



**BLINKEN PLEDGES SUPPORT
TO REBUILD GAZA WORLD**

The Tribune

VOICE OF THE PEOPLE



**TERRORISM MAIN CHALLENGE:
EAM TO UN CHIEF BACK PAGE**

WEDNESDAY | 26 MAY 2021

CHANDIGARH | GURUGRAM | JALANDHAR | BATHINDA | VOL. 141 NO. 144 | 12 PAGES | ₹5.00 | REGD. NO. CHD/0006/2021-2023 ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Deadline over, Twitter, FB yet to comply with ethics code

New rules aim to check inflammatory content

Tribune News Service

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 Even as the deadline for social media platforms to comply with the new government regulations ended on Tuesday midnight, there is little chance of Twitter, Facebook and other companies facing an immediate blackout in India. Facebook today said it was working to implement operational processes and aimed to comply with the provisions of the IT rules that will come into effect from May 26. The deadline ended in the backdrop of a scheduled meeting between External CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

FRESH GUIDELINES NOTIFIED IN FEB

- Social media firms need to appoint three types of officials
- 1 Chief Compliance Officer: Will ensure new rules are followed
- 2 Nodal Officer: Will be in touch with law enforcing agencies 24x7 to remove or block any illegal or inflammatory content
- 3 Resident Grievance Officer: Will acknowledge grievances within 24 hours and respond to complainant in 15 days
- Companies need to identify the first originator of any contentious message
- Three-official panel to be liable if any illegal content is shared over their platforms



HOW MANY USERS IN INDIA*	
WHATSSAPP	53 CR
YOUTUBE	44.8 CR
FACEBOOK	41 CR
INSTA	21 CR
TWITTER	1.75 CR

(*FIGURES TILL FEBRUARY 2021)

Cong: Tag posts of 11 ministers as 'manipulated'

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 Congress media chief Randeep Surjewala on Tuesday wrote to Twitter, asking it to tag tweets of 11 Union Ministers as "manipulated media". He alleged the content of #CongressToolkitExposed was created by a section of BJP leaders to gain undue political advantage by spreading potentially dangerous and fabricated content against the Congress. "People tend to take on face value any information put up directly by a Union Minister on Twitter," he said. —TNS

Daily infections below 2 lakh after 40 days; deaths under 4K

Tribune News Service

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 As India's daily cases dropped below 2 lakh for the first time after 40 days, the Centre today urged states to accelerate vaccination amid a slow pace and high wastage. The daily cases fell to 1,96,427 for the first time since April 14 when 1,84,372 cases were reported. Daily deaths fell below 4,000 for the first time after three days, settling at 3,511.

SPUTNIK V ADDED TO CoWIN
The national vaccine wastage rate is 6.3 per cent, with Jharkhand reporting maximum wastage at 37.3 per cent, followed by Chhattisgarh at 30.2 per cent, Tamil Nadu at 15.5 per cent, J&K at



WHO COVAXIN LISTING LIKELY BY JULY-SEPT

Covaxin manufacturer Bharat Biotech on Tuesday said it was expecting WHO's emergency use listing for the product between July and September this year. TNS

**FRESH CASES
1,96,427**

ACTIVE CASES: 25,86,782

DEATHS IN 24 HRS
3,511

TOTAL DEATHS: 3,07,231

Confusion reigns as nod for walk-in jabs amid crunch

NEW DELHI, MAY 25 At a time of acute Covid vaccine shortage across the country and closure of several vaccine centres in states, the government's decision to allow walk-in jabs for adults is raising eyebrows.

Several people who took their Covaxin first shots in April continue to struggle for online appointments to get the scheduled second dose with even AIIMS in New Delhi

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

EDIT: WALK IN FOR THE JAB

5,424 MUCORMYCOSIS CASES FROM 18 STATES, SAYS VARDHAN

38% of HP deaths within 24 hrs of hospitalisation

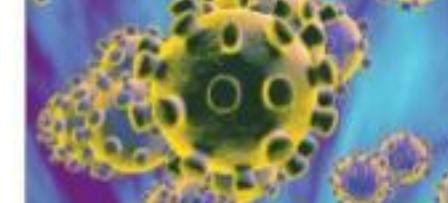
Pratibha Chauhan
Tribune News Service

SHIMLA, MAY 25 About 38 per cent of the Covid deaths in Himachal Pradesh occurred within 24 hours of hospitalisation, indicating the delay in seeking medical assistance is a major reason behind the high mortality rate in the state.

An analysis of the 2,752 deaths (till May 23) shows that about half of these took place either at home, on way to hospital or within 24 hours of being admitted to a health institution.

In all, 2,843 persons, of the 1,81,256 tested positive, have succumbed to the virus after the outbreak of the pandemic. "The delay in shifting patients to hospital is to be blamed for the high case fatality rate (CFR)," said Chief Minister

Concern over delay in seeking medical care



WORRISOME TREND **2,752**

COVID DEATHS TILL MAY 23

Occurred at home 213 7.7%

Brought dead 114 4.1% to hospital

Died within a day of hospitalisation 1,045 38%

Within 48 hours 310 11.3%

Within 72 hours 874 31.8%

Jai Ram Thakur: Despite daily positive cases dropping

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Ldh YouTuber calls Arunachal part of China, arrested

Nikhil Bhardwaj
Tribune News Service

LUDHIANA, MAY 25 A 21-year-old YouTuber based at Janakpuri here was arrested after he allegedly called Arunachal Pradesh a part of China and said state's MLA Ninong Ering "looks like a non-Indian".

The accused, Paras Singh, was booked by the Arunachal Police after the video on his YouTube channel "Paras Official" went viral.

In a tweet, MP Kiren Rijiju said, "The accused will be punished as per law. Such a mindset harms the unity of our country. The Union Home Ministry has already issued advisories to all states and UTs to ensure protection and dignity of the North-East people."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Railways suspends Sushil Kumar

NEW DELHI: Murder accused Olympian wrestler Sushil Kumar has been put under suspension by the Northern Railway following his detention in police custody for over 48 hours. —TNS

PNB scam accused Choksi goes missing

NEW DELHI: Fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi, wanted in a Rs 13,500-crore PNB fraud case, is reported to have gone missing in Antigua and Barbuda where he has been staying since January 2018. —TNS

6 months on, farmers say won't budge an inch

Geetanjali Gayatri
Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25 Six months after they descended on the Delhi border seeking repeal of the three farm laws, the protesting farmers may have been forgotten by the Centre amid the Covid surge, but their movement is still alive.

Though the Centre has not yielded to the pressure and talks have not resumed since the last meeting in January, the farmers protesting at Singh and Tikri will observe Wednesday as a 'black day' to mark the six months of their

'Black day' today; activists flock to Singh, Tikri



Farmers gather at Tikri border near New Delhi on Tuesday. PTI
CONTAIN SPREAD AT PROTEST SITES: NHRC TO HRY, DELHI
New Delhi: The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Tuesday issued notices to the governments of Haryana, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh seeking report in four weeks on actions taken to control the spread of Covid at the farmers' protest sites. TNS

NO CONCLUSION DESPITE MEETS

NOV 26, 2020: Farmers from Pb, Hry head towards Delhi

DEC 3, 5: Round I, II of talks

JAN 12, 2021: SC puts laws on hold, forms panel

JAN 20: Centre offers to suspend laws for 18 months

JAN 26: Farmers hold tractor march, ruckus at Red Fort

JAN 28: Cops try to vacate stir site, Tikait's appeal revives stir

MAY 21: Unions write to PM for resumption of talks

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Farmers to observe black day today

Tribune News Service



READY FOR LONG HAUL

● The struggle will continue until the farm laws are repealed. We owe it to those who sacrificed their lives in the struggle and to our future generations.

Sukhdev S Kokrikalan, BKU GEN SECY

As people of Punjab prepare to observe a "black day" on Wednesday on the completion of six months of farmer protests on the borders of Delhi, Kisan Morcha members have renewed their resolve to continue the struggle, saying it will be a long haul.

Across Punjab, farmers have formed jathas and continued to proceed in large numbers towards the Delhi borders. Families of farmers, mainly women, distributed self-stitched black flags today, urging people to hoist these tomorrow, as a mark of solidarity with farmers.

The Sanyukt Kisan Morcha has appealed to all sections of society to support them, says Jagmohan Singh

Patiala, leader of the morcha. Political leaders, cutting across political spectrum, have also lent their support to farmer protests.

With almost 500 farmers having died during the course of the struggle - as claimed by the Bharatiya Kisan Union (Ekta Ugrahan) and All-India Kisan Federation — farmers say that their sacrifices will not go in vain.

miss my family, especially my grandchildren, back home. I have not met them even once, only talk to them on the phone. But I will go back only after the three laws are repealed," he says.

He is one of the farmers who have been sitting on a dharna on the borders of Delhi for six months now. Neela Singh (67) of Peori village in Gidderbaha, who has been part of the morcha

since November 26, says that he and others like him cannot go back till the laws are repealed and the Electricity Amendment Act and the commission on the Air Quality Management is withdrawn. "If I go back, my grandchildren, when they grow up, will ask me why I did not fight for their right to livelihood?" he asks.

Amarjit Kaur, a fiery woman farmer leader from Barnala, who has been staging a dharna near the Barnala Railway Station everyday since October 1, says that the long course of the struggle has not exhausted them. "Rather, our zeal to fight against the laws remains as fervent. People like me go to the dharna site everyday fighting for our right, because we understand that struggles yield results," she says.

Hold direct talks with farmers:

Sukhbir to Modi

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

Sukhbir Badal has urged the party rank and file to hoist black flags to demand the repeal of three agricultural laws as well as show solidarity with protesting farmers.

Tells party men to show solidarity with protesters

He called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi to hold direct unconditional talks with the farmers. He also requested the Punjab Government to ensure all 400 martyrs of the kisan andolan were given adequate compensation and jobs. He said only 189 farmers had been given a compensation of Rs 5 lakh each and none of the affected families had been offered jobs. — TNS



Protesters stitch black flags at Bhuchot in Bathinda. TRIBUNE PHOTO

In solidarity, Malwa women stitch flags

SUKHMEET BHASIN

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

BATHINDA, MAY 25

Black flags stitched by women activists of the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU-Ekta Ugrahan) will dot the Delhi borders tomorrow.

MUST INTENSIFY STIR

● I have stitched 120 black flags in the past two days that are to be distributed for the May 26 rally on Delhi borders. We need to intensify our protest to make the Centre relent.

Nirmal Kaur, BATHINDA PROTESTER

der and various villages".

BKU (Ekta Ugrahan) activist Charanjeet Kaur of Buchot Khurd said: "She along with her three friends stitched black flags, which have been sent to Tikri."

In the last few days, a large number of farmers in tractors, vehicles and motorcycles have gone to Delhi to participate in the protest from the region.

Farmers in the region are fully geared up for the protest as they have prepared black flags on their own in large numbers. Even all other farmers unions have also prepared and distributed these flags in villages.

All must support farmers: Sidhu

Tribune News Service



STAND BY THEM

● I will continue to protest the central agricultural laws and stand in solidarity with my farmer brothers.

Navjot Singh Sidhu, CONGRESS LEADER

◀◀ Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu, along with Navjot Kaur, at his Patiala house.

from Amritsar to his birthplace Patiala in the past six months. He has been maintaining distance from the media, except for holding a couple of press conferences at his ancestral home in Patiala.

"Hoisting the black flag in protest... every Punjabi must support the farmers," read Sidhu's Twitter post.

Sidhu has shifted his focus

to be the last nail in the coffin," said Sidhu.

"I will continue to protest these laws, and stand in solidarity with my farmer brothers," said Sidhu, who is camping at his ancestral home in Patiala. "Hoisting the black flag in protest... every Punjabi must support the farmers," read Sidhu's Twitter post.

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Meanwhile, Sidhu's daughter Rabia Sidhu also hoisted a black flag at their residence in Amritsar. She raised the flag as an endorsement of her father's protest against the three farm laws. However, she refrained from speaking to the media, which was denied entry, on the premises.

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YCLaunches drive on vax awareness

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

After helping over 1,000 Covid victims with medical aid, the Punjab Youth Congress has undertaken the task of guiding residents on vaccination drives.

Almost a month after launching a dedicated helpline 'Farz Manukhta La' from the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) headquarters here, the volunteers are now guiding people about vaccination centres and the real-time availability of the vaccine, especially in rural areas. General secretary of All India Youth Congress Amarpreet Singh Lalli said the helpline was a unique initiative.

"With the help of MLAs and Youth Congress leaders, mobilisation of medical aid became easy and swift. If the patients were unable to travel long distance for medical help like oxygen cylinders or concentrators, our workers reached the patients' location with the aid," he said. — TNS

month, the state was giving over 1.5 lakh doses everyday but due to shortage of vaccine, the graph kept on declining. Till mid-April, the state was administering between 6 and 7 lakh doses on an average. So far, the state has given 48.12 lakh doses to various groups, including healthcare workers, frontline workers and people above 18 years.

Though in last week (May 16 to May 22), the state vaccinated 4.29 lakh people and drive picked up a little pace as compare to the past, overall it is still not able to use even 20 per cent of the infrastructure. At one point of time last

Health infra in place, but short of doses

Can inoculate 3.5L, but able to vaccinate 65K

JAB GRAPH DIPS

Week	Doses
April 11-17	6.55L
April 18-24	5.60L
April 25-May 1	5.18L
May 2-8	3.38L
May 9-15	2.69L
May 16-22	4.29L



of high-ups. Teachers said they would oppose the delivery of the mid-day meal ration on the doorsteps.

Teachers say locating children of migrant families and daily wagers in the crisis times is difficult. Last year also, they found many families had moved from the given address when they went there to deliver the ration, said Prem Chawla, senior vice-president, Government School Teachers' Union.

The direction will only expose the teachers to the threat of Covid-19 infection, said a teacher. Another teacher in Faridkot termed the decision impractical. A senior functionary in the District Education Office said the department was only following the directions

The scheme guarantees a meal for at least 200 days in a year to all 16,88,769 students in government and aided schools under Samagra Shiksha, a programme of the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

Reduce GST on Covid equipment: Manpreet

Tribune News Service



Finance Minister Manpreet Badal has demanded that Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and GST be slashed. "Many goods face BCD ranging up to 20 per cent and GST up to 18 per cent, besides a social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent and IGST of 2-3 per cent on taxable value.... It is baffling that despite the crisis that our country finds itself in, with millions of people suffering the consequences of Covid and inadequate health infrastructure, high taxes continue to be applied on basic essentials needed to overcome this life-threatening disease," he has written in the letter.

Highlighting the high taxation on the goods and equipment required to fight Covid, Badal has demanded that Basic Customs Duty (BCD) and GST be slashed. "Many goods face BCD ranging up to 20 per cent and GST up to 18 per cent, besides a social welfare surcharge of 10 per cent and IGST of 2-3 per cent on taxable value.... It is baffling that despite the crisis that our country finds itself in, with millions of people suffering the consequences of Covid and inadequate health infrastructure, high taxes continue to be applied on basic essentials needed to overcome this life-threatening disease," he has written in the letter.

Highlighting the high taxation on the goods and equipment

PM's photo off vax certificates

KARAM PRAKASH

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



KEEP ₹1,000 CR FOR VACCINATION: SAD

SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Tuesday requested Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh to make a special allocation of ₹1,000 crore to purchase vaccines for the state in the next six months. He also called for giving a monthly pension of ₹6,000 to all families, who had lost their breadwinners to Covid.

◀◀ A girl shows vax certificate in Patiala. TRIBUNE PHOTO

by the central government."

He said as the state government was buying vaccines on its own, that could be the reason for the removal of the photo of the Prime Minister from the vaccination certificates.

Sources said the Health Department had clearly communicated to the people about the short supply of vaccines.

Dr GB Singh, Director, Health and Family Welfare,

said, "The photo of the Prime Minister is not there on the certificates because the vaccine is being purchased by the state government on its own. Besides, the portal to download the certificate — Corona Virus Alert (COVA) — is also of the Punjab Government."

State Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu could not be contacted for a comment despite repeated attempts.

With the lockdown in place, the mid-day meal hasn't been cooked on school premises since April 1. The government and aided schools have been asked to ensure the supply of two-month ration (April and May) to all children of classes 1 to 8 at their homes.

Besides, the schools have been asked to deposit the money to cover cooking

Moga lad to feature in US school books

KULWINDER SANDHU

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE



Sandeep Singh Kaila (29) of Badduwal village in Moga, who has three Guinness World Records to his credit for spinning a basketball on a toothbrush for the longest duration

Sandeep, currently settled in British Columbia, Canada, broke his own record three times. His name figured thrice in the Guinness World Records and once in the Limca Book of Records, besides many more records to his credit.

His name first entered the

Guinness World Records in 2017 with 53 seconds, but was quickly bested by other competitors in India and Germany. Unsatisfied, he continued to practise and has held onto the title since his third victory recently. "My goal is to break at least 10 world records, a record which has not been achieved by anyone so far," he said.

Drop mid-day meal ration at pupils' houses, teachers told

BALWANT GARG

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Department's direction draws ire



EXERCISE WILL EXPOSE US TO INFECTION

● Migrant workers and daily wagers are always on the move. To locate them and their wards for the delivery of ration in the Covid times will be a difficult task, and only expose us to infection.

Prem Chawla, SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT SCHOOL TEACHERS' UNION

costs in the bank accounts of students or their parents.

Teachers say locating children of migrant families and daily wagers in the crisis times is difficult.

Last year also



Government of Haryana



Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Free Covid cure in pvt hospitals for the poor

Those enrolled under Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana to benefit

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

In a major reprieve for the underprivileged sections of society, Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Sidhu today announced the government's decision to provide free treatment to Covid patients falling under the Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana (SSBY) at the empanelled private hospitals.

He said the facility would be available in the hospitals offering Covid treatment at the rates ranging from Rs 8,000 to Rs 18,000 per day, the rates fixed for private hospitals in the state. The government will bear the differential treatment cost derived after deducting the cost payable by the insurance company from the cap rates. Sidhu said the cap rates include bed, PPE kits, medicines, consumables, monitoring/nursing care, doctor's fee, investigations, oxygen, etc.

SSBY beneficiaries could directly visit empanelled hospitals without any need for referral from the public hospitals, he said, adding that the



GOVT TO BEAR DIFFERENTIAL COST

- The facility will be available in the hospitals offering treatment at the rates ranging from ₹8,000 to ₹18,000 per day
- The government will bear the

initiative would bring relief to the vulnerable and deprived section, who would now be able to avail level-2 and level-3 treatment in private hospitals.

He said earlier the treatment available in these empanelled hospitals was payable as per the SSBY scheme rates fixed by the Centre that range from Rs 1,800 to Rs 4,500, which were too less to be viable for the hospital to meet expenses of treatment of a Covid patient that entails an additional cost

on account of PPE kits, masks, consumables, isolation, etc.

Sidhu said though the treatment of beneficiaries was free in public hospitals, to provide relief to a large section of society, the government decided to bear the additional expenses and allow free treatment in the empanelled private hospitals.

He said since its launch, the Ayusham Bharat Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojana had shown a consistent growth.

Youth killed, 2 hurt in O2 cylinder blast

Tribune News Service

MOGA, MAY 25

A youth was killed and two others were injured when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the house of a Covid patient at Kokri Vehnival village of the district.

The deceased, identified as Satnam Singh, brought the patient home from a hospital in an ambulance without any valid permission from the health authorities. "He was not the driver of the ambulance," said Dr Sukhpreet Singh Brar, Senior Medical Officer (SMO), district hospital.

Without any technical knowhow, he was checking the oxygen cylinder when it exploded, he said. Since the patient was still in the ambulance, he escaped unhurt, the health authorities said, adding that Satnam died on the spot, while two others were injured.

The SMO said the oxygen cylinder was procured by the patient's family illegally through Satnam. The police were also inquiring as to how

COVID METER		
Cases	4,798	
Critical	386	
Active	53,127	
Deaths	176	
WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS		
DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Jalandhar	536	12
Ludhiana	461	19
SAS Nagar	376	9
Amritsar	352	16
Bathinda	344	14

Satnam drove the ambulance to ferry the patient because he was not the driver. No technical/health staff was accompanying the patient in the ambulance.

District Magistrate Sandeep Hans has sought a detailed report. He has asked how the oxygen cylinder went to the Covid-19 patient's house without the approval of a magistrate, which was mandatory as per the prohibitory orders issued by the administration. He warned distributors and private hospitals to abide by the guidelines or face strict action.

UK strain to blame for surge in state: Survey

Nitin Jain

Tribune News Service

LUDHIANA, MAY 25

Contrary to the national trend, the UK variant is growing fast and has become the most dominant strain in Punjab, the state government has confirmed.

This variant (B.1.1.7) accounts for 84.6 per cent of all variants of concern (VoCs) found in the state during the genome sequencing of 965 samples since January, the data compiled by the Health and Family Welfare Department has revealed.

However, B.1.617 (the variant first detected in India), which has become the most dominant in the country and accounted for 65% of the total variants of concern (VoCs), has been detected in only 10.5% samples in the state.

■ However, the UK variant (B.1.1.7) accounts for 84.6% of all VoCs found in the state during the genome sequencing of 965 samples since January

(0.2 per cent), one each of Nigerian variant B.1.525 and B.1.36 (0.1 per cent each), and 40 other mutations, which accounted for 4.1 per cent of the total VoCs detected during the last less than five months.

The month-wise break-up of the VoCs found in the state suggested that a maximum of 672 VoCs, which accounted for 95.9 per cent, were found in the total of 701 samples genome sequenced in the state in March, followed by 94.2 per cent VoCs in 195 of the total 207 samples in April, 16 per cent VoCs in 16 of the total 100 samples in February, and single variant of concern was detected in the total of four samples processed in the state from January to May.

Of those, 816 were that of the UK variant, 101 of B.1.617, four B.1 (0.4 per cent), two South African variant B.1.351

B.1.617 VARIANT IN JUST 10% SAMPLES

■ B.1.617, the variant first detected in India, which has become the most dominant in the country and accounted for 65% of the total variants of concern (VoCs), has been detected in only 10.5% samples in the state.

■ However, the UK variant (B.1.1.7) accounts for 84.6% of all VoCs found in the state during the genome sequencing of 965 samples since January

MAXIMUM CHARGES

PER DAY FOR THE COVID-19 TREATMENT HAS BEEN FIXED AS BELOW:

CATEGORY OF HOSPITALS	MODERATE SICKNESS	SEVERE SICKNESS	VERY SEVERE SICKNESS
	ISOLATION BEDS Including supportive care and oxygen*	ICU without need for ventilator(HDU)*	ICU with ventilator care (invasive /non-invasive)
All Private Medical Colleges/Private Institutes with teaching program (DNB etc.)	Rs. 10,000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 1200/-)	Rs. 15000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)	Rs. 18000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)
NABH accredited Hospitals, Private Medical Colleges without Post graduation courses/DNB	Rs. 9000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 1200/-)	Rs. 14000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)	Rs. 16500/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)
Non-NABH accredited Hospitals	Rs. 8000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 1200/-)	Rs. 13000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)	Rs. 15000/- (including cost of PPE Rs. 2000/-)

Including management of the co-morbidities as per orders issued.

* Patients on HNFC may be charged Rs. 2000/- per day over and above the rates of oxygen supported bed.

The Private Hospitals/Nursing Homes/ Clinics treating COVID-19 patients must display the COVID-19 treatment charges at prominent places in their premises along with name and contact no. of the Nodal Officer to address the grievances, if any, in this regards.

While the above rates have been notified by the Department and widely publicized, still reports/ complaints are appearing in the electronic/ print and the social media about over-charging by some private hospitals from the COVID-19 patients. In this regard all are informed that :

Deputy Commissioner of the respective district is competent to take action against any violator of these instructions. Any complainant may approach the Deputy Commissioner or Civil Surgeon of the district or call at Toll Free Helpline 104.

Further, a State Level Committee of following officers has also been constituted to look into direct complaints as well as guide/ advise the districts in their local level complaints:

- Sh Kumar Rahul, IAS, Secretary Health-cum-Mission Director-NHM Punjab (Chairman)
- Sh Prashant Deshta, HAS, Joint Secretary Health
- President IMA, Punjab Chapter, or his nominee
- Dr G.B. Singh, Director Health Services (Convenor)

Anyone having any complaint / grievance regarding overcharging can approach the State level committee at Email: directorhealth-pb@punjab.gov.in or WhatsApp No.: +919855105496.

For more information download COVA Punjab App

<https://www.facebook.com/PunjabDOHFW>

<https://twitter.com/PunjabDOHFW>

<https://nhm.punjab.gov.in/>

FOR ANY COMPLAINT / MEDICAL ASSISTANCE CALL HELPLINE 104

Issued by: Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Punjab



17K in 18-44 age group get jab

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

The government today vaccinated 16,932 persons in the age group of 18-44 years, taking the total number of vaccinated people in this group to 4,27,329.

All of them have been administered Covishield. The entire target was met by the government for this group without wasting any dose. Disclosing this here today, Vikas Garg, state nodal officer for vaccination, said priority groups were formed and vaccinated vigorously. He said the government had received 4.29 lakh doses for this age group. —TNS

Follow These Precautions While Leaving Home During Covid-19



Always Keep Baskets, Bags etc. and Sanitizer with you for Buying Stuff for Home



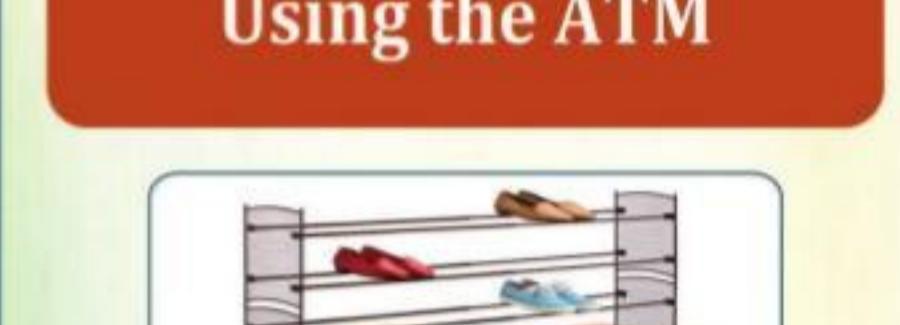
Properly Cover the Face With Mask or Cloth While Going Out of Home



Don't Touch Anything Unnecessarily in Shops and Keep Distance of 2 Gaj



Sanitize Hands Before and After Using the ATM



Keep Separate Shoes or Slippers for Going Out, Do Not Wear Them Indoors

Helpline For Assistance Regarding Covid-19

8558893911

(For Entire State)

& 1075

(Except Gurugram & Faridabad)

Remember, Precaution is the Prevention

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana

www.prharyana.gov.in @Cmohry @DiprHaryana

Speculation over Khaira rejoining Congress

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

There is speculation in the Congress that Bholaht MLA Sukpal Khaira can rejoin the party.

Khaira categorically denied the reports, adding that "there is nothing like this. I will let you know if there is anything like this". Sources said the move would help the Chief Minis-



Justice Vikas Bahl administered oath

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

A day after the President appointed senior advocate Vikas Bahl as an additional judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, he was administered oath by Chief Justice Ravi Shankar Jha this afternoon at a simple but impressive ceremony.

Known for his legal acumen, Justice Bahl was handling a wide variety of cases involving civil rights and constitutional issues prior to his elevation. Justice Bahl's name was cleared by the Supreme Court in March, paving way for his appointment.

Justice Bahl was enrolled as an advocate in March 1999 and designated senior advocate in January 2014. With his elevation, the number of HC judges has gone up to 47 against the sanctioned strength of 85. The elevation comes at a time when the High Court is facing a pendency of 6,80,132 cases. The situation is expected to worsen in the near future with three more judges retiring this year.

High Court for larger Bench on protection to live-in couples

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

Following divergent opinions on the issue of providing protection to couples in a live-in relationship, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has referred the matter to the Chief Justice for the constitution of a larger Bench.

Justice Anil Kshetarpal, in his order, observed it was considered appropriate to request the Chief Justice to constitute the larger Bench to decide whether the court was required to grant the protection without examining the marital status and other circumstances of the case when two persons living together sought protection of life and liberty by filing a petition. If the answer to the question was in the negative, what were the circumstances in which the court could deny them protection?

Justice Kshetarpal added he had used the expression "person" in the question, instead of "adult", as the court had apparently granted protection in certain cases where both petitioners



SEVERAL WRIT PETITIONS FILED

Keeping in view the fact that a large number of writ petitions are being filed before this court involving the questions framed, the counsels would be at liberty to request the larger Bench for interim relief and expeditious disposal. HIGH COURT

were not adults. Justice Kshetarpal further added: "It appears that various Benches of this court, of coordinate strength, have formed dif-

HC panel clears 27 advocates for senior tag

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

A committee set up by the Punjab and Haryana High Court has cleared the names of 27 advocates, including three women, for designating them as seniors. In all, 113 advocates had applied and were scanned by the "permanent committee for designation as senior advocates". The list is expected to be placed for discussion before the full court, comprising the Chief Justice and all the judges of the High Court.

Information suggests only the names cleared by the full court will be designated as senior advocates. The last list was cleared seven years back, when about 13 advocates were designated as seniors. So far, the High Court has designated just over 200 advocates as seniors.

A lawyer, with his consent, may be designated as senior advocate if the Supreme Court or a High Court is of that opinion that he is deserving of such distinction by virtue of his ability, standing at the Bar or special knowledge or experience in law. A senior advocate has to follow a separate code of conduct. —TNS

'Illegal' mining: Court puts state on notice

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has put Punjab on notice on a 344-page petition for stopping of "illegal" mining going on in the periphery areas and certain villages of Ropar district.

Taking up the petition filed by Sudhesh Kumari and other petitioners through senior advocate VK Jindal with Akshay Jindal, the Bench of Justice Ajay Tewari and Justice Rajesh Bhardwaj also issued a notice regarding stay to the state and other respondents. The notices came after the petitioners claimed that the process was illegal, unjustify and was endangering agriculture process and the environment.



Directions were also sought to the respondents to stop the process of de-silting the Sutlej, the Beas and the Ravi, along with seasonal rivulet of the Ghaggar and the Chakki, without holding due auction process. —TNS

Muktsar youth thrashed, head tonsured over 'affair'

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MUKTSAR, MAY 25

A Dalit youth was "tied, thrashed, forced to drink urine and his head tonsured" after he was allegedly caught with a girl at his house on Monday in Malout town.

Sources said the girl, too, belonged to the same community and was a resident of the same area.

A video of the boy's head being shaved publicly has gone viral on the social media. Meanwhile, the police have started an

Video goes viral; cops rescue him, begin probe

investigation. The boy is currently admitted to the Civil Hospital.

A cousin of the victim said: "A large number of people from the girl's family tied up my brother, thrashed him, forced him to drink urine and shaved his head publicly. The girl had actually come to his house and even brought some gifts like chocolates and a mobile phone. Her

family did not like it. They did not question her, but mercilessly thrashed my brother. Later, the police rescued him. We demand strict action against the girl's family."

Malout (City) SHO Mohan Lal said: "We had visited the spot and rescued the boy yesterday. He is admitted to the local Civil Hospital. It seems the couple was in a relationship, but there was nothing like this when our team reached the spot. We will take action after getting the report from the hospital."

Noclue, CBI seeks closure in missing youth's case

FARIDKOT, MAY 25

Five years after the Punjab and Haryana High Court had ordered a probe by the CBI into the disappearance of Faridkot youth Manoj Kumar, who was working as an ATM money loader, the CBI has sought to close the case, saying no clue could be found about the missing youth and the suspects.

Manoj had been missing since May 2014 from Faridkot. A special investigation team of the Punjab Police failed to trace him. Almost Rs 19 lakh had been fraudulently withdrawn from ATMs by those who allegedly abducted Manoj, it is claimed. —TNS

Mohali developer fined for delayed possession

SANJEEV SINGH BARIANA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

The Punjab State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission has ordered Parkwood Glade developer, Mohali, to refund Rs 33.86 lakh to Hardesh Mehta, a resident of Faridabad, for failing to deliver the possession of a flat in time.

The flat was supposed to be delivered by November 30, 2014. More than six years after the scheduled date, the project was not complete till January this year when the complaint was filed.

President of the commission Justice Paramjit Singh Dhaliwal and members Rajinder Kumar Goyal and Kiran Sibal ordered the developer to

per cent interest from the date of booking (March 22, 2012). The commission has also levied a fine of Rs 33,000 for mental agony and it is required to be paid within 30 days of the receipt of the order.

Mehta had booked a two-bedroom flat in the residential project Parkwood Glade, located in Sante Majra village in Mohali. The consumer, in

the complaint, also highlighted terms of the contract which were "one-sided, biased and totally in favour of the developers". The Parkwood Glade developer did not present himself before the commission and was proceeded ex parte. There was also no response from the developer for a mail from The Tribune correspondent.

Films on Gurus to comply with norms: SGPC

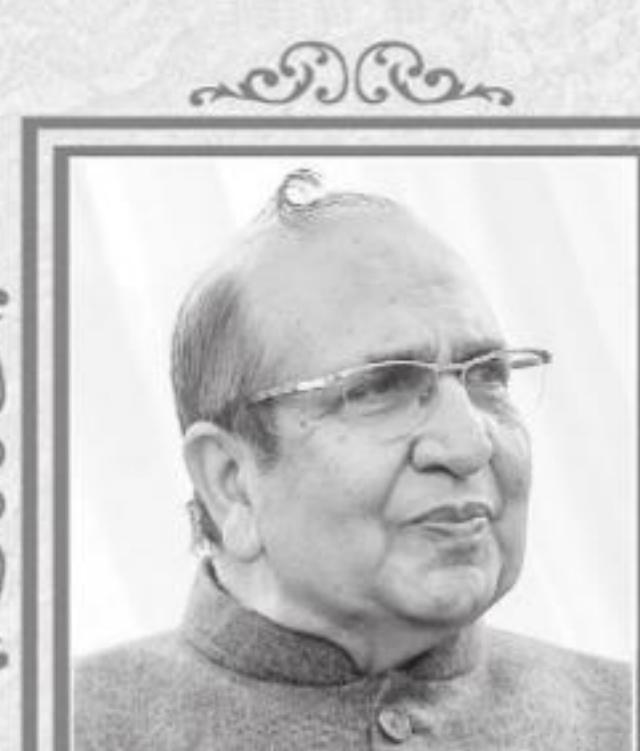
AMRITSAR, MAY 25

The SGPC has decided to move ahead with its plans to make religious films but under the ambit of Sikh 'rehat maryada' as directed by Akal Takht.

A day after objections were raised over the move, SGPC president Bibi Jagir Kaur said digital and electronic media were the modern source of learning for the youth and had a wider reach.

As per Akal Takht directions, no actor could portray any of the 10 Sikh gurus, their parents, their wives and children on screen in living form. "In our films, the Guru will be symbolically depicted with a voiceover of Gurbani verses. Absolutely no one will be playing the Guru's character," she said. —TNS

Our deepest condolences on the sad demise of the visionary Sh. Ram Saran Dass Sajula Ji, founder of SEL Group.



Ram Saran Dass Saluja

(February 06, 1943 to May 23, 2021)

We stand in solidarity with the Saluja family in this time of grief.

In Grief:- Management and Staff of Shri Ram Sarup Garg Group, Malout



Demand for O₂ dips by 66% in 10 days in F'bad

BIJENDRA AHLAWAT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDABAD, MAY 25
With a remarkable slide in the number of new and active Covid cases, the demand of oxygen for home-isolated patients has dropped by 66 per cent in the past 10 days in the district.

With more than 98,141 positive cases to date, Faridabad is placed second in the state.

"The occupancy of the oxygen beds in the hospitals has also declined by 50 per cent in the past two weeks in the wake of the downside in the number of new cases and handsome recovery achieved in the recent past," said an official of the Health Department.

He said this had resulted not only in a huge dip in the demand for hospital beds, but also the need of oxygen supply to both home-isolated and hospitalised patients.

Claiming that the number of active patients and home-isolated ones had decreased by 65.6 percent and 72.7 percent, respectively, in the past one week, he said the demand for oxygen for home delivery had also reduced to

The Faridabad administration has announced seven O₂ plants. FILE

2,817	FRESH CASES
128 DEATHS	
IN 24 HOURS	
ACTIVE CASES 34,088	
WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS	
DISTRICT	+VE
Hisar	295
Gurugram	220
Sirsa	208
DEATHS	
16	
8	
8	

half. The demand for the gas for home delivery, which was 182 cylinders on

May 15, reduced to 61 cylinders on May 24, which was 61 per cent lower.

Claiming that the supply and availability of oxygen had been streamlined and there was no shortage of gas for the past two weeks, DC Yashpal Yadav said the administration had provided gas at the doorstep to a total of 1,900 requests made so far.

Stating that three plants with a capacity of 690 litres per minute had already been commissioned, he said a work order for setting up seven new plants with a cumulative capacity of 7,600 litres per minute had been released.

Health Minister Anil Vij, Karan Punia, state IMA president

however, claimed that Patanjali had agreed to bear 50 per cent cost of the kits (costing Rs 500 each) aimed at boosting immunity. He said the kit was being given in addition to the regular medical treatment to the Covid patients.

Haryana had already got 50,000 Coronil kits.

Vij had tweeted yesterday that 1 lakh kits of Patanjali would be distributed among patients, sparking off controversy. —TNS

Meanwhile, the state unit of the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has opposed the distribution of the kits to Covid patients. "The kit has no medicinal value and the Haryana Government's decision is just to benefit Patanjali."

Karan Punia, STATE IMA PRESIDENT

Health Minister Anil Vij,

ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥ ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
ਨਹ ਕੇ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥ ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥

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Farmers set to hoist black flags



Farmers hoist a black flag at Tikri border. SUMIT THARAN

HP unit making fake Remdesivir sealed

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

The Haryana Police on Tuesday said they along with Himachal Pradesh authorities have sealed a "pharmaceutical unit", located at Nalagarh in the hill state, which was allegedly manufacturing large quantities of fake Remdesivir injections.

The unit, Elfin Drug Private Limited, was sealed on Monday. Its owner, Dilpreet Singh of Mohali, was arrested on Monday.

266 INJECTIONS SEIZED

Ambala: The police seized 266 more Remdesivir injections from the pharmaceutical unit in Nalagarh. Ambala SSP Hamid Akhtar said, "The accused sold one injection for ₹6,000." TNS

"In all, 11 accused have been arrested. They were selling injections to desperate people at an exorbitant rate," the spokesperson said in a statement.

HC: Onus on accused to prove innocence in POCSO cases

SAURABH MALIK
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that presumption of guilt engrafted in Section 29 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act will operate against an accused unless rebutted.

The ruling came as Justice Suvir Sehgal of the High Court denied anticipatory bail to an accused in a sexual harassment case involving a minor.

Section 29 of the POCSO Act makes it clear that the special Court "shall presume" the accused to be guilty, when he is prosecuted for committing an offence of sexual assault against a minor.

In normal course, an accused has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty. But in a case under the POCSO Act, the burden is on the accused to prove his innocence.

REASON: LOW CONVICTION RATE

In normal course, an accused has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty.

But under the POCSO Act, the burden is on the accused to prove his innocence. The concept of reverse burden was incorporated in the system apparently keeping in view the low conviction rate in cases of sexual offences against kids.

The matter was placed before Justice Sehgal after the accused in the case filed a petition against the State of Haryana and other respondents seeking anticipatory bail in an FIR registered at the Model Town police station in Panipat district on January 5 for outraging modesty and other offences under Sections 354 and 323 of the Indian Penal Code, along with the provisions of the POCSO Act and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act.

Justice Sehgal asserted: "The victim, a young girl of 13, has levelled specific and categorical allegations against the petitioner, which have been duly supported by her in her statement under Section 164 of the CrPC. The

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Justice Sehgal asserted: "The victim,

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Registering migrants

Delay in completion of national database hurting workers

MORE than a year after the Covid-induced lockdown — imposed at a few hours' notice — triggered a Partition-like exodus of jobless and penniless migrants across the country, crores of such people remain *atmanirbhar* in the worst sense of the word. They are not even a blip on the government's radar. Left to fend for themselves, the labourers who are working or have worked in the unorganised sector are unable to gain access to various welfare schemes being implemented by the Centre and the states as they don't even figure in the official records. Expressing disappointment at the slow pace of registration of the unorganised workforce, the Supreme Court has called for expeditious completion of the process so that the intended beneficiaries can keep themselves afloat by making the most of these schemes.

It's inexcusable that the all-important exercise of developing a comprehensive national database for unorganised workers, undertaken by the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, continues to be a work in progress almost halfway through 2021, even though last year's horrifying chaos had underlined the dire need to speedily enumerate all such labourers. In the absence of reliable data, it's tough to establish the proportion of workers who have not received cash transfers or free ration. The absolute numbers reeled off by ministers and government officials don't show us the true picture on the ground.

Though there has been no nationwide lockdown this year, various states and union territories have enforced stringent restrictions on economic activity and public movement, forcing many migrant workers to again adopt the desperate measure of returning to their home states. Those who have willy-nilly stayed back are also struggling for bare essentials. A recent survey in Punjab has revealed the disturbing reality: one-third of the migrant workers in the state's urban areas are illiterate; and almost 60 per cent of them have a monthly income of less than Rs 8,000. What's needed is a workable action plan — national as well as state-specific — to ensure adequate means of subsistence for migrant workers so that they can withstand repeated disruptions.

Walk in for the jab

Reach is important, so are safeguards

ATTER the states exercised their powers and imposed lockdowns at their own level to contain the second wave of the coronavirus, the Centre has now asked them to allow walk-in vaccines for people in the 18-44 age group to protect the younger adults from the virus. The decision to widen the ambit of the vaccination programme has been prompted by the digital divide as people who did not have access to the Internet or a smartphone were finding it difficult to book appointments for the jab. This will apply only to the government vaccination centres for now. That governments have realised that checking the spread of Covid-19 and reducing its severity need micro-managing the fight is evident from places like Panchkula in Haryana and Mohali in Punjab where drive-through vaccinations have also been arranged for the eligible beneficiaries after due verification.

Vaccines for the younger adult age group became available from May 1, but the demand soon surpassed supplies, exhausting stocks and halting the drive in several states. In Delhi alone, 400 inoculation centres have been shut down because of the unavailability of vaccines and talks with some companies have hit a bottleneck because of their refusal to deal directly with the states instead of the Central Government. While the availability of vaccines is expected to become broad-based in the country in the days to come, making them reachable by avoiding shortages will have to be ensured. The inoculation schedule for some vaccines has already been readjusted, resulting in confusion.

The vaccination programme against the coronavirus does need a fillip to protect lives. But it should be well organised to ward off another surge of the deadly virus. For this, the Centre and the states should work in tandem. The onus will also lie on the people to minimise risks by taking all necessary precautions.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

He has the most who is most content with the least. — Lord Buddha

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1921

INDIA'S STATUS.

AS was to be expected, the Hon. Mr. Shastri, the Indian delegate to the Imperial Conference, has begun by making a declaration of policy which is as sound as it is clear and unequivocal. In the course of an interview with the "Manchester Guardian", Mr. Shastri said that before India could be expected to discuss seriously the problems of imperial defence and imperial preference, her status must be raised to an equality with the Dominions, and that in the present circumstances round table discussions on subjects of imperial interest could not be expected to do much good to India. This has always been India's position in the matter, and it is precisely because it has been her position that she has never taken anything like a keen or energetic interest either in the work of these Conferences or in the participation in them of the delegates sent from India. Indeed, the general feeling on the subject ever since Lord, then Sir S.P. Sinha was deputed to attend one of these Conferences, first, to assist the Secretary of State for India and then as a full-fledged member, has been that it was like putting the cart before the horse. It did some good, as innovations of this kind do, but it was based upon a fallacy which made it impossible for the experiment to be anything like a considerable success. That fallacy in the words of one of the most brilliant Viceroys that ever came out to India, consisted in the assumption that the Indian, though he might not have the rights and privileges of a citizen in his own country, was already a citizen of the Empire. The thing was absurd on the face of it, and the hollowness of the plea was exposed by an Australian paper many years ago when it asked with what consistency or propriety Englishmen in India could expect the self-governing colonies to treat Indians as equal fellow subjects after denying them the rights of citizens in their own country.

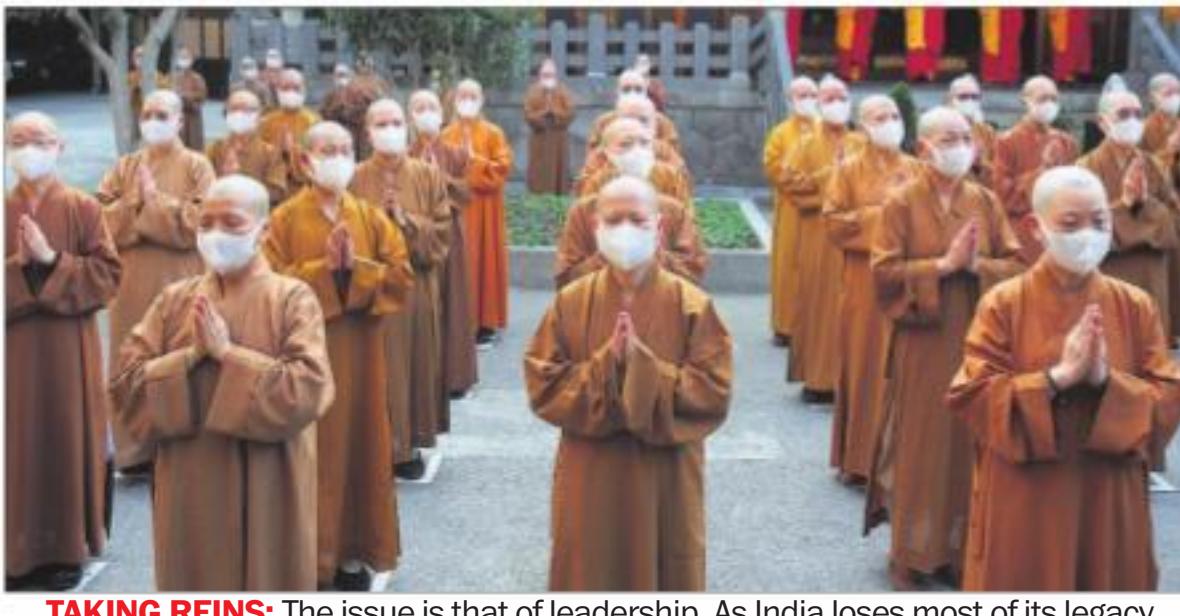
China's Buddhism card

The fear is that it will translate its economic weight into spiritual might



P STOB DAN

STRATEGIC AFFAIRS EXPERT



TAKING REINS: The issue is that of leadership. As India loses most of its legacy, China is taking the leadership over global Buddhism. AP

India needs to seriously reaffirm its central role and embrace its own tradition of Buddha, dharma, sangha.

As we celebrate the 2565th Buddha Jayanti, it is time to reflect on how the ideas and symbols of Buddha have gradually vanished from the land where he attained enlightenment.

Buddha neither exists in temples nor is Buddhism about kneeling down before a statue to save one's soul. It is not about performing rituals and sacrifices. Yet, this might seem strange, given the growing relevance of Buddhism elsewhere, it is assuming less importance in India.

But sadly, India's deviation from Buddhism and its historical essence could do more harm than good to its global image, for the world outside continues to relate India's greatness, despite its modern achievements, with Buddha's wisdom.

Surely, the builders of the Indian nation were aware of the essence. Nehru particularly elevated his profile through Buddhism — adopted Buddhist features and symbols in the making of the Indian state. According to historian Madhavan Palat, Nehru viewed Gandhi as Buddha's avatar and himself as Ashoka's incarnation. Both rejected dogma but stood for the law of truth. Buddha's ethical approach and principles of change deeply influenced Nehru. If Buddha gave India a temper for peace, Nehru applied it to his foreign policy — to draw back from conflict and from competing with one another.

But today the issue is that of leadership. As India loses most of its legacy, China is taking the leadership over global Buddhism. And, as China plans to become a Buddhist superpower along with its financial, politi-

cal, and marketing clout, it would come as India's worst fears.

Certainly, China and Buddhism go a long way. In fact, contrary to popular belief, Buddhism remained firmly rooted in China even after the Communist Party took over power. China has been opposed to superstitious practices but not against religion. But, in recent years China is witnessing a growing passion for Buddhist renewal. The spectre of economic affluence seems to steer people's quest for spirituality, forcing Buddhism to make a strong comeback.

Millions of Chinese are seeking their 'yin guo' (karmic) connections with Buddha Amitabha. From students to businessmen, ordinary Chinese are beginning to link their existential happiness to the interdependent nature of karmic cycles.

Chinese Master Jingzong once said China's intent to realise its economic and political destiny would pale compared to the urge amongst millions to accomplish their spiritual fortunes. He cannot visualise China's future without Buddhism.

But, it is none other than President Xi Jinping who has been working on a Buddhist globalisation drive since he was 29 years old, serving as a jun-

ior official in Hebei province.

Xi has shown bias against ideologies that deemed foreign i.e. Christianity, Islam, and democracy. He had helped rebuild several famous temples in the past, but ordered thousands of crosses to be pulled off the steeples of churches while he was chief of Zhejiang province between 2002 and 2007.

Xi could be following a policy akin to Vladimir Putin's spiritual feast of adopting orthodox Christianity, which is seen as giving him the moral legitimacy to be the leader of the Slavic world. This is despite Article 14 of Russia's constitution declaring the country 'a secular state'.

Nobody knows whether Xi is a practitioner, his wife is; but he has firmly been putting Chinese Buddhism on the global stage since 2005. At the domestic level, it looks as though he is turning to religion not just to bolster his rule, but to save the party from falling, and to arrest the flagging moral values in China's social fabric through anti-corruption drive.

It looks as though he is reimagining China's future along the lines of the imperial Chinese state. With humanist Buddhist values diffusing into society, China is likely to see in the future what we witness in countries

OBITUARY

Pushpindar Singh Chopra (1943-2021)

Encyclopaedia of Indian aviation

AIR MARSHAL ANIL CHOPRA (RETD)

PUSHPIN DAR 'Pushy' Singh Chopra. The name brings to mind a range of reference books scripting the aviation history of the subcontinent, capturing generations of aircraft flown, recording treasured history for posterity. It would not be an understatement to say that the work of Pushpindar Singh has been regularly used as official reference material by officers and airmen of all generations, looking to learn about the IAF's past and its journey.

A renowned aviation historian, Pushpindar Singh's association with the IAF dates back to the period soon after the Indo-Pak war of 1965, when he

interviewed aviators and IAF personnel in an effort to record the air operations as they happened, and also to refute enemy propaganda. His write-ups and records of the air battles of 1965 are a valuable source of information for various authors who have written about the war. One recalls his article, 'Laying the Sargodha ghost to rest', in *Vayu Aerospace Review* in November 1985 as being a trailblazer amongst others, which led to debunking the myth of PAF's claim of shooting down five IAF Hunters on September 7, 1965.

In the numerous books he wrote on the IAF, starting from *Aircraft of the Indian Air Force: 1933-1973*, and the coffee table books of squadrons, one finds diligent professional

research on facts, anecdotes, pictures from archives, summing up history in a nutshell, which is something every official historian would aspire to deliver. To converse with him was akin to engaging with a human encyclopaedia of Indian aviation. It was perhaps for this reason that one mistook him for an Air Force veteran at many of the dem-official and social gatherings of the IAF that he was invited to.

To his distinction, he published books on the occasions of IAF's Golden Jubilee, Diamond Jubilee and Platinum Jubilee. The definitive three-volume magnum opus titled *Himalayan Eagles: History of the Indian Air Force*, written for the Plat-

ium Jubilee in 2007, occupies pride of place in every Air Force library and squadron crew room.

His pioneering work, *Vayu Aerospace Review*, was one-of-its-kind aerospace journals when launched in 1974 and it continues to dominate readership amongst air warriors of today.

The contribution of Pushpindar Singh towards recording the history and air wars of the IAF cannot be contained in a single article. He belonged to a rare category of passionate aviation enthusiasts, who of their own reckoning decided to become a part of the men and women in blue. We shall fondly remember him and treasure his works for future generations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Test all medicine systems

The recent irrational statement of Ramdev against allopathy has exposed the rivalry between the two systems of medicine. In an era of evidence-based medicine, any system of medicine must be based on evidence and research, and all medicines, whether allopathic, ayurvedic, unani or homoeopathic, should undergo human trials to prove their efficacy and side-effects before being used as treatment modalities approved only by the ICMR. We should learn from the Chinese who have integrated the modern and traditional system of medicine. Instead of issuing obnoxious statements or 25-point letters, people like Ramdev should prove the usefulness of their medicines. And those making false claims to mislead people should be immediately arrested and prosecuted.

VITULL K GUPTA, BATHINDA

Businessman baba

The shrewd tycoon, Baba Ramdev, firstly spewed venom and later cleverly twisted his derogatory remarks after he was rapped by the Health Minister. Should a man of his fame harbour such views and mentality? He is nothing but a yoga trainer who has been often unduly appreciated by various ministers. Making use of his political connections, every now and

then, he tries to fool the masses for his own gains. He is all for ayurvedic formulations, not because he is a highly qualified and experienced ayurvedic doctor or a herbal scientist, but because he is successfully running a huge ayurvedic empire.

SUNIL CHOPRA, LUDHIANA

Admonishment not enough

Ramdev has spoken lowly against the medical fraternity which has been fighting the Covid pandemic since last year and has saved lakhs of people, even though they had to make many sacrifices in the line of duty. Ramdev is known for illogical statements. He has insulted the medical fraternity. The government should take stern action against him to boost the morale of doctors and other medical staff. Simple admonishment by the health minister is not enough.

MANJIT SINGH, LUDHIANA

Sustainable farming

Refer to 'Innovation is the key to tackling agrarian crisis'; the Centre and state governments, with the active help of agricultural experts and institutions, must prepare necessary action plans to tackle the agrarian crisis. The Centre should also initiate talks on the recent three agricultural laws with the protesting farmers. In view of the prevailing

pandemic, we want peace and social harmony in the country. For the sake of sustainable farming, R&D departments of the agricultural sector should study the suggestions and prepare a concrete action plan.

SUDESH KUMAR SHARMA, KAPURTHALA

Dose of compassion

The middle 'From a doctor's moist eyes' aptly highlights our helplessness and desperation in this hour of crisis. It is true that even if a physician cannot cure, he can always be a source of comfort to the patients. A patient listening, a caring advise and a positive approach by a doctor can work wonders. No doubt, the virus is beyond our control today, no doubt, the times are tough and there is a constant fear of losing our dear ones, yet, we need to act humanely and with compassion. A caring attitude, gestures of love and affection and a friendly conversation can help ease the pain.

SUMITA KANWAR, YAMUNANAGAR

Cancel board exams

Reference to 'Exams in limbo'; when students and parents are against the exams, why is the Central government keen to hold them? It won't take long for the exam centres to become Covid hotspots. If children contract the virus, who will take the responsi-

bility? Will the minister take it? Who will be answerable for the safety of thousands of young lives? Already, the healthcare infrastructure is under tremendous strain. The government must explore the option of internal assessment for Class 12 students. Holding exams isn't feasible.

RITISH PANDIT, SUNHET

Exams a must

The decision to conduct class XII exams is a welcome step. As there is no replacement for classroom teaching, so is the case with offline exams. After class XII, students go into various fields depending upon their performance. Assessing the students online or promoting them based on pre-board scores or school assessment scores would have done a great injustice to brilliant students. Hence, offline exams under strict supervision are a must. Keeping in view the safety of examinees and staff, papers of compulsory subjects may be conducted. Duration of the paper can be reduced without compromising on the aim of learning. Exams can be conducted in two shifts to maintain social distance. In cases where students are not able to take exams due to Covid problems, separate exams can be held later.

DARSHAN S BHATHAL, NANGAL

Letters to the Editor, typed in double space, should not exceed the 200-word limit. These should be cogently written and can be sent by e-mail to: Letters@tribunemail.com

Challenging, eventful two years of Modi 2.0



RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

SENIOR JOURNALIST

DESTINY deprived the Narendra Modi-led government of another chance to celebrate an anniversary. In 2020, when Prime Minister Modi completed one year of his second term on May 30, the country was facing the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. An unexpected and unwanted fallout of the disaster was that it emptied out the cities of their working class migrants, who held aloft the organised and subterranean economies, after the Centre announced a long national lockdown.

One year hence, a brief lull that induced optimism and complacency in the government has resulted in a bigger catastrophe that shows little sign of subsiding. If anything, experts have warned of a third and a more intense wave looming large.

Still, by the reckoning of the faithful in the large BJP fraternity, Modi's first year in 2.0 was creditable, barring the electoral reverses in Delhi, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. The BJP, nonetheless, managed to put together coalition governments in Haryana and Bihar.

Considering that electoral outcomes have become an index of Modi and the BJP's popularity like never before — even Atal Bihari Vajpayee, BJP's first

Prime Minister, took defeat on his chin and went about the business of governance with equanimity — it looks like the party is unable to live down the loss in West Bengal.

Indeed, as the second anniversary approached, the Centre and the BJP had hoped that a success in the eastern state would be the crowning glory of their record of electoral "conquests", quite unlike even Uttar Pradesh, which the BJP is used to winning now and then.

A win in West Bengal had several implications, not the least being vanquishing an ideology that was anathema to the RSS from the start. Therefore, even celebrations on a limited scale were in order, regardless of the devastation the pandemic wrought in the countryside. Mamata Banerjee robbed Modi of his moment of glory.

Premature triumphalism marked the government's approach to pandemic management. The flight of migrants, the job losses, the beating taken by the economy, particularly in the manufacturing, construction and service sectors, and the inadequacies evident in the sphere of health were not factored in the "feel-good" mood which the government infused among people after the first wave receded.

Hospitals, health centres and pharmaceutical companies managed to cope ably because the severity of the virus was less than the magnitude that followed.

There was hope that a vaccination programme would kick off on a large scale with the help of indigenous manufacture and imports. The government's confidence was not entirely misplaced but there was little evi-



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PREMATURE: Triumphalism marked the approach to pandemic management. REUTERS

dence that the sentiment was commensurate with hardcore efforts to launch mass vaccination of the scale seen in earlier programmes. India has a legacy of successful immunisation policies and projects and there was no reason why the Covid immunisation would not take off.

In retrospect, the project's beginning was wrong. It reflected a sense of misplaced priorities. The 'Vaccine Maitri' diplomacy, however well intentioned, saw the Centre dispatching Covid vaccines to multiple countries in the belief that India would not require huge doses because it had "contained" the virus.

The exercise began in January 2021, when forewarnings of a second and

possibly more severe attack were issued by experts. Was the seemingly goodwill gesture intended to enhance the PM's image in the global community? If it was, the endeavour took a serious beating within months when the virus spread uncontrollably, this time to the rural areas that were relatively untouched in the first phase, and vaccines remained short.

The health infrastructure collapsed, death counts were inaccurate because the villages were largely impenetrable and life-saving medicines and oxygen ran scarce. The images of cadavers floating on rivers and devoured by dogs and vultures will linger on for a long time.

The government's approach was

marked by callousness, that some mistook for helplessness, over-centralisation, giving a wide berth to the non-BJP states and their chief ministers, allowing RSS-aligned quacks a free play and a curious reluctance to share critical information.

Fortified by the 2019 mandate, the government did not let the RSS down or compromise on its ideological commitment. Modi 2.0 started on the right note from the Sangh's perspective: the government passed the Bill criminalising the practice of 'triple talaq' among Muslims; revoked nearly all of Article 370, of which 35A is a part, and which formed the basis of Kashmir's complex relationship with India for nearly 70 years; amended the Citizen-

ship Act to disenfranchise Muslim immigrants in West Bengal and the North-East and confer citizenship rights on the non-Muslim settlers from Bangladesh and other countries; and strengthened the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), empowering the state to designate an individual as a terrorist and impound his properties. The tweaked UAPA was employed with impunity to crush dissent, notably the protests against the altered Citizenship Act from students on Delhi campuses, some of whom are still languishing in jails.

The pinnacle of achievements on the BJP's core ideology was the start of the construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya with the Supreme Court's green signal. Modi promptly set up a government trust to oversee the construction that capped a "movement" dating back to 1984.

The other big — and unforeseen — political challenge was the fight by the farmers of Punjab and Haryana against the new farm laws that were packaged as major step towards reforming agriculture. The protests spread to parts of Uttar Pradesh and partially revived the state's dormant Opposition.

The farmers show no sign of backing off as the Centre seems equally determined not to revise its stance.

Uttar Pradesh, which goes to the polls in February-March 2022, will be the first big test of how people view Modi 2.0 because the BJP proposes to showcase the PM more prominently in its campaign than the Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath. The only source of comfort for the BJP is that the Opposition remains disunited and largely passive.

No evidence yet of paediatric impact



CHANDRAKANT LAHARIYA

PUBLIC POLICY AND HEALTH SYSTEMS EXPERT

THERE is a lot of discussion going on that the third wave would affect mainly children. In a hearing, a Bench of the Supreme Court has asked about the government's plan to protect children from the third wave. Maharashtra has set up a separate state task force for Covid-19 in children. The Karnataka State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has recommended the setting up of paediatric task forces on Covid-19 in every district. Some health experts have suggested that special paediatric Covid-19 intensive care units, catering to up to 5 per cent of the child population, should be set up.

These developments have been interpreted by many as confirmation that the third wave would primarily affect children.

A number of countries have already experienced three or four waves of the pandemic and there is no scientific evidence and epidemiological data from any part of the world that children were more commonly affected in any subsequent wave. In fact, states such as Delhi have already seen four waves and the children have not been affected disproportionately.

Fifteen months into the pandemic, we have a better understanding of SARS-CoV-2 and Covid-19. Successive sero-surveys in Indian cities and states and even national surveys have revealed that children have developed a proportionately similar rate of infection as any other age-group. It is just that they simply don't develop a moderate or severe disease. The reason is that ACE-2 receptors on which SARS-

**BASELESS:** There is no data from any country which has seen three or four waves to infer that children were more commonly affected in any wave. TRIBUNE PHOTO

CoV-2 binds are underdeveloped in children and the virus fails to find its way to their lungs.

Yet, why is it being thought that children could be more widely affected in the next wave? Let us examine the possible reasons.

One, in the second wave, doctors attending Covid-19 children reported to have seen more cases than in the first wave. The children admitted reported to be sicker than in the previous wave.

A few weeks ago, Niti Aayog and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) released facility-based data comparing age distribution in the two waves. It found that in the second wave, of the total admitted patients, 5.8 per cent were 0-19 years, and this was 4.2 per cent in the first wave. The age group constitutes nearly 43 per cent of the population. Clearly, Covid-

19 infections in children remain low.

Therefore, if paediatricians have seen more infections and cases of children in the second surge, it must also be noted that the overall Covid-19 cases in the country have also increased by four to five times and sustained for a few weeks.

An epidemiologist will explain that to make any correct inference, the data from both groups — the clinicians (who have a better sense of admissions of children, the numerator) and the data experts (who have a broader picture of the overall cases in the entire population, the denominator) — is needed and they must work together. This will address the 'numerator-denominator dissociation' to make a correct interpretation.

Two, for illnesses which require hos-

pitalisation, people always try to 'seek care at the next level of healthcare facility' than the one closer to them: those in villages go to the city, those in the city go to a major city, and those in a major city, seek a hospital in metropolitan cities. This care-seeking behaviour is seen more frequently for children. Therefore, most of the higher-level facilities in large cities and catering to Covid-19 children might have received a higher number of sick children than in the other age-groups, leaving the impression (to the attending doctors) that more children were affected in the second wave.

Three, there is no evidence that the virus or the new strains have increased transmissibility or pathogenicity to the younger age-groups or children. Yet, we know that while additional Covid-19 facilities were opened to cater to the increased case-load, the proportion of Covid-19 facilities for children did not witness a proportionate increase.

Therefore, due to a shortage of beds and ventilators, only those with moderate or severe conditions were admitted to Covid facilities. This triage of already sick patients for hospital admission, to a treating physician, gave the impression that the severity of the illness was higher, while it was a selection bias.

In short, there is no data from India to support that children were more commonly affected in the second wave (in comparison to the first wave) or would have a higher risk of disease in the third wave.

However, to ensure an effective pandemic response, the government

should analyse the available Covid-19 data by age, gender and other stratifiers with comparison between the two waves and make it public. That is essential to develop evidence-informed strategies and dispel the unsubstantiated assertions, which may create fear.

Also, both the Centre and states should prepare for all possible scenarios (informed by data and not merely opinion) to respond to the third wave. There is merit in ensuring that Covid-19 testing and treatment services for children are also strengthened.

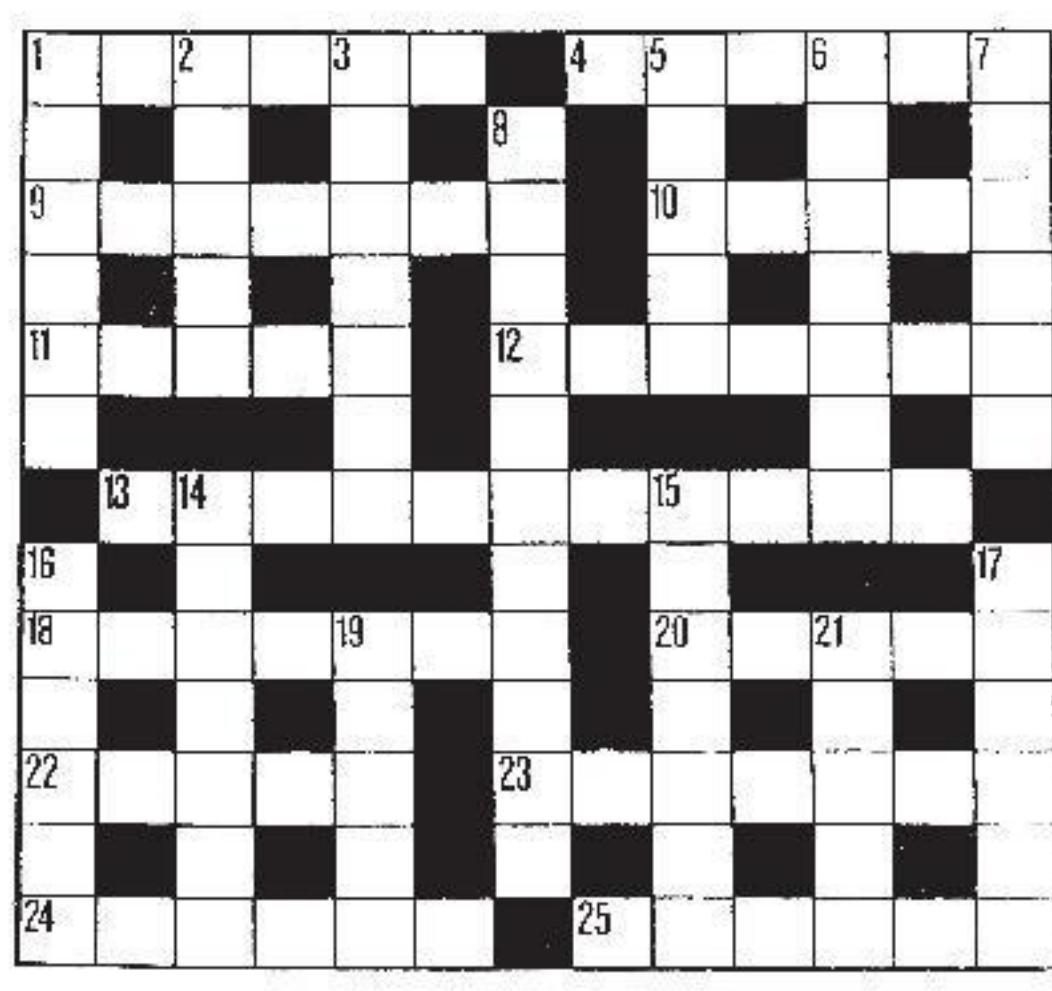
The genomic sequencing and clinical studies regularly examine transmissibility or pathogenicity of the circulating strains in all age-groups. Setting up a separate task force for Covid-19 may be an attractive idea, but it has the risk of a fragmented response. It would be better if a single task force at the state level, with the participation of child health experts, were to look into the strategies and plans holistically.

Consideration on the opening of the schools and plan for vaccination of children should be a part of the overall plans for the pandemic response.

Health experts need to support their assumptions not merely based on their clinical experience but in the broader epidemiological context to avoid any possible panic.

As of now, there is no reason to conclude that children would be at a higher risk of contracting Covid-19 in the third wave, as and when that happens. However, preparation without causing unnecessary alarm and panic has to be the approach to be followed.

QUICK CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

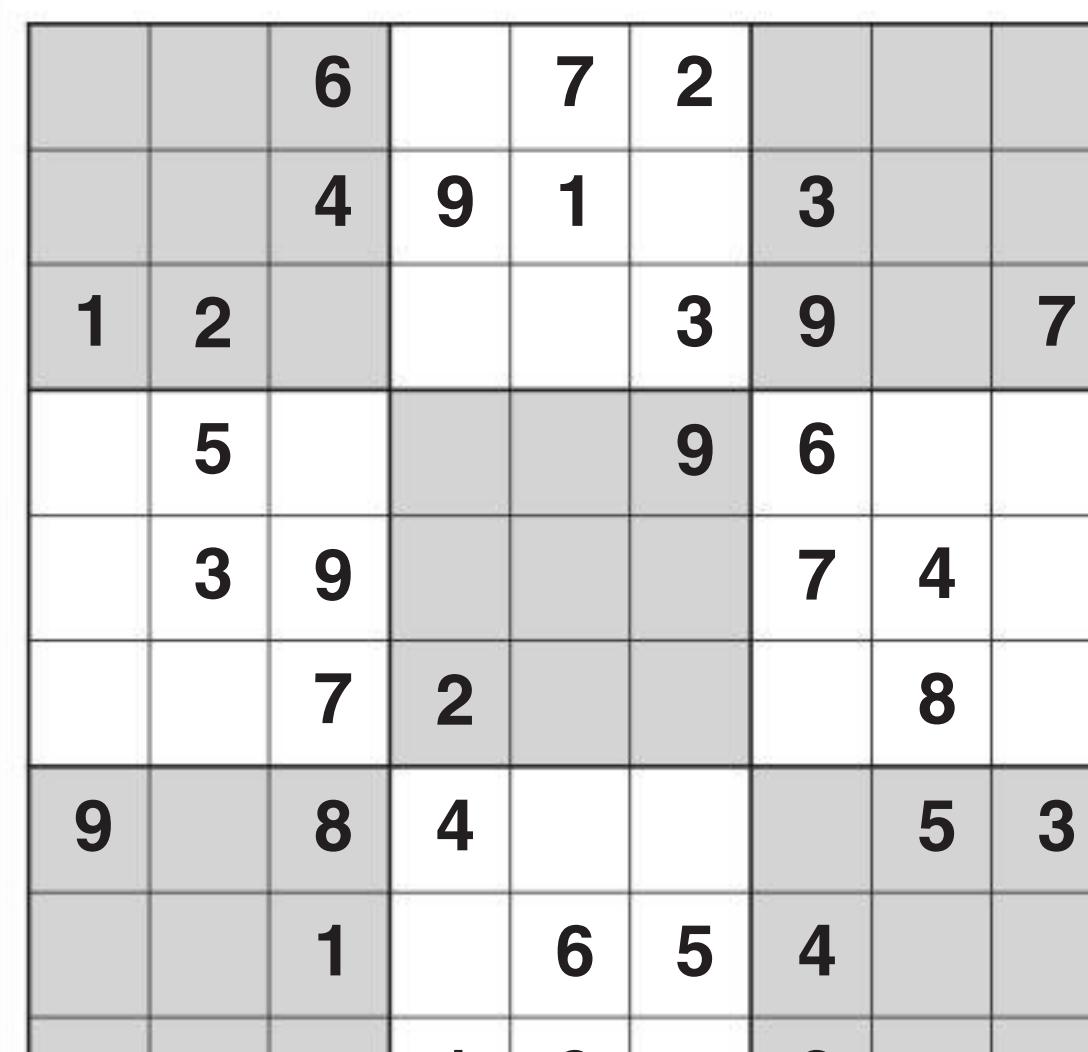
Across: 1 Notable, 5 Waste, 8 Burn one's boats, 9 Eland, 10 Scruple, 11 Nylons, 12 Patron, 15 Monitor, 17 Vocal, 19 Speak one's mind, 20 Sheen, 21 Surgeon.

Down: 1 Noble, 2 Turn a blind eye, 3 Broaden, 4 Even so, 5 Weber, 6 Sharp practice, 7 Eastern, 11 Nemesis, 13 Adviser, 14 Prunes, 16 Token, 18 Laden.

ACROSS

- 1 Relative rank in hierarchy (6)
- 4 Fit for growing crops (6)
- 9 Rice-based dish (7)
- 10 Europe's longest river (5)
- 11 An aspiration (5)
- 12 Unpaid debt (7)
- 13 No laughing matter (6,1,4)
- 18 Landlocked south African country (7)
- 20 Exemplary (5)
- 22 US Civil War general (5)
- 23 Expression of high regard (7)
- 24 Free from obligation (6)
- 25 Military engagement (6)
- DOWN**
- 1 A long step (6)
- 2 Passage between rows (5)
- 3 Played at a fast pace (2-5)
- 5 Wanderer (5)
- 6 Rampart (7)
- 7 Pass by (6)
- 8 Rules of behaviour (3,3,5)
- 14 Subjugate (7)
- 15 Caribbean country (7)
- 16 Deadly contagious disease (6)
- 17 Wool shorn from a single sheep (6)
- 19 Add together (3,2)
- 21 Uncertainty (5)

SU DO KU



V. EASY

CALENDAR

MAY 26, 2021, WEDNESDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat 2078

■ Shaka Samvat 1943

■ Jyeshta Shaka 5

■ Jyeshta Parvishite 13

■ Hijari 1442

■ Shukla Paksha Tithi 15, up to 4.44 pm

■ Shiva Yoga up to 10.51 pm

■ Anuradha Nakshatra up to 1.15 am

■ Moon in Scorpio sign

■ Vaisakh Purnima

■ Budh Purnima

■ Gandmool start 1:15 am

■ Moon eclipse 3:15 pm to 6:23 pm

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

7	9	8	1	3	4	6	2	5
4	5	6	7	2	8	9	3	1
2	1	3	5	9	6	7	8	4
1	6	4	2	8	5	3	7	9
9	2	5	4	7	3	8	1	6
3	8	7	9	6	1	4	5	2
6	3	1	8	5	9	2	4	7
8	4	2	6	1	7	5	9	3
5	7	9	3	4	2	1	6	8

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SUNSET: WEDNESDAY 19:16 HRS

SUNRISE: THURSDAY 05:23 HRS

Sunny Partly Cloudy Cloudy Rainy Foggy

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Notice issued to Nalagarh drug firm

AMBIKA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SOLAN, MAY 25

The Drugs Controller, Baddi, today issued a show-cause notice to the management of Elfin Drugs Pvt. Ltd., Nalagarh, whose owner was arrested by the Ambala police along with fake remdesivir injections last month.

A team of two Drugs Inspectors from the office of Drugs Controller, Baddi, and an inspector from the Central Drugs Standard Control

Organisation (CDSCO) has been constituted to conduct a detailed investigation to find out the involvement of the manufacturer in the matter and its related aspects. The team will submit its report in 15 days, said State Drugs Controller Navneet Marwaha.

A team of officials from the Haryana Food and Drug Administration, Ambala Zone; CIA-1, Ambala; CDSCO sub zone, Baddi; and Drugs Control Administration, Baddi, inspected

Its owner was held with fake remdesivir injections

the premises of Elfin Drugs Private Ltd. at Berson village in Nalagarh yesterday.

The Ambala police had on April 21 registered an FIR following the recovery of covifor injections (remdesivir injections 100 mg/vial) Batch No. REM121006A manufactured by Hetero Labs Ltd at Aspiro Pharma

Ltd. in Haryana and unlabelled vials with a red flip off seal. These unlabelled vials were recovered from Pardeep Kumar, who disclosed that he had procured these from Manoj Kumar, a resident of Naraingarh in Ambala district, through Mohammed Shahvar. Kumar is working as Plant Manager at Elfin Drugs Ltd.

During joint investigation yesterday, 346 unlabelled vials filled with white powder and a red flip off seal were recovered from

rejected material store on the premises of Elfin Drugs Ltd, which purportedly contain meropenem. The Drugs Inspectors from Baddi drew samples for a lab analysis. A rejected material storeroom on the company's premises was sealed and a probe was underway. However, the joint team found no evidence of labels, cartons or printing material related to the manufacturing of remdesivir injection on the premises of Elfin Drugs Ltd., said Marwaha.

INTACH to take up Chamba temple conservation work

The Tribune IMPACT

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DHARAMSALA, MAY 25

INTACH, the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, will take up the restoration of the Devi Kothi temple, tehsil Churah in district Chamba in collaboration with the district administration of Chamba. This was disclosed today by the State Convenor of INTACH, Malvika Pathania.

For the restoration of the temple, expertise will be provided by INTACH free of charge. A sum of Rs 2 lakh has also been sanctioned by Chairman, INTACH for restoration. She said that an MoU regarding the preservation of heritage in Himachal has already been signed between the government of Himachal and INTACH.

Deputy Commissioner Chamba, DC Rana said he



The Devi Ki Kothi temple in Chamba district.

was grateful to LK Gupta, chairman of INTACH, for granting funds and for sanctioning free expert consultancy for Devi Kothi temple for its conservation.

As reported in *The Tribune*, art lovers were enraged at the

destruction of heritage in Chamunda temple in Devi Kothi village in Churah sub division of Chamba district. About two-century-old temple was being re-constructed by petty contractors without any advice from experts.

Thakur said that so far five cases of black fungus had been reported in Himachal and four of them had been operated upon. He added Asha workers should be provided sufficient masks, sanitisers and gloves so that they could perform their duties effec-

Court questions govt on hospitals with ICU facility

SHIMLA, MAY 25

The HP High Court today directed the state government to inform it about the steps taken to convert primary health centres (PHCs) into hospitals having ICUs with oxygen facility.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice L. Narayana Swami and Justice Anoop Chitkara passed the order on a public interest litigation (PIL) highlighting the issue of a lack of medical facilities in the state medical colleges and hospitals.

An Assistant Solicitor General of India informed the court that the Central Government had directed the state governments to convert the PHCs into 30-bed hospitals having ICUs with oxygen facility. However, on the other hand, a Senior Additional Advocate General for the state government informed the court that on an average 14,000 RT-PCR tests were being conducted every day. — OC

'Ghosts' on corona duty make violators fall in line in Kangra

LALIT MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DHARAMSALA, MAY 25

Corona "ghosts" are doing their bit in checking Covid in Kangra villages these days. The artistes of the public relations department of Kangra in the attire of corona ghosts are going around villages and trying to scare people roaming about without masks or not keeping social distancing. They run after people not wearing masks in villages, and try to sensitise them to follow the Covid protocols.

Deputy Commissioner Kangra, Rakesh Prajapati, who has conceived the idea, said that the motive behind making corona ghost was to attract the attention of people in rural areas. "It was noticed that people in rural areas of Kangra were not strictly following the protocol of wearing masks in public places and keeping social

distance. So, instead of enforcing harsh measures, we decided to use the artists of public relations department to sensitise them in a novel manner," he said.

He said that Covid cases had come down in the district but people should still follow the guidelines.

The corona "ghost" was appealing to the people to

wash hands frequently to avoid infection. They should not touch their face frequently and use a sanitizer. By taking such precautions, this infection can be avoided, argues the "ghost".

The "ghost" appeals to people not to leave their home without a reason during the curfew, and follow specified norms.

1,999 cases, 60 deaths

SHIMLA, MAY 25

As many as 1,999 Covid cases were reported in the state today, taking the tally to 182,982. Besides, 60 persons died of the virus in the past 24 hours.

Nineteen deaths were recorded in Kangra, nine in Sirmour, seven each in Solan, Shimla and Solan, five in Hamirpur, three each in Mandi, Bilaspur and Chamba and

two in Kullu. The highest number of 576 cases was reported in Kangra, followed by 295 in Mandi, 231 in Solan, 191 in Shimla, 159 in Sirmour, 134 in Hamirpur, 117 in Chamba, 113 in Bilaspur, 86 in Una, 49 in Kullu, 37 in Kinnaur and 11 in Lahaul and Spiti. The number of active cases stood at 23,053. — TNS

1971 war hero cremated

HAMIRPUR, MAY 25

The 1971 war hero, Col Panjab Singh (retired), was cremated as per the Covid protocol, at Chandimandir. The Veer Chakra awardee of the district succumbed to Covid-19 yesterday, at the Command Hospital, Chandimandir. The 80-year-old retired defence officer of the Sikh Regiment was admitted to the Army hospital after he tested positive, two weeks ago.

Col Panjab Singh (retired) was awarded the Veer Chakra on December 24, 1972 for his gallantry service in the Army operation 'Cactus Lily' in the war against Pakistan.

He had lost his elder son Anil Singh to Covid-19, three days ago, in Delhi, while his younger son Ajay was discharged from the hospital day before yesterday. — OC

two in Kullu.

The highest number of 576 cases was reported in Kangra, followed by 295 in Mandi, 231 in Solan, 191 in Shimla, 159 in Sirmour, 134 in Hamirpur, 117 in Chamba, 113 in Bilaspur, 86 in Una, 49 in Kullu, 37 in Kinnaur and 11 in Lahaul and Spiti. The number of active cases stood at 23,053. — TNS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

O/o STATE TRANSPORT COMMISSIONER,
GOVT. OF PUNJAB, SCO-177-178,
SECTOR 17-C, CHANDIGARH

E-mail: stc.punjab04@gmail.com, 0172-2702575

Vehicle Location
Tracking Device
(VLTD)

**PUBLIC NOTICE****Advertisement**

VLT devices manufacturers (AIS 140 Complaint) who are supplier of AIS 140 VLT devices to original Vehicle Manufacturer are eligible for enlistment in the State. Interested AIS 140 Vehicle Location Tracking Device Manufacturers may apply for enlistment in the State. For terms conditions document please visit www.punjabtransport.org.

DPR/Pb/4814 State Transport Commissioner, Punjab.

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

Regd. Office- PSEB Head Office,
The Mall, Patiala – 147001

Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813

(PUBLIC NOTICE)

All the esteemed consumers are informed that as per approval of PSERO w.e.f. 01.07.2021, all electricity bill payments exceeding Rs. 20,000/- will only be accepted through digital modes viz Net Banking, Debit/Credit Cards, RTGS/NEFT, Mobile Wallets, UPI/BHIM etc. Further, a rebate of 0.25% of the bill amount subject to maximum of Rs. 100/- per bill shall be allowed to all consumers making payment through digital mode w.e.f. 01.07.2021 irrespective of the bill amount. The rebate shall be credited to the account of consumer in the next bill.

Various digital payment platforms are: PSPCL e-payment service through PSPCL Website, PSPCL consumer Service App, various Bharat Bill Pay enabled Apps and apps like Umang, Phonepe, Paytm, Amazon, Google Pay, Just Dial, Payapp, UPI apps, etc.

Bill can also be paid through RTGS/NEFT via consumers' own bank account (for this consumer has to do one time registration of his/her account at <https://registerrtgs.PSPCL.in> to get IFSC code and unique account number).

C 200/21
DPR/Pb/4817
CE/Commercial, PSPCL, Patiala.

HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LIMITED
(A State Govt. Undertaking)
(Notice Inviting Tenders)

Online tenders (two bid system) are invited from the authorized & eligible "A" Class Electrical Contractors enlisted with the HPSEBL & PHEB for the execution of the following work, on the basis of the technical & financial bids submitted by them. Tender and bid formats are given below. The detailed tender notice can be viewed/downloaded from cost of cost from <http://www.hpsb.nic.in> website and tender document may also be had from website after making necessary payment. Further, any addendum/Adendum in connection with said tender shall only be uploaded on website. Therefore, the bidders are advised to keep visiting the website for such updates.

Tender/Bid No.	Name of work</th
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66% above 45 years vaccinated in J&K

National average 32%; adequate vax supply sought

JAMMU, MAY 25

Nearly 66% people above 45 years of age have been administered Covid vaccine so far in J&K, top officials informed at a high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla to review the Covid management across all the union territories.

J&K is among the leading regions in the country in vaccination of above 45-year age group as it has vaccinated 66% of its eligible population which is well above the national average of 32%, officials said.

Four districts — Ganderbal, Jammu, Samba and Shopian — have achieved 100% coverage in this category, while the remaining districts continue with promising progress, they added. To accelerate the vaccination in the 18-45 age group, it was requested in the meeting that J&K be provided with a sustained supply of vaccines in the coming months, the officials said.

The Union Home Secretary cautioned the UTs about the surge in Covid cases and asked them to remain vigilant about the situation.

Advising the UTs to learn from their experiences, he



Kin mourn the death of a Covid patient in Srinagar on Tuesday. PTI

L-G SETS TIME FRAME FOR MORE INFRA

- Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha on Tuesday visited Samba and Kathua to review Covid containment measures
- He set timelines for increasing Covid-dedicated beds and augmenting oxygen availability in the hospitals in these districts

asked them to keep pace with testing and vaccination rates, besides enforcing Covid appropriate behaviour and strengthening the infrastructure.

At the outset, the Union Secretary, Health and Family Welfare, gave a presentation

on the prevailing situation in the UTs. It was mentioned that J&K was performing reasonably well in mitigating the second wave of Covid with 3,946 cases per million population being reported over the last two weeks. — PTI

3 incubation facilities sanctioned

JAMMU, MAY 25

The Central Government has sanctioned three common incubation facility centres worth Rs 7.81 crore in J&K, a senior government official said on Tuesday.

The centres would be set up at Anantnag, Baramulla and Jammu, said Navin Kumar Choudhary, Principal Secretary, Agriculture Production and Farmers' Welfare Department.

He termed these units as a milestone towards processing and marketing of agriculture business in the UT. Choudhary said the first incubation facility centre would be established in Anantnag with an estimated cost of Rs 2.70 crore. — PTI

38% of deaths in 24 hours...

FROM PAGE 1

from over 5,000 to below 2,000 currently, the 24-hour fatality count still stands around 55 to 60, which is quite high for a small state like Himachal.

"The data reflects that 49.8 per cent patients died due to delay in seeking medical help," said Nipun Jindal, Mission Director, National Health Mission. He appealed to the people to watch out for the warning signs in patients, the main being oxygen saturation falling below 94 per cent even after a six-minute walk test.

The district-wise highest deaths at home have occurred in Kangra (64), Mandi (39) and Hamirpur (29) and the deaths within 24 hours of hospitalisation in Kangra (42), Mandi (23) and Solan and Shimla (12 each).

The farmers are clear about staying put till their demands are met. "The government will have to take back its contentious laws. We are not going back empty-handed," says farmer leader Balbir

6 months on, farmers say won't budge...

FROM PAGE 1

agitation. They say they are satisfied with the "larger picture" they have sketched on the political canvas since their struggle began on November 26 last year. BKU (Charuni) leader Gurman Singh Charuni said, "The BJP's graph is dipping. This is evident from its loss in the West Bengal elections where the farmers campaigned against it. Ours is a mass movement now. We are proud that we stood up to the government."

The farmers are clear about staying put till their demands are met. "The government will have to take back its contentious laws. We are not going back empty-handed," says farmer leader Balbir

GOVT UNDER PRESSURE

“The government may pretend to be indifferent towards our cause, but it is under immense pressure.

Pargat Singh, BKU (Rajewal)

Singh Rajewal.

Alleging that the government used every means to divide the farmers of Punjab and Haryana, Pargat Singh of BKU (Rajewal) said, "We are headed in the right direction."

The farmers' unions have written to the Centre on the resumption of talks. "The studied silence of the Centre is neither in the interest of the government nor the nation," Charuni said.

Subodh Jaiswal is CBI chief for 2 yrs

FROM PAGE 1 whichever is earlier." The high-powered selection committee comprising PM Narendra Modi, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, had shortlisted three names, including SSB DG Kumar Rajesh Chandra (1985-Bihar cadre IPS) and Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the MHA VSK Kaumudi (1986- Andhra Pradesh cadre), besides Jaiswal, who currently holds the office of DG, CISF.

Jaiswal, who has also worked as Director General of Maharashtra Police, has been given preference over the other two because of his seniority, sources in the government say. — TNS

FROM PAGE 1

Daily infections...

10.8% and MP at 10.7%. The Health Ministry today held a detailed review with states, urging them to speed up inoculation and keep vaccine wastage below 1 per cent.

"States were informed that Sputnik V has been added to the CoWIN portal. They were told to enhance vaccination through available stock and anticipated supplies till the end of June," the ministry said, amid vaccine shortage hitting the drive.

Many CoWIN users also say that even after they managed to book their second dose appointment at a hospital other than the one where they took the first shot, their appointments continue to be randomly delayed.

To open walk-in registration for adults at a time when the pending second dose of several citizens remains delayed has caused confusion with vaccination schedules and systems continuing to falter



amid vaccine shortage.

The government allowed onsite registration to "prevent vaccine wastage".

Several experts have questioned the hasty opening of the vaccine drive for all adults from May 1, with vaccinologist Gagandeep Kang noting, "I think we rushed into opening the vaccination for adults. Even the UK, which has covered more vulnerable people than we have, is to open vaccination for adults from June. We should have first ensured a larger coverage of the vulnerable population." — TNS

Twitter, FB yet to comply...

Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, who is on a five-day visit to New York and Washington, and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. Most of the social media platforms are owned by US-based entities.

The social media platforms were required to abide by the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, notified on February 25. The rules suggest that significant social media companies (with more than 50 lakh users) like Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube will have to comply with the ethics code.

The government wants to have "additional due diligence" to appoint a chief compliance officer for ensuring that the new rules are adhered to. It also wants a nodal contact person who will coordinate round-the-clock with law enforcement agencies weeding out any inflammatory content and a resident grievance officer to acknowledge grievances of users within 24 hours and respond to them within 15 days.

Till now, social media companies were not liable for content posted on their platforms. Once the rules kick in, the company and the three-member panel appointed by it can be held criminally liable if any objectionable content is shared over their platforms.

The social media platforms had sought an extension of the deadline. Indian social media company Koo, meanwhile, has complied with the new norms.

Confusion reigns as nod for walk-in jabs...

unable to offer slots. For most part of the last week, the government's digital vaccine platform CoWIN did not enable booking of appointments at leading government hospitals in New Delhi with several users exceeding the dose interval of 28 days.

Many CoWIN users also say that even after they managed to book their second dose appointment at a hospital other than the one where they took the first shot, their appointments continue to be randomly delayed.

To open walk-in registration for adults at a time when the pending second dose of several citizens remains delayed has caused confusion with vaccination schedules and systems continuing to falter

WALK-IN INTERVIEW

HARYANA GOVERNMENT CIVIL AVIATION DEPARTMENT

30 BAYS BUILDING, 3RD FLOOR, SECTOR-17B, CHANDIGARH

WEBSITE: www.haraviation.gov.in, E-MAIL: cavation@hry.nic.in

TELEPHONE No. 0172-2709386, TELE FAX: 0172-2709174

The following post to be filled on contract basis at Integrated Aviation Hub-Hisar under the Civil Aviation Department, Government of Haryana. The details of the post and qualifications criteria are as under:-

Sr. No.	Name of Post	No. of Posts	Consolidated pay	Qualifications	Experience	Preferable Qualifications	Age Limit
1.	Chief Security Officer	01	60,000/- Fixed per month	(i) Graduate in any discipline (minimum 3 years duration) from a recognized University. (ii) Candidate should possess valid Basic AVSEC and X-BIS Screeners Certificate. (iii) In case of Ex-Servicemen:- Who are graduate, have a service record of minimum 15 years in the armed forces and who have been honourably discharged from the services during the preceding two years.	(i) Minimum Five (05) years Security Experience in the capacity of Supervisor at an Airport. (iv) Knowledge of Unarmed Combat. (v) Basic Computer Knowledge. (vi) NCC B/C' Certificate.	(i) AVSEC Experience. (ii) Knowledge of Fire Fighting. (iii) Knowledge in Industrial Security and Disaster Management.	Upto 50 years (relaxable upto 05 years in case of ex-servicemen)

NOTE:-

- The interested candidates meeting the above said qualification criteria may submit their application along with resume through above mentioned email or registered post by 08.06.2021.
- The interested candidates shall appear for the walk-in Interview along with Resume/Bio-data, Original Documents, latest photograph and the self attested copies of certificates as well as experience certificate at Civil Aviation Department, 30 Bays Building, 3rd Floor, Sector-17-B, Chandigarh-160017 at 09:30 a.m. on 15.06.2021. No TA/DA will be admissible.

PRDH/1017/11/4/2022/3038/314

Adviser, Civil Aviation Department, Haryana.

Kind Attention Rail Passengers

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that the timings of the following Special Trains will be revised due to speed enhancement/operational requirements as under:-

02425/02426 New Delhi - Jammu Tawi - New Delhi Rajdhani Superfast Special Train

TRAIN NO. 02425				TRAIN NO. 02426					
Existing Timings		Revised Timings		STATIONS		Existing Timings		Revised Timings	
ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.	ARR.	DEP.
---	21:10	---	20:40	New Delhi	05:00	---	05:55	---	---
01:16	01:26	00:28	00:38	Ludhiana	00:05	00:15	01:40	01:50	01:50
03:40	03:42	03:10	03:12	Pathankot Cantt	21:32	21:34	23:05	23:07	23:07
---	---	Pass	03:42	Kathua			Pass	22:26	22:26
05:45	---	05:00	---	Jammu Tawi	---	20:10	---	21:25	21:25

Days of Run: 02425 from New Delhi from 28.05.2021 and 02426 from Jammu Tawi from 29.05.2021

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations en route etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [https://enquiry.indianrailways.gov.in](http://enquiry.indianrailways.gov.in) or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in
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RailMadad Helpline No.: 139
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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, BILASPUR DISTT. BILASPUR (HP)

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER (NIT)

Tender Ref No. HFW-BLP-Tender(Diet/Sanitation)/2-2020-

Dated:

E-tenders are invited from individuals, registered Firms, Proprietary firm(s)/Partnership firm(s)/Company/Corporation/Cooperative Society or any legal entity for providing cooked diet for the Civil Hospital Ghumarwin, Distt. Bilaspur HP for the Financial Year 2021-22 as per detail given below.

Name of the Institution	Particulars of the Tender/ Services	Cost of Tender document (in form of DD)	Earnest Money Deposit (in form of DD/FDR)	Date of online publishing/ availability of tender document	Last Date & Time for online bid
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POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
The Hospital Engineer (Civil)-, PGIMER Chandigarh invites on behalf of the Director PGIMER Chandigarh online percentage rate bids from Specialized agencies dealing in similar type of works on two bid system (Eligibility-cum-Technical Bid and Financial Bid) who fulfill the eligibility Criteria for the following work(s):
Name No.: PG/Engg/Civil/2021/10, Name of Work: Outsourcing of various Engineering Services of Civil Works including Bridge, Polymer, Chandigarh - SHI Water Supply Services, Estimated Cost: Rs. 16.04 Lakh, Earnest Money: Rs. 32,000/- Period of Completion: One year, Last date and time of submission of bid: 03.06.2021 up to 4.00 PM, Last date and time of submission of Original EMD: 04.06.2021 up to 4.00 P.M., Date and time of opening of Eligibility bid: 05.06.2021 at 11.30 AM.
The original EMD as scanned & uploaded shall be deposited physically by all the intending bidders in the office of H.E. (Civil)- as per above schedule failing which the bid shall be treated as invalid. The tender forms and other details can be obtained from the website: www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app, and official website of the PGIMER www.pgimer.edu.in. Press notice is also available on www.eprocure.gov.in. The Contractors are requested to get their firm registered on the website www.eprocure.gov.in for any tendering purpose (Helpdesk for registering: 09988447863). For any detailed information Contact (0172-2759860).
HOSPITAL ENGINEER (CIVIL)-

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH
ADMISSION NOTICE NO: 12/2021
Online Applications are invited from Indian citizens for admission to the following B.Sc courses for the September 2021 Session:

Name of the course	Starting date	Closing date
B.Sc. Nursing (4 Years)	25.05.2021	24.06.2021
B.Sc. Nursing (Post Basic)	25.05.2021	24.06.2021
B.Sc. Paramedical	01.06.2021	02.07.2021

Selection/Admission to the above courses will be done through Computer Based Test to be held at various cities/centres. For details regarding eligibility criteria, procedure for filling of online application form, application/examination fee and other terms and conditions, candidates are advised to visit PGIMER website www.pgimer.edu.in.

PROF. IN-CHARGE (ACADEMIC)
DI-3290

दहर नगर कैमल, बरेटा (Haryana)
eomcbaret@gmail.com
पंडत नं. न.क्ष. 859
मिति: 25.05.2021

धुँसी बोली

राज अम अंते धाम तु मूर्चिर गीरा सादा है कि नगर कैमल, बरेटा वैल आपाटी मालवी वालीयां परीजन लोगों ते देण, मुरदा पूजा चुक्के अंडा धीम कृष्णकृष्णन दा नगर दिन जावा है। इस धुँसी धुँसी बोली दहर नगर कैमल, बरेटा विधि मिति 04.06.2021 तु मध्ये 11.00 वैल रेत लिए अनुर देवेगी।

बोली का नाम	मात्रा	आमानडी रकम
1. वाहीयन जमीन (पेंट टेक)	11.00 वैल	रिसर्व लीमिट दा 10%
2. मुरदा पूजा	11.30 वैल	5000/- रुपए
3. चंडा अंडा धीम	12.00 वैल	20000/- रुपए

नंद- बोली सभीय लोगों ते देण वैल दिन दहर नगर कैमल विधि देखीयां जा सकतीयां हान, नेटिम बोली ते देण परीजन जा सदर्दीयां हान। अगढ़ल बोलीयां नं रकम तु उत्तर व्हापस कर दिये जावेगी। जेक बोली वैल दिन हैरी देवेगी तं बोली अंगल दिन उत्ते समं अंदे सदर्द ते देण जावेगी।
समी- गांधी राम, पूरान, सगी- परिवर्तन सिंह, वारनासायर अद्वार, नगर कैमल, बरेटा

DPR/Pb/4806

EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)

SUPPLEMENTARY EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

1. Refer advt published on 13 May 2021 regarding contractual emp for medical, non medical & para medical staff to polyclinic ECHS Yol & Dehraopur.

2. ECHS Cell, Stn HQ Yol Cantt also invites applications to engage the following posts on contractual basis:-

Sr. Post No.	Place of employment	No of Vac	Res for ESM	Open Quota
1. Medical Specialists	Yol Cantt	02	60%	40%
2. Gynecologist	Yol Cantt	01	60%	40%

2. For Terms and conditions, application form and remuneration kindly visit our website www.echs.gov.in. For details please contact Stn. HQ (ECHS Cell) Yol Cantt at Tel No. 01829-235674, Army- 6091 and Email on echsyl@gmail.com. Also approach concerned Polyclinic for details. Last date of receipt of application at Stn HQ Yol Cantt is 10 June 2021 and screening/ selection will be conducted on 15 June 2021 at Stn HQ, Yol Cantt. Candidates will bring original certificate/degree and two photo copies of all documents of testimonial/experience, as applicable and two pp size photographs at the time of interview.

Tender Notice for Selection of "System Integrator for Establishment and Commissioning of Integrated Command & Control Centre, at Shimla and Dharamshala" Himachal Pradesh

Department of Information Technology, Himachal Pradesh through its Society for promotion of IT and e-Governance (SITEG), invites e-Tenders from reputed, qualified and experienced firms for the Selection of 'System Integrator for Establishment and Commissioning of Integrated Command & Control Centre, at Shimla and Dharamshala' Himachal Pradesh. The e-tenders can be downloaded from <https://htenders.gov.in> from May 21, 2021 onwards. There is non-refundable fee of Rs. 10000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand Only) which can be submitted in the form of Demand Draft in favour of "Member Secretary (EC), SITEG, Department of Information Technology, Shimla-171013" payable at Shimla, which is to be deposited prior to the last date of submission of bids. For more details, please download the tender documents.

Director IT-cum-Member Secretary, SITEG (EC),
Department of Information Technology,
IT Bhawan, Mehli Shimla-171013
Phone and Fax: +91-177-2628914
E-mail: dirit-hp@nic.in
website: <http://himachaldit.gov.in>

DPR/HP/94

INDIAN RAILWAYS DIESEL LOCO MODERNISATION WORKS PATIALA - 147003

Tel: 2396000, 2396001, Fax No. : 91-0175-2306413

Notice No. TPT/21-22/42P

Principal Chief Material Manager acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tenders on website www.ireps.gov.in. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bid up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders and any manual offer received shall be ignored. Tenderers are allowed to make payment against these tenders towards earnest money only through on-line payment modes available on IREPS portal. Manual payment through demand draft, bank cheque, deposit receipt, FDR etc. is not allowed.

SN	Tender No.	Brief Description of Work	Due Date
1	SD-I/DMW/TPT/21-22/RT400	Transportation of Railway material from DMW/Patiala to various destinations through 06 MT Truck.	18.06.2021
2	SD-I/DMW/TPT/21-22/RT395	Transportation of Railway material from various destination to DMW/ Patiala through 06 MT cap. Trucks.	18.06.2021

Note: (i) Detailed description of items to be transported mentioned in ireps website, other terms and conditions of tender, EMD etc. may be viewed from website www.ireps.gov.in. (ii) Credentials/documents received from the tenderers after opening of the tender shall not be given cognizance. 11/17/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Social Justice & Empowerment Department, Govt. of Himachal Pradesh

Directorate of Women and Child Development Cedar Home, Brent Wood Estate, Himland, Shimla – 171001

Notice

Juvenile Justice Fund has been created under Section 105 of the Juvenile Justice Act for welfare and rehabilitation of children covered under this Act. This fund is maintained and operated by the Directorate of Women and Child Development concerned with this Act through the Himachal Pradesh State Child Protection Society. This fund is utilized for providing maintenance, foster care and after care facilities or lump sum subsistence or entrepreneurial support to the children leaving Child Care Institutions or for any other innovative programme related to maintenance, protection, healthcare, education/ vocational education and rehabilitation etc. of the children covered under this Act. Some children are also being orphaned due to COVID pandemic and the number of children requiring care, protection and rehabilitation etc. under the Juvenile Justice Act is increasing. Any individual, voluntary organization and a company may credit the donations, voluntary contributions, subscriptions or funds under the Corporate Social Responsibility, whether or not for any specific purpose, directly to the following bank account of the Juvenile Justice Fund:

Account Holder's Name: Juvenile Justice Fund under ICPoS, Directorate of Women and Child Development, Shimla, HP.

Bank Name: UCO Bank

Account No.: 15550110047828

IFSC: UCBA0001555

For more information, may contact at telephone number 0177 2622003 or 0177 2629731 or Mobile No. 82199 00486 (Accounts Officer) or 70188 06067 (Programme Manager).

Issued By: Director, Women and Child Development-cum-Member Secretary, HP State Child Protection Society.

DPR/HP/91

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Notice Inviting Tender

Sr. DEE/TRD/FZR acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the works as under. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date 16.06.2021 at 15:00 Hrs only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender and any such manual offer received shall not be considered.

Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost. (Rs.)	Cost of Tender form(Rs.)	Date & time for submission of tender	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Completion period	Opening of tender	Website Particulars
301-TRD-FZR-2021-22	TRD work in connection with Providing complete facilities at SvDK station of Firozpur division	1,39,21,345.70	NIL	Upto 16.06.2021 15:00 Hrs	NIL	09 Months	16.06.2021 after 15:00 Hrs.	www.ireps.gov.in
302-TRD-FZR-2021-22	Replacement of corroded cantilever assemblies, Anti Creep and Tail Feeders in the polluted zone of Sahnawal (SNL)-Amritsar (ASR) section of Firozpur division to improve the reliability of OHE	2,10,00,207.60	NIL	Upto 16.06.2021 15:00 Hrs	NIL	06 Months	16.06.2021 after 15:00 Hrs.	www.ireps.gov.in

No.: 301 & 302-TRD-FZR-2021-22 Dated: 24.05.2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

US security assistance to Pak remains suspended: Pentagon

WASHINGTON/ISLAMABAD, MAY 25

US President Joe Biden has continued his predecessor Donald Trump's policy on suspending security assistance to Pakistan and there is no clarity if the administration will change its stance in the future, the Pentagon has said.

Former US President Trump suspended all security assistance to Pakistan in January 2018, arguing that he was not satisfied with Islamabad's cooperation and role in the fight against terrorism.

"At this time, the US security assistance to Pakistan is still suspended. I will not get into to speculate on one way or another about if or whether that will change going forward," Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby told reporters at a news conference on Monday.

He was responding to a question on if the new Biden administration has reviewed the policy of the previous

DEFENCE SECY BATS FOR STABILITY

■ Earlier in the day, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa to discuss shared regional interests and objectives.

■ During the call, the secretary reiterated his appreciation for Pakistan's support to the Afghanistan peace negotiations and expressed his desire to continue to build on the United States-Pakistan bilateral relationship.

■ "I reiterated my desire to continue to work together to further regional security and stability," Austin said.

for Pakistan's support to the Afghanistan peace negotiations and expressed his desire to continue to build on the United States-Pakistan bilateral relationship," he said.

"I reiterated my appreciation for the US-Pakistan relationship and my desire to continue to work together to further regional security and stability," Kirby said.

"During the call, the secretary reiterated his appreciation

Security Advisor Jake Sullivan met his Pakistani counterpart Moeed Yusuf in Geneva.

"Both sides discussed a range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, and ways to advance practical cooperation. They agreed to continue with the conversation," spokesperson for the National Security Council Emily Horne said.

In a first in-person high-level meeting, the Pakistani and US national security advisers held wide-ranging talks on bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest.

"Both sides had a positive conversation on a range of bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest and agreed to advance practical cooperation on these issues," a joint statement issued by Yusuf's office said in Islamabad. The meeting took place as both sides have been trying to bring peace to Afghanistan. — PTI

Blinken pledges support to rebuild war-ravaged Gaza

JERUSALEM, MAY 25

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken vowed on Tuesday to "rally international support" to aid Gaza following a devastating war there while keeping any assistance out of the hands of its militant Hamas rulers, as he began a regional tour to shore up last week's ceasefire.

The truce that came into effect on Friday has so far held, but it did not address any of the underlying issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, something Blinken acknowledged after meeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"We know that to prevent a return to violence, we have to

TENUOUS TRUCE

■ The truce remains since tensions are still high in Jerusalem and the fate of the Palestinian families is not yet resolved.

■ The evictions were put on hold just before the Gaza fighting erupted, but the legal process is set

to resume in the coming weeks. Police briefly clashed with protesters at Al-Aqsa on Friday, hours after the ceasefire came into effect.

■ An Israeli soldier and a civilian were stabbed on Monday and a

CJI invoked rule to eliminate govt choices for CBI top post

MUKESH RANJAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 25
Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana had invoked a 15-year-old Supreme Court's verdict, which says a person having less than six months of service left should not be considered for the appointment as police chiefs, to stall the candidature of two of the IPS officers — BSF DG Rakesh Asthana and NIA Chief YC Modi — reckoned to be the government's favourites for the post of CBI Director, sources said.

The CBI Director's appointment is guided by Section 4-A of the Delhi Special Police Establishment Act, 1946 — as amended by the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013, which does not talk of any such pre-condition.

LAW THAT DISQUALIFIED ASTHANA, YC MODI

- A 15-year-old SC verdict says a person having less than six months of service left should not be considered for appointment as police chief
- The rule disqualified BSF DG Rakesh Asthana, who retires on July 31, and NIA chief YC Modi, who retires on May 31
- The CJI and LoP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury were in agreement that the rule ought to be enforced



Sources say this was for the first time that this ruling was being applied to the CBI chief's appointment, which disqualified Asthana, who retires on July 31, and YC Modi, who retires on May 31.

According to the amended law, the CBI Director's appointment has to be made on the recommendation of the Prime Minister, leader of the single largest opposition

party and the CJI (or a SC judge nominated by CJI).

However, in the meeting of the high-profile selection panel led by PM Narendra Modi, the CJI is said to have brought up the Supreme Court's 2006 verdict in Prakash Singh's case on police reforms that stipulated that officers having less than six months to retire should not be considered for the top job.

With Justice Ramana pointing out the legal position, the government was forced to drop its supposed favourites and move on to consider other names after Congress leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury lent his support to the CJI's views, sources said.

Thereafter, when other three names — former Maharashtra Director General of Police Subodh Kumar Jaiswal, Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) KR Chandra and Special Secretary (Internal Security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs VSK Kaumudi — came up for consideration, Chowdhury gave a dissenting note citing procedural lapses while the majority — PM and CJI — authorised the government to select the best of the three for the top job.

"Sweeping directions have been made, we therefore direct the same to be stayed and the courts shall not consider the directions to grant anticipatory bail to accused in other cases and must con-

Fear of death from Covid no ground for pre-arrest bail: SC

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 25

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed "sweeping" directions issued by the Allahabad High Court, which had granted anticipatory bail to an accused in a cheating case observing that apprehension of death due to Covid-19 infection can be a valid ground for granting the relief.

A Vacation Bench headed by Justice Vineet Sharman said courts shall not consider the directions issued by the high court on May 10 for grant of anticipatory bail to accused in other cases.

"Sweeping directions have been made, we therefore direct the same to be stayed and the courts shall not consider the directions to grant anticipatory bail to accused in other cases and must con-

sider merits of each case," the top court said.

It appointed senior advocate V Girish as amicus curiae to assist it to decide if Covid-19 can be a ground for grant of anticipatory bail.

The SC passed the order on an appeal filed by the UP Government challenging the May 10 order of the Allahabad HC after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted that accused Prateek Jain, given anticipatory bail till January 2022, had 130 cases pending against him.

The HC order had been relied on in many other cases and several other accused had been seeking anticipatory bail on the same ground, Mehta pointed out.

The top court also stayed a Rajasthan High Court's controversial order restraining the police from arresting accused charged under offence punishable with a maximum sentence of up to three years till July 17 and not to list pre-arrest bail applications before the high court as well as sessions court.

In a rare move, the Rajasthan HC approached the SC against its own single judge's order to the DGP not to arrest such accused. The HC challenged the order on the ground that the direction will "create a situation of lawlessness" and that it ignored the settled principle of law that Chief Justice is the "Master of Roster" of the HC.

IN BRIEF

Nod for director at Nagpur NDRF unit

NEW DELHI: The government on Tuesday approved a proposal of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs for creating a post of the director at the NDRF academy in Nagpur, Maharashtra. TNS

Buddhadeb on oxygen support

KOLKATA: CPM leader Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee (77), who tested positive for Covid-19 last week, was admitted to a private hospital in Kolkata after his health condition deteriorated on Tuesday. TNS

Fire at HPCL refinery at Visakhapatnam

VISAKHAPATNAM: A fire broke out at HPCL's oil refinery here on Tuesday but it was doused within hours and no one was injured. PTI

NDRF deploys 112 teams for relief operations

NEW DELHI, MAY 25

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has said it has mandated deployment of the highest number of its 112 teams in Odisha and West Bengal as part of relief and rescue preparations in view of the impending Cyclone Yaas.

Army presses into service 17 relief columns in WB



Fishermen anchor their boat on the banks of the Hooghly ahead of Yaas landfall in Nadia on Tuesday. PTI

Two killed, 11L evacuated as tornado hits West Bengal

SHUBHADEEP CHOUDHURY
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, MAY 25

Two persons died in Pandua in West Bengal on Tuesday after being struck by lightning, which was accompanied by a "tornado", that hit the town in the evening.

As many as 11 lakh people have been evacuated and given accommodation in flood shelters as well as in school and college buildings, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Tuesday.

Forty to fifty houses were damaged in the storm, which did not last long. The Chief Minister said a similar incident took place in Halisahar, where some houses were damaged. Mamata, who was talking to reporters regarding relief operations planned by the state government in view of cyclone "Yaas", expected to

Strikes hours before Yaas makes landfall in Odisha

make a landfall on the West Bengal-Odisha coast on Wednesday, said the "tornados" at Halisahar and Pandua were precursors to the cyclone "Yaas".

Mamata will be staying in the control room set up at the state secretariat Nabanna and monitoring the situation. On Wednesday too, she would be at Nabanna.

The Chief Minister's presence at the control room, even during late hours, is expected to ensure that officials entrusted with the relief work do not suffer from lack of motivation.

The "landfall" of the cyclone, categorised as "very severe cyclonic storm" would

take place during the morning and noon on Wednesday, the Chief Minister said.

Three lakh people, including 74,000 state government officers and staff, 2 lakh police and Home Guards, members of defence forces and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel have been deployed for relief operations.

The lessons learnt while dealing with cyclone "Amphan", which had hit the state at around this time last year, was coming handy for the preparedness for "Yaas", the Chief Minister said and added that 21 districts in the state would be affected by "Yaas".

"Do not be afraid. Please relax. We will take care of everything. Please be safe and do wear a mask", the Chief Minister said in an appeal to people.

Radicalisation, terrorism main challenges, EAM tells UN Secy Gen

NEW DELHI, MAY 25

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar highlighted the need to counter terrorism and radicalisation as the priorities for the entire region during his interaction with UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in New York on Tuesday.

"We discussed the Covid challenge, underlining the importance of finding urgent and effective global vaccine solutions. Critical to ramp up the vaccine supply chain to ensure greater production and fairer distribution," he tweeted.

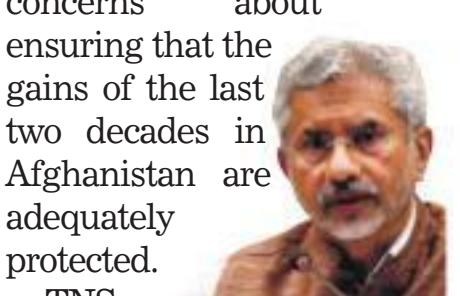
The two also exchanged views on climate action with Jaishankar underlining the need for greater resources in order to achieve larger ambitions. "Financing will determine our seriousness and credibility," he said, drawing attention to one aspect of climate change that is sidestepped by the developed countries.

Besides highlighting India's constructive role in the UNSC, the minister also conveyed that maritime security and technology for peacekeeping would be New Delhi's priorities during its Presidency of the UN Security Council in August.

They also deliberated on the regional challenges in India's neighbourhood and shared concerns about

ensuring that the gains of the last two decades in Afghanistan are adequately protected.

— TNS



SC notice to WB Govt on post-poll violence

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 25
The Supreme Court on Tuesday issued a notice to the West Bengal Government on a petition demanding a probe by a special investigation team (SIT) into the post-poll violence that claimed several lives and forced thousands to flee the state.

Acting on a PIL filed by five social activists, including two lawyers, a Bench of Justice Vineet Saran and Justice BR Gavai asked the Mamata government to respond to the plea to provide relief and rehabilitation to those displaced due to post-poll violence, allegedly unleashed by TMC workers.

CBI withdraws plea in SC on TMC leaders' house arrest

The top court also agreed to make National Human Rights Commission, National Commission for Women, National Commission for SC/ST and National Commission for Protection of Child Rights parties to the PIL after senior advocate Pinky Anand made a request to this effect. Anand said the human rights bodies should be asked to submit their reports on the violence.

Directing the TMC government to respond to the plea, the Bench posted the matter for further hearing in June.

India, New Zealand to boost defence, security relations

NEW DELHI, MAY 25

India and New Zealand on Tuesday carried out a comprehensive review of the bilateral ties and decided to enhance the depth and momentum of engagement in areas of defence and security, counter-terrorism, cybersecurity and climate change.

At a virtual meeting held under the framework of India-New Zealand foreign office consultations, the two sides also discussed issues relating to access to Covid-19 vaccines and medicines to contain the Covid-19 pandemic globally, the MEA said.

Both sides exchanged views on various regional issues and reiterated the importance of closer cooperation for a rules-based international order and a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, it said.

"Comprehensively reviewing ongoing bilateral cooperation, both sides discussed the steps to be taken to enhance the depth and momentum of engagement in different areas," the MEA said. — PTI

Army to merge CSD canteens of static units in same station

VIJAY MOHAN
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 25

As part of the efforts to reduce operating costs and revamp functional structure, the Army has issued orders to merge unit run canteens (URC) of the Canteen Stores Department (CSD) functioning from various static military establishments located in the same station.

Any one URC of a static unit, preferably the one with largest dependency, be nominated as the "merged URC" and all other URCs be kept in "suspended animation". The URCs of those units that are likely to be affected by rotational movements should be exempted from the merger; a letter issued by the Quartermaster General's Branch at Army Headquarters to the establishments of all three services on May 24 states.

Based on the recommenda-



tions by a Board of Officers (BOO) comprising all stakeholders, formation commanders, local military authorities and station commanders will have the leeway to nominate the merged URC, which should be centrally located so that it is convenient for all to commute, the letter adds.

Station canteens for ex-servicemen can continue in accordance with the BOO's recommendations. The letter states all URCs in suspended animation shall retain their names and URC codes, but the supporting CSD depots shall not process any demand received from such URCs.

HIMACHAL PRADESH JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG NOTICE INVITING TENDERS					
The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Mandi invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work(s) through offline process:-					
Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Cost of Form	Time Limit
1	Restoration of Rain Damages of WSS Salla in GP Bhatwari Tehsil/Aut Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- C/o Wire Crates to Protect the Intake Chamber (Under BASP).)	1,48,627/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
2	Restoration of Rain Damages of WSS Kanog Dhanog in GP Tung Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP. (SH:- C/o RCC Circular Storage Tank 10000 Ltr Capacity) (DC Deposit).	1,25,882/-	2550/-	250/-	Three Months
3	Replacement of Old GI pipes in GP Nichla Lot, Baggi, Sehli, Sai & Kasan Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- Laying, Jointing and testing of GI pipe line 15mm at various points for house service connections = 84 Nos) Under NABARD.	1,48,680/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
4	C/O WSS Lajhukhar Janjohi and Bahidhar Mohal in GP Dhar Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP. (SH:- Demantelling of old rusted GI pipe line 15mm dia 1700 Rmt and Laying, Jointing and Testing of GI pipe line 20mm dia = 1570 Rmt) (DC Deposit).	1,40,318/-	2850/-	250/-	Three Months
5	Restoration of Rain Damages to LWSS to NC/PC habitation from Uhl River to Tung Bijan and its adjoining villages in GP Tung & Bijan Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- C/o Wire Crates at Nalnu from Kamand from RD 10 to 15 Mtr) (DC Deposit).	1,49,732/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
6	Restoration of Rain Damages to LWSS to NC/PC habitation from Uhl River to Tung Bijan and its adjoining villages in GP Tung & Bijan Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- C/o Wire Crates at Nalnu near Kamand from RD 30 to 45 to 15 Mtr) (DC Deposit).	1,47,832/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
7	Restoration of Rain Damages to LWSS to NC/PC habitation from Uhl River to Tung Bijan and its adjoining villages in GP Tung & Bijan Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- C/o Wire Crates at Nalnu near Kamand from RD 45 to 60 to 15 Mtr) (DC Deposit).	1,49,732/-	3000/-	250/-	Three Months
8	Replacement of old GI pipe in GP Nichla Lot, Baggi, Sehli, Sai & Kasan Tehsil Sadar Distr, Mandi HP (SH:- Laying, Jointing and Testing of GI pipeline from Q5-Q6				