensive and coordinated response to India's battle against Covid, the Eastern Command has provided medical assistance to other states. HQ Eastern command is constantly monitoring its teams for updates and assistance required by them. **SNS**

Kolkata Port's Centenary Hospital to install O2 tank



The authorities of Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata on Tuesday informed that an oxygen storage tank is being installed at the port's Centenary Hospital to cope with the rising need for medical oxygen in this Covid crisis.

The Kolkata port spokesperson informed that at present the oxygen requirement at Centenary Hospital has increased tremendously because of the pandemic. "We used to consume about 10 jumbo oxygen cylinders a day and that has gone up to about 80 a day. This means that the cylinders have to be refilled on a daily basis and can be difficult when the supply is limited." It is learned that to overcome this problem, a British company, Linde was contacted and they have offered to set up a 3KL (3000 liters) liquid oxygen tank in the hospital premises.

This should fulfil the oxygen demand of the hospital for about 20 to 30 days. The tank will be filled up by the liquid oxygen tankers of Linde as and when required, said the spokesperson.

The port chairman Vinit Kumar, has directed the installation of such a tank in port's hospital, immediately.

Under the guidance of Union ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, all hospital administration has been totally geared up to meet the challenging times while all categories of employees are working on a war footing basis, a port statement said. **SNS**

Torrential rain in Bengal, 8 dead

Heavy showers in city and outskirts spelled misery for commuters and affect traffic

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

A thunderstorm accompanied by heavy rainfall hit Kolkata and the other districts of south Bengal on Tuesday afternoon. According to officials, eight people were killed in rain-related incidents. In Murshidabad, a farmer died in a lightning strike in Samsanganj while working in the field.

One person died of suspected electrocution near Raj Bhawan. Officials of Kolkata Police rushed to the spot and the person was carried to the hospital in an ambulance. According to the witnesses, the man was apparently returning from the office when the incident took place.

In Birbhum, two persons were killed when a car collided head-on with a truck at Nanoor during the thunderstorm. Two more deaths reported from the districts—Sanjoy Pramanik (29) and Sharif Munshi (20) of Burdwan East. Baneswar Ghosh (42) and



A rickshaw puller and people on cycles wade through a water logged road, after heavy rain in Kolkata. (R) Pedestrians wade through a water logged road, after heavy rain.

Jayanta Garai (51) of Bankura—both were struck by lightning and died instantly. A major incident was averted at a government hospital in Katwa after a fire broke out following a blast in a gas cylinder near the generator room of the hospital. The rain came as a blessing as the fire could be doused quickly due to the showers. Several thoroughfares were waterlogged in dif-

ferent parts of Kolkata, including Esplanade, Central Avenue, Kidderpore, College Street, Chingrighata, Rabindra Sadan, Behala, Salt Lake and so on due to the showers that began at around 1.30pm. The heavy downpour lasted for a few hours and the city witnessed darkness in broad daylight.

According to the weather office, a squall lasting for about one minute passed over Alipore at around 1.55pm from the Easterly direction with the highest gust of 54kmph. The city received a rainfall of 101.7mm in the last 24 hours with Salt Lake getting heavy showers of 16mm since 8.30 am today.

Alipore and Dum Dum got a rainfall of 102mm and 96 respectively. Ultadanga received 106mm while Thanthania got a heavy down-

pour of about 99mm between 2-3pm.

Lightning and gusty winds with speed reaching up to 30-40 km per hour hit Kolkata, Howrah, parts of North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Hooghly, Nadia, Murshidabad, Bankura, East Burdwan, West Midnapore, Birbhum and Purulia districts, according to the officials of the Regional Meteorological Department.

As informed by the officials of the weather office, a trough line from Sikkim to North Odisha and passing through the state, brought the rains in the state. "A mass of clouds brought the heavy showers in the city today," informed an official of the MET office.

"The moisture-bearing clouds were stagnant over Kolkata and its adjoining districts since the past few days bringing such heavy downpour in the city and its surrounding districts," he added.

According to the MET department, the rainfall with thundershower is likely to take place in some of the districts of the state for the next two days.

Kerala's Gowri Amma no more

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM/
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Veteran Communist leader and the founding leader of Janadipathyam Samrakshanam Samiti (JSS) K R Gouri Amma died at a private hospital here on Tuesday. She was undergoing treatment for age-related ailments. She was 101.

CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said: "It is with deep pain and grief that I receive the news of the death of K R Gouri Amma, an outstanding leader of the people's movement in Kerala."

Even before the formation of the present Kerala, she was elected to the Travancore-Kochi legislative Assembly in 1952 and 1954.

She was a minister in various governments in the state, including the one headed by the UDF for some time. She was expelled from CPI (M) in 1994 for anti-party activities. She then floated her own outfit JSS.

However, disillusioned with the UDF she had been coop-

erating with the Left Democratic Front for the past few years, Yechury said.

Elected to the Legislative Assembly 10 times, Gowri Amma was minister for 16 years as part of six different governments. She had helmed various key portfolios, including revenue, excise, industries, food and agriculture.

After the formation of Kerala, she became revenue minister in the first communist ministry in 1957, headed by EMS Namboothiripad. Gouri Amma presented the revolutionary Land Reforms Bill in 1957 while she was the revenue minister, which transformed land ownership rights in the state.

Born in July 1919 at Pattanakkad village of Alappuzha, Gouri Amma went on to become a graduate in law and set up a practice in Cherthala. She joined the Communist Party in 1948. In 1957, she married TV Thomas, a prominent communist and a minister in EMS ministry. Her funeral was held at Valiya Chudukkad in Alappuzha with state honours on Tuesday evening.

61 BJP MLAs in Bengal will get 'X' category cover

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

Under the 'X' category security, two or three armed commandos escort the protegee.

work. If the violence goes down, then they can rethink the (security cover) but for now we need this".

"Even several MLAs of our party are facing life threatening bid in their local constituency areas.

Party sources said that the X-category security is being provided by CISF after a detailed review. Following post poll violence, the state BJP claimed that more than 15 party supporters were killed by the TMC backed miscreants. Incidents of throwing stones at senior BJP leaders also happened. Earlier, additional security cover to 10 more BJP leaders in West Bengal was given ahead of the Assembly polls in the state. Under the 'X' category security, two or three armed commandos escort the protegee.

Officials cited above said the ministry of home affairs (MHA) approved the security cover for 61 MLAs, who had no protection till now, after taking into consideration a report prepared by intelligence agencies as well as the inputs shared by the four-member team that visited the state last week to assess post-poll violence there. From Kalimpong to Kakdwip TMC unleashed violence and the reign of terror. The state is itself sponsoring it. So there must be alternative arrangement to save the life of the MLAs, said Majumdar.

And, under the 'Y' category, four to five commandos do the job. The BJP had claimed that TMC goons have killed at least 14 party workers and nearly 1 lakh have fled their homes post-poll violence in Bengal last week.

With this, all newly elected 77 MLAs of BJP in the 294-seat assembly are now being provided security cover by the central forces.

BJP leader and party's national secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya said, "We had requested the home minister to provide security to our 77 MLAs as they were not able to travel anywhere, including their constituencies to their

'Ministerial berth helps ease pain of LS defeat'

HOOGHLY, 11 MAY

The Pandua ruling party MLA Dr Ratna De Nag who was sworn-in as the minister of environment, science, technology, and biotechnology was overjoyed which she felt has overcast the pain of losing the Hooghly Lok Sabha constituency during the 2019 general elections.

Talking to The Statesman, she expressed her gratitude for the state chief minister Mamata Banerjee who defeated chief minister Mamata Banerjee from Nandigram, already has a second highest 'Z' category security cover from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

Officials cited above said the ministry of home affairs (MHA) approved the security cover for 61 MLAs, who had no protection till now, after taking into consideration a report prepared by intelligence agencies as well as the inputs shared by the four-member team that visited the state last week to assess post-poll violence there. From Kalimpong to Kakdwip TMC unleashed violence and the reign of terror. The state is itself sponsoring it. So there must be alternative arrangement to save the life of the MLAs, said Majumdar.

She dedicated this achievement to her father who she felt would have been proud of witnessing this moment in her career. "I remembered my father Dr Gopal Das Nag who was the labour minister during the then Congress rule.

How happy he would have been to see his daughter being sworn as a minister."

SNS

BRISK BUSINESS



Ignoring social distancing norms, people throng New Market to shop for Eid, in Kolkata on Tuesday. **SNS**

Cong top brass set up panel to examine poll debacle

TIRTHANKAR MITRA

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

With humiliating defeats in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry and political oblivion staring it in the face in West Bengal following election reverses, the Congress leadership have decided to set up a committee to investigate the causes of the string of defeats in Assembly elections. Though the decision has been taken by party chief Sonia Gandhi, rumbles of discontent, according to sources were discernible in its wake.

The committee will meet state leaders, poll candidates and party activists to find out the reason for the debacle.

The decision to set up this committee in a few days is part of a move to sidestep any immediate effort to get down to the brass tacks to find out the reasons triggering the poll debacle as sparks will fly within the leadership thereafter.

Stating this a senior leader said immediate stock-taking would have led to answers being sought from the present leadership for the poll reverses and leading to recrimina-

tions.

This is not the maiden effort on part of the leadership to set up fact-finding committees after poll reverses. But a senior leader pointed out that the findings of such committees formed earlier have not seen the light of the day nor have action been taken on their recommendations.

Questions were raised in the Congress Working Committee (CWC) as to why Congress failed to defeat the incumbent regimes in Kerala and Assam. There is no reason to be in the dark about the Congress's worst-ever performance in West Bengal where it failed to win a single seat in the recently concluded Assembly elections.

The leadership should be

kept informed about the ideological background of the alliance partners before the state party units join ranks with them in poll battle. This contention was raised by Ghulam Nabi Azad, a veteran leader and one of the signatories of the controversial letter to Mrs Gandhi seeking changes in the party.

Azad has hinted that Congress's association with AIUDF in Assam and ISF in West Bengal led to its electoral decimation. Interestingly, despite not being on the same page with Azad on many issues, PCC chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury has said that he does not want to contest future elections with the Indian Secular Front as an alliance partner.

Jharkhand girl who made it to Harvard feels education can bridge gender inequality gap

SOUMYADIP MULLICK

KOLKATA, 11 MAY

ON CLOUD NINE

» Seema has got a full scholarship to Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She was also accepted at Ashoka University, Middlebury College, and Trinity College.

» Seema has applied for a course in economics at Harvard University but hopes to switch to sociology.

» During the exchange programme she pursued a leadership course at Washington University in St Louis.



cultivate an internationalist outlook and realize the value of education. She confessed it taught her to appreciate the support extended by her family who ensured their daughter has the freedom to map her own journeys.

During the exchange programme she pursued a leadership course at Washington University in St Louis. Her stay in the US though was short. Seema recalled that the entire journey from her remote village in Eastern India to a whole new continent was a renaissance moment for her.

In this dark age of a pandemic where separation has become the sine qua non to survival, her memories of living

weather" which made her miss the sunshine back at home. Seema has applied for a course in economics at Harvard University but hopes to switch to sociology. Waiting for her visa, she admits she wants to return to her village after completing higher studies to start a non-profit organization for bolstering education initiatives for women below the poverty line.

"Education among women will help bridge the gap in gender inequality. There is no wrong if a woman wants to be a housewife but it is vital she makes her choice after being exposed to all possible career options. Everyone has their rights to education."

Having coached the girls in her village in football, in a shy confession she admits she hasn't watched much of international football but supports Real Madrid; coincidentally, she speaks fluent Spanish which she picked up during the years of her secondary education.

To sum up Seema's journey

in the words of the philosopher and polymath, Thomas Paine, "The mind once enlightened cannot again become dark."

Having coached the girls in her village in football, in a shy confession she admits she hasn't watched much of international football but supports Real Madrid; coincidentally, she speaks fluent Spanish which she picked up during the years of her secondary education.

He claimed that immediately after taking the oath, Banerjee as the chief minister took strict steps to stop post-poll violence which scaled down after 5 May but Banerjee has been continuously criticising the govern-

ment and speaking in favour of BJR. "This is not acceptable under the provision of the constitution of India. On Monday hon'ble high court of Calcutta appreciated state efforts to check violence. You should take a lesson from such a mandate and not indulge in unconstitutional activities. You should adhere to the law laid down by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India that a governor cannot take an inimical stand against the state government."

He further warned the governor that he cannot post any tweet criticising the state government since that supposedly makes his actions unconstitutional and unethical.

However, Kalyan didn't stop there and requested that Banerjee restrain from being the "BJPs flag bearer" and act in accordance with the constituted law without going into a confrontation with the state government.

Governor should not interfere in matters of administration: Kalyan

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HOOGHLY, 11 MAY

The Serampore MP, Kalyan Banerjee took to Twitter and lashed out at the governor, Jagdeep Dhankhar, asking the latter to stop interfering in matters of state administration.

Dhankhar has been quite vocal against the ruling dispensation ever since incidents of violence began rocking the various districts in Bengal post-election. He blamed the TMC government for its inefficiency towards checking and stopping the post poll violence.

Banerjee rebut the allegations of Dhankhar and wrote on Twitter, that from the moment of oath ceremony of hon'ble chief minister Mamata Banerjee, the governor is interfering with the state government's administration and blaming the present government.

Attack on Learning

The weekend's tragedy in Afghanistan has deepened as the bombing near a school in Kabul, killing no fewer than 60 people, predominantly students, happened in the holy month of Ramzan and coincides with the gradual pullout of American troops from the country. The heartrending nature of the incident is reaffirmed with the fact that at least 150 people, many of them young women, were grievously wounded in the attack in a Shia neighbourhood of the Afghan capital. The place has often been targeted by the Sunni entity, the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria. Though no group has as yet claimed responsibility, it is the Taliban that is generally suspected. At one level, therefore, Saturday's outrage is an offensive against the education of women, as had once happened to Malala Yousufzai. The children were returning home after finishing their studies. So too was Malala. This time, the range of the mayhem was frightfully sweeping and not what they call a surgical strike. The other factor is the ignoble intra-religious strife and the possible involvement of the Sunni-dominated ISIS in the Shia-populated Dasha-e-Barchi cannot be ruled out. The enormity of the tragedy is heightened with visuals of people preparing victims' coffins for a mass funeral ceremony. Kabul has been on alert since Washington announced plans last month to pull out all US troops by September 11, with Afghan officials saying the Taliban has stepped up its attacks across the country. For all the periodic jaw-jaw in Doha, the Taliban remains ever so murderous. The mayhem demonstrates that the vicinity of Kabul remains dangerous. The West's departure from Afghanistan is a gamble.

The Afghan President, Ashraf Ghani, issued a statement condemning the attack, blaming the Taliban even as the group denied it. He offered no proof, however. "The Taliban, by escalating their illegitimate war and violence, have once again shown that they are not only reluctant to resolve the current crisis peacefully and fundamentally, but by complicating the situation," Ghani said. The Taliban condemned the attack, apparently aimed at civilians, and denied any responsibility. It took place in a neighbourhood that has frequently been attacked by ISIS fighters over the years. The entire city is numb after this attack. The institution is a joint high school for girls and boys, who study in three shifts, the second of which is for female students, according to Afghanistan's education ministry. The European Union mission in Afghanistan condemned what it said was a "horrendous attack". This is a "despicable act of terrorism," the mission said on Twitter. "Targeting primarily students in a girls' school makes this an attack on the future of Afghanistan, indeed on young people determined to improve their country." The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has expressed its "deep revulsion" at the blast. Adults have killed children returning home from school. It is a militant attack on learning per se.

Assam's new CM

When Assam's new Chief Minister was sworn in at Guwahati's Srimanta Sankardeva Kalakshetra on Monday, Hemanta Biswa Sarma had formally pipped Sarbananda Sonowal to the post. The uncertainty in the state over the next head of government is now over. Altogether, it has been a face-saver for the triumphant Bharatiya Janata Party, which was floundering since the afternoon of 2 May in its quest for a new head of government, unable as the leadership was to project a probable CM in course of the campaign. The party leadership, most particularly its national president, JP Nadda, has plumped for Sarma, ignoring the claim of Sonowal who had helmed the government in Dispur for the past five years...and during the Assembly election. Very pertinently has the state's 15th Chief Minister inaugurated his tenure with a fervent appeal to the separatist militant outfits to abjure violence ~ a recurrent malaise in Assam and indeed the north-east. Contextualised with this appeal was his overture to Paresh Barua, leader of the United Liberation Front of Assam (Independent), to return to the mainstream in the next five years. Given the inherent strength and influence of the militants, such an appeal is easier conveyed than executed. It has been cloaked this time with a statement of fact ~ "Kidnapping and killings complicate problems; they do not solve them." This is a truism that has eloquently been articulated by the new Chief Minister. And he will need the assistance of the Centre to fulfil his mission, specifically his goalpost to make Assam one of the "top five in India" over the next five years.

Of course, his uppermost priority at this juncture is to address the resurgence of Covid-19, not to forget the other imperative ~ to make the state free from the annual flood havoc. It would be an understatement to describe the Covid situation as "alarming"; the daily case-count in Assam has crossed 5,000. It bears recall that on April 4, Mr Biswa Sarma had insisted that there was no need to wear a mask in the state. On Monday, he skirted the controversy stoked by the Citizenship Amendment Act that has roiled the sensitive border state. And yet, without going into details of the National Register of Citizens (NRC), it was pretty obvious that the new CM is in favour of what he calls "reverification" of 20 per cent of the names in the border districts and ten per cent in other areas. Sarma appears to have been rewarded for his organisational skills, most particularly his role in the party's re-election and its growth in the sensitive north-east. The BJP or its allies are in power in all the seven north-eastern states. Sarma is said to have been vigorously backed by the Union home minister, Amit Shah. After having failed to secure power in West Bengal, the BJP seems determined to consolidate its power base in the neighbouring north-eastern state.

Killed by Procedure

Two learnings emerge. Firstly, our bloated bureaucracy and bureaucratic procedures have to be overhauled to make them capable of responding quickly to an emergency. Secondly, public health should not be guided by partisan politics, and a robust and effective national public health agency should be nurtured, to respond to public health threats, and to help prevent the next inevitable pandemic



The governance model in India operates on the principle that the wisdom of generalists is paramount and domain specialists, however learned they may be, should defer to generalists. Unsurprisingly, bureaucrats rather than public health specialists had the final say in crafting the nation's response to the coronavirus pandemic, and bureaucratic measures rather than basic public health measures are being tried out to control the raging pandemic.

If there can be solace in scoring brownie points, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (USCDC), an agency that was once at the forefront of global disease detection and control, initially dented its image in its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. It may, however, be pointed out that the White House Coronavirus Task Force had repeatedly altered the advisories of US CDC scientists about Covid-19, including recommendations on social distancing in bars and restaurants, and making a downright foolish recommendation, on the advice of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, that people showing no Covid-19 symptoms need not be tested for Covid-19.

The hollowness of claims of having augmented medical infrastructure and the country's production capacity of medical consumables between the first and second waves of the pandemic, stands exposed by the current shortage of medical equipment, right from hospital beds to ICUs to medical oxygen to PPE kits to vaccines. The Government is now on a massive buying spree from China, with the Western world pitching in with medical aid. Significantly, Government of India's policy, designed by Manmohan Singh in 2004, in the wake of the Tsunami, and reiterated at the time of the Uttarakhand disaster (2013), was of not accepting foreign aid under any circumstances.

Reliance on bureaucratic wisdom at the time of Covid-19 pandemic is somewhat strange, given the fact that we have the venerable National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), (established in 1909) whose mandate is to deal with pandemics by "employing epidemiological and diagnostic tools" and "investigating and recommending control measures for the out-break of various communicable diseases." We also have the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), established in 1911, as the apex body for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research. Inexplicably,

both these organisations are not at the forefront at the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Probably, being only minor adjuncts to the Health Ministry, these organisations were not thought capable of tackling the pandemic, and bureaucrats, in their superior wisdom took over the leadership of the management of the Covid-19 pandemic.

If there can be solace in scorning brownie points, the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (USCDC), an agency that was once at the forefront of global disease detection and control, initially dented its image in its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. It may, however, be pointed out that the White House Coronavirus Task Force had repeatedly altered the advisories of US CDC scientists about Covid-19, including recommendations on social distancing in bars and restaurants, and making a downright foolish recommendation, on the advice of the White House Coronavirus Task Force, that people showing no Covid-19 symptoms need not be tested for Covid-19.

Later on, in September 2020, the US CDC drafted an order requiring masks on all public transportation in the United States, which was blocked by the White House Coronavirus Task Force. Thus, due to political interference, in the initial stages of the pandemic, the US CDC, comprehensively failed to handle the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, being fair to the US CDC, it could be said that rather than relying on basic public health principles to tackle the pandemic, the US Government like the Indian Government, was obsessed with magic bullets - vaccines, new medicines, or a hope that the virus would simply disappear. With the departure of Trump, US CDC has regained its credibility and is capably leading the struggle against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nearer home, as soon as the first wave of Covid-19 infections ebbed, our response mechanism went into hibernation; bureaucrats tasked with keeping a watch over the pandemic shifted their attention to other, routine, but probably more important matters. Since, the political leadership wanted to hold elections and religious congregations despite

the obvious danger of rising infections, the top leadership declared that the pandemic had been vanquished.

The Government changed its tune only in late April 2021, when the second wave of coronavirus infections had attained tsunami proportions. Initially, in a typical bureaucratic response, the Government denied a shortage of critical equipment and drugs and those talking of shortages or suggesting novel measures to fight the pandemic, including ex-PM Manmohan Singh, were branded as vested interests and malcontents. Upping the ante, the Prime Minister announced a Tika Utsav (Vaccination Festival) from 11 to 14 April 2021, and vaccination of all adults from 1 May, though most vaccination centres were running short of vaccines.

When newspaper reports in early May 2021 suggested that the vaccine shortage had arisen because the Government had not ordered a sufficient number of vaccine doses and that the last order for vaccines had been placed in

March 2021, the Government replied that it had ordered 16 crore vaccine doses on 28 April 2021. However, no one in Government explained how such a large quantity of vaccines was supposed to be manufactured and supplied, in time for the vaccination drive starting on 1 May 2021. Caught in the ugly controversy, the owner of Serum Institute of India, Adar Poonawalla fled to London, citing a threat to his life. Last heard, a top minister of the Government has been deputed to bring him back. Notably, India's vaccination drive had begun on 26 January 2021 with 3,000 vaccination centres with a target of 100 vaccinations daily on weekdays - at which rate it would have taken more than 10 years to vaccinate the target population.

The horrendous results of neglecting the Covid-19 pandemic are now manifest; all cities have long queues of ambulances gathered outside over-full hospitals, that have little oxygen or critical medicines. The crumbling health infrastructure has given up the ghost; in addition to deaths from Covid-19 infections, a number of fires, oxygen leaks and shortages, have taken a ghastly toll of innocent lives. Giving the lie to Government death statistics,

sells, the more one lowers the rate." I am an octogenarian; having taken Covishield first dose along with my septuagenarian wife, on March 15 from a local private hospital @ Rs 250 each with advice to take the second dose within six to eight weeks. By the third week of April, there were serpentine queues in front of the hospital. By 23 April, vac-

cination stopped and the notices have been removed. On 26 and 27 April, our names were noted for vaccination, one after another, at four points; and cancelled soon after.

With today's "good" news ~ "Third Wave of Covid inevitable", we hope only God will rescue us!

Yours, etc., B Mondal,

Kolkata, 6 May.



A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES
Extraordinary times

Announcing the United States' support for the proposal of some World Trade Organization members to temporarily lift the patent protections on Covid-19 vaccines, US Trade Representative Katherine Tsai said that "extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures". This is an abrupt break from the previous US resistance to such a move, and the high-profile, sensational about-face has won immediate applause both at home and abroad. After all, in this difficult time, when the world anticipates more unabated surges of the novel coronavirus in less-developed countries, such as that being experienced by India, anything conducive to boosting the availability of vaccines should be welcomed. Yet, although it may be unfair to take the Joe Biden administration's apparently altruistic offer as being simply political lip service meant to win back the moral high ground, the sad truth is that even if it is not, such a prospect will likely prove too idealistic to be realistic.

The Big Pharma companies for instance have raised a number of issues that deserve deliberation: the potential disruption of existing supply chains should all countries enter the materials market and compete for scarce resources, capacity-building that will take time, inadequate oversight and lack of quality guarantees. And multiple US allies have sided with Big Pharma when it comes to intellectual property protection. Angela Merkel's German government, for one, has said that "the protection of intellectual property is a source of innovation and must remain so in the future".

The concern being that the proposed waiver will discourage future investment in badly needed research and development which might harm humanity in the future. Inside Washington's policy circles, of course, there

CHINADAILY

is one additional concern ~ the intellectual property waiver may deprive the US and the West of a crucial technological edge in present and future competition with countries such as China and Russia. Just as the US trade representative acknowledged, it will therefore take time to sort it all out, as the White House will have to negotiate hard to get both Big Pharma and the China-haters on board.

The pandemic, though, will wait on no one. Nor can the rest of the world afford to wait while the US drags its feet. As politicians and public policymakers continue their quarrel over the proposed waiver, the world should focus on tapping the potential of instantly available vaccine supply mechanisms and substantially increase vaccine supplies to countries in need.

Given the broad resistance against the proposal, and the many feasibility issues that would ensue even if a consensus should emerge, the world still needs to prioritize boosting production, reducing monopolies and hoarding, and increasing supplies to the countries that have effectively been left out in the race for vaccines. If the White House is worried about the global pandemic situation and wants to play a bigger, more meaningful role in the global campaign, it can start by fairly sharing what is available.

IN MEMORIAM

BASU SHYAMA PROSAD (Ex-Syndicate Bank) — Left for his heavenly abode on April 30. Deeply mourned and fondly remembered by his host of admirers of New Barrackpore and Dum Dum Jn. May his soul Rest in peace.

SHAMEFUL STATE

SIR, I refer to today's headline, 'SC: prepare for more lethal 3rd Covid wave'. We have all failed conclusively in containing the second surge of the Covid pandemic. Our preparedness to fight the lethal second wave has been in a shambles. And the gruesomeness of the pandemic continues with no sign of a let-up. It is in this moment that the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Prime Minister announces the possibility of a third wave without specifying the possible timeline or the probable target age group.

We are none the wiser, nor safer after the announcement because there still are no beds, not enough medical oxygen and there is a severe scarcity of drugs and equipment, manpower and even ambulances. Adding to the distress, patients are being fleeced by hospitals, ambulance services and even at the crematorium. The scenes and situation are similar across the country.

The Centre and states now have to be ready with a rational plan to manage the next wave. The Supreme Court directed the Centre to evolve a comprehensive oxygen supply plan to ensure 700 MT to Delhi. The country as a whole needs such a plan for all critical care components, including testing kits. The Centre has to urgently ramp up testing and vaccination facilities, without which we will be left paralysed during the next wave.

Amid this shameful state of affairs inside the country, those in External Affairs Minister Jayashankar's team who turned positive after reaching London have become an international embarrassment.

Yours, etc., N Sadhasiva Reddy, Bengaluru, 7 May.

God help us in the season of Covid

SIR, The current handling of matters in India reminds one of the proverb "when Rome burnt, Nero fiddled", especially when one learns of allocation of billions of rupees in making a new Parliament complex and related facilities as the nation starves for medical oxygen and vaccine to fight Covid. In this context, I recall that in the early 1950s, Streptomycin injections for tuberculosis patients used to cost Rs 80 which gradually came down to a little over one rupee per vial (probably of one gram) together with Pyrogen-free distilled water.

In other words, with rising sale of the medicine, its price had come down. I am bewildered about the price of Covid vaccines at these fleecing rates, after selling millions, or maybe, billions, of vials. This is contrary to market policy "the more one

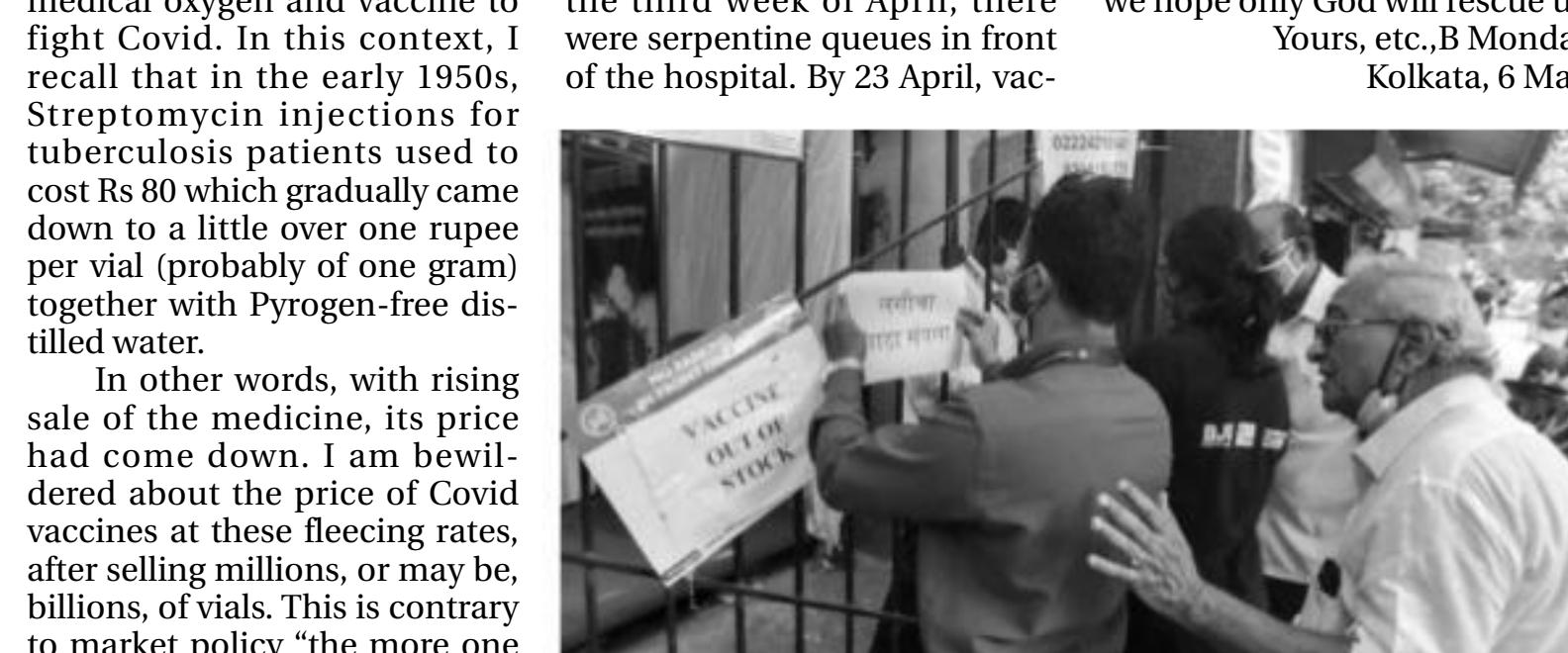
sells, the more one lowers the rate." I am an octogenarian; having taken Covishield first dose along with my septuagenarian wife, on March 15 from a local private hospital @ Rs 250 each with advice to take the second dose within six to eight weeks. By the third week of April, there were serpentine queues in front of the hospital. By 23 April, vac-

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Yours, etc., B Mondal,

Kolkata, 6 May.



ATANU BISWAS

Just a few days after the Left was routed in the West Bengal Assembly election, the Labour Party in the UK faced a historic by-election defeat by a landslide. It's not that the failure of Left-leaning parties is a universal event in the recent past. In fact, Jacinda Ardern's Labour Party won a historic re-election in New Zealand in October. The Joe Biden-led Democrats could defeat Donald Trump in January, and, in the just-concluded Assembly elections, the incumbent Left Democratic Front, under the leadership of Pinarayi Vijayan broke the tradition in Kerala and retained power. Every place is different, and, importantly, the local factors may be dominant features in an election.

It's, however, remarkable to see how quickly the Left Front lost its massive vote share in Bengal. It got more than 50 per cent votes in both the 2004 and 2006 elections. It started to lose its support base due to many reasons, and the Singur and Nandigram movements were particularly instrumental in the Left's decline. It also resulted in the rise of TMC. However, despite losing power in 2011, the Left Front had polled 43 and 41 per cent in 2009 and 2011 respectively, which are certainly remarkable by any standard.

It would be ideal for the Left to play the role of an opposition diligently until they come back to power again. It's true that the emergence of the BJP in the state has made the task of the Left harder. But there might be reasons to believe that the Left also had made their own job increasingly difficult. While, in a democracy, it is ideal for the opposition to wait for the opportune moment to strike back, the Left possibly hurried prematurely. Maybe after a long stint in power, they were uncomfortable themselves as an opposition. Who knows?

And, the Left which despite losing got a formidable 41 per cent support in 2011 Assembly elections, could manage only about 7.5 per cent vote share in the State in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. It is widely believed that in 2019, a large chunk of the traditional Left voters voted for the BJP. This might or might not be true. However, even if the Left votes were not shifted in an organized way, there is little doubt that the BJP's astonishing performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in West Bengal could be possible largely at the expense of erstwhile Left votes.

A CSDS study, however, showed that a large chunk of traditional Left votes shifted to TMC as well in 2019. In any case, the Left, along with the Congress Party, lost the glamour of

Does the Left have a future in Bengal?



the main opposition. In 2021 also, it is widely speculated that some of the remaining traditional Left voters have voted for TMC. As a result, Left did not win even one assembly segment in both 2019 and 2021 elections.

Visibly disappointed by the dismal performance of the Left Front, one of my Leftist former students told me that if we had a system of voting like the Alternative Vote (AV) or Instant Runoff Voting (IRV), as exists in many countries, he had no doubt that the Left would have got the most second choice votes. In an AV system, every voter puts a number by each candidate, with a 'one' for their favourite, 'two' for their second favourite and so on. Such a system, for example, is used in Australia to elect the House of Representatives and in Australia's states to elect at least one House of their state parliaments.

Thus, when the Left got a mere 7.5 per cent vote share in 2019, its 2021 fate was almost sealed as it was no longer within the top two parties/alliances in the perception of the voters. The Left lost the 2021 battle in 2019 itself. Thus, to be honest, not

careful thinking I'm convinced that it would be like that. First, most of the TMC voters may not like BJP as the second choice. Same for BJP voters – many of them would not opt for TMC as the second choice, for sure. Although the Left could manage a meagre 5.5 per cent vote share in the assembly elections this time, they still have a deep-rooted support base in the state – at least a soft support towards the Left exists in many people's mind. It's true that people have mostly voted for TMC and BJP in this election. This is what had to happen as the first-past-the-post electoral system like ours eventually tends to be a two-party system, and the third party largely gets decimated. This is Duverger's law, framed by the French sociologist Maurice Duverger in the 1950s and 1960s, and is largely valid within many of our states, at least.

However, as a legacy of its 34-year rule in Bengal, the Left-leaning mentality may still be persisting in the State. As my student said, the Left might still be the credible second choice to many in the Bengal electorate. And that's clearly the advantage in any effort of resurgence for the Left. But a resurgence is never easy. For one needs to admit mistakes, and somebody has to take responsibility also. It needs course-correction

much prospect for the Left remained unless they could course-correct appropriately in the meantime. Voting is largely a habit. It's never easy to get back voters who have now started voting for another party just because they once voted for your party, and for a long duration. And people tend to ride the 'bandwagon' of the winner.

So, unless there is a widespread belief that a party or an alliance can win the election, its vote share is bound to diminish. That is what happened to Left parties in West Bengal. The Left in Kerala was the ruling alliance, and they did not have to face such a situation.

However, as a legacy of its 34-year rule in Bengal, the Left-leaning mentality may still be persisting in the State. As my student said, the Left might still be the credible second choice to many in the Bengal electorate. And that's clearly the advantage in any effort of resurgence for the Left. But a resurgence is never easy. For one needs to admit mistakes, and somebody has to take responsibility also. It needs course-correction

through reorientation of the organization and by re-establishing the connection to the people. After the recent 'bitterly disappointing' local election results in the UK, Jonathan Freedland, a columnist of 'The Guardian' wrote an opinion piece titled 'To win back working people, Labour should learn from Joe Biden.' Well, every country or state is different, and the socio-political dynamics also differ considerably. After the recent election debacle, when the Labour MPs and others called for him to urgently change course, Labour leader Keir Starmer said in a televised clip: 'I take full responsibility for the results, and I will take full responsibility for fixing things.' Starmer has conceded his party had lost the trust of working people across England. And the party is now even considering moving the party's headquarters out of London to reflect Labour's determination to show that it represents the whole country. Some desperate and visible efforts, at least.

The writer is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

A boom time for mercenaries

ZARRAR KHUHRO

The news cycle will soon be inundated with images of US troops leaving Afghanistan, presumably never to return. Of the 98,000 troops that were deployed at the height of the US presence a mere 2,500 remain, and even these are largely confined to their bases as they busy themselves in packing their bags and conducting rehearsals for the now inevitable end of America's longest war.

But the numbers don't tell the full story of the US deployment as there are at least 18,000 private 'defence contractors', as they are called in the sanitised, euphemistic doublespeak of these times, still present in Afghanistan, at least half of whom are not Americans but nonetheless fight America's wars for a reasonable fee. Simply put, they are what we would have called mercenaries in less enlightened, if more honest, times. Although most are assigned to support and not combat duties, they are nevertheless hired cogs in the American war machine and over the years their numbers have only grown in proportion to actual soldiers on the ground, from an estimated 10 per cent of total deployment in World War II, to over 50 per cent during the Afghanistan and Iraq invasions. This means that at the peak of the deployments, there was more than one mercenary for every US soldier on the ground.



This was because the US, in its hubris, imagined that the war would be over in a few weeks or months, and when the reality dawned that far more troops would be needed the only options were to withdraw (impossible), to initiate a draft (political suicide) or else to outsource to groups like the now infamous Blackwater. Thus begins the modern commercial-

isation of war.

The appeal is obvious: using these shadow soldiers allows you to hide the actual cost of war, and because every American government since Vietnam shudders at the thought of flag-draped coffins returning home in the thousands, using hired fighters whose deaths receive little to no attention makes perfect sense.

Secondly, it allows you to withdraw from conflict zones without actually withdrawing, since the numbers of the mercenaries do not count towards official troop numbers. On the flip side it also allows you to intervene in strategic theatres while still maintaining plausible deniability; a match made in heaven really.

There are, of course, consequences, in the 2007 Nisour square massacre, Blackwater's killers for hire murdered 17 Iraqi civilians in an incident that revitalised the insurgency. Predictably, the consequences were not borne by the unaccountable mercenaries but by regular US troops and Iraqi civilians. Similar excesses led to the lynching of four Blackwater mercenaries in Fallujah in 2004 and the shattering of an uneasy peace between locals and US forces in the area.

Interestingly, the 2004 lynching is perhaps the first time the extent of mercenary involvement in this conflict came to light even though American media, obediently toeing the Pentagon's line, repeatedly referred to these men as 'civilians' while wilfully ignoring their actual purpose.

Today, we have mercenary armies that make Blackwater look like babies, and often we find that while these armies work for hire, they tend to have specialised clientele. Take the Russian mercenary army Wagner: this outfit, which provides substitute ground forces for Russia in Syria and has also been involved in (entirely deniable) operations in Ukraine, isn't just about infantry but has, or has been provided access to, tanks,

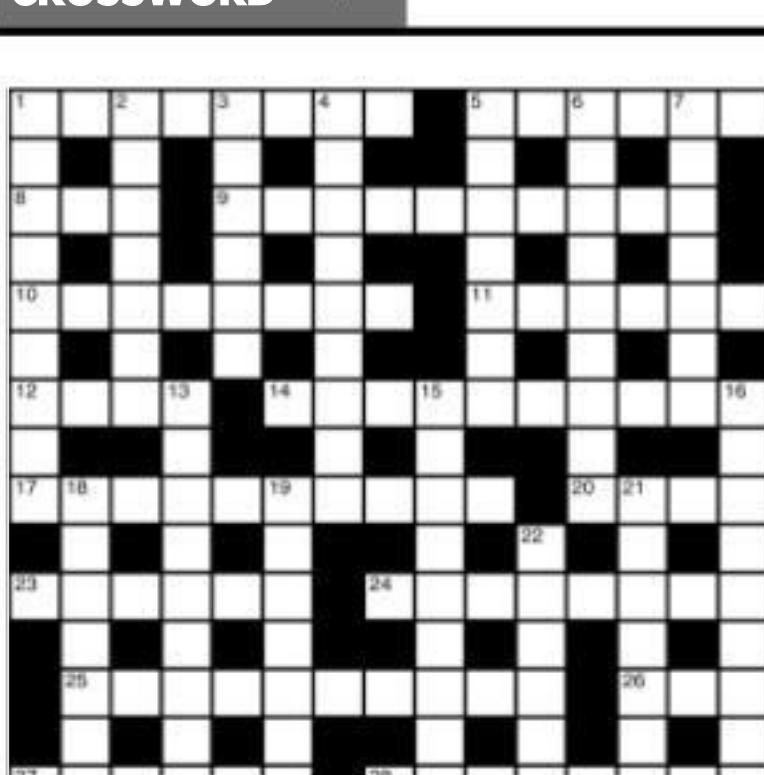
artillery and even warplanes. In 2018, Wagner made a frontal assault on US forces in Syria, only to suffer massive casualties in a pitched four-hour battle. While Wagner's fortunes have since declined, other private armies for hire have stepped in to fill the void.

In some cases, mercenaries are more effective than regular forces, especially when it comes to dealing with adversaries using guerrilla tactics. In Nigeria, Boko Haram had stymied efforts by the military to crush its insurgency, until the government hired South African mercenaries (complete with gunship helicopters and special forces teams) which notably saw more success and even helped the Nigerian military acquire much-needed counter-insurgency skills. And of course, when you have an appetite for war but don't have a deployment-capable military you can do what the UAE did in Yemen, where mercenaries from Latin America and Africa were hired to fight the Houthis. We even see that apart from states, private organisations, MNCs and even NGOs have or are seriously considering obtaining the services of these groups for security.

But unlike national armies, mercenaries uphold no flag and pledge allegiance only to the paycheck. Hence, they are not invested in ending wars but in fact in extending them, given that this is quite literally their bread and butter. And in a world riven with shadow conflicts and proxy wars, business has never been better.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28910



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 Curry for one dollar also picked up in faraway location (8)
- 5 Hack cuddles hot bird (6)
- 8 It helps to stop getting muscles (3)
- 9 Row over dodgy mate's wife being idler (4-6)
- 10 Supporter to begin accepting terrible law (8)
- 11 I go out with inspiring European, and conceive (6)
- 12 Jug was for more than one when cycling (4)
- 14 Naughty experience in sick bed (3-7)
- 17 I would suspect pal is enthralled by rise in green energy (5,5)
- 20 Light punch (4)
- 23 Investigates cutlery being laid the wrong way (6)
- 24 Spend good day in Southern Utah (5,3)
- 25 Perhaps Mary Trump's former home? (5,5)
- 26 Speak fondly of exclusive story being uncovered (3)
- 27 No humorous interlude provided by Tokyo gentleman (6)
- 28 Political position of liberal English newspaper popular with German nurses (4-4)

DOWN

- 1 Temporary coach dispatched with one's ranking dropping (9)
- 2 Manipulate body with maturity (7)
- 3 Dependent on women being evacuated in residential area (6)
- 4 Primarily, Tony Christie's trip here is bearing fruit (9)
- 5 Cup of tea and large dessert (7)
- 6 Notable child regularly plays with it (2,3,4)
- 7 Wire barrier across path restricts hill climbing (7)
- 13 Thought processes lead to salt, perhaps, being replaced by bit of relish (9)
- 15 Hombre who used to guard nappy factory (9)
- 16 Lower G-string pinching back of crotch – one is in pain (9)
- 18 Not at all insignificant person starts late, extremely angry (2,2,3)
- 19 Band-Aid left out by veterinarian, at last, for part of horse's foot (7)
- 21 Air conditioning: it stings current Amazonian native (7)
- 22 Natural waste products, 25% off! (6)

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Mr. Filson Young, whose reminiscences of the Dogger Bank battle have been appearing in a London paper, gives an interesting illustration of the difficulties of observation from the air, especially in the heat of an action. Incidentally, he also supplies a possible explanation of the bombing of our rescue parties from the air, while they were engaged in trying to rescue members of the crew of the Blucher. This incident has been frequently cited as a proof of the invertebrate frightfulness of the Hun. Mr. Young points out that it was very probably due to the belief that the sunken ship was not the Blucher, but either the Tiger or the New Zealand, the Germans remaining for many days under the impression that they had sunk one or the other of these vessels. It is true that this explanation still convicts the Huns of a barbarity of which it is quite certain no British airman would be guilty, but it slightly modifies the former impression, which was that the bombardment of our rescue parties could have had no motive except frightfulness. On this same occasion Mr. Young, who was on the totally disabled Lion, describes how a Zeppelin missed its chance of finishing off Admiral Beatty's flagship. Both engines had stopped, and the Lion was quite helpless when the Zeppelin appeared, and everybody on board thought that their last hour had come.

NEWS ITEMS

OBJECTION TO COUNCIL ELECTION FAILS

Babu Annoda Prasad Sanyal, of Berhampur, recently presented a petition to the local Government against the election of Babu Surendra Narayan Singh to the Bengal Legislative Council by the Murshidabad constituency. The Government appointed Messrs. G.B. Mumford, Banwari Lal Banerji, and Radharaman Mukherji to report on the validity of the election. The Commissioners have reported that Babu Surendra Narayan Singh, the returned candidate, was duly elected and that the petition of Babu Annoda Prasad Sanyal should be dismissed. The Governor has confirmed the finding of the Commissioners and declared the returned candidate to be duly elected to the Bengal Legislative Council. In accordance with the recommendation of the Commissioners, Babu Annoda Prasad Sanyal has been ordered to pay to Babu Surendra Narayan Singh the sum of Rs 1,200 as costs.

PASSENGER TRAINS IN COLLISION

About 1 o'clock this morning, while No. 653 Down passenger train was entering Mataundh, a station on the Jhansi-Manipur branch, 807 miles from Bombay, it collided with No. 653 Up passenger train. The collision, it is understood, is alleged to be due to the driver of the Down passenger train running against the signals. The District Traffic Superintendent was in the train. Five carriages have been completely destroyed and serious loss of life is feared. Medical relief has been sent to the scene of the accident. Transhipment of passengers and luggage is in progress. It is anticipated that normal working will be restored by tonight.

ATTACK ON GLOUCESTERS AT RAWALPINDI

Further information that has come to hand regarding the raid by the Pathans on the Quarter Guard of the Gloucestershire Regiment at West Ridge, Rawalpindi, shows that only two men were actually engaged in the attack. These two lay down about 150 yards from the Quarter Guard about 8 o'clock in the morning, and, without warning, opened fire on the regimental band which was engaged in practice near by. The band hastily withdrew, two of them being wounded, and the raiders then directed their fire on the Quarter Guard. Flanking parties were quickly sent out and these succeeded in accounting for the daring assailants, both of whom were shot dead. They seem to have made no attempt to escape. Their identity has not yet been established.

AFGHANISTAN AND INDIA

The intense activity of Soviet agents in Afghanistan and beyond makes it obvious, says the Pioneer, that the delicate negotiations on which Sir Henry Dobbs is engaged cannot be hurried. It appears that the probable stay of the Mission at the Afghan capital will be a protracted one. In the circumstances no news may be taken to be good news, and the recognition of the adverse influences which Sir Henry has to combat will assuredly counsel patience in this country. It is to be hoped that the firmness of the British Cabinet's note will not be belied by any reluctance to enforce the sanction which it carried, in the event of the Soviet Government failing to comply with its strict requirements.



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KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, BIOCON

THUMBNAILS

Moody's cuts growth forecast to 9.3%

Negative impact of 2nd wave of Covid-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Nomurasees 10.8% GDP growth in FY'22

MUMBAI, 11 MAY

Cairn move: UK's Cairn Energy Plc on Tuesday said it is taking all necessary actions to access the \$1.7 billion it was awarded by an international arbitration tribunal after overturning a retroactive tax demand slapped by the Indian government. "In December last year the tribunal established to rule on our claim against the Government of India found in Cairn's favour and awarded us damages of \$1.2 billion plus interest and costs," Cairn Energy CEO said at company annual shareholders meeting. PTI

Tata Motors probe: Homegrown auto major Tata Motors on Tuesday said it is reviewing the order by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to initiate investigation against its commercial vehicles business in India for alleged abuse of its dominant position. Last week, the CCI had passed an order directing the director-general, CCI, to initiate investigation against the company for alleged abuse of dominant position with respect to dealership agreements in its commercial vehicles business in India. PTI

Isuzu launch: Isuzu Motors India on Tuesday launched the much-awaited, BS VI compliant V-Cross variants in India. The company added an all-new model Isuzu Hi-Lander and a new V-Cross Z AT variant to address the needs of emerging urban Indian customers attracted towards the pick-up culture it has created. The company also launched the BS VI compliant mu-X models alongside, according to a Press release. SNS

Yes Bank share: Anchor investor Bay Tree India Holdings I LLC has sold over 2 per cent stake in Yes Bank through open market transactions. According to a regulatory filing, Bay Tree India Holdings I LLC, which held 7.48 per cent stake in Yes Bank earlier, sold 52.15 crore shares representing 2.08 per cent of equity stake in multiple tranches between 6 January and 6 May 2021. PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 11 MAY

COAI plea: Industry body COAI has approached the health ministry to seek vaccination for frontline telecom workers on a priority basis amid the severe second wave of the pandemic. COAI on Monday shot-off a letter to the ministry of health and family welfare, saying that even with a steep rise in the number of cases all across the country, the frontline telecom staff ~ manning networks around the clock ~ have to be on duty "but there is fear in the minds of these professionals". PTI

JSW Steel output: JSW Steel on Tuesday said its crude steel output jumped over two-fold to 13.71 lakh tons (LT) during April 2021. The company had produced 5.63 LT in April 2020, JSW Steel said in a statement. PTI

Equity benchmarks nursed losses today after four days of gains, largely in tandem with overseas markets which tumbled after surging commodity prices stoked inflation fears. Profit-booking in banking, finance and metal counters further weighed on bourses, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened on the backfoot and stayed in the negative territory throughout the session, ending 340.60 points or 0.69 per cent lower at 49,161.81 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 91.60 points or 0.61 per cent to close at 14,850.75 points.

ONGC, PowerGrid, Sun Pharma, UltraTech Cement and SBI were among the gainers, climbing up to 4.60 per cent.

"Rising commodity prices, like international steel price, are at a record high which has instilled a fear in the world market of rising inflation. Global markets are retreating in anticipation of future interest rates hikes, in which the technology sector will be heavily impacted as it has benefited the most during a pandemic.

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MARKET WATCH

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Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 3 per cent, followed by HDFC, TechMahindra, Bajaj Finance, Titan, Bajaj Finserv, HUL and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, NTPC,

other states. Milk sales are up across India, but ice cream, butter and cheese demand is down, according to the Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation that owns the popular Amul brand.

Milk sales volumes are 25

per cent more than the same month last year, informed Amul managing director Rupinder Singh Sodhi, but ice cream demand has dipped by 30-40 per cent when it should

have increased by 20-30 per cent in summer.

IICMA officials say they have for a year requested the government to reduce GST from 18 per cent to 12 per cent, but without success.

IICMA treasurer Pradeep G Pai wants all state governments to support the ice cream industry as it "contributes immensely in generating local employment (direct and indirect)".

"We are also seeking a deferral of electricity bill payments as sales have taken a huge hit across the country," Pai said. "Ice cream, like dairy, should be brought under essential goods as done by the Government of Karnataka during the lockdown last year," he said.

While he might face difficulty convincing other government decision makers to categorise ice cream as an essential commodity as milk, IICMA officials, however, argue that the ice cream industry thrives on raw materials from the dairy industry, accounting for 5 per cent of India's gross domestic product.

Ice cream chieftains point out their industry's poor performance will lower demand for milk, butter and cream, thereby affecting livelihoods of farmers and dependents of the dairy and related food processing industries.

Although the losses are not new for the ice cream industry, new is "the declining sentiments for the dessert in the market", according to

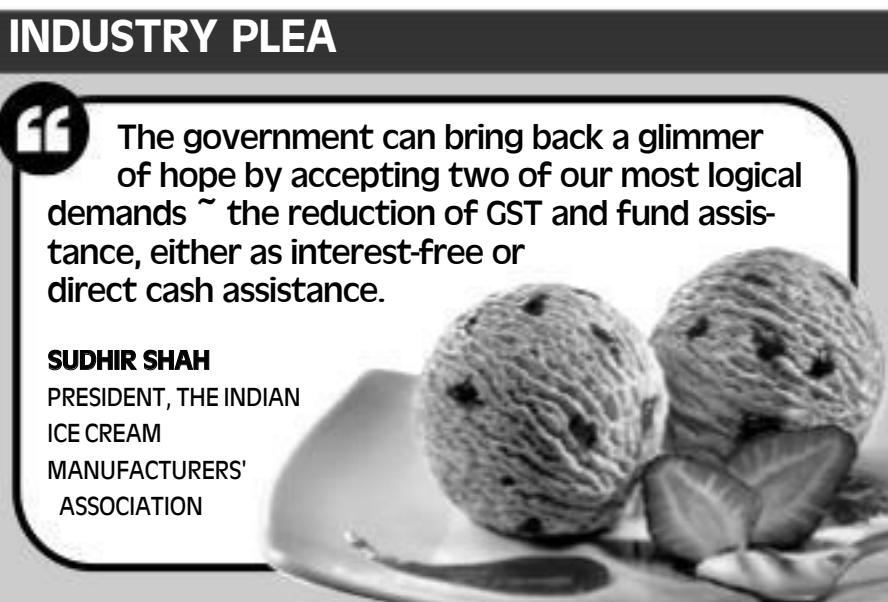
ice cream industry representatives.

Also new is village pan-chayats in some parts of the country banning ice cream sellers out of fear that eating ice creams can cause cold. Having even an ordinary cold can mean trouble these anxious and fearful pandemic times.

"None of our requests have been met till now," complained IICMA secretary Ashish A Nahar. "March and April have already passed and we have just one more month to prove our point to the government. Our capping losses through the year for an industry happily connected to joyous celebrations, feel good times and more cheery summers," he said.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. Rajasthan levies the highest value-added tax (VAT) on petrol in the country, followed by Madhya Pradesh. Sri Ganganagar district of Rajasthan had the costliest petrol and diesel in the country at Rs 102.70 per litre and Rs 95.06 a litre, respectively. Also in Rajasthan, petrol crossed the Rs 100-mark in Jaisalmer (Rs 100.71) and Bikaner (Rs 100.71) while it neared that mark in Barmer (Rs 99.82).

Petrol in several districts of Madhya Pradesh, including Shahdol (Rs 102.06), Rewa (Rs 102.04), Chhindwara (Rs 101.67) and Balaghat (Rs 101.98) crossed the physiological mark. PTI



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Very concerned about why

After what Beijing has done to Xinjiang, Tibet & Hong Kong, no sane person would believe it could take care of Taiwan's health needs or otherwise.



TAIWAN FOREIGN MINISTER JOSEPH WU
ON TWITTER, REFERRING TO CHINA'S RULING COMMUNIST PARTY

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 12 MAY 2021

09

Militants & children among 24 dead as Israel hits Hamas

Gaza militants fired more than 250 rockets at Israel, with about one-third landing in Gaza

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GAZA CITY, 11 MAY

Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza early Tuesday, hitting the high-rise home of a Hamas field commander and two border tunnels dug by militants, as Hamas and other armed groups fired dozens of rockets toward Israel. The escalation in the conflict was sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem.

Since Monday when the cross-border attacks began, 24 Palestinians, including nine children were killed in Gaza, most by airstrikes, Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military said 15 of the dead were militants. During the same period, Gaza militants fired more than 250 rockets toward Israel, injuring six Israeli civilians in a direct hit on an



Palestinian mourners carry the body of 11-year-old boy, who was killed by an explosion during the conflict. AP

apartment building.

Israel signaled it is widening its military campaign. The military said it is sending troop reinforcements to the Gaza border and the defense minister ordered the mobilization of 5,000 reserve soldiers. In the past, cross-border fighting between Israel and Hamas, the group that rules

planned well in advance.

The overnight rockets and airstrikes were preceded by hours of clashes between Palestinians and Israeli security forces, including dramatic confrontations at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque compound, a sacred site to both Jews and Muslims. In fighting in the contested city and across the West Bank, more than 700 Palestinians were hurt, including nearly 500 who were treated at hospitals.

Hundreds of residents of Arab communities across Israel staged overnight demonstrations denouncing the recent actions of Israeli security forces against Palestinians in one of the largest protests by Palestinian citizens in Israel in recent years. The escalation comes at a time of political limbo in Israel.

Netanyahu has been act-

ing as a caretaker prime minister since an inconclusive parliamentary election in March. He tried and failed to form a coalition government with his hard-line and ultra-Orthodox allies, and the task was handed to his political rivals last week.

One of those rivals is Israel's defense minister who is overseeing the Gaza campaign. It is not clear if and to what extent the toxic political atmosphere is spilling over into military decision-making, though the rival camps have unanimously expressed support for striking Hamas hard. Israeli media have reported that the new round of violence is slowing efforts by Netanyahu's rivals to form a ruling coalition among parties with a broad range of ideologies, but a shared goal of toppling Netanyahu.

Nepal President initiates government formation, parties to stake claim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 11 MAY

Nepal President Bidya Devi Bhandari has called on parties to form a new majority government by Thursday after the one headed by the embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli lost a trust vote.

The Office of the President, in a statement on Monday, said President Bhandari has decided to invite parties to form a majority government pursuant to Article 76 (2) of the Constitution of Nepal.

As per the constitutional provision, a candidate requires to submit signatures of lawmakers belonging to two or more political parties in parliament to the Office of President within the stipulated time.

The President's announcement came shortly after Oli lost a trust vote in the House of Representatives. Oli, who decided to seek the trust of the 275-member House on his

government, managed to garner only 93 votes, which fell short of 43 votes to reach the 136-mark and win the vote of confidence during a special session of the lower house.

A total of 124 members voted against the confidence motion while 15 members stayed neutral, Speaker Agni Sapkota announced on Monday. The session was attended by 232 lawmakers.

After Oli lost the trust vote, the Nepali Congress, the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) and a faction of the Janata Samajbadi Party led by Upendra Yadav urged President Bhandari to invoke Article 76 (2) of the Constitution to pave the way for the formation of a new government.

Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba, Maoist Center chair Prachanda, and Yadav, one of the chairs of the Janata Samajbadi Party, issued a joint statement. As per Article 100 (1) of the Constitution, the prime minister moved a

vote of confidence motion, but lost it. The prime minister hence has been relieved of his position as per Article 100 (3). So, we call upon the President to initiate the process to form a new government under Article 76 (2), the joint statement read.

With Oli failing the trust vote, the President needs to invoke Article 76 (2) to form a new government. It says in cases where no party has a clear majority in the House, the President shall appoint as the prime minister a member of the House who can command the majority with the support of two or more parties in the House of Representatives.

The main Opposition party, Nepali Congress, has already made a decision to form a government under its leadership. The CPN (Maoist Center) and the Janata Samajbadi Party have so far announced support to the NC-led government.

N Korea claims no coronavirus infections



SEOUL, 11 MAY

North Korea has told the World Health Organization that it has tested 25,986 people for the coronavirus through April but still has yet to find a single infection.

The WHO said in a weekly monitoring report that North Korea's testing figures include 751 people who were tested during April 23-29, of which 139 had influenza-like illnesses or severe respiratory infections.

Experts have expressed skepticism about North Korea's claim of a perfect record in keeping out Covid-19, given its poor health infrastructure and a porous border it shares with China.

North Korea has described its anti-virus efforts as a matter of national existence. It has barred tourists, flown out diplomats and severely restricted cross-border traffic and trade.

The North has stopped providing the number of people it quarantines this year, but previously said it had quarantined tens of thousands who had exhibited symptoms.

China's population grows at slowest pace to 1.412 billion: Census

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, 11 MAY

China's population grew at its slowest pace to reach 1.41178 billion, keeping its status as the world's most populous country amid official projections that the numbers may decline from next year, leading to labour shortages and a fall in consumption levels, impacting the country's future economic outlook.

According to the seventh national population census released by the Chinese government on Tuesday, China's population in all the 31

provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities reached 1.41178 billion up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010, the latest census data shows.

As China faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019 is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027, according to a UN report released in June, 2019. According to the data released by the NBS, the new census figures reveal that the demographic crisis China faced was expected to deepen as the population above 60 years grew to 264 million, up by 18.7 per cent last year.

SIMPLE JOYS



A woman plays with a child near elderly people on wheelchairs sunbathing on a compound of a commercial office building in Beijing. AGENCE

Saudi Arabia announces projects for Pak

DUBAI, 11 MAY

Saudi Arabia has announced 118 humanitarian projects worth over \$123 million for cash-strapped Pakistan in food security, health, education and water during Prime Minister Imran Khan's two-day visit, according to a report.

The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center's Supervisor General Dr Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Rabeeah said that the assistance was announced in light of the Covid-19 pandemic.

KSrelief announced 118 humanitarian projects for Pakistan at a cost of over \$123 million in food security, health, education, water and environmental sanitation.

He said that the kingdom has provided medical and preventive aid worth over \$1.5 million to combat the pandemic.

Khan's Special Representative for Middle East Affairs Sheikh Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi told the Saudi Press Agency that the visit will push the march of the joint cooperation in the right direction in order to achieve the desired interests and goals, and contribute to developing the political, military, diplomatic, economic, commercial, developmental and cultural coordination and cooperation fields. The two sides also stressed the need for concerted efforts of the Islamic world to confront extremism and strive to achieve international peace.

Myanmar junta holds pretense of control with 100 days in power

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BANGKOK, 11 MAY

After Myanmar's military seized power by ousting the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, they couldn't even make the trains run on time: State railway workers were among the earliest organised opponents of the February takeover, and they went on strike.

Health workers who founded the civil disobedience movement against military rule stopped staffing government medical facilities. Many civil servants were no-shows at work, along with employees of government and private banks.

Universities became hotbeds of resistance, and in

recent weeks, education at the primary and secondary levels has begun to collapse as teachers, students and parents boycott state schools.

One hundred days after their takeover, Myanmar's ruling generals maintain just the pretense of control. The illusion is sustained mainly by its partially successful efforts to shut down independent media and to keep the streets clear of large demonstrations

by employing lethal force.

More than 750 protesters and bystanders have been killed by security forces, according to detailed independent tallies.

The junta might like people to think that things are going back to normal because they are not killing as many people as they were before and there weren't as many people on the streets as before, but... the feeling we are get-

ting from talking to people on the ground is that definitely the resistance has not yet subsided, said Thin Lei Win, a journalist now based in Rome who helped found the Myanmar Now online news service in 2015.

She says the main change is that dissent is no longer as visible as in the early days of the protests before security forces began using live ammunition when marches and rallies in major cities and towns could easily draw tens of thousands of people.

At the same time, said David Mathieson, an independent analyst who has been working on Myanmar issues for over 20 years. Because of the very violent pacification of those protests,

a lot of people are willing to become more violent."

Police in Thailand arrest journalists who fled to Myanmar

Three senior journalists working for a news agency in Myanmar who fled after the military government ordered its operations to stop have been arrested by police in northern Thailand, their editor said Monday.

The three work for DVB, also known as Democratic Voice of Burma, an online and broadcast news agency, its executive director and chief editor, Aye Chan Naing, said in an email. Burma is the former name for Myanmar and is still used by some opponents of military rule.

Hesaid the three, along with two activists, whom he did not identify, were arrested Sunday in Chiang Mai during a random search by police. They were charged with illegal entry into Thailand, he said.

From photos published by local Thai media, it appeared that the journalists may have continued to report from a single-story house in which they seemed to have set up a makeshift video production studio.

Myanmar's junta, which seized power in February and ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, has attempted to silence independent news media by withdrawing their licenses and by arresting journalists.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



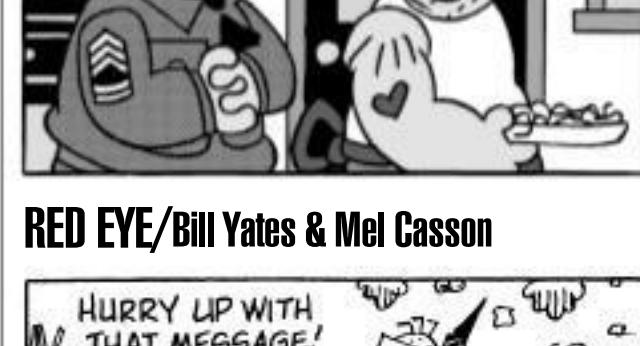
SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS	DOWN
1 Bear (5)	1 Wheedle (6)
4 Cry of disapproval (3)	2 Refuse (7)
8 Special anniversary (7)	3 Egg part (4)
9 Living (5)	4 Jewellery item (8)
10 Den (4)	5 Pending (2,3)
11 Plant used in cosmetics (4,4)	6 Flared trousers (4-7)
13 Timepiece (11)	7 Greek cheese (4)
16 Forlorn (8)	12 Coal mine (8)
18 Mouth tissue (4)	14 Teach (7)
20 Apportion (5)	15 Facet (6)
21 Artificial (3-4)	16 Twilight (4)
22 Lock-opener (3)	17 Plant stem (5)
23 Bedlinen item (5)	19 Burden (4)

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

2368836, 23686181

Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747

Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

Port 011-25671580; Terminal I-23860626

B 25671576, 18001803838

Rajasthan Roadways 23864470

U.P. Roadways 23868709

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 45313186; Indigo Airlines Airline 45313187

Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

Qatar Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

SCRABBLE BRAND

Scrabble Word Score



President Biden and President Putin have agreed to explore strategic stability discussions on a range of arms control and emerging security issues

RUSSIA FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEI LAVROV

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	30°C	27°C
HONG KONG	29°C	25°C
TOKYO	18°C	12°C
LONDON	16°C	9°C
DUBAI	37°C	26°C
SAN FRANCISCO	17°C	9°C
NEW YORK	19°C	9°C
MOSCOW	23°C	10°C

S= sunny, CL= clear, H= hazy, R= rainy...

THUMBNAILS



A clergyman registers his name as a candidate for the June 18, presidential elections at the interior Ministry in Tehran, Iran on Tuesday.

Suez Canal southern stretch to be expanded: The Suez Canal Authority plans to expand and deepen the southern stretch of the waterway where the container ship Ever Given got stuck in March, Chairman Osama Rabie said on Tuesday. AGENCIES

Twitter donates \$15 mn for Covid-19 relief: Twitter has donated USD 15 million to help address the Covid-19 crisis in India which is battling the unprecedented second wave of the deadly pandemic. Twitter CEO Jack Patrick Dorsey on Monday tweeted that the amount has been donated to three non-governmental organisations Care, Aid India and Sewa International USA. AP

FBI names pipeline cyberattackers as company promises return

WASHINGTON, 11 MAY

Hit by a cyberattack, the operator of a major US fuel pipeline said Monday it hopes to have services mostly restored by the end of the week as the FBI and administration officials identified the culprits as a gang of criminal hackers.

US officials sought to soothe concerns about price spikes or damage to the economy by stressing that the fuel supply had so far not experienced widespread disruptions, and the company said it was working toward "substantially restoring operational service" by the weekend.

The White House said in a statement that it was monitoring supply shortages in parts of the Southeast and that President Joe Biden had directed federal agencies to bring their resources to bear.

Colonial Pipeline, which delivers about 45 per cent of the fuel consumed on the East Coast, halted operations last week after revealing a ransomware attack that it said had affected some of its systems. Nonetheless, the attack underscored the vulnerabilities of the nation's energy sector and other critical industries whose infrastructure is largely privately owned. Ransomware attacks are typically carried out by criminal hackers who scramble data, paralyse victim networks, and demand large payments to decrypt it. AP

Pfizer Covid-19 shot expanded to US children as young as 12

Shots can begin as early as Thursday, after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 11 MAY

Uregulators on Monday expanded the use of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine to children as young as 12, offering a way to protect the nation's adolescents before they head back to school in the fall and paving the way for them to return to more normal activities.

Shots could begin as soon as Thursday, after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations for using the two-dose vaccine in 12- to 15-year-olds. An announcement is expected on Wednesday. Most Covid-19 vaccines worldwide have been authorised for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to 12 and up.

Parents, school administrators and public health officials elsewhere have eagerly awaited approval for the shot to be made available to more kids. This is a watershed moment in our ability to fight back the Covid-19 pandemic, Dr Bill Gruber, a Pfizer senior vice president who's also a pediatrician, told.

The Food and Drug Administration declared that the Pfizer vaccine is safe and offers strong protection for younger teens based on testing of more than 2,000 US teenagers ages 12 to 15. The agency noted there were no cases of Covid-19 among fully vaccinated adolescents compared with 16 among kids given dummy shots. More intriguing, researchers found the kids developed higher levels of virus-fighting antibodies than earlier studies measured in

young adults. The younger teens received the same vaccine dosage as adults and had the same side effects, mostly sore arms and flu-like fever, chills or aches that signal a revved-up immune system, especially after the second dose.

Pfizer's testing in adolescents met our rigorous standards, FDA vaccine chief Dr Peter Marks said. Having a vaccine authorised for a younger population is a critical step in continuing to lessen the immense public health burden caused by the pandemic.

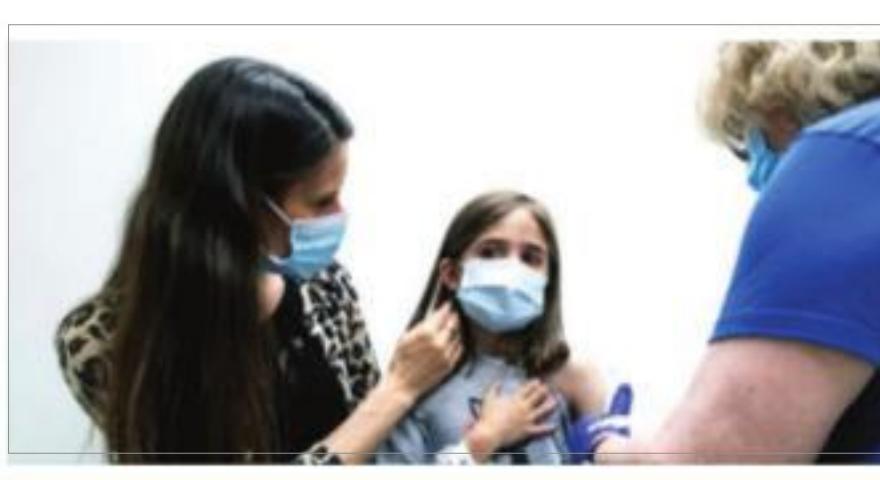
Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech recently requested similar authorisation in the European Union, with other countries to follow.

The latest news is welcome for US families struggling to decide what activities are safe to resume when the youngest family members remain unvaccinated.

"I can't feel totally comfortable because my boys aren't vaccinated," said Carrie Vittitoe, a substitute teacher and freelance writer, who is fully vaccinated, as are her husband and 17-year-old daughter. The FDA decision means her 13-year-old son soon could be eligible, leaving only her 11-year-old son unvaccinated.

President Joe Biden said that Monday's decision marked another important step in the nation's march back to regular life. The light at the end of the tunnel is growing, and today it got a little brighter, Biden said in a statement.

Pfizer is not the only company seeking to lower the age limit for its vaccine. Moderna recently said preliminary results from its study in 12- to 17-year-olds show strong pro-



US schools fight to keep students amid pandemic

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KANSAS CITY, 11 MAY

US educators are doing everything they can to track down high school students who stopped showing up to classes and to help them get the credits needed to graduate, amid an anticipated surge in the country's dropout rate during the coronavirus pandemic.

There isn't data available yet on how the pandemic has affected the nation's overall dropout rate - 2019 is the last year for which it is available - and many school officials say it's too early to know how many students who stopped logging on for distance learning don't plan to return.

"When students drop out, they typically look for

an out, an opportunity to leave. And this has provided that, unfortunately," Sandy Addis, chairman of the National Dropout Prevention Center, said recently, referring to the pandemic. His group believes the dropout rate has spiked this year and will remain high for years.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation warned that the pandemic had put 24 million children worldwide at risk of dropping out of school. And the pandemic's effects could erase gains the US made in reducing its dropout rate, which fell from 9.3 per cent in 2007 to 5.1 per cent in 2019, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

tors showing its vaccine is safe in children as young as 3.

Children are far less likely than adults to get seriously ill from Covid-19, yet they represent nearly 14 per cent of the nation's Covid cases. At least 296 have died from Covid-19 in the US alone.

European Union asks AstraZeneca to deliver 120 mn vaccines by June

BRUSSELS, 11 MAY

The European Union wants AstraZeneca to deliver at least 120 million doses of its Covid-19 vaccine by the end of June, a lawyer representing the EU said on Tuesday at the opening of a legal case against the company over delayed supplies.

The lawyer was speaking in a Belgian court as proceedings in the second legal case brought by the European Commission against the AstraZeneca got underway.

AstraZeneca had originally agreed with the EU to deliver 300 million doses by the end of June, but has so far delivered only 50 million, and has said it aims to ship 100 million shots by June end.

Officials familiar with the case said the lawsuit is mostly procedural - pertaining to the merits of the issue - after a first case was launched in April, and would allow EU to seek possible financial penalties.

The EU's lawyer told the court that the company should deliver 120 million doses by the end of June in the first formal request made so far by Brussels on the exact volume it is seeking.

The lawyer also told the court that the EU "hoped" that the remainder 300 million doses could be delivered by September. AstraZeneca's lawyer reiterated that the company "hopes" to deliver 100 million doses by June. AGENCIES

tanced audience, all of whom needed to have a negative Covid test in order to attend.

PM Boris Johnson and his Cabinet put together the list of proposals after a year of lockdowns and Covid-19 restrictions triggered the UK's deepest economic slump in three centuries. The government is also facing renewed calls for Scotland's independence and unrest in Northern Ireland fuelled by Britain's departure from the European Union.

Johnson will pursue the agenda from a position of strength, with his Conservative Party holding 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons. That electoral power was underscored last week, when the Conservatives dominated local elections in England.

Ahead of the speech, Johnson announced plans to give all adults access to four years of university or job training throughout their lifetimes as part of an effort to ensure workers have the skills employers need in a changing economy. The government also plans to revamp planning laws to speed up construction of new homes. "These new laws are the rocket fuel that we need to level up this country and ensure equal opportunities for all," Johnson said in a statement released ahead of the speech. "We know that having the right skills and training is the route to better, well-paid jobs."

British PM seeks to bolster economy, union in new Parliament



ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 11 MAY

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GUIDING LIGHT



A Canada goose escorts goslings as they swim across a pond at MacRae Park in Des Moines. AP

Putin submits legislation on Russian withdrawal from Open Skies treaty

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, 11 MAY

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday submitted legislation to parliament to formalise a Russian exit from the Open Skies treaty, a pact that allows unarmed surveillance flights over member countries.

The United States left the Open Skies arms control and verification treaty in November in one of Donald Trump's final acts as president. Washington accused Russia of violating it, something Moscow denied. Russia said in January it would also withdraw from the treaty.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov on Tuesday said



one of the reasons behind Russia's planned withdrawal was that the United States was still able to receive information acquired through the Open Skies treaty from its NATO allies.

Putin on Tuesday submitted a document to the State

School shooting in Russia kills 9 people; suspect arrested

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 11 MAY

A gunman attacked a school Tuesday morning in the Russian city of Kazan, sending students running out of the building as smoke poured from its windows. At least nine people were killed - seven eighth-grade students, a teacher and another school worker - and 21 others were hospitalized, an officials said.

Footage released by Russian media outlets showed students dressed in black and white running out of the building. Another video depicted shattered windows, billowing smoke and sounds resembling gunshots in the background. Dozens of ambulances lined up at the school's entrance after the attack and police fenced off access to the building.

Russian media said while some students were able to escape, others were trapped inside during the ordeal. All students were eventually evacuated to nearby day care centers and collected by their families. Officials said the attacker has been arrested and police opened a criminal investigation into the shooting.

Authorities immediately put additional security measures into place in all schools in Kazan, a city 700 kilometers (430 miles) east of Moscow.

Rustam Minnikhanov, gov-

ernor of the Tatarstan republic where Kazan is the capital, said four boys and three girls, all eighth-grade students, died, as well as a teacher and another school worker.

"The terrorist has been arrested, he is 19 years old. A firearm is registered in his name. Other accomplices haven't been established, an investigation is underway," Minnikhanov said after visiting the school.

According to Tatarstan health officials, 21 people were hospitalized with wounds after the attack, including 18 children, six of whom were in "severely grave condition."

Authorities announced a day of mourning on Wednes-

day to honor the victims of the shooting and cancelled all lessons in Kazan schools.

While school shootings are relatively rare in Russia, there have been several violent attacks on schools in recent years, mostly by students. In response to Tuesday's attack, authorities in several Russian regions ordered sweeping security inspections at schools.

Russian media said the shooter was a former student of the school who reportedly called himself "god" on his account on the messaging app Telegram and promised to "kill a large amount of biomass" on the morning of the shooting.

Iran rejects US claim that speedboats sparked encounter

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEHRAN, 11 MAY

Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guard on Tuesday rejected the US Navy's claim that fast-approaching Iranian speedboats in the Strait of Hormuz sparked a tense encounter in the already sensitive region.

The Guard's website, sepahnews.com, published a statement Tuesday saying Americans were guilty of using "false narratives and unprofessional behavior" and should more strictly "abide by international regulations." Specifically, the statement said the Guard's navy warned the US vessels to stop their "provocative and aimless shooting."

A day earlier, the US said the Revolutionary Guard sent

Pentagon. "This activity is

the kind of activity that could lead to somebody getting hurt and could lead to a real miscalculation there in the region, and that doesn't serve anybody's interests."

It was the second time in two weeks that a US ship opened fire to warn vessels of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard. On 26 April, an American warship fired warning shots when vessels of Iran's Revolutionary Guard came too close to a patrol in the Persian Gulf. That was the first such shooting in nearly four years. The Navy released black-and-white footage of that encounter in international waters of the northern reaches of the Persian Gulf near Kuwait, Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

Signs of optimism as New York City sees rise in tourism, bit by bit

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, 11 MAY

The once-deserted steps outside the Metropolitan Museum of Art are filling up with visitors again. Hotel lobbies are losing their desolate feel. Downtown, people are back to taking selfies with the Charging Bull statue near Wall Street.

Tourists who vanished from New York City's museums, hotels and cultural attractions when the pandemic hit a year ago are trickling back in as restrictions loosen.

There's still a long way to go before the still-closed theater district is mobbed with international travelers again.

But lately, indicators like hotel occupancy and museum attendance have ticked up, thanks to domestic travelers and day trippers who don't mind seeing the city operating at less than its usual hectic pace.

"It's kind of nice without a

lot of people out," she said, noting that the pre-pandemic crush of people would probably now make her nervous, with the virus still circulating.

"In the end, people want

city for a handful of days recently to celebrate a friend's birthday.

Lounging at a table in Times Square as three street performers started their dance moves nearby, Fuhrer said she knew it wasn't anywhere near as busy as usual. But she was OK with that.

"It's kind of nice without a

lot of people out," she said, noting that the pre-pandemic crush of people would probably now make her nervous, with the virus still circulating.

"In the end, people want

Hunting at night

The early night owl was a dinosaur

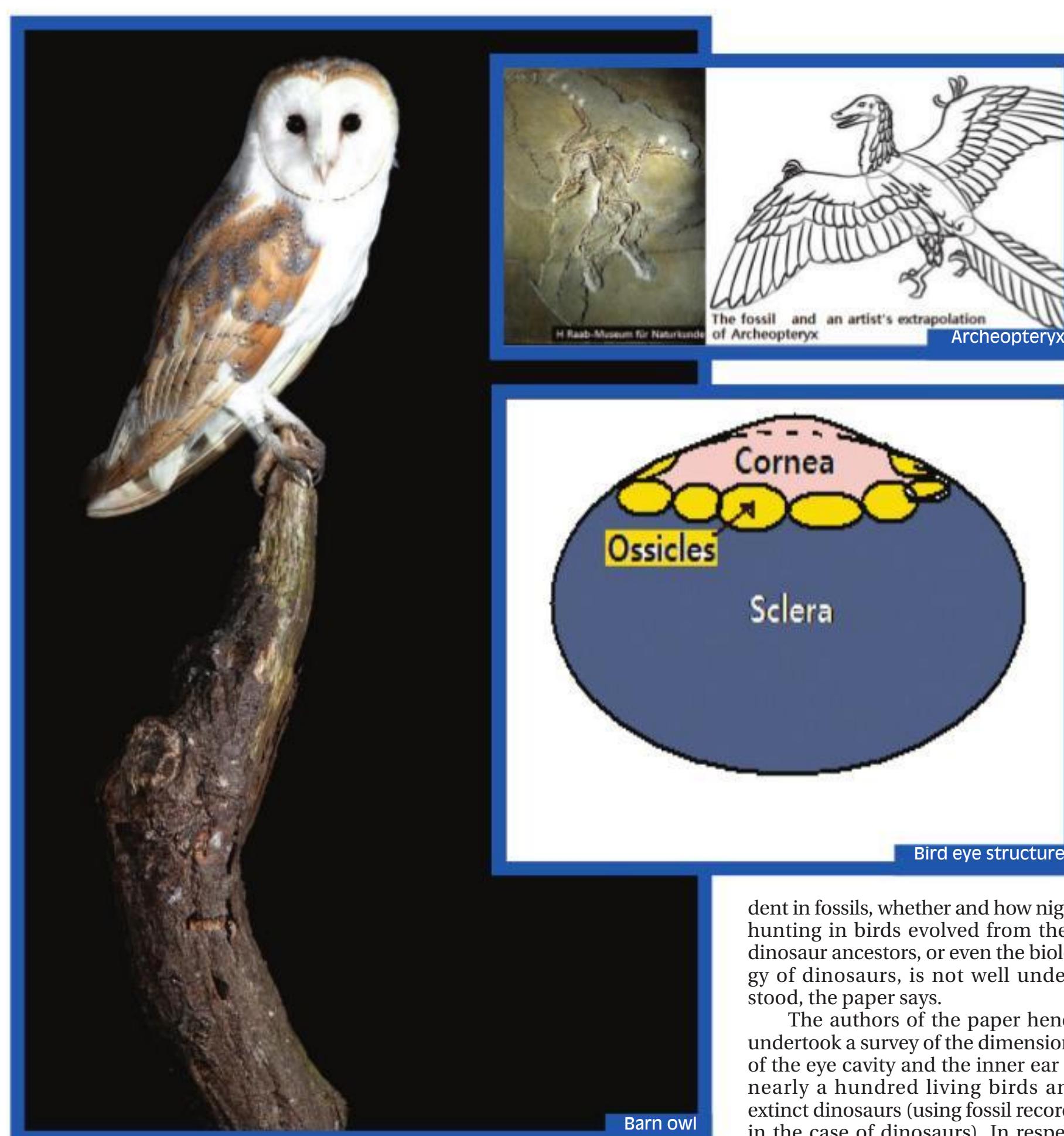
S ANANTHANARAYANAN

Birds are essentially daylight creatures, but there are some that have adapted to hunt in the night. And night birds have evolved very acute visual and auditory sensitivity. As birds are known to have evolved from dinosaurs, a valid question is whether this ability to hunt in poor light existed among dinosaurs too.

Jonah N Choiniere, James M Neenan, Lars Schmitz, David P Ford, Kimberley E J Chapelle, Amy M Balanoff, Justin S Sipla, Justin A Georgi, Stig A Walsh, Mark A Norell, Xing Xu, James M Clark, Roger B J Benson, from University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa, Universities of Oxford, Edinburgh and Iowa, John Hopkins University, Midwestern University, George Washington University, Claremont McKenna, Scripps, and Pitzer Colleges, Claremont and Institutes and Museums in Los Angeles, New York, Edinburgh and Beijing, answer the question in the affirmative. In their paper in the American Association for the Advancement of Science journal, *Science*, they identify a species of dinosaur, which lived in the Late Cretaceous epoch (100-66 million years ago) and had the same adaptation for poor light as present night birds.

Ancestors of the birds were a group of meat-eating dinosaurs called theropods, a bipedal group with hollow bones and three-toed feet. We usually associate dinosaurs with huge and fearsome creatures – and the largest dinosaurs belonged to the group of theropods. Theropods, however, were of all sizes, going down to less than a kilogram in weight, and it is from this group that some evolved into birds.

The Archaeopteryx, discovered in the 1860s, was a chicken-sized creature that had many features of dinosaurs, like jaws with sharp teeth, three fingers with claws and a long bony tail, but also had a pair of broad wings, that enabled it to glide or fly, as well as long, powerful front limbs. The Archaeopteryx was hence considered the transition, or the bridge, between reptiles and birds. More specimens of feathered dinosaurs, however, have been discovered, and there are now



more candidates for the beginning of the evolutionary tree of birds.

Birds have specialised – according to conditions, available prey or sources of food, and predators – and there are now some 10,000 different species. And as mentioned earlier, the majority are birds that hunt or forage in daylight. There are, however, a few species, mainly different kinds of owls, the nightjar, frogmouth, night heron, which have specialised for hunting in the dark or low light.

The authors of the paper note that this adaptation is in the form of large pupils of the eyes, to increase sensitivity to light, and again in the

features of the ear, to detect feeble sounds – most marked in the barn owl, which can hunt in total darkness. These adaptations result in skeletal structure to accommodate the larger eyeball, in the case of vision, and the longer organ called the lagena, in birds, or the cochlea, in mammals, of the inner ear, that processes sound in the case of hearing.

"Most nocturnal birds have conspicuous modifications of the visual system, and specialised nocturnal foragers of active prey combine adaptations of both vision and hearing," the paper says. Although such features of the skeletal structure should be evi-

dent in fossils, whether and how night hunting in birds evolved from their dinosaur ancestors, or even the biology of dinosaurs, is not well understood, the paper says.

The authors of the paper hence undertook a survey of the dimensions of the eye cavity and the inner ear of nearly a hundred living birds and extinct dinosaurs (using fossil records in the case of dinosaurs). In respect of vision, the anatomical feature studied was the scleral ossicle ring, or the bony casing as part of the sclera, the container, the outer layer of the eye, a feature seen in birds and in many vertebrates. And in respect of hearing, the cochlea, the spiral-shaped, bony, resonating cavity, lined with sound-sensing filaments, to pick up different frequencies.

The eyes of birds that hunt in low light are highly adapted to suit the purpose. Unlike the eyes of mammals, their eyes are not round but tubular, and packed with rods, as opposed to cones, for greater sensitivity. And they have no eyeball that can move – instead, the large vision apparatus is

rigidly fixed to the bony, ossicle ring. The bird hence has to turn its head to change its gaze. The eyes, however, are larger, in case of the owl and they account for three per cent of body weight – a thousand times more than ours – and are therefore highly adapted to see in great detail and in poor light.

As for hearing, the study of 88 species of living birds, the paper says, shows that birds that hunt in the dark all have elongated or highly elongated cochlear ducts, as opposed to daytime birds. "This suggests that duct elongation is an adaptation for auditory foraging, contradicting the hypothesis that it evolved to facilitate intraspecific communication," the paper says. Woodpeckers, which use sounds to track concealed insects, also show limited-moderate duct elongation, the paper says.

The question now is whether such adaptations for low light foraging can be seen among dinosaurs.

The paper reports that adaptation to night hunting is there in a group of small dinosaurs that existed from the Jurassic, which is the epoch just before the Cretaceous (100-66 million years ago), and through the Cretaceous. Computer-based reconstruction of the casing of the eyes show large eyes and openings, suggesting adaptation for night hunting in the case of two groups. The first, an early group, retains much of the general features and may not have specialised its manner of hunting. The other, called *Shuvunia Deserti*, which appears in the Late Cretaceous, developed a bird-like skull and limbs and digits suited for scratching and digging.

The hearing apparatus was studied using micro-CT scans. It is found that *Shuvunia* has an elongated cochlear duct, with a large curved diameter, similar to that of the current barn owl. While such hearing adaptation is seen in the theropods, the elongation is exceptional in the case of *Shuvunia* and one more, the paper says, in a manner comparable to how the elongation in the barn owl is not even seen in other owls.

The paper notes that acute hearing ability, while exceptional among birds, is not so rare among dinosaurs and is fairly common among mammals that hunt at night. The paper surveys the occurrence of both visual and hearing acuity, other features, like modification of dental endowment and limbs suited for digging and scraping, to expand our understanding of ancient ecosystems and how specialisation for hunting at night took place, independently among birds and mammals.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Bamboo bats



Cricket bats made of bamboo instead of the traditionally used willow are stronger, offer a better "sweet spot," and deliver more energy to the ball on impact, according to a new study.

Using techniques such as microscopic analysis, video capture technology, computer modelling, and mechanical testing, scientists at the University of Cambridge found that bats made of bamboo enabled "increased energy transfer from the player to the ball," than willow which has become synonymous with cricket bats.

The results of their analysis, published in the Journal of Sports Engineering and Technology, noted that their specially made prototype laminated bamboo bat is significantly stronger than willow blades and can hold much higher loads.

Since bats made with bamboo could be thinner while remaining as strong as willow, the researchers believe batters can swing the lighter blades significantly faster to transfer more energy to the ball.

Scientists also found that their prototype's "sweet spot" – the area on cricket bats where energy transference is at its most efficient – performed 19 per cent better than on a traditional willow bat.

"This sweet-spot was about 20 mm wide and 40 mm long, significantly larger than on a typical willow bat, and better still, was positioned closer to the toe (12.5 cm from the toe to its sweetest point)," the researchers noted in a statement. Players using bamboo bats would also not feel any more vibration than they faced off a willow bat's handle.

They believe blades made of bamboo can also be a sustainable option for the future. Citing previous studies, the scientists said there is already a shortage of good-quality willow since these trees, which grow mostly in England, take up to 15 years to mature to a point where the wood can be used to make bats.

Using willows to make cricket bats also posed the problem of increased wastage as manufacturers throw away nearly a third of the timber they source.

In contrast, the researchers said the bamboo varieties suitable for cricket bats grow abundantly in China, across South-east Asia as well as South America, and mature twice as fast as willow.

The cell structure in the laminated bamboo material is more regular, according to the scientists, potentially leading to less wastage of raw material during manufacture. They say its low-cost production and increased sustainability can make bamboo cricket bats a viable and ethical alternative to willow.

—THE INDEPENDENT

DELVING INTO PREGNANCY LOSS

What causes miscarriages? An expert explains why women shouldn't blame themselves



ROCHANDA MITCHELL

Mother's Day is a happy day for millions, but for those who have experienced a miscarriage, the day can be devastating. As many as one in four recognised pregnancies result in miscarriage.

Pregnancy loss can be mentally and physically taxing. Women often have feelings of sadness, anger, isolation and guilt. Often, women blame themselves for the loss, which may lead to feelings of hopelessness and depression.

I am a fellow in maternal-fetal medicine, and I have seen first-hand the emotional upheaval that many women experience after miscarriage. Caregivers and loved ones can help by understanding a woman's feelings and helping her know that this loss was not her fault. I know that having honest dialogue about the incidence and cause of early pregnancy loss may foster a community of support and make the topic of pregnancy loss less taboo.

Why it's not the woman's fault

About 15-25 per cent of all clinically recog-

nised pregnancies result in pregnancy loss. Some miscarriages occur before a woman is aware, thus accounting for the wide variation in the incidence of pregnancy loss.

About 80 per cent of all pregnancy losses occur within the first trimester and are often caused by having missing or extra chromosomes, called aneuploidy. Sporadic errors during chromosomal division and duplication cause aneuploidy. Many of the abnormal chromosomes are incompatible with life and result in miscarriage. These genetic errors are considered sporadic because they're due to chance and weren't passed down as an inheritable trait from the parents.

When an extra chromosome occurs, the result is called trisomy. The most common chromosomal abnormality found in first trimester loss is trisomy 16. The term trisomy 16 indicates that there are three copies of chromosome 16, instead of the normal two copies of the chromosome. This almost always results in pregnancy loss.

About five per cent of women will experience two consecutive pregnancy losses, and one

per cent will experience three or more consecutive pregnancy losses. Consecutive pregnancy loss is known as recurrent pregnancy loss. Women who experience this should discuss it with their obstetrician/gynaecologist and schedule a clinical workup.

What doctors know about pregnancy loss

The cause of pregnancy loss is often beyond a woman's control. It can be related to genetics, abnormalities in the uterus, autoimmunity, infections and metabolic disorders. Lifestyle choices, such as avoiding tobacco and drugs, are a few of the things that can lower the risk of miscarriage.

Miscarriages caused by uterine abnormalities happen most often in the second trimester. Something called a septic uterus is the most common of the malformations, occurring when a fibrous or muscular membrane, or septum, develops inside of the uterus and divides it. This typically happened when the woman herself was a developing foetus in her own mother's womb. Unless it has been diagnosed by a doctor, a woman would not even know she has this con-

dition.

Septate uterus can be surgically corrected and improve pregnancy outcomes, but there are no known surgical corrective options for other types of abnormalities.

Clotting disorders and lifestyle

A clotting disorder known as antiphospholipid syndrome is also associated with pregnancy loss. This condition causes the placenta to develop and implant abnormally. About five to 20 per cent of patients with recurrent pregnancy loss will be positive for antiphospholipid antibodies, but women are not routinely screened for this condition. If a woman has a history of recurrent pregnancy loss, however, she and her physician should consider testing for this syndrome. Treatment with low-dose aspirin and heparin has been shown to improve live-born rate.

Women can and should do everything they can to take good care of themselves, pregnant or not. When pregnant, however, it is especially important to manage chronic diseases such as diabetes. Also, doctors who treat pregnant women who smoke, drink alcohol or use other drugs can and should help them get treatment to help them stop. Ceasing the use of tobacco, alcohol and other substances has been associated with a decreased risk of miscarriage.

Grief and guilt abound

There is often a grief response associated with pregnancy loss. The psychological burden of miscarriage may negatively affect a couple's relationship. Increased awareness and sensitivity to the issues associated with pregnancy loss are essential to eliminating the stigma some women experience. And, many women feel guilty when they experience a miscarriage, which may compound the grief.

Having more open dialogue regarding pregnancy loss may reveal just how common miscarriage is. Fostering a community of support is important in helping women move through this difficult process. During this Mother's Day celebration, let us celebrate mothers with living children and honour those who have had the unfortunate experience of pregnancy loss.

The writer is a fellow in maternal-fetal medicine, University of Virginia, United States. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com

A team at the Indian Institute of Technology-Mandi have invented a method to simultaneously study the variations in nerve functions and brain blood flow associated with brain disorders such as Ischemic stroke. The invented method helps in locating and classifying damaged sites (lesions) in the brain, brought about, or leading to neurological diseases.

Results of the study led by Shubhajit Roy Chowdhury, associate professor, School of Computing & Electrical Engineering, IIT-Mandi, has been published in IEEE Journal of Translational Engineering in Health and Medicine and the team has been recently granted a US patent for the invention. Roy Chowdhury has collaborated with Abhijit Das, a neurologist from the Institute of Neurosciences, Kolkata, and Anirban Dutta, assistant professor in restorative neurorehabilitation from the department of biomedical engineering, University at Buffalo, US.

A benign electrical current is given to the brain through electrodes, and the responses of the brain in terms of nerve action and blood flow are simultaneously measured by electroencephalography and near-infrared spectroscopy. While EEG and NIRS are already used independently, the prototype developed by IIT-Mandi innovators combines them into a single point-of-care unit to get a more accurate picture of the Neurovascular coupling.

For the brain



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LAST-MINUTE PANIC

Naomi Osaka (photo, left) has admitted she is "not really sure" the coronavirus-hit Tokyo Olympics should go ahead as doubts grew about the Games weeks before the opening ceremony. She joined Kei Nishikori in raising concerns, with Tokyo and other parts of Japan under a coronavirus state of emergency.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

Giles to decide how English cricketers will be utilised

THE INDEPENDENT & AGENCIES

LONDON/AUCKLAND, 11 MAY

England head of cricket Ashley Giles has confirmed some but not all of England's cricketers who have returned from the Indian Premier League will be made available for the start of the Test summer.

Originally, those participating in the IPL were to begin the New Zealand series off, which is set to begin at Lord's on 2 June given the clash with the latter stages of the competition.

However, with the franchise competition postponed due to the severe Covid-19 crisis in India, nine of the 11 English participants - not all of them Test players - are now back in the UK currently in airports serving their quarantine period. Those are due to end at the weekend, and with a round of Championship matches beginning on 20 May, there is an opportunity to re-acclimatise to the red ball ahead of the two-Test series.

While there is a desire to utilise those who have come home early, not least from fans put out by the IPL, given priority over Test cricket, Giles, managing director of men's cricket, states participation will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. "All these guys are currently in quarantine and have had a number of spells in quarantine and bubbles in this last period. Some of their choice, I get that. We need to look after them, with the amount of cricket they've got coming up, we're not going to



rush or force them back into cricket.

"Chris Silverwood (head coach) will work with each and every one of them, as will our medical teams on what's best for their progress. On the matter of playing cricket, they are all different. We know historically that Chris Woakes (in photo) likes to get more overs under his belt with the red ball before he's up to speed. Others react differently to that, so it's a case by case basis." It is likely to mean a player like Jos Buttler will not be pushed into action, opening the door for Ben Foakes to keep wicket in his first home Test match. The Surrey wicketkeeper played the last three India Tests after Buttler

returned home as part of the winter's rest-and-rotation plans.

At the same time, Jonny Bairstow, who does not have a Test central contract but picked up four caps at the start of the year, may want to build on his surprise comeback. Likewise, Woakes, who did not make an appearance in Sri Lanka or India due to being a close contact with Moeen Ali who tested positive for Covid at the start of the tour of the subcontinent, may express a desire to add to his 39 caps.

Sam Curran, too, could be keen on filling the allrounder gap left by Ben Stokes who is recovering from a broken finger sustained at the IPL.

There will still be opportunities for those originally pencilled into the New Zealand series to get their chance to impress. For instance, Ollie Robinson and Craig Overton in particular still retain hopes to feature given the returnees because of injuries to Jofra Archer (who returned to action for Sussex 2nd XI last week), Olly Stone and Stokes.

Part of the reasoning behind who gets the nod will also come down to the programme this year, which features plenty of multi-format cricket. Five Tests against India are to come this summer, along with limited-overs matches against Sri Lanka and Pakistan. That leads into a tour of Pakistan, the T20 World Cup, an Ashes and then a tour of the Caribbean which will finish in March 2021.

Though England are keen to abandon their rest-and-rotation policy that formed the basis of their selection at the start of the year, there is an appreciation that the need for bubbles during the summer along with the schedule will mean similar management is required. "We have got an awful lot of cricket coming up," said Giles. "We only have seven Tests between now and the Ashes, but that's a lot more than our competition at the moment. That with the amount of other cricket we have to play, we almost want to get this tapering towards the Ashes. We have got to get that right. Is that against New Zealand? I don't know. That's something for us to continue to discuss.

"What we do know and what's not going to change is that given the weight of cricket,

et, given the Ashes series, and we don't know what conditions that's going to be played in at the moment with regard to a Covid environment, we are going to need a bigger group of players still. We may also choose against New Zealand to look at some new faces."

'Safe in bubble'

In Auckland, Mumbai Indians fielding coach James Pamment has claimed some senior Indian players did not like being subjected to restrictions inside the IPL's big bubble but it felt completely safe till the time infections in participating teams did not come to light.

"Some of the senior Indian guys don't like being restricted and told what to do," he was quoted as saying by *stuff.co.nz*. "But we did feel safe, at no point did we feel the bubble would be compromised...we felt the travel was always going to be a challenge."

The New Zealander said he and MI players had started to feel apprehensive shortly before the competition was halted. "It was when cases started to come with the team. They were a little more fearful, a little more apprehensive," said the 52-year-old, who had returned home on Saturday. "Chennai announced their cases and we'd played Chennai at the weekend, so straight away, the dynamic changed. I certainly noticed within my group. I'd spend most of my time with the Kiwis and the Aussies, their mindset had changed. You know it's going to be hard to manage," he said.

"We had a case ourselves on our first travel to Chennai. It was a support staff member, fortunately picked up very quickly and he was isolated, and none of the people considered close contacts to him was infected. It was a very early reminder that your bubble's not impenetrable. We probably got even stricter around how we operated."

He also said that allowing 70,000 spectators in Ahmedabad for Test matches against England "was a little irresponsible and now Ahmedabad is a hot-bed of Covid-19."

were sick. There were bereavements as well and we were taking a bit of a cue from those guys who were saying 'No, we want to carry on' and the messages were coming back that this was a good distraction." Pamment said at no stage had he felt his health was going to be put in jeopardy within the bubble set up by MI at a Mumbai hotel.

"You felt as long as everyone was disciplined and people weren't tempted. You did feel confident you'd be fine, and everybody around you would be fine...an extremely safe bubble being formed."

He said long before the suspension of IPL, he was aware of the pandemic getting worse in India and the event should not have been spread across six fixtures. "If it had been held solely in Mumbai, perhaps it'd have been easily managed, but once cases rise in Mumbai, you're looking at ground staff, you're looking at different service-type people. You know it's going to be hard to manage," he said.

"Currently, Law 5.3.2 states that the blade of the bat must consist solely of wood, so for bamboo (which is a grass) to be considered as a realistic alternative to willow would require a law change," the MCC said in a statement yesterday.

"Importantly, the law would need to be altered to allow bamboo specifically, as even if it were to be recognised as a wood, this would still be illegal under the current law, which bans lamination of the blade, except in junior bats."

The researchers found the bamboo bat to be "stiffer,

harder and stronger than those made of willow, although more brittle" and also supposed to have a larger "sweet spot, closer to the toe of the bat. The sweet spot on a bamboo bat makes it much easier to hit a four off a yorker for starters, but it's exciting for all kinds of strokes," Shah had said in the report.

The MCC, however, said they needed to tread carefully to ensure the bat-ball balance remained intact.

"The MCC's role as the Guardian of the Laws includes maintaining the balance between bat and ball, and any potential amendments to the Law would need carefully to take this into consideration, particularly the concept of the bat producing greater power."

The apex body said it would discuss the matter as finding alternatives to willow in a relevant issue. "Sustainability is a relevant topic for the MCC and indeed cricket, and this angle of willow alternatives should also be considered," the MCC said. "This could provide a pertinent angle for further research and the possibility of reducing the cost of producing bats in different areas of the world. The Club will discuss the topic at the next laws sub-committee meeting," it added.

Cricket law-makers to discuss bamboo bats



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON, 11 MAY

The Marylebone Cricket Club have shot down for the moment the idea of bats to be fashioned from bamboo, saying it would be "illegal" under the current set of rules governing the game. The guardians of the laws of cricket, however, said they would discuss the matter during their laws sub-committee meeting.

According to a study by Darshil Shah and Ben Tinkler-Davies from the University of Cambridge, bats made of bamboo are economically sustainable and are also stronger than the ones made of willow, which are traditionally used.

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Qualifiers are postponed

PTI

KUALA LUMPUR, 11 MAY

The qualifying round draw of the 2022 Asian Football Confederation Women's Asian Cup to be held in India, scheduled for 27 May, was today postponed owing to rising Covid-19 infections in the host country and across the continent.

The AFC said the draw to be held here had been postponed until further notice. In January, the AFC announced the main tournament would take place between 20 January and 6 February next year.

Chess initiative

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Viswanathan Anand and four other Indian Grandmasters will play simultaneous online exhibition matches against others on Thursday to raise funds for Covid-19 relief in the country.

Any player with a *Chess.com* affiliation or FIDE standard rating of under 2000 can play with former world champion Anand by donating US\$150 and with the other four GMs by paying US\$25 for registration.

Donations will also be accepted during the exhibition matches to be broadcast on *Chess.com* at 19:30 IST. The website said it would match all donations up to a total of US\$10,000. AGENCIES

'All India games in Colombo'

NEW DELHI, 11 MAY

Colombo's R Premadasa Stadium will host all the matches in India's limited-overs series against Sri Lanka. Indian cricket board president Sourav Ganguly earlier said that India were set to travel to Sri Lanka in July for three One-Day Internationals and as many Twenty20 Internationals.

"We plan to host the entire series at one venue. As of now, it has been decided that the Premadasa Stadium will host the fixtures. Obviously, it depends on how the situation is around that time," Arjuna de Silva, Sri Lanka Cricket's administrative committee chairman, told an Indian magazine yesterday.

"With the Covid-19 situation fluid, we cannot allow fans yet, so all the matches will be closed-door affairs," De Silva said. India are reportedly set to arrive in Sri Lanka for the series on 5 July and, after the team complete their week-long quarantine, will play the ODI series starting on 13 July. The T20 series will begin on 22 July.

"As of now, we will stick to the protocol which stipulates the players will have to undergo a spell of hard quarantining for the first three days and in the next four days, they will be allowed to train. However, if there are any revised guidelines from the health ministry around that time, we will have to follow that," he added. AGENCIES

'Caribbean glory days won't return'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KINGSTON, 11 MAY

Pace legend Curly Ambrose (in photo) believes the current lot of Caribbean youngsters doesn't really understand what cricket means to the West Indies and so the two-time world champions will never be able to relive their glory days again.

The West Indies had won the first two World Cup titles, in 1975 and 1979, and it took 33 years for the team to claim another International Cricket Council title when Darren Sammy guided them to the 2012 Twenty20 World Cup crown and repeated the feat four years later.

"Most of the youngsters we

have now probably don't quite understand what cricket means to West Indians in the West Indies and abroad because cricket is the only sport that really unites Caribbean people," Ambrose told *Talk Sports Live*.

"This is going to be difficult to find another Viv Richards or a (Desmond) Haynes and (Gordon) Greenidge, a Brian Lara, Richie Richardson, you know, a Malcolm Marshall, Curtly Ambrose, Courtney Walsh, Michael Holding, Andy Roberts, and the list goes on and on, Clive Lloyd," Ambrose

said. "It's going to be extremely difficult to find those quality players again." Ambrose said the West Indies team could improve their ICC ranking but would not be able to dominate cricket the way they did in the 1980s and 1990s.

"When we were the best team in the world, West Indians all over the globe could walk and boast about how good we were because we were the best, so it's going to be difficult to see those glory days again," he said. "Yes, we can be competitive and climb up the ICC rankings and be a force to be reckoned with again, but those glory days, I don't think we will see them again."

Juventus face expulsion from Serie A if still in Super League

AGENCIES

MILAN, 11 MAY

Cristiano Ronaldo's (in photo) Juventus will be excluded from next season's Serie A should the Italian football club decide to persist with the proposed European Super League project, the head of the Italian football federation - FIGC - said yesterday.

Nine of the clubs who tried to break away, including six English Premier League teams, backed out of the Super League idea, but Juventus, Barcelona and Real Madrid are still involved in the project.

"If Juventus do not respect the rules they will be out," Gabriele Gravina told a Press conference. "At the time of registration for the next Serie A championship, the club will be excluded if they decide not to withdraw from the Super League."

Juve, Real and Barcelona said they were ready to reconsider the proposed approach to the breakaway plan following the angry backlash across the continent, but added it would be "highly irresponsible" for them to abandon the project altogether.



"We are fully aware of the diversity of reactions to the Super League initiative and, consequently, of the need to reflect on the reasons for some of them," their statement said on Saturday. "We are ready to reconsider the proposed approach, as necessary." They did also denounce the "intolerable" pressure put on them by Uefa to drop the project.

The Super League argued it would increase revenue for

the top clubs in Europe and allow them to distribute more money to the rest of the game. Uefa, other teams and fan organisations, however, said the league would only boost the power and wealth of elite clubs, with European football's governing body insisting on Friday that the three clubs will face sanctions.

The game comes in the middle of a period of three league games in five days for United, which has had to fit in a rearranged match against Liverpool that was postponed on May 2 because of fan protests against the club's American owners. The game against Liverpool is scheduled for Thursday and, with United coming off a win at Aston Villa on Sunday, manager Ole Gunnar Solskjær is likely to field a severely depleted lineup to guard against fatigue-related injuries.

Leicester will look to take advantage as it seeks a win to consolidate its place in the top four, which has come under pressure particularly from Liverpool and West Ham with two weeks of the season remaining. Southampton and Crystal Palace meet in the other game, with both teams safe from relegation.

SPAIN Barcelona has another opportunity to take the Spanish league lead when it visits Levante. The Catalan club was held by leader Atlético Madrid at home on Saturday to stay two points back in third place.

It can move in front of Atlético with a win in Valencia. Atlético, which has led most of the league, hosts fifth-placed Real Sociedad on Wednesday.

ITALY Fourth-placed Napoli hosts mid-table Udinese looking to strengthen its chances of returning to the Champions League. Napoli is on a 12-match unbeaten run and striker Victor Osimhen has been in form with five goals in his last four games.

they could not make the final of the men's skeet event on Monday.

Former India shooter Suma Shirur, who is now the high-performance coach of the national rifle team, sought blessings before their departure.

"With a 'Bharat Mata ki Jay' we get ready to depart for Croatia. From there straight to Tokyo 2020 Olympics. 80 days in total. The Indian Shooting team needs your blessings to give their best," Shirur wrote on her Twitter handle.

The team left in a chartered flight arranged by the NRAI. After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to participate in the Olympics, beginning on July 23.

The ISSF World Cup in Osijek is being organised in place of the one earlier scheduled in Baku, Azerbaijan (from June 21 to July 2), which got cancelled due to a surge in COVID-19 cases in that country.

There will be nine coaches for the 13 rifle and pistol shooters but some coaches like Samareesh Jung, Jaspal Rana and Ronak Pandit could not travel with the team for various reasons.

Foreign rifle coach Oleg Mikhailov was also a part of the travelling contingent but longtime pistol coach Pavel Smirnov could not leave on Tuesday as he did not get his visa. He is likely to join the team next week.

As per the standard COVID-19 protocols in Croatia, the Indian contingent will serve a mandatory quarantine before starting the training. World Cup gold medallist Sanjeev Rajput and world number 10m air pistol, Elavenil Valarivan, also issued pre-departure tweets from their respective handles, both hoping to lift the spirit of the coronavirus-ravaged nation with their achievements in the sporting arena.

"Long tour ahead, wish us luck. Hope we are able to win medals and raise spirits of the nation," Elavenil wrote.

Alongside a few pictures of the shooters, two-time Olympian Rajput tweeted, "Off to Croatia for our preparation leading up to Tokyo2020. Hopefully the next time we enter India is with a handful of Olympic Medals. Thank you for the support as always. Do keep blessing us with your wishes! Jai Hind."

Man U looks to keep Man City waiting to seal title

AGENCIES

LONDON, 11 MAY