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WINDOWS

SMALL SAVINGS GROW BIG WITH

Army reduces attendance in offices

NEW DELHI: The Indian Army on Sunday said it has reduced attendance in its offices and cancelled all physical conferences and meetings till the end of this month in order to contain the spread of COVID-19.India is struggling with the second wave of the coronavirus infection as hospitals in several states are reeling under a shortage of oxygen and beds. The Indian Army said on Twitter it has issued fresh instructions -- which will remain in effect till May 31 -- to contain the spread of COVID-19 infection

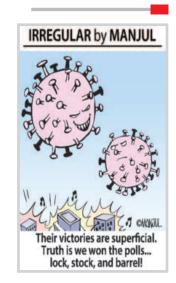
and maintain force preservation.
"The measures include reduced attendance in offices of all headquarters(HQs)/establishments including Army HQ, cancellation of all physical conferences/meetings."

Ambulance driver arrested

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police has arrested an ambulance driver for allegedly charging Rs 14,000 to ferry the body of a person who died of COVID-19 to the crematorium, officials said on Sunday.Kandhi Lal was charging the exorbitant amount for a distance of six kilometers, they said. On Saturday, after receiving a tip-off about the driver, the police laid a trap. "Constable Mahesh called the ambulance driver and asked him to ferry the body of a person who died of COVID-19 to Nigam Bodh Ghat from NuLife Hospital. "The ambulance driver said it would cost him Rs 14,000 and sent a slip to give the money," Additional DCP (northwest) Guriqbal Singh Sidhu said.

Delhi receives 2nd 'O2 Exp'

NEW DELHI: The second 'Oxygen Express' for Delhi arrived here on Sunday with 120 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen and a third such train has begun its journey for the national capital from Angul in Odisha, the railway ministry said. The train from Angul is carrying 30.86 tonnes of oxygen, it said. The second wave of the coronavirus has put huge pressure on the country's health system, with hospitals facing shortage of oxygen, medicines and equipment to treat COVID-19 patients, besides beds. The railways has delivered 1,094 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen in 74 tankers to various states across the country since April 19, the ministry said on Sunday. Nineteen 'Oxygen Express' trains have already completed their journey.



Aakash Healthcare with 250 patients cries for 02

NEW DELHI: Delhi-based Aakash Healthcare Super Speciality Hospital on Sunday sought the government's help to provide it with oxygen to save the lives of 250 patients, as the life-saving gas available with it would not last for "more than 60 minutes".

The hospital sounded the alert through an SOS message on its Twitter handle, seeking help from the Delhi government as well as the Centre.

"CRY FOR HELP: Received only 5 #oxygen cylinders after running around the entire day, not more than 60 mins

left to save lives of more than 250 patients. Crying out to Govt authorities to shift out our patients ASAP so that they can be saved," Akash Healthcare tweeted

Aakash Healthcare Super Speciality Hospital is a tertiary care facility in Delhi's Dwarka area.

Earlier, Delhi's Madhukar Rainbow Children's Hospital on Sunday sounded alert over oxygen shortage on a regular basis despite it claimed to be the city's southern region's only hospital that have been admitting pregnant women in-



fected with Covid-19. The 130-bedded hospital sent an SOS message through its Twitter handle after it again faced similar issue on Sunday when the oxygen availability at the facility for the day was estimated till 12 noon.

Based in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar

area, the hospital currently admitted 80-90 Covid patients that included pregnant women and children-- some in ICU and NICU.

Soon after the SOS message was posted by the hospital, AAP MLA Raghav Chadha said, "We have arranged five D

Type oxygen cylinders for Rainbow Children's Hospital, from our Rajghat Response Point. The govt's oxygen reserves are extremely limited due to reduced oxygen supply to Delhi, but we are doing everything possible to avert any untoward incident."

In a tweet, Ranbow Children Hospital alerted, "We have liquid oxygen supply till 12 noon on Sunday at Madhukar Rainbow Children hospital."

A hospital staff Ankita, , who sounded the alert, said that the hospital has been facing oxygen crisis on "daily basis".

BENGAL CHAMPION



BJP returns in Assam, LDF in Kerala DMK back in power after 10 years

New Delhi

MAMATA Banerjee rode the BJP challenge to take her Trinamool Congress to triumph for a third consecutive term in West Bengal on Sunday while the BJP was set to return in Assam and the LDF in Kerala, signature victories for ruling parties which decisively beat the anti-incumbency syndrome.

However, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry voted against the incumbents – AIADMK prepared to cede space to the opposition DMK-led alliance in the former and the AINRC-led NDA headed toward power in the latter. Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his congratulations to Banerjee, Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and DMK's MK Stalin. DMK has come to power after 10 years.



The cynosure of the elections, held over March and April as the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic picked up pace to finally ravage large parts of the country, was the high-stakes, acrimonious TMC-BJP contest in

West Bengal that had dominated headlines, drawing room conversations and political discourse.

It was a victory that had Mamata Banerjee imprinted all over with the TMC winning 21 seats and leading in 190 of the 292-member house -- the possible 211 seats comfortably over the winning mark of 147. But her own seat in Nandigram was in jeopardy. The tantalising has-she-won-has-she-not game played out for much of the day as votes were counted under strict Covid protocols.

While some TV channels declared her victory, the Election Commission website at 8 pm showed she was trailing behind her one-time loyalist and now BJP candidate Suvendu Adhikari in his home constituency Nandigram by more than 4,392 votes.

Banerjee conceded defeat to Adhikari, who proved to be a tough competitor and could well emerge one of the party's most powerful leaders. "I respect the verdict of people of Nandigram.

Cabinet secy asks Delhi govt to ramp up med infra

NEW DELHI: Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba expressed anguish over issues related to availability of oxygen in the national capital and emphasised the need to ramp up the city's medical infrastructure.

At a high-level review meeting on the COVID-19 situation here, Gauba also asked the Delhi government to make every effort to lift their allocated oxygen by using all means. On issues related to availability of oxygen, the cabinet secretary expressed his anguish at recent instances where people had suffered due to lack of adequate and timely availability of oxygen, an official statement said. He has asked the Delhi government to make all out efforts to lift their allocated oxygen, using all the means at their disposal, and also to ensure that the oxygen available to them is distributed rationally and in a transparent manner, so that there is no diversion or leakage, it said.

The cabinet secretary emphasised the need to ramp up medical infrastructure in Delhi, at the earliest, to cater to the increasing demand for COVID beds, ICUs and ventilators. He stressed the need to make available to the public all relevant information on COVID beds and other facili ties, and availability of med cines, according to the statement. Gauba said the information should be uploaded on websites and apps so that people in need of such facilities and medicines can approach the right place.

Day after 12 deaths, Batra Hospital gets 2.5-tonne oxygen

New Delhi

A day after 12 patients, including a doctor, died due to oxygen shortage at Delhi's Batra Hospital, the facility in south Delhi on Sunday received 2.5-tonne liquid medical oxygen.

s.C.L. Gupta, the medical director of Batra Hospital, confirmed that an oxygen tanker carrying the life-saving gas arrived at its Mehrauli-based facility where 12 people lost their lives on Saturday afternoon due to lack of medical oxygen for over an hour.

"An oxygen tanker from INOX carrying 2.5-tonne liquid oxygen had reached Batra at around 12 noon. Supply to sustain till 11 p.m.," Gupta said.

The oxygen supply was provided to the hospital a day after the tragedy occurred on its campus, killing the hospital's gastroenteritis head R.K. Himthani (62) and 11 others. Six of the 12 deceased persons were admitted to the hospital's intensive care unit (ICU).

"Death toll at Batra Hospital increases from 8 to 12. Oxygen shortage at the facility led to these deaths. These were patients whose oxygen level sunk when the supply dropped," Sudhanshu Bankata, the Executive Director of Batra Hospital, had said on Saturday.

As on Saturday, a total of 220 patients were on oxygen support at the hospital.

The hospital had sent an SOS message before the tragedy on Saturday, "Oxygen will last for another 10 minutes." While oxygen was later supplied to the hospital, it said that by that time, eight patients had already died.



Doctors getting O2 refilled from Haridwar

NEW DELHI: Amid the surge in Covid cases in the national capital, the Delhi government is taking all necessary measures to contain the virus and provide treatment to the patients. Doctors across the city are also putting in all their efforts in treating the patients and overcoming the shortage of oxygen.

The doctors with the help of family members of the patients are getting the oxygen cylinders refilled from a refilling facility in Haridwar in order to ensure continuous oxygen supply for the patients. The relatives of the patients are travelling from Delhi to Haridwar in their own vehicles to get the cylinders.

Recently, the Delhi government converted the Shehnai Banquet Hall near LNJP hospital into a Covid care centre. Patients with mild to moderate symptoms have been kept here.

Rajat Jain, President of the 'Doctor for You' organisation, which is responsible for this Covid care centre, told IANS that "there is acute shortage of oxygen while the patients who are being admitted now are in need of it.

Satyendra Jain's father dies of coronavirus

PURNA SINGH NEW DELHI

DELHI Health Minister Satyendra Jain has lost his father to Covid-19, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted on Sunday. "Our health minister Satyendra Jain lost his father today to COVID," he said, terming it "very very sad". "Satyendra himself has been working tirelessly round the clock for the people of Delhi. God bless his soul and my heartfelt condolences to the family," Kejriwal added in his tweet. Jain, who himself had tested positive for Covid-19 in June last year, recovered after his treatment at a private hospital in the national capital. Delhi's Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also expressed his condolences over Jain's father death. "My close friend and colleague in Delhi Govt Satyendr Jain @SatyendarJain has lost his father. It's a very sad news for all of us in this tough time. May his soul rest in peace. Om shanti," Sisodia tweeted.

POLITICKLE by MANJUL WEST BENGAL ELECTIONS BANGAL BANGAL

War of words between Jaishankar and Jairam over O2 supply

New Deli

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Congress leader Jairam Ramesh were on Sunday locked in a war of words on social media over the supply of medical oxygen to two foreign embassies apparently by volunteers of the Youth Congress for COVID-19 patients. Jaishankar hit out at Ramesh in response to his tweet saying the youth wing of the Congress was attending to SOS calls from foreign embassies and wondering whether the MEA was "sleeping". The minister said that the MEA checked with the Philippines embassy and they had no COVID case. In the midst of the exchanges between Jaishankar and Ramesh, the Ministry of External Affairs said it is in continuous touch with all foreign embassies in India and responding to their medical demands, especially those related to COVID-19. MEA Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said the response to medical demands of the embassies included facilitating treatment in a hospital even as he



urged all not to hoard essential supplies including oxygen. In his tweet late last night, Ramesh also shared a video posted on Twitter by Indian Youth Congress national president Srinivas B V that showed a mini pickup van entering the embassy of the Philippines in Delhi, carrying oxygen cylinders. Srinivasan also shared a video of supplying oxygen cylinders by his team to the New Zealand high commission and thanked the IYC team for

the quick relief. "MEA checked with the Philippines Embassy. This was an unsolicited supply as they had no Covid cases. Clearly for cheap publicity by you know who. Giving away cylinders like this when there are people in desperate need of oxygen is simply appalling," Jaishankar tweeted. "Jairamji, MEA never sleeps; our people know across the world. MEA also never fakes; we know who does." he said in another tweet. Ramesh last night said: "While I thank @IYC for its stellar efforts, as an Indian citizen I'm stunned that the youth wing of the opposition party is attending to SOS calls from foreign embassies. Is the MEA sleeping @DrSJaishankar?" Following the comments by the external affairs minister, the Youth Congress tweeted that it got a request for an urgent requirement of oxygen cylinders for two COVID-19 patients in the Philippines embassy. "The Cylinders were delivered at the embassy on a much-solicited request. Post-delivery embassy thanked us on Facebook," it said while sharing screenshots of some exchanges with the

embassy. Tagging the post, Ramesh later tweeted, "What say you now, Mr. Minister? @DrSJaishankar." The New Zealand high commission reportedly deleted its tweet reaching out to Srinivas seeking oxygen, and later put out a fresh post. "We are trying all sources to arrange for oxygen cylinders urgently and our appeal has unfortunately been misinterpreted, for which we are sorry," it said. In his statement, Bagchi said the MEA is responding to the medical demands by the foreign missions. "The chief of protocol and heads of divisions are in con-

tinuous touch with all high commissions/embassies and MEA is responding to their medical demands, especially those related to Covid. This includes facilitating their hospital treatment," he said. "Given the pandemic situation, all are urged not to hoard essential supplies, including oxygen," Bagchi said responding to media queries. Hospitals across the national capital are reeling under a severe shortage of medical oxygen in view of a massive surge in COVID-19 cases.

PRIYANKA @PRIYANKACHOPRA

The battle to stop the ravaging effects of Covid-19 in India still continues unabated. Your contributions to @GiveIndia will make a huge, tangible difference! Your contributions will save lives #TogetherForIndia Click the link below to donate. http://bit.ly/Toge



Refreshing to see independent productions, global cinema on Indian screens'

LOCKDOWN TRULY PUT PRIORITIES INTO PERSPECTIVE, SAYS ACTOR MASUMEH MAKHIJA

SIDDHI JAIN

ctor and entrepreneur Masumeh Makhija, who is part of Shiladitya Bora's upcoming film 'Bhagwaan Bharose', and has appeared as a child actor in 'Banegi Apni Baat' (1994) and

several TV commercials, finds it refreshing that independent productions and international cinema are finding a home on Indian

Excerpts from an interview with the '3 Storeys' actor about her work:

You started your career at the age of 11 and now you are an actor, entrepreneur and producer. How has the journey been so far?

It has been an exciting journey since the beginning as a child actor and having the privilege to work in amazing films like 'Maqbool', 'Chupke Se' and 'Three Storeys'. I am looking forward to exploring new more challenging directions as an actor, producer and writer.

What are you currently working on?

The film titled 'Bhagwaan Bharose' directed by Shiladitya Bora and produced by Platoon One films. It explores a very hard-hitting subject that has immense relevance in contempo-

What is keeping you going during these trying times?

Yoga and meditation are my anchors. It isn't easy being locked down again but I am grateful that my family and I are safe and healthy. It is important to stay positive and help however and whenever we can.

I was lucky enough to spend the lockdown with my family. We were all caught up with our busy-ness before the lockdown, It truly puts priorities into perspective.

You are the CEO and Founder of 'The Creative Tribe', how are things going on that front?

'The Creative Tribe', is a film and advertising production company, which I started with my business partner a few years back. We have created and worked on several popular campaigns which speak with a young, vibrant voice.

Over the past few years, we have collaborated with many agencies, including Mirum on 'Mutual Fund Sahi Hai' campaigns and also designed campaigns for brands like AGL Tiles, PGIM and Reliance Digital. Besides, we have been working with platforms to create AFP's and branded content. One of the highlights was creating and writing 'Eat.Love.Live with Masumeh' a lifestyle program for Disney+ Hotstar, which garnered more than 6 million organic views.

It is a show that explores a holistic approach to life and food. We are currently developing feature films and web series with some of the leading studios.

Online content and streaming received a major leg-up in 2020. What worked, what didn't, and what trends we can expect

I think it is refreshing that independent productions and international cinema are finding a home on Indian screens. In the past week I have watched Indian, Spanish, French, and Japanese content. It is a very thrilling time to be an actor, producer and writer. I think last year we saw a lot of mysteries and crime thrillers, In the coming years, I feel young adult shows and movies will find their niche.

Some cool and

exciting beauty tips for your daily routine

GRUSHA KHANNA

Being home doesn't mean that you can't get ready or take care of your skin, look at it the other way and utilize it in the best way you can. Some tips that will help you take care of your skin as well as help you in your make-up.

The 1st and foremost import part is to do CTM – cleanser, toner, moisturiser. Always do your CTM on a daily basis to make your skin health and moisturized. Whether you want to apply make-up or not this is the perfect way to prep up your

Natural Makeup Look

Whenever you are home you might not feel like applying a lot of makeup but a basic makeup is never too much. After your CTM to have that natural makeup look you can apply kajal, mascara and any light shade lipstick. This will give you a natural makeup look with just 3 basic products - kajal, mascara and lipstick/

Makeup Remover

Whenever you want to remove your makeup, don't just directly wash your face with face-wash. Always wipe off your makeup with a wipe tissue or a makeup remover first and then wash your face with face-wash. This will help you remove your makeup completely.

Night Care Routine

Before going to bed always clean your face with a facewash and apply a little bit of the moisturizer to pamper your skin. You can also apply Vitamin C serum onto your skin. This will help your skin to stay healthy for a longer run.

Replace Foundation

Being home can make you lazy enough and you might not feel the need of apply foundation all the time. To have the perfect and light weight base to your skin you can always use a good BB cream. BB cream can be a daily product to be used as a base whenever you don't feel like applying foundation.

Multani Mitti

Try to use multani mitti twice in a month. Multani mitti is one of the best and natural products that can help you keep your skin health. We use a lot of products which comprises of a lot of chemicals so always try to moisturize your skin naturally, and Multani mitti is the best source for it.

Replace Liner

To try something new and different replace your eyeliner with smudged kajal. Apply a thin layer of kajal instead of liner on your eyelid and smudge it slowly and gradually. This will be give you a smudgy smokey effect enhancing your beauty. These amazing tips can help you skin stay healthy and glowing during with lockdown.

Different ways to style dupatta

Women are always keen to make their outfits look stylish and always want to add a different touch to their usual suits or kurti or even style your jeans top with a dupatta. Here are few ways to style your dupattas:

Folded Diagonally: Tuck one end of the dupatta on either side of your bottom wear. Wrap it around your waist and tuck it on the opposite side on the

Loose Back Drop: Tuck one end of the dupatta on either side of your bottom wear. Turn it around your back and bring it to the front. Make pleats and tuck it on the opposite side of the shoulder. You can leave it as it is or can take the front end and tuck it on the other side of the shoulder like a normal dupatta.

Shawl Drap: Pleat the dupatta and tuck it on right side of the shoulder. Tuck it in such a way the length is longer in the back and bring it in front from under or over the shoulder and pin it on the right shoulder.

The Cape Drap: Pin the dupatta in the center at the back of the top/kurti. Tuck the two ends of the dupatta in the center of the top/kurti like old Punjabi culture. This style will be best with a plain top/kurti along with a heavy printed or embroided dupatta.

Cuff style: Pin one side on the right side of the shoulder and let it fall freely. Bring the other backend of the dupatta and tie it like a cuff on the left wrist and you are ready to go. This style is best suited on a heavy suit or kurti. These styles will surely help you carry that look elegantly and perfectly.

Getting back to normalcy after childbirth

NEWS ROUNDUP

Why Covid positive Hina Khan is a 'helpless daughter'

ctress Hina Khan says she is a "helpless Adaughter" as she can't be with her mother after her father's recent death, because she is currently under quarantine. Hina posted her thoughts with a picture on Instagram, where she is seen looking outside of the window with a mask on. "A Helpless Daughter, Who can't even be with her mother to comfort her, when she needs her the most. Dear people times are tough

very tough for not just us, but everyone around," she wrote

> "But thrs a saying, Tough times don't last, Tough people do. And I am, was and will always be my Daddy's Strong Girl. Send

in your prayers plz... Let thr be light.... Dua," she said. Hina tested positive on April 27. Her father passed away a week before owing to a heart

Lemonade day

tall, icy glass of yellow (or pink!) lemonade is refreshing and terrific no matter what time of year. However, it does have particular benefits when consumed on a super hot, super sticky summer day.

Lemonade day celebrates the long-standing tradition of drinking lemonade and opening lemonade stands. It encourages others to celebrate too, by supporting these children in their business. Whether it's for a charity cause or for that very special thing that child wants to earn for themselves, Lemonade Day is all about drinking lemonade and having a good time.

Sweet but tart, and perfectly refreshing, Lemonade day celebrates everything wonderful about this delicious beverage! Lemons were originally discovered around 1st century AD when the Romans and Greeks established routes to India, where this yellow, tart citrus fruit is believed to have first originated.

After its discovery in India, the cultivation of lemons began to spread to the Middle East and throughout Southern Europe, where the climate was still hospitable for growing the lemon trees. During this time, lemons were considered a bit of a luxury item in

The activity of squeezing the juice from the lemon to make 'lemonade' probably happened in the Mediterranean region during the 13th century and was considered medicinal. And it probably didn't taste sweet the way we expect it today! However, because lemons are so filled with Vitamin C and other healthy nutrients, it is easy to see why it would

Lemonade is believed to have been introduced to America by European settlers in the 17th century. It wasn't until the beginning of the industrial

Lemonade Day was founded by Lisa and Michael Holthouse in 2007 to honor the way lemonade stands are a useful tool to teach children about running a business. The tagline says it all: Teaching Kids the Power of Entrepreneurship.

As the coronavirus pandemic persists, many people are looking for ways to boost their immunity against infections and diseases. In fact, some people are drinking or gargling with lemon juice or lemon water in an attempt to kill the SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Not only is lemon water delicious, but's it's also one of the easiest home remedies that can help treat a wide range of ailments - from a cough and cold to treating indigestion and preventing kidney stones. Perhaps, you may have been told that this vitamin C-rich beverage is one of the best drinks to boost your immune system naturally.

THIS DAY IN HISTORY

Motherhood changes a woman inside out. After having a baby, the body changes in multiple and cooking as well as in decoration. Eat healthily, but watch what you eat mind-blowing ways. The transition When you breastfeed, the food from pregnancy to postpartum that you eat nourishes your baby brings with it a variety of new symptoo. Hence it is essential to follow a toms and questions. We spoke to Dr balanced diet of carbohydrates, fats, Gayathri Kamath, Senior Consulthave been used for its important health benefits. proteins, vitamins, minerals, also inant. Obstetrics and Gynaecology, crease the intake of fruits and veggies. A nutritious diet and a workout Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road, Bangalore. regime also help with losing weight revolution that lemonade stands would become a popular gained by the mother during pregway of teaching children about leadership and money. She shares some tips that you nancy. Drink plenty of fluids and need to know to get back to regular limit junk food.

life as a new mom. Take hot showers or soak in hot baths to

ease aches and pains It is best to take a sitz bath during the postpartum period to cleanse and relax the perineal areas. The temperature of the water increases blood flow to the vaginal area and promotes faster healing and helps in relieving pain.

Set realistic expectations about losing weight gained during pregna5ncy

Each mother has different postpartum weight loss goals. Various celebrity moms have showed-off their slim bodies just months after their deliveries. While there is no

harm in aspiring to be that way, it is essential to ensure your weight loss journey is healthy and you do not end up exerting yourself beyond the ideal limit. Strenuous physical activity can reduce milk production so one needs to do it judiciously.

See a women's health physiotherapist After delivery, it is extremely important to see a physiotherapist who can assess your pelvic floor muscles and abdominal muscles, chart the appropriate plan for your body to get back to a workout regime. Include exercises in your workout routine to strengthen the core. Performing Kegel exercises can help you to strengthen pelvic floor muscles that can regain bladder control more quickly.

Breastfeed and take good care of your

Breastfeeding has umpteen benefits - it provides immunity to the infant and protects the baby from falling ill. It reduces the risk of breast and ovarian cancer in you. Breast milk contains nutritional components, antioxidants, and live antibodies from the mother in abundance. It also contains substances that naturally soothe the infant. Use warm compress or ice packs and gently massage. Wear comfortable bras and after each session, let your breasts air out. Also, use ointments as prescribed by your doctor to treat cracked nipples.

PM reviews progress of converting nitrogen plants to produce O₂

New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday reviewed the progress of conversion of existing nitrogen plants to produce oxygen -- a feasibility explored by the Centre considering the requirement of medical oxygen amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Centre has identified more than two dozen nitrogen generation plants for production of medical oxygen.

"In order to ramp up oxygen supplies, the government is working on converting nitrogen plants into oxygen plants. Po-

tential industries where current nitrogen plants could be spared, are being identified and converted," the Prime Minister tweeted after the review meeting. The process of converting the existing Pressure Swing Absorption (PSA) nitrogen plants for production of oxygen was discussed in the meeting, said a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office.

In the nitrogen plants Carbon Molecular Sieve (CMS) is used whereas Zeolite Molecular Sieve (ZMS) is required for producing oxygen. Therefore, by replacing CMS with ZMS and

carrying out a few other changes such as oxygen analyzer, control panel system and flow valves, existing nitrogen plants can be modified to produce oxygen.

"On deliberation with the industries, so far 14 industries have been identified where conversion of plants is under progress. Further 37 nitrogen plants have been also identified with the help of industry associations," said the statement. A nitrogen plant modified for the production of oxygen can be either shifted to a nearby hospital or, in case it is not feasible to



shift the plant, it can be used for on-site production of oxygen, which can be be transported to hospital through specialized vessels or cylinders. Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister, Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary Road Transport and Highways and other senior officials participated in the meeting.

Oxygen produced in on-site plants has to be compressed and filled in cylinders or special vessels using high pressure compressor for transporting to hospitals. Facilitation is being provided to these industries for completion of work at the earliest. The Centre had earlier asked the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), which has a comprehensive data base of industrial units, to identify the industries having spare nitrogen plants and explore the feasibility of converting existing nitrogen plants to produce oxygen.

The CPCB with the help of the State Pollution Control Boards has identified such potential industries, wherein existing nitrogen generation plants may be spared for production of oxygen.

3 killed as high tension wire snaps in UP district

KASGANJ

Three farmers, including a teenager, were killed in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj district on Sunday after a 11,000-volt high tension wire broke and fell down. The deceased included two brothers who were working in the field when the accident took place.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has taken cognizance of the accident. Expressing his condolences, he has instructed the District Magistrate

and other officials to reach the spot immediately.

He has also directed the electricity department to pay a compensation of Rs five lakh to the kin of the deceased.

According to reports, brothers Manvendra and Krishna died on the spot while Pawan was rushed to a hospital for treatment but died on the way. The police have sent the bodies for post-mortem. A similar incident had taken place in the village six months ago where a girl Sapna had lost her life.

RSS leader's son, friend die in accident in Gurugram

GURUGRAM

SON of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) leader Pawan Jindal and his friend were killed in a road accident after their BMW rammed into a pillar of an underpass of DLF Phase-2 Rapid Metro Station on Golf Course Road at around 2.30 a.m. on Sunday.

According to the police the deceased have been identified as Gaurav Jindal (35) the son of RSS leader and his friend Sawan Khanna (37). Both were resi-

dents of Sector-15 in Gurugram. "At the time of the accident the duo were returning from their friend's house in DLF-1. When they reached at the underpass of DLF Phase-2 Rapid Metro Station on Golf Course Road the BMW reportedly being driven by Gaurav at a very high

speed lost balance and hit the nearby metro pillar and overturned," Assistant Sub-Inspector Praveen of DLF Phase-2 police station told IANS.

The investigation officer Praveen said, "Soon after we received the information, a team reached the spot and somehow managed to take out the bodies from the vehicle. Gaurav's body was cut into two parts while his friend was rushed to a private hospital where doctors declared him brought dead."

Preliminary investigation revealed that the accident happened because of overspeeding. However, the deceased were drunk or not will be revealed after detailed investigation. The bodies have been kept in the mortuary for an autopsy while further investigation is on, said

IIT-K to analyse **Covid curve in UP**



LUCKNOW

UTTAR Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked officials to engage the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K) for rigorous analysis of the Covid curve in all the 75 districts of the state.

He said that such analysis would help in pandemic manage-

"In view of the Covid peak, experts all over the country have been coming up with analysis. We should coordinate with IIT-K for district-wise rigorous analysis of UP," he said during a review meeting of the Covid situation in the state.

A senior state government official said that various experts had been doing analysis using technology and mathematics to indicate how and when the Covid infection or recovery graph would rise and fall

The IIT-K already has been doing such analysis and has made them public. It would do more, as and when, the state government asked it to do so.

Professor Abhay Karandikar, director of IIT-K, said, "This is a part of a national super model where along with leading experts, doctors, and IIT-K Prof Manindra Agrawal have been working on predicting the peak. The prediction of peak done district wise has shown remarkable fit with observed data and hence reliable estimates can be done. This will help plan the medical emergencies. However, this is just a model and we need to be prepared for the worst-case sce-

Official sources said that of the 159 deaths in April, 95 persons were above 60 years of age, while 46 persons were between 46-60. Of the total cases, 95 per cent (18.572) cases came from urban areas, while 834 cases were from rural areas,

Yogi Adityanath further said the state was now also getting oxygen from Jamnagar (Gujarat), Durgapur and Barjora (West Bengal) and Rourkela (Odisha) to augment supply.

Retired doctors, retired army personnel, experienced paramedics, and final year students of medical and paramedical courses should be engaged as there would be the need for trained human resource in hospitals in view of the fast-changing scenario, he said.

"It would be better if we have a manpower bank in the state so that we can deploy people as and when they are needed," he said.

UP Cong demands white paper on Covid Care Fund



LUCKNOW

THE Congress, on Sunday, asked the Uttar Pradesh government to release a white paper on the state's Covid Care Fund amid a massive surge in Corona virus

In a statement issued here, UP Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu said the Covid Care Fund was created in April 2020 through which people from different sections of society contributed money.

The MLA funds were suspended for a year, and 30 per cent salary of the ministers and legislators cut and deposited in the Covid Care Fund.

It was said that the money would be used to fight the pandemic. Lallu said no one knows where this fund is in the second wave of Covid. "Where is the fund being

spent now? The people in the state are facing a shortage of Oxygen, medicines, and basic facilities. In this scenario, where is the Covid fund being spent, nothing is known," Lallu said adding that the government should release a white paper on

The UP Congress chief also claimed that the money meant for being used to provide medical treatment to the people, was diverted.

"As a result, in the second wave of Covid, the government has left the people to die. Today, because of the laxity and insensitivity of the Yogi Adityanath government, every citizen is fighting the pandemic at their own level and in their own capacity," he said.

He also said the UP chief minister, in a written reply to the UP Legislative Assembly, had said that till July 2020, Rs 412 crore was deposited from various sources, of which Rs 252 crore was used to buy medical equipment and to help the migrant labourers.

"Where has the rest of the Rs 160 crore gone? This is not known. Any information about money being deposited in the Covid Care Fund has not been made public," he stated.

Police action against UP man for giving O2 cylinders to patients

THE Jaunpur police is initiating legal action against a person for allegedly helping provide free oxygen cylinders to patients who were unable to find beds at the district hospital.

The district medical department accused the youth of violating Covid-19 safety norms and has lodged a complaint with the police.

portedly helping the patients by ar-



ranging oxygen cylinders for them outside the district hospital.

(CMS) of the hospital in the complaint to the police said Vicky was providing oxygen to many people without a Covid-19 test, in an unsafe manner, without sanitization and other medical precautions. This could lead to the spread of infection from one person to another. In the police complaint, the CMS demanded action under the Epidemic Diseases Act.

The police in a statement said they were taking further legal action on the

The man identified as Vicky, was re-The chief medical superintendent basis of the complaint. CENTRE TO PROVIDE 56L VAX TO STATES, UTS IN NEXT 3 DAYS

New Delhi

WITH its aim to vaccinate maximum number of people to curb Covid-19 menace, the Centre has decided to provide more than 56 lakh vaccine doses to the States and Union Territories within the next three days.

"A total of 56,20,670 additional Covid vaccine doses will be provided to the states and the UTs in the next three days," Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) said on

Sunday. The decision was taken at a time when the cumulative number of Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in India has crossed 15.68 crore on Sunday with over 86,000 beneficiaries covered in the Phase-3 of the nation-

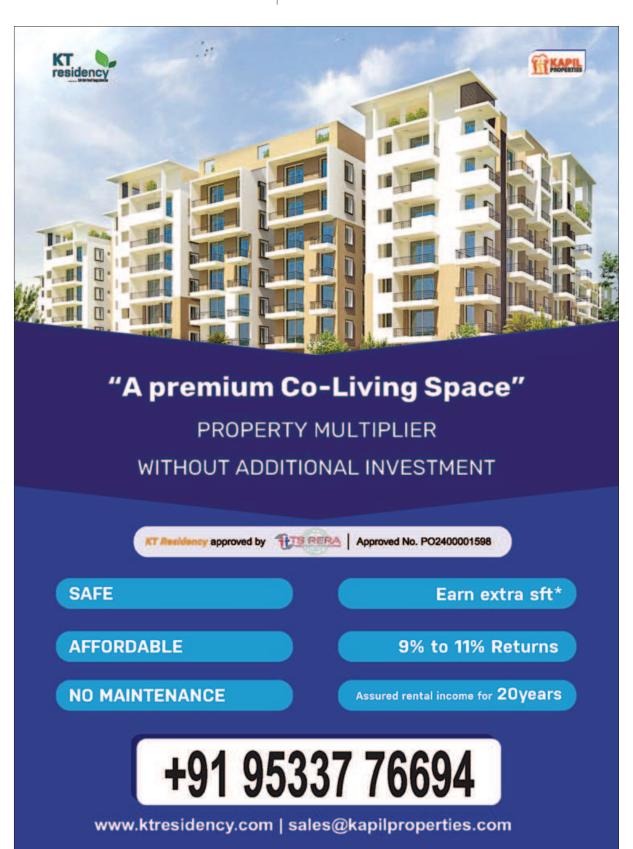




(as per data available at 8 a.m. on Sunday." More than 78 lakh Covid vaccine doses (78,60,779) are still available with the states and the UTs to be administered. A total of 86,023 beneficiaries of the age group of 18-44 years received their first dose of Covid vaccine across 11 states as the Liberalized and Accelerated Phase-3 Strategy of Covid-19 vaccination came into force on Saturday. These states are Chhattisgarh (987), Delhi (1,472), Gujarat (51,622), Jammu and Kashmir (201), Karnataka (649), Maharashtra (12,525), Odisha (97), Punjab (298), Rajasthan (1853), Tamil Nadu (527) and Uttar Pradesh (15,792).

Cumulatively, 15,68,16,031 vaccine doses have been administered through 22,93,911 sessions, as per the provisional report till 7 a.m. on Sunday, said Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Sunday said the third phase of coronavirus vaccination for those aged between 18 and 45 years, numbering around 1.1 crore, commenced at 200 centres in the state on Sunday.

He said free vaccination would be done at all government hospitals and vaccination centres. A total of 66 lakh doses of the vaccine were sought and the first batch has been received.



TMC wins but BJP makes big inroads into West Bengal

Test Bengal results proved BJP wrong. It is 'Khela West Bengal results proved DJT WIGHER HOLE (game is on) not 'Khela shesh' (game over). The West Bengal results should be seen from two different view points. One from the view point of TMC led by Mamata. It was arguably the toughest poll she had fought in her political career and succeeded in thwarting the challenge by the battle-hardened BJP election army led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah. This election has been a different one for the TMC since the party recorded stupendous victory while the captain lost by 1736 votes to BJP candidate Suvendu

From the BJP point of view, they have made tremendous inroads into West Bengal and from just three seats in last elections have emerged as the main opposition. The BJP has certainly succeeded in polarisation of votes. From the polling pattern prima facie, it appears that they have been able to influence Hindu voters in towns and cities. The worst performance was that of

the Congress party and the Left. The Congress has been at the receiving end once again not only in West Bengal but also in other States. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi campaigned in all the five States but still the party's performance was dismal though the team which was monitoring and managing the elections was handpicked by him. It failed to win even a single state

Assam elections were considered to be crucial for the Congress party and it pinned hopes on coming to power. It had even roped in a PR agency to manage the poll and battery of leaders including Rahul, and Priyanka campaigned but still could not do much.

There is nothing to be said about Nagarjuna Sagar by-election to Telangana Assembly because it was a foregone conclusion that Congress would lose the seat. The results of Tirupati Lok Sabha by-poll was on expected lines though the YSRCP could not get the majority of five lakhs which they had expected. TDP gave a good fight and retained its votes. While BJP doubled its votes from about 13,000 to around 26,000, Congress could poll more than 4,500 votes.

In Kerala, Tariq Anwar was roped in to manage the election, but despite anti-incumbency, the party failed to galvanize the people behind it. It is a personal setback to Rahul Gandhi who is an MP from Wayanad. The Con-

gress in Puducherry too lost its way. However, the election results of West Bengal have proved that the unhealthy trend of parties losing faith in their own cadre and depending on political strategists continues. This is rather unfortunate trend and could damage the democratic fabric of the country in future. The results could be disastrous. But then just as political parties ignored the warning of WHO on second wave of COVID-19, the political parties including BJP would turn a deaf ear to this caution. Because what matters is coming to power by hook or crook. God save Democ-

WTO VERSUS HUMANKIND?

THE WAY AHEAD

Jhunjhunwala

today-Covishield, developed by AstraZeneca and produced under its license by Serum Institute of India; and Covaxin, developed by Bharat Biotech. Serum Institute has to pay

N the main two

vaccines are

available to us

one-half of the sale price to AstraZeneca as royalty; or it has to pay Rs 75 as royalty if it sells Covishield to the Central Government at Rs 150. Serum Institute says that it is not economical for it to produce Covishield in the balance Rs 75. For this reason, they have offered to sell Covishield only at Rs 300 to the States and at a higher price to private buyers. In this way the States will be buying Covishield at Rs 300 and subsidizing the purchase by Center at Rs 150. The Center should act as father of the States. Instead, it is acting as their opponent. This is a minor problem, however.

Serum Institute is having to pay this huge amount of royalty because we have accepted Product Patents under the World Trade Organization (WTO). Product Patents stipulate that another company will not produce a patented product even by using an alternate process. Say AstraZeneca has patented a technique of heating the iron rod in order to flatten it. Product Patents stipulate that another company cannot flatten the iron rod by any other method such as cold hammering. The Product Patents was accepted by us as a part of the WTO deal in 1995. Before that time we had Process Patents which allowed anyone to produce the same product by an alternate process. The result of Product Patents is that our companies cannot manufacture Covishield by alternate processes. This is limiting the manufacture of vaccines in India and vaccine is not available to our people. Indeed, this problem applies to the Covaxin developed by Bharat Biotech also. We shall discuss this next. That be as it may, the entire world cannot manufacture the vaccines developed by certain companies and is suffering because of the

sell Covaxin to the Center at Rs 150 perhaps following the footprints of Serum voke the provision of "Compulsory Licensing" and allow other companies to manufacture the same product under situations of national emergency such as at present. The WTO permits the countries to determine the grounds for granting compulsory licenses and to determine what constitutes a national emergency. However, the Government has not invoked this provision. Perhaps the Government fears an international backlash from the Multinational Corporations and Western countries if this provision is invoked. In that case the availability of foreign vaccines will be reduced and we may fall from the frying pan into the fire. This is a matter of assessment and it is best to leave it to the judgment of the Govern-

The question of WTO itself remains. We were told in 1995 at the time of signing of the WTO Treaty that the loss to us from the royalties paid due to Product Patents would be more than made up from the benefits from free trade-agricultural goods in particular. It will be a win-win proposition for the Developing Countries. They will get technologies as well as export markets. Twenty five years later it is clear that the Multinational Corporations are charging prohibitive royalties such as 50 percent price of Covishield and the Developed Countries have not opened their markets for our agricultural exports. Thus WTO has become a loss-loss proposition. We are neither getting the technologies nor access to their markets.

A number of arguments are being given to maintain the Product Patents even in the present pandemic. It is argued, one, that the developing countries do not have the capacity to manufacture the vaccines even if the patents were cancelled. The manufacturers have certain technological details that are not disclosed in the patent applications hence opening the patents will not enable new entities to manufacture the vaccines. Two, that the developing countries cannot complete the supply chain. They do not have the raw materials and machines to make the vaccines. Indeed the Serum Institute has said that the United States is obstructing the supply of raw materials necessary for it to make the



Serum Institute is having to pay a huge amount of royalty because we have accepted Product Patents under the World Trade Organization (WTO). Product Patents stipulate that another company will not produce a patented product even by using an alternate process.

celling the patents, then what is the harm in cancelling them? The fourth argument also does not stand because new drugs such as penicillin were developed without Product Patents. The task is to assist the companies across the world, the "common man," so to say, to pitch into the manufacture of vaccines by opening the patents.

We have to make our strategy also in the light of the fact that the Covid virus

lamented in a TV Program that foreign Multinational Corporations developed the vaccines after millions of dollars in support from their Governments. Bharat Biotech got a paltry Rs 65 crores according the information available on the net. It has indeed been given Rs 1500 crores recently but only after it had developed the vaccine on its own.

Two, the Government must buy the patent from Bharat Biotech and open the process for the entire world so that various countries can make the vaccine and save themselves. This will hit hard at the market of the Multinational Corporations and "teach them a lesson."

Three, we must help Bharat Biotech to ramp up the production of Covaxin, cancel the Product Patents and, if necessary, come out of the WTO.

> (The author is formerly Professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)



The show must go on: The show comes home!

VINOD MIRANI

FTER a filmmaker makes a film, a distributor calls exhibition, Aand exploitation of that film happens. It was his domain to take the best out of a film assigned to him, at the box office. In the present situation, exhibition of films through cinema halls has been put out of the equation.

Lockdown or no lockdown, the show must go on. The show must go on, the adage goes back a couple of centuries when it was first used. Its origin is credited to many, including Shakespeare. The phrase, having been coined for theatre, went on to be associated with films and so many other aspects of life. However, in India and our film industry, the phrase came to be identified more with the late Raj Kapoor. He was dubbed the greatest Showman.

Interval is a part of a show but this once, since the spread of the pandemic of coronavirus, the show came to a total stop. Cinema halls as well as film and television production activity came to a standstill all over the world. This kind of total closure of the cinema business was not seen even during the World War II, which was the most difficult period for all countries, especially in Europe. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic made it happen.

After second

lockdown has

makers of big

an alternative

inevitable. The

model seems to

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like OTT, you get

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friends, yet pay

much less than

the cost of one

ticket -- per view,

say, for a price of

a popcorn and a

cola at a

multiplex.

family and

pay-per-view

be the viable

medium has

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films, opting for

When the pandemic seemed to be easing its grip, cinema halls were allowed to open conditionally. They could fill up only a certain percentage of the capacity and had to sanitise the hall after each show. Normally, a hall takes up about 30 minutes to clean up between shows and this sanitising business only added to that chore.

Cinema managements would have been relieved that, at least they were back in business. They may have been back in business but not normal business. Viewers were not willing to risk being closeted in a cinema hall yet with the coronavirus fear lingering. Also, even if the audience was willing to come, filmmakers were not willing to take the risk of releasing a film under such circumstances. A few irrelevant films lacking face value did open at cinemas hoping to cater to a cinemastarved audience but to no avail. Their collections were pathetic, making one think the cinemas were better off closed than screen such films.

As it turned out, the Over The TOP (OTT) streaming platforms successfully managed to fill the vacuum created by films in cinemas halls. Before the pandemic, a couple of major OTT players like Netflix and Amazon were already in the business in India. Many more followed thereafter.

Not only Indian content, OTT made it possible for people to watch content for all over the world besides making available to viewers the dubbed versions of other Indian languages content. OTT has become like a window to the world of entertainment. Feature

films made for big screen have started being premiered on these platforms. However, none of these films had any merit and would have found the going tough if released in cinemas.

So far, the makers of big-ticket films were reluctant to risk either a theatrical release in the prevailing situation nor give their films to OTT. These were high budget films, hence necessitating huge returns possible only with the cinema way.

It has been more than a year since the pandemic, and it continues to play havoc with people's lives all over the world. Some high investment films have been awaiting normalcy for release so that they could recoup crores of rupees stuck as dead investment with no immediate realisation in sight.

Just when things looked like normalising, the pandemic has struck again and with more deadly form and velocity. The cinema halls had started the process of partial and conditional resumption of business. Unfortunately, a second lockdown has come into effect. For makers of big films, opting for an alternative medium has become inevitable.

The pay-per-view model seems to be the viable alternative. Just like OTT, you get to watch the film at home with family and friends, yet pay much less than the cost of one ticket -- per view, say, for a price of a popcorn and a cola at a multiplex.

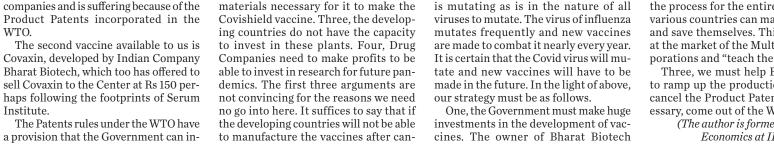
"Radhe" will release on Zeeplex on May 13, on the occasion of Eid. It will be available at a reasonable Rs 249 per view. That way, Salman Khan gets his favourite Eid slot, which his fans always look forward to. There can be no debate on the pricing when you compare it to cinema admission rates or, even otherwise. To Zee's advantage, this reasonable pricing will assure them of high volumes of hits. Time that cinema halls adopted the logic of reasonable pricing.

Zee had earlier released "Khaali Peeli" in this format and priced it at Rs 299, but the film lacked face value to fetch any kind of price for a view. It did not work.

The initial idea was to release "Radhe" simultaneously in cinemas along with Zeeplex. The major multiplex chains were not said to be in favour of this arrangement, wanting exclusive cinema release. Before they could be convinced or an understanding could be reached, the country is now undergoing another lockdown and the cinema halls have been asked to shut down again. So, the Radhe premiere will have to be exclusively on Zeeplex.

Jio management, in the company's last AGM, had promised to bring new films to your home the same day they opened at the cinema halls. That credit now goes to Zee. Considering it is a Salman Khan film, arriving on Eid is a plus, and to add to that the saving on the share of cinemas and the other costs incurred for a theatrical release, this should work well for Zee. The show will go on. IANS

(Vinod Mirani is a veteran film writer and box office analyst)



Asian Americans see generational split on confronting racism larly inclined and thought she was wasting her time

SUDHIN THANAWALA

THE fatal shootings of eight people — six of them ▲ women of Asian descent — at Georgia massage businesses in March propelled Claire Xu into action. Within days, she helped organize a rally condemning violence against Asian Americans that drew support from a broad group of activists, elected officials and community members. But her parents objected. "'We don't want you to do this," Xu, 31, recalled their telling her afterward. "You can write about stuff, but don't get your face out there." The shootings and other recent attacks on Asian Americans have exposed a generational divide in the community. Many young activists say their parents and other elders are saddened by the violence but question the value of protests or worry about their consequences. They've also found the older generations tend to identify more closely with their ethnic groups - Chinese or Vietnamese, for example - and appear reluctant to acknowledge racism. That divide makes it harder to forge a collective Asian American constituency that can wield political power and draw attention to the wave of assaults against people of Asian descent in the US since the coronavirus pandemic began, community leaders say. "In our original countries, where our ancestors came from, they wouldn't even imagine that someone from Bangladesh would be lumped in the same group as someone from Laos," said Angela Hsu, president of the Georgia Asian Pacific American Bar Association. But those differences obscure a shared experience of "feeling like we're constantly thought of as being foreign in our own country," said US Rep. Andy Kim, of New Jersey. Much of the recent violence against Asian Americans has targeted the elderly, and some seniors have attended rallies to condemn it. But Cora McDonnell, 79, said she did not want to speak out, though she is now scared to walk to the church blocks from her Seattle home. She emigrated to



the U.S. from the Philippines in 1985 and said her culture was "more respectful." "You talk maybe in your family, but not really publicly," she said. "You don't really blurt out things." Lani Wong, 73, said she understood that feeling, though she does not adhere to it. "Just don't stir the pot, don't get involved," said Wong, chairwoman of the National Association of Chinese Americans. "I think that was the mentality of the older generation." Some young Asian Americans said they were frustrated by family members' reactions to the shootings. E Lim said it was "infuriating and really sad" to hear her parents cast aspersions on the massage work done by some of the Georgia shooting victims. "It's almost like this desperation for denial so that they don't have to recognize that there is a world that hates them," said Lim, organizing and civic engagement director for Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Atlanta. A pastor in the Atlanta area, Tae Chin, said his Korean mother-in-law also questioned the victims' line of work while urging him not to focus on race. Four of the slain women were of Korean descent. "Just work hard. Just live. Just be a good person, and they'll see someday," Chin, 41, recalled her saying on a phone call after the March 16 attack. "I'm like, That's why we have this problem to begin with, because that's exactly what we do." Allison Wang's parents were simi-

protesting the shootings. "I think they believe that it's more important to focus on your career and family and don't really feel like we can make a difference," said Wang, who helped Xu put together the rally in downtown Atlanta. For Raymond Tran's family, the political history of one of their home countries played a role in opposing his involvement in any organizations. The attorney raised in Los Angeles said that when he was growing up, his parents told him about an uncle imprisoned and tortured by Vietnamese communists after joining a student group. Racist polices in the U.S. strictly limited immigrants from Asia until the 1960s, so many Asian families have been in the country for only a generation or two. It's not unusual for new immigrants to focus on providing for their families, avoiding attention in favor of assimilation. Asian immigrants face the added burden of the "model minority" stereotype that portrays them as industrious, law-abiding and uncomplaining, and ascribes their achievements to those traits, historians and advocates say. "It divides generations," said Maki Hsieh, CEO of the Asian Hall of Fame, a program that honors Asian leaders. "It divides Asians from each other, and ultimately it divides them from other groups." Xu said her parents worried about her safety, but she thinks their objections to her activism also stemmed in part from a desire to avoid trouble. They understood the need to speak out against anti-Asian violence but didn't want her to do it, she said. "I wholeheartedly believe if this is the way everybody thinks, then there won't be any progress," she said. The younger generation is also coming of age during a period of renewed racial awareness reflected in last year's Black Lives Matter protests that makes it impossible for Asians in the U.S. to "fly under the racial radar anymore," said Nitasha Tamar Sharma, director of the Asian American Studies program at Northwestern University. (AP)

Set up Covid care centres in all circles: CS Somesh Kumar

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

AS per the directions of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar held a tele-conference with Zonal Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners of GHMC in regard to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic from BRKR Bhavan on Sunday.

Chief Secretary directed Deputy Commissioners to start out-patient clinics centre at every Government Hospital, Urban Health Centre and Basthi Dawakhanas. He further directed that all symptomatic persons should be handed over home treatment kit and said that all the circles must have Covid care centres. "Constitute teams with Municipal Staff, ANM and two Asha



workers who will visit every household to identify people suffering from fever and other symptoms," he directed. Apart from handing over the home isolation kits with medicines the team will also follow up about the patients' health conditions.

He also instructed the GHMC officials to take up cleanliness drive in all the Government Hospitals, Urban Health Centres and Basthi Dawakhanas. "Illuminate the hospital premises and take up white washing to maintain hygienic conditions in the hos-

pitals," he added.
Secretary Health S.A.M.Rizvi,
Commissioner GHMC Lokesh
Kumar, Director of Medical Education Ramesh Reddy, Director
of Public Health G.Srinivas Rao
and other officials were also

present.

SCR cancels eight trains from May 1–31

HANS NEWS SERVICE SECUNDERABAD

DUE to poor occupancy, South Central Railway (SCR) have temporarily cancelled eight

trains from May 3 to May 31.

Including Train no 02735(Secunderabad – Yesvantapur), train no -02736 (Yesvantapur- Secunderabad), train no 07625(Kacheguda-Repalle), train no 07252 (Kacheguda- Guntur), train 07002 Secunderabad – Sainagar Shirdi), train no 07001 (Sainagar Shirdi- Secunderabad, train no 02204(Secunderabad – Visakhapatnam), train no 02203 (Visakhapat-

HYDERABAD

THE first Oxygen Express for Telangana, with five tankers loaded with 124.26 tonnes of liquid oxygen, arrived at Secunderabad Railway Station here on

The five empty tankers were sent from Secunderabad on April 28 and after getting filled with liquid oxygen, commenced their journey back to Secunderabad on Saturday.

Sunday from Angul in Odisha.

According to the South Central Railway (SCR), the liquid oxygen being transported in these tanks is a cryogenic cargo which has many limitations like maximum speed at which it can be carried, maximum acceleration and deceleration and loading restrictions like availability of liquid oxygen tankers, loading

ramps etc. The route mapping of the train along with green corridor is done taking in to consideration of all these factors including ensuring adequate clearance along the route in terms of curves, RoBs and FOBs,

Five tankers loaded with 124.26

tonnes of liquid oxygen arrive

Empty tankers were sent from Secunderabad on April 28

The Oxygen Express trains have been started by the Indian Railways to provide safe, secure, hassle-free and fast transportation of oxygen to the different parts of the country during these critical times.

Under this initiative, the road tankers (both empty as well as loaded) are transported by the railways through Ro-Ro (Roll on-Roll Off) service. The Oxygen Express trains are operated at the request of the State governments. While the States provide the tankers, the Railways under-

take to bring the oxygen supplies to the requisitioning state in fastest feasible mode.

Accordingly, SCR has been operating these trains to meet the needs of the states. The Zone has operated two empty Oxygen Express trains from Secunderabad, with five empty tankers each. The second one had left on Saturday.

SCR General Manager Gajanan Mallya has assured that the Railways will continue to provide utmost priority to the running of the Oxygen Express trains. Any request received on this front will be immediately processed so as to operate the trains at the earliest. He advised all officers and staff to maintain continuous monitoring of the movement of this train along the green corridor.

Property tax payers to get 5% discount till May 30 The State government extends the effer once again in

The State government extends the offer once again in view of problems being faced by the people due to Covid

HANS NEWS SERVICE HYDERABAD

THE State government on Sunday one more time extended the early bird offer for property tax payers in all municipalities and municipalities corporations of the State. With this the tax pay-

ers can pay the tax till May 30 by availing the discount of 5%

The principal secretary of Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) department Aravind Kumar issued orders to this effect and extended the date from April 30 to

May 30.

In his orders, he said that the State government had extended the orders by keeping in view of the problems faced by the people of the State. Under the scheme, the people can pay their tax dues by availing a discount of five per cent.

Youngsters delivering free food to Covid patients

MEGHNA NATH
JUBILEE HILLS

COMING to the rescue of Covid positive patients, who are finding it difficult to get food, a group of youngsters have come forward to provide free food for them. Under the name 'Free Kitchen' these youngsters are providing food at the doorsteps of those under home isolation.

Manya Mitra, who is voluntarily helping Covid patients, resident of Jubilee Hills said, "As many non-charitable organizations have extended their helping hand but also it is not sufficient, so I wanted to help those people who were in need of food. Along with my elder sister Manvi Mitra and six friends we have started providing free food under the name Free Kitchen."

In the third week of April, we have started this initiative, as for the first week only delivered food packets in and around Jubilee Hills. So to reach many people who are in need across the city, we have



put our details on social media platforms, so that more people would be able to reach out. Along with the request of food, we also received calls from people living in surrounding areas who wanted to help us with the deliveries.

"This kitchen is providing home cooked lunch and dinner. Keeping in the mind the health of Covid patients all the food is being cooked in less oil and salt, providing only vegetarian food. In a day, we are receiving nearly 30 phone calls. We are



delivering 100 to 150 food packets and our volunteers are putting the food parcels at the doorsteps of the patients. As from next week we are trying to use biodegradable boxes instead of using plastic boxes and bags for packing food. With the support of crowd-funding we are able to support those people in need. People who are in need can message us on our Instagram page @ Free Kitchen or can contact us on 75695 55698," said Manvi Mitra, interior designer.

TIRUPATI LS VERDICT

A big thumbs up for Jagan's welfare schemes: YSRCP

HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI

nam-Secunderabad).

THE Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection is an overwhelming approval by the voters of Chief minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government successful implementation of welfare schemes, said YSRCP Chittoor district In-charge and TTD chairman Y V Subba Reddy.

Speaking to the media here on Sunday, Subba Reddy reacting to the party retaining the Tirupati seat with 2.71 lakh vote majority, said the people rejected outright the opposition TDP and BJP propaganda against the YSRCP government.

"Within one year after assuming office, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was able to implement 90 per cent of the promises of the party manifesto," he said adding that YS-RCP welfare schemes and developmental initiatives laid the path for the party achieve a resounding victory in the byelection. Admitting that the victory margin is below the expectations of party getting three to four lakh majority, he said this



TTD chairman and YSRCP Chittoor In-charge Y V Subba Reddy, along with Panchayat Raj Minsiter Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister K Narayanaswamy, addresses media in Tirupati on Sunday

was due to fall in the voting percentage which came down to 64 per cent as against 70 per cent in 2019 mainly due to severity of Covid second wave.

Thanking party MPs, MLA, functionaries, leaders and activists who worked for the party in the election, he wanted them to work with renewed vigour for effective implementation of

Panabaka claims moral victory for TDP in bypoll

welfare schemes to ensure the benefits reach every eligible poor

Replying a question, he said people did not believe the opposition TDP's allegations against YSRCP government, adding tht the TDP received five per cent less votes than it polled in 2019 election indicating that the people were no more ready to believe TDP.

Panchayat raj minister Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy said party's win with huge margin in the byelection enhanced their responsibility and wanted the party activists to work with renewed vigour to serve people.

Deputy Chief Minister K Narayana Swamy was also present.

Lokesh thanks Minister for deferment of exams

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

TDP national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Sunday thanked minister for education Audimulapu Suresh for saving lakhs of students and their parents from coronavirus threat by postponing the examinations for the first and second year Intermediate students in the state.

Lokesh termed it as a bold decision on the part of the minister not to blindly follow the adamant stand of the Chief Minister with regard to the exams. It was indeed a victory for the virtual agitation and legal struggle waged by the students against the government's initial decision to hold the exams compulsorily.

Addressing a press conference at party state office in Mangalagiri, the TDP MLC said that a great threat to over 15 lakh students was averted with Sunday's postponement of exams. Had the government taken the decision in the first week of April itself, over 10,000 students would have been

protected from Covid infections. The practical exams conducted during the initial stages of Covid spread had led to infections among some students. When all other States took early decisions to postpone or cancel the examinations, the YSRCP government woke up from its slumber only after so much protest from the students and the general public.

Lokesh appealed to the government to take a conscious decision on the Class X exams which were scheduled to begin in a month's time. Any decision on going ahead with the exams should be taken only after a close review of the prevailing coronavirus situation at that time. Studies from IIT Kanpur said that the epidemic would peak during May 6 to 10. Already, the second wave highest single day infections rose to 20,000 in the state. Even for these patients, the government was not able to provide hospital beds, oxygen supply and also ambulances. Only in a single village in Mangalagiri Assembly constituency, over 36 villagers got infected.

Accuses ruling party of indulging large scale irregularities in the poll

 Dares the ruling party leaders to swear at Kanipakam temple that their victory is in accordance with the democratic principles

 Party leader and former Minister Amaranatha Reddy points out that despite widespread malpractices the YSRCP could not get the 5 lakh majority it claimed

> HANS NEWS SERVICE TIRUPATI

TDP candidate in Tirupati Lok Sabha byelection Panabaka Lakshmi claimed that the moral victory belongs to her party as the ruling party has indulged large scale irregularities in the polling in all the seven Assembly constituencies. They have polled a huge number of bogus votes with fake ID cards



which is detrimental to democracy. Saying that the real voters have voted for TDP only, she challenged the ruling party leaders to swear at Kanipakam temple that their victory is on lines of democratic principles. She thanked party president N Chandrababu Naidu, general

secretary N Lokesh other leaders and party workers for their hard work.

Echoing the same sentiment,

Amaranatha Reddy said TDP has achieved moral victory in Tirupati Lok Sabha by election and added that the result should serve as an eyeopener to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy. Speaking to media in Chittoor, Amaranatha Reddy said, "Though YSRCP ministers Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy, K Narayanaswamy and several ruling party legislators of the district have categorically declared that YSRCP candidate M Gurumoorthy will win with an historical majority of 5 lakh votes, but the party could get only 2.5 lakh majority despite the rampant malpractices resorted by the YSRCP during the election."

He said that panchayat raj minister P Ramachandra Reddy and his supporters have used every opportunity to lure voters with false promises and money power during the election campaign. "We are not disappointed with the bypoll result. It is significant that YSRCP's influence and popularities are fading which is reflected in the election result," he said. District TDP convenor P Nani and others were present

'Sitalkuchi firing one of the reasons BJP lost in Bengal' Team BJP did not reflect in villages where an odd BJP flag and poster was present

logans like "2 Mai, Didi Gayi" (May 2 Didi is losing) and "200 Paar" (we will cross 200 seats) reverberated in Bengal during the BJP's campaigning for the assembly elections. Now, on counting day, Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee has an-

swered them, according to News18 report.

On the face of it, the TMC had its backs to the wall this time given public resentment and anger against the party on the issues of cut-money, corruption and lawlessness and many senior leaders deserting her for the BJP. But the Trinamool managed to turn the sentiment around on the face of Banerjee, projecting her as the sole woman fighting the "big BJP men from Delhi", invoking Bengali pride, the insider-outsider card and rallying the women and Muslim voters in its favour. The BJP, which had the momentum in Bengal

since the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, failed to tap the anti-incumbency sentiment against Banerjee, given a sheer lack of organisation on the ground. As a result, the BJP which led in 121 assembly segments in Bengal in 2019, and thought the anti-incumbency push will take it beyond 147-mark, had dropped below 78 seats in a major blow to it.

There were two clear turning points in the election.

One was Banerjee's injury sustained in Nandigram on March 10 after which she began her campaign on a wheelchair and blamed the BJP for the trauma. Though the BJP made light of her injury as a "sympathy-gaining drama", the image seems to have worked on the ground especially amongst the women voters with Banerjee "the fighter Didi" being projected as the one who was under attack. Her iconic image of sitting



alone on a dharna in Kolkata for several hours after a one-day ban by the Election Commission further reinforced the perception that she was under attack from all sides and had been left alone.

The second major turning point was the Sitalkuchi firing incident on the day of the fourth phase of polling when four Muslim boys were killed in poll-related violence in firing by central security forces. This incident gave Banerjee a chance to rally the Muslim voter behind her and she went to Sitalkuchi to give the message that she was the sole saviour of the community. In doing so, the impact of the Left-Congress-ISF combine in Muslim-dominated districts like Malda, Murshidabad and Dinajpur was completely negated and the TMC for the first time has won a record number of seats in these districts.

In fact, an audio tape released by the BJP of a conversation between the CM and the TMC candidate in Sitalkuchi to "play politics over the bodies", as BJP described it, only worked in the favour of the Trinamool Congress as its message reached the Muslims that voting for the Third Front meant bringing the BJP into the state. Though the BJP made claims that it has committees on 85% of the booths in the state and had made rapid progress in building up its organisation in Bengal, the same did not reflect in the villages where an odd BJP flag and poster was present but there was a lack of local leaders. The TMC instead was a welloiled machine, specialising in the "last-mile delivery of the vote" when it mattered while the BJP did not have the boots on the ground to encash the disillusionment that many people felt with the Trinamool.

WINDOWS

2 army men **booked** for minor's rape

HATHRAS: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped by two army men in Hathras district when she was returning home after meeting her neighbour. The police have arrested one of the alleged accused Mukesh, who had come to the village on a leave. The other accused, Saurabh, is absconding. According to Superintendent of police (SP) Hathras, Vineet Jaiswal, Mukesh is posted in Jodhpur as a jawan. Saurabh, a new recruit, has not got his posting yet.



A TMC activist celebrates party's win in Kolkata on Sunday

Rakesh Tikait, 12 others booked

AMBALA CANTT: A case was registered by the Haryana Police against Bharatiya Kisan Union leader Rakesh Tikait and 12 others, who held a 'maha panchavat' in a village in the state, for allegedly violating prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPc, officials said on Sunday. Tikait and some other BKU leaders addressed the 'kisan mazdoor maha panchayat' in Dhurali village near Ambala Cantt on Saturday. In view of a massive surge in coronavirus cases, the district magistrate had imposed Section 144, which bars assembly of four or more persons.

Bengal voted for cruel lady: Supriyo

Himanta wins by a whopping over 1 lakh votes; humbly accept people's mandate: Rahul

KOLKATA/KOCHI/NEW DELHI

UNION Minister and BJP MP Babul Supriyo broke with tradition on Sunday evening as he refused to congratulate the ruling Trinamool Congress on an emphatic win in the 2021 Bengal Assembly election.

In a short but angry Facebook post Supriyo said the Bengali voters had made a "historic mistake" and lashed out at party chief Mamata Banerjee, whom he labelled a "cruel

"Neither will I congratulate Mamata Banerjee... nor do I wish to say I 'respect' the peonle's verdict... sincerely think people of Bengal made a historic mistake by not giving BJP a chance... by electing this corrupt, incapable, dishonest government and a cruel lady back to power," he ranted. Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Nirmala Sitharaman have wished Ms Banerjee on her win.

In his own fight, Supriyo - one of four MPs roped in by the BJP, in an unusual move, to contest in a state election - is trailing to the Trinamool's Aroop Biswas from Tollyganj. Biswas is up by over 50,000 votes as of 6.45 pm, according to the Election Commission

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut congratulates Mamata Banerjee on her impending win. Raut tweeted, "Congratulations to the Tigress of Bengal... O Didi... Didi O Didi ."

Didi O Didi of course, alludes to PM Narendra Modi's mocking of the CM at his rallies in the state -- 26 of them -- till the EC banned rallies over the Covid crisis. Mamata Banerjee had called herself the tigress of Bengal.

NCP president Sharad Pawar congratulated Mamata Banerjee.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya credited Mamata Banerjee for the TMC's astounding performance in Bengal elections, and said his party would introspect the poll results. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said that it's a disappointment for the party in Kerala, but it gave tough fight to the LDF. Tharoor hailed Mamata for her spectacular win and said the BJP has met its match in Bengal and lost.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said it humbly accepts the people's mandate and it will continue to fight for its values and ideals.

Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma won Jalukbari constituency for the 5th consecutive term by a margin of 1,01,911 votes.

With the CPM-led LDF set to return to power in Kerala, the party's general secretary Sitaram Yechury thanked the state's electorate for showing confidence in the party and vowed that the Left party will continue to fight the challenges faced by people.



Trinamool Congress activists celebrate their party'swin in South Dinajpur on Sunday

Rajasthan bypolls: Congress retains 2 seats, BJP one

JAIPUR: Cashing in on the emotional card, Rajasthan's ruling Congress won the bypolls to the Sujangarh and Sahada Assembly seats while the BJP retained Rajsamand. BJP's Nimisha Suthar won the by-election to Morva Hadaf (ST) Assembly constituency in Gujarat's Panchmahal district by defeating her nearest Congress rival by 45,649 votes, an official said. Senior BJP leader and former Union Minister Pon Radhakrishnan was trailing by a margin of 1,11,491 votes against his rival Vijay Vasanth of the Congress in the Kanyakumari Lok Sabha constituency. The BJP won the Belgaum Lok Sabha and Basavakalyan assembly constituencies in Karnataka, while the Congress was able to retain the Maski assembly seat in the April 17 bypolls. According to officials, in Belgaum Lok Sabha constituency Mangala Suresh Angadi won by a margin of 5,240 votes over her nearest

rival and Congress candidate Satish Jarkiholi by securing 4,40,327 votes. Mamata behind TMC's astounding show: BJP

'Metro Man' **Sreedharan loses**

KOCHI: Bharatiya Janata Party's candidate for Kerala's Palakkad Assembly seat, E Sreedharan, has lost to sitting MLA Shafi Parambil of Congress by nearly 7,403 votes. Sreedharan, popularly known as 'Metro Man,' joining the BJP was a much-celebrated event among the party lovers in and out of the state. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's statement that the Bharatiya Janata Party, which had won one seat in Kerala in the 2016 Assembly polls, would see its account getting closed this time, has come true with the Centre's ruling party failing to secure any victory despite fighting hard in three constituencies.

BJP office in Arambagh on fire

Shiv Sena congratulates Mamata, mocks PM

KOLKATA: Violence begins in West Bengal. The BJP's office in Arambagh has been set on fire by miscreants on

The BJP had said that it feared repercussions if it lost the elections. The TMC candidate from Arambagh is Sujata Mondal, whose husband is

Meanwwhile, Dr Kunal Sengupta, a leading orthopaedic surgeon in Kolkata said the atmosphere in the city is similar to what it was after Indira Gandhi announced that Dhaka had been liberated in 1971.

"It's unfortunate that we cannot celebrate the win, but I cannot put into words, how ecstatic we are!

DMK complains of malpractice

CHENNAI: The DMK, which seems set to come to power in Tamil Nadu requested the EC to replace the Returning Officer of the Viralimalai Assembly constituency for malpractice and count the votes as per law. In its complaint, the DMK said around 4,000 votes polled in favour of the party candidate Palaniappan were counted in favour of AIADMK candidate and Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, who was shown to be leading with about 3,000 votes. "If this malpractice is allowed, it would affect the exact result, which is apparently showing the victory of our DMK candidate," DMK's Organisation Secretary and Rajya Sabha member R.S.Bharathi said.

Prashant Kishor says 'quitting this space'

NEW DELHI: Ace election strategist Prashant Kishor, adding Bengal to his list of remarkable successes, dropped a bombshell as he announced that he was done and "quitting this space".

"I do not want to continue what I am doing. I have done enough. It is time for me to take a break and do something else in life. I want to guit this space," Kishor

On whether he would rejoin politics, he said: "I am a failed politician, I have to go back and see what I have to do." On a lighter note, he talked about going with his family to Assam and "doing tea-gardening", according to NDTV report.

Prashant Kishor's dramatic announcement came on a day he delivered on a dare back in December. "For all the hype AMPLIFIED by a section of supportive media, in reality BJP will struggle to CROSS DOUBLE DIGITS in #WestBengal PS: Please save this tweet and if BJP does any better I must quit this space!" he had tweeted on December 21.

Grinning with satisfaction, Kishore said while the results today seemed one-sided in favour of the Trinamool Congress, it was a tough fight. "We went through hell. The Election Commission was blatantly partial and made our campaign difficult,"

But he added that he was always confident the Trinamool would do very well, more than people were willing to give it. "Mr Modi's (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) popularity won't mean BJP will win all elections." the poll strategist added.

He went on to describe exactly why this election was more challenging than most. Unprecedented religious polarization was a big factor, he said, asserting that "the bogey of communalism" can only go so far, "There was large-scale polarisation across Bengal and the election commission, which must ensure it that doesn't happen. They sat mum and did nothing about it. In my six-seven years as an election strategist. I have never ever seen this scale of religious polarisation ever in any state. The entire campaign and the sheer magnitude of the 'Jai Shri Ram' campaign was unprecedented," Kishor said.

Medical, nursing grads set to join Covid duty

PM Narendra Modi reviewed various measures to augment human resources for effective management of the Covid-19 situation, discussing. among other ways, the possibility of incentivising medical and nursing college graduates for joining the pandemic duty. The final details are likely to be announced on Monday, they added. "Decisions may include delaying NEET and incentivizing MBBS passouts studying for it to join the Covid-19 duty. The decisions may also include utilising services of final-year MBBS and nursing students." a government source added. The medical personnel

preference in the government recruitment and financial incentives as well. the source said. The review meeting took place amid reports of healthcare personnel feeling overwhelmed in some parts of the country due to the surge in the Covid-19 cases.

Following multiple meetings held by Modi on Sunday to review the Covid-19 situation, a statement said the government has also explored the feasibility of conversion of existing nitrogen plants to produce oxygen, and various such potential industries where the existing nitrogen plants may be spared for production of oxygen were identi-



Family members of COVID-19 patients wait to fill their empty cylinders

medical oxygen outside an oxygen agency in New Delhi

Covid deaths of 3,689 ing over four lakh cases of corona infections, India on Sunday recorded 3,92,488 new Covid-19 cases and 3,689 fatalities, highest

India records highest

daily death toll due to infections, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare said. It is the 11th day in a row when India recorded more than 3 lakh cases while over 3,000 casualties

have been reported for the past five India's total tally of Covid-19 cases now stands at 1,95,57,457, the

highest since the pandemic started in 2020, with 33,49,644 active cases and 2,15,542 deaths so far. Accordhave been discharged in the last 24 hours after getting cured, taking the total recoveries to 1,59,92,271.

The Health Ministry said that a total of 15,68,16,031 people have been vaccinated so far in the country, including 18,26,219 people administered vaccines in the last 24 hours. Odisha and Haryana on Sunday announced fresh restrictions to check the spread of coronavirus in the states.

The Odisha government announced a 14-day lockdown in the state, starting May 5, while Haryana opted for a sharp weeklong lock-

Pundits smell chance for regional parties say in natl politics

ith the results of five assembly polls delivering a chastening blow to BJP's electoral juggernaut and virtually decimating its main rival Congress, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's massive victory over the formidable saffron machinery may help bring regional satraps to the fore of the national politics yet again, analysts believe.

Under flak from the opposition for its government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis, the BJP's big loss in West Bengal polls has denied the party a face-saver it might have hoped for to claim the popular endorsement for its policies and has lent further ballast to the view that it often falls short against a popular regional force. While the BJP will draw some satisfaction from its comfortable win in Assam, the overall mood in the party was sombre as it

appeared drawing a blank in Kerala and also fared poorly in Tamil Nadu where its senior ally AIADMK was set to lose power to the rival DMK but defied some exit poll predictions of its rout. The BJP-led NDA, however, trumped its rivals in Puducherry. BJP sources claimed that a meltdown of the Left-Congress alliance, consolidation of Muslim votes behind Banerjee-headed Trinamool Congress, and a fall in the polling percentage, especially in the last few phases as the Covid-19 cases surged, played a role in its defeat. The saffron party's West Bengal unit chief Dilip Ghosh, however, said that the leaders who came to BJP from Trinamool somehow did not fare well in the elections, while another senior party leader Kailash Vijayvargiya credited Banerjee for the TMC's astounding per-

Manindra Nath Thakur, an associate professor at the Centre for Political Studies of JNU, said the West Bengal



results may trigger a new realignment with Banerjee, whom he described as the strongest woman leader after Indira Gandhi, emerging as a key force. Noting that she does have a party structure outside Bengal, he said the second phase of coalition politics may emerge with regional satraps playing a strong role.

The Congress will have a role in states where it remains strong, he added. The regional forces used to have a significant presence in the national politics till 2014 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi steered BJP to its maiden majority in Lok Sabha polls diminishing the say of state satraps in power corridors of the national capital. Even in defeat, a BJP leader said, the party emerged as the only capable challenger to Banerjee. "From three seats (2016), we now have nearly 90 MLAs. Analysts will write whatever they have to but the BJP is now an obvious alternative to the TMC, which was not the case until

a few years back," he said. Thakur also noted that Benga is now "between the BJP and Mamata" with the Left and the Congress having been wiped out. "The BJP has gained ground in the state. With the kind of party structure and resources it has, it may create problems for her in the next five years," he said.

However, judged against its rhetoric of winning over 200 seats, such is the scale of the BJP's loss that it was reminiscent for some of its drubbing in the 2015 Bihar assembly polls where it was simply no match to the popular support the RJD-JD(U) alliance enjoyed despite its high-decibel campaign. According to the Election Commission's data, the gap between the TMC and the BJP vote share was almost 10 per cent. This meant a loss of nearly 3 per cent for the saffron party and a gain of about 5 per cent for the TMC since the 2019 Lok Sabha elec-



















Gold prices dip on concerns over Covid-19

DR HC UPADHYAY

A midst acrimonious debate over US President's revealing the home plan on his completion of 100 days in office, the global markets remained uncertain about the future growth, not that Biden administration has an eye on the pockets of its citizens by way of imposing higher taxes, but more for the looming fear of devastation likely to be caused by the new mutants of corona virus throughout the world.

Consequently, New York gold closed at \$1,769.10 (per Ounce), while silver closed at \$25.91 (per Ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$1,195(per Ounce) and \$2,842(per Ounce) respectively. Other economic parameters continued to remain moderate. Brent closed at \$66.76 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs 4,716 (per barrel). While Gold MCX stood at Rs 46,785 (per 10 grams), MCX Silver appreciated and closed at Rs 47,492 (per kg). Copper MCX closed at Rs 753.95 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 48782.36 and 14631.10 points. On the closing day, leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: \$: Rs 74.10, British Pound: Rs 102.37, Euro: Rs 89.06, Singapore \$: Rs 55.67, Swiss Franc: Rs 81.14, Australian \$: Rs 57.22, Saudi Riyal: Rs 19.76, New Zealand Dollar: Rs 53.07, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs 246.04, Omani Rial: Rs 192.47 and UAE Dirham: Rs 20.17, Japanese Yen: Rs 0.68 and Hong Kong Dollar: Rs 9.54.

In local markets, due to lower demand standard gold (24 carats) declined by Rs 1,110 and closed at Rs 47,770 (per 10 grams). Ornamental gold too, followed the suit and was quoted in the range of Rs 43,690 - $43{,}790\,\mathrm{on}$ the closing day. Silver (0.999) retained its higher position with a small appreciation of Rs 100 and closed at Rs74,100 (per kg).

Mkts ignore Covid wave amid better Q4

MARKET

KHABREIN

CHERUKURI KUTUMBA RAO

uoyed by better-than-expected Q4 earnings, positive global cues like US Federal Reserve's accommodative stance and short covering; the domestic markets ignored rising number of Covid cases and logged gains during the week ended.

The BSE Sensex rallied 903.91 points or 1.89 percent to 48,782.36, and the Nifty climbed 289.75 points or 2.02 percent to 14,631.10. Broader markets also performed impressively with the BSE mid-cap index gaining 1.9 percent and small-cap index rising

3.2 percent. Perturbed by the record rising number of Covid cases and weak rupee, FIIs sold over Rs 8,500 crore in April after buying in previous six consecutive months. However, markets remained stable on the back of more than Rs 9,900 crore buying from DIIs. Early part of coming week will see market response to the Assembly election results and results of RIL. With economic recovery sustaining, Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections hit a record ₹1.41 lakh crore in April. This is seventh successive month of the mop-up exceeding ₹llakh crore. More than economic activity closer monitoring against fake-billing, deep data analytics using data from multiple sources including GST, Incometax, Customs IT systems and effective tax administration have also contributed to the steady increase in tax

Earnings season will gain more pace in the coming week with as many 125 companies releasing their Q4 numbers. Companies to watch include Kotak Mahindra Bank, SBI Life Insurance Company, Adani Ports, Tata Steel, Hero MotoCorp, HDFC, Tata Consumer Products, Dabur India and Ultratech Cement. Market observers expect the volatility to continue given

US Fed stance, short covering, DIIs propel indices upwards

the rising Covid cases, uncertainties regarding vaccination, while stockspecific action will continue given the March quarter earnings season along with global cues.

Heard on the Street

What happens when stocks only go up. Losing your fear of bear markets can lead to complacency and new risks. Bear markets haven't gone extinct. They've evolved into teddy bears. That's what some investors seem

to believe - and who can blame them? The stock market used to take years, sometimes decades, to recover its prior peak after the start of a bear-market decline. After last year's 34 per cent meltdown, however, stocks regained record highs in only 126 trading days. Post this year's Union Budget, many market players estimated the probability of another crash in the ensuing 12 months at only five per cent.

"Sure, stocks only go up. They only go up-until they go down!" This isn't the firsttime, people have thought that bear markets had been rendered extinct. The best way not to be over-

whelmed by fear during a bear market is to retain a trace of it in bull markets, too.

Quote of the week

"We don't prognosticate macroeconomic factors, we're looking at our companies from a bottom-up perspective on their long-run prospects of returning." - Mellody Hobson

It's very difficult to predict when

the next recession or stock market crash will come, so many of the best investors don't even try. Instead, look for good companies with the strength to make it through the occasional challenging economic environment.

Earnings season will gain more

pace in the coming week with as

many 125 companies releasing

their Q4 numbers. Market

observers expect the volatility to

continue given the rising Covid

cases, uncertainties regarding

vaccination, while stock-specific

action will continue given the

March quarter earnings season

along with global cues

F&O/ Sector Watch

Settlement week witnessed brisk trading in the derivatives segment. Rollovers in Nifty futures declined to 66 per cent compared to last month 82 per cent and also well below the 3-month average of 79 per cent. However, in value terms it has increased at Rs 15,249 crore versus Rs 14,087 crore. On other

hand, market wide rollovers stood at 83 per cent compared to last month 93 per cent. In value terms it was Rs 1,35,039 crore which is higher than last month Rs 1,22,782 crore. Maximum Call Open Interest (OI) was seen at 15,000, 14,900 and 14,800 strikes, while Maximum Put OI was seen at 14,000, 14,500 and 14,600

strikes. Call writing was seen at 15,000, 14,800 and 14,900 strikes with Call unwinding at 14,100 and 13,900 strikes. Put writing was seen at 14,000, 13,900 and 14,200 strikes with Put unwinding at 14,900, 15,000 and 15,200 strikes. The Implied Volatility (IV) of Calls closed at 22.19 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 24.19 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 23.31 per cent and is expected to remain volatile. PCR OI for the week closed at 1.68. Fresh uptrend should be expected only if volatility index starts declining.

Stock futures looking good are Aurobindo Pharma, Cipla, Coal India, Granules, Jubilant Food, Sun TV. Sun Pharma and Zee Entertainment. Stock futures looking weak areAU Bank, Bajaj auto, L&T Info, Dabur, PVR, and Mindtree.

Stock picks

SH Kelkar and Company Limited now renamed as Keva is an fragrance and flavors manufacturing company. The company is engaged in offering fragrances in various categories, such as personal care, hair care, skincare and cosmetics, fabric care, household products and fine fragrances.

The future of the fragrances and flavours industry is secure, as it caters to end-user industries that will remain an indispensable part of global consumers' lives. Fragrances segment continued to dominate the revenue share of business with approximately 90 per cent share. Fragrances find application across wide spectrum of daily consumption items. The company's team of specialised perfumers' crafts innovative complex compounds and ingredients which are used across a wide range of the fragrance portfolio. Why we are recommending

- The entry barriers are high in this field and the new entrants have to make a huge effort to grow.
- The seamless relocation of the company operations from Barneveld, in the Netherlands, to Mahad, in Maharashtra (India), was concluded and led to a significant lowering of expenses. The Mahad facility began operating at full capacity by December 2019, within one year of commencing operations, which is exceptional for bulk chemical manufacturing.
- First sampling of an Ayurvedic product for a major MNC client already done and is a breakthrough for company. There is huge scope in the natural ingredients and immunity-boosters business after this contagion and company is exploring several opportunities here.
- Fragrance division went beyond FMCG products and made inroads into industrial applications.

Buy between Rs130-140 for medium term price target of Rs275. In the event of sharp correction in markets, keep stop loss at Rs115. Risk / Reward ratio is 1:8.

> (The author is a stock market expert. He is former vice chairman of AP Planning Board)

K Naresh Kumar

The interest rates have been ▲ on a south bound journey for the last couple of years and pandemic only compounded to the bottom. It's not an endemic to India, but most of the world has been on this path for the last two decades. The productivity gains and deflationary pressures have had a tremendous impact on the interest rates across the board, a phenomenon seems to remain, at least looking from the experience of the developed world.

This has put stress on the investors who were looking to eke out income from interest earning assets. The continued falling rates would favour the borrowers, but impact the lenders/savers, who make less returns out of their investments. It has altered the behaviour of some of the conservative investors and has led to overstep on the risk boundaries. Particularly, senior citizens and other conservative investors are forced to seek investment options that have a relatively higher risk profile than they're otherwise comfortable with,

for generating an additional return. The favourite among the conservative investors was and has been bank fixed deposits. This is evident from the enormous chunk of individual savings that these occupy. Of course, they come with a

Beware of alternative debt options

An investor with a moderate risk appetite and a medium to longterm horizon could take an exposure up to 10% in the portfolio



convenience of easy process of deposit/withdrawal, paperwork and trust of the bank with a fair amount of regulation and supervision. Despite the tax inefficiency especially with investors at higher tax slabs and lower real returns (inflation adjusted), they remain popular among most investors.

Possibly, the next best thing comes through the option of debt mutual funds, though, there are multiple variants serving various purposes (depending upon the timelines of the investors). The underlying asset among all these funds mostly being same, the structure, time horizon and investment mix calls for better understanding of the constituents.

We very well know that India is a capital starved nation, but with a high requirement of capital as the infrastructure is being developed. The government spend increased, but is insufficient relative to the demand, the gap was earlier funded by financial institutions and Non-Banking Financial insti-

tutions (NBFCs). The collapse of IL&FS and the amplified scrutiny of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in identifying the non-performing assets (NPA) has only constrained further infusion of the capital into these sectors. This re-evaluation of exposure to infrastructure proiects has aggravated further leading to imbalance in the capital inflows.

Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvIT) are designed to address this gap by allowing the infra developers to monetize their assets to raise capital. These are trusts. registered with the Securities Exchange Board of India (Sebi), hold the operational infrastructure assets with consistent cashflows. while the investors in these are allocated units through public or private placement. These are an intermediate between debt and equity, assist in deleveraging the balance sheet of the infra companies. The unitholders (investors) earn revenue through annual distribution of dividends and/or interests. Sebi has levied certain guidelines to bring transparency and uniformity in the way InvITs are operated. Listed InvITs are required to

maintain a maximum leverage ratio of 49 per cent and could be increased to 70 per cent subject to a post-listing track record of six continuous distributions to the unitholders. These instruments currently have been concentrated mostly in the space of roads, power and telecom sectors. The regulation demands that the portfolios should contain at least 80 per cent of their investment in operational assets and also ensure a minimum of 90 per cent of the free cashflows are distributed to the investors.

The minimum subscription amount for a publicly listed InvIT has been amended by Sebi from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 1 lakh making it suitable for retail participation also. However, these products are not a direct alternative to the debt options. Though all the current listed vehicles bear AAA rating and so solvency risk is limited, the risk of payment (cashflows) is not guaranteed. The other risk is the ability of the sponsor (issuer) to scale up the offering cost effectively and at an economical rate. To sum up, an investor with a moderate risk appetite and a medium to long-term horizon could take an exposure up

to 10 per cent in the portfolio. (The author is a co-founder of "Wealocity", a wealth management firm and could be reached at knk@wealocity.com)

Caution alert for investors as indicators in overbought zones

THOVITI BRAHMACHARY

The stock market was **** in the positive territory for the most of first four days of the last week. After the March derivatives series expiry, the NSE Nifty erased most of the weekly gains. It added 289.75 points or 2.02 per cent during the week.

The BSE Sensex was up by 1.9 per cent. Midcap-100 and Smallcap-100 advanced by three per cent and 3.8 per cent respectively. On the sectoral front, the Nifty Metal index was up mostly by nine per cent. Bank Nifty closed with a 3.3 per cent gain, and the other sectoral indices gained at an average of 2 to 2.5 per cent. The FMCG index declined by 0.3 per cent. The markets are entering a new decisive phase in the short term. A sharp upswing did not sustain the momentum. It retraced 50 per cent in just nine hours. It formed a big shooting star candle on a weekly chart. It entered into the upward channel, but failed to stay inside the channel. For the second consecutive week, the Nifty is below the weekly upward channel. As mentioned in the previous newsletters, support or resistance will not hold more than seven times in the very rarest of the case.

On Wednesday, it decisively closed above the 50 DMA, and lack of follow-through day, it again closed below it. The 20DMA worked as support on Friday. But, both 20 and 50DMAs are trending



and the 100DMA (14,459) are at are in the overbought condition a similar place now. The 14,469- in a shorter period of time frame 14,264-14,191 strikes are the immediate important support levels for Nifty in the short term. A close below this support zone means we got another confirmation to the bear market

The recent price swings, since February 16 giving many clues on the time and price confluences. The last week's upswing is the sharpest among three upswings in the counter-trend consolidation phase. The earlier swings are nine and eight sessions, but the current swing in just five sessions with 6.31 per cent rise. The length of prior swings is 6 per cent and 5.05 per cent. So, this sharp swing needs follow-through days to continue further. As there are no follow-through days, there is a downswing with an equally sharper one. The current downside move may take very little time of two to three days maximum to reach

the support zone. Interestingly, the downswings are almost equal time-wise and price. Two downswings with eight days of length, and one is nine

them declined an average of six per cent. This time and price movement evidence is showing the current swing is at the matured stage. It is time to be cau-

On a monthly chart, the Nifty formed a bearish hanging man and bearish engulfing pattern, it also formed the lower highs and lower lows. The adage of 'Sell in May and Go for a Holiday' may come to a surprising reality this year. History shows that there are several black Monday's and black Fridays in the month of May. As mentioned above, a break below the 14,191 means the market will test at least 13562 levels in the near term.

As the five state elections outcome, particularly West Bengal's result, has disappointed the ruling BJP, the market may negatively react. The epidemiologists and healthcare professionals suggest the lockdown to contain the Covid-19 second strain in the country. In such a case, the market may not repeat the March 2020 rally this time. Be watchful of event risks in the short term.

> (The author is a financial journalist and technical analyst. He can be reached at tbchary@gmail.com)

DERIVATIVES OUTLOOK

DASARI SREENIVASA RAO

B ased on the latest options data, the Call base for the weekly as well monthly expiry is highest at 16,000 Call strike, 1,000 points higher than previous week and it should be a critical resistance. Since mid-March, the Nifty remained largely in the range of 14300-14900, while breach of the range should trigger a fresh directional bias. However, on an immediate basis, analysts forecast the highest Put base of 14,000 may act as support. Further, the volatility in the market remained higher near 23 level and closed the week near 23 owing to the

short covering. After high volatility in the April

Modest consolidation amid volatility Nifty rollover to May series at 66.28% as against 81.67% in April series and 3-mth average of 79.06%

series, Nifty is expected to move towards some consolidation before fresh directional move. On the rollover front, the NSE Nifty commenced the new series, May derivatives, with almost nine million shares, marginally higher than the April futures and options (F&O) series. Nifty Series on Series rose by four per cent and Bank Nifty underperformed marginally as the banking index rose by two per cent. Nifty recorded a rollover of 66.28 per cent to May series as against 81.67 per cent in April series and three-month average of

79.06 per cent. Dhirender Singh Bisht, senior research analyst (derivatives) at

SMC Global Securities Ltd, said: "In current week expiry, the Call writers were more aggressive than Put writers and highest Call concentration is at the 15,000 strike. The highest Put concentration is placed at 14,000 strike"

The 16,000 strike has the highest Call OI followed by 15,500/ 15.000 /15.600 strikes, 16.000/ 15,500/15,600/strikes recorded significant build-up of Call OI. Coming to the Put side, the 14,000 strike continued to have the highest Put OI for a second week followed by 14,500 / 14,700/ 14,200 strikes witnessed reasonable addition of Put OI

"Nifty again touched the 15,000

F&O TRADING 3,88,661 37,034.52 9,43,016 71,279.02 2,09,12,330 19,92,910.83 17,321.81 17,98,710 1,39,467.83 3,822.03 21,143.84

mark in April series and showed some profit booking from there as uncertainty regarding the second wave of pandemic still persists. The April derivatives series closed at a slightly positive note where the advance-decline ratio of futures and options stocks was 2.06 for the full expiry. Metal and pharma showed good strength against the market in the April F&O series, and are expected to continue the same in May series,"

Index Futures

Stock Futures

Index Options

Stock Options

added Bisht.

The domestic stock market witnessed a strong recovery in the settlement week for the April derivatives series and moved towards 15,000 points, but closed the week just above the 14,600 strike. The NSE Nifty gained almost two per cent in the week, the banking index moved up almost three per cent. On the other hand, mid-caps and small-cap stocks found momentum and closed the month

near recent highs. For the week ended April 23, 2021, BSE Sensex closed at 48,782.36 points, a net recovery of 903.91 points or 1.88 per cent, as against 47,878.45 points. NSE Nifty too recouped by 289.75 points or 2.02 per cent and closed at 14,631.10 points from 14,341.35 points. Bisht forecasts: "From technical front, Nifty can be seen trading upwards once it breaches a psychological level and highest Call concentration at the 15,000 level as if the market is trading in a broad range of 15000-14500 levels. Beyond these levels, we can see a sharp movement and rise in volatility.

The high volatility suggests a sign of caution for investors. According to ICICI Direct.com, a fresh uptrend should be expected only if the volatility index starts subsiding. Broader markets witnessed a strong recovery in the settlement week and moved towards 15,000 before closing the

week just above the 14,600 strike. Continued buoyancy in metals and short covering move in the banking space led the recent market recovery, while the rest of the sectors remained largely subdued.

"The Implied Volatility of Calls closed at 22.19 per cent, while that for Put options closed at 24.19 per cent. The Nifty VIX for the week closed at 23.31 per cent and is expected to remain volatile. PCR of OI for the week closed at 1.68." remarked Bisht.In the F&O space, FIIs were primarily seen in the stock futures and index options segment as foreign investors bought Rs472-crore index futures, Rs5.309-crore stock futures and Rs4,104- crore index options.

Bank Niftv

The NSE's banking index Bank Nifty closed at 32,781.80 points, a net gain of 1,059.50 points or 3.33 per cent from 31,722.30 points.

New Delhi

JOS Buttler announced his return to form with belligerent maiden T20 hundred as Rajasthan Royals made a mincemeat of an outof-sorts SunRisers Hyderabad, winning Sunday's IPL encounter by a whopping 55-run margin.

Opening the innings, Buttler smashed a breathtaking 124 off 64 balls while Sanju Samson was effective in his 48 off 33 deliveries which powered Rajasthan to a commanding 220 for three.

Even a change in captaincy couldn't bring in luck for SRH as they could manage only 165 for eight in their 20 overs. Chris Morris (3/29) and Mustafizur Rahman (3/20) did the bulk of the work with the ball while Kartik Tyagi (1/32) Rahul Twetia (1/45) picked a wicket apiece.

With the win, the Royals moved up to fifth spot while SRH continued to stay at the bottom, having won only one match all season.

Looking to register their second win of the season, SRH raced to 57 for no loss in the first six overs. However, Bangladesh pacer Rahman struck right after the first strategic time out, getting rid of Manish Pandey (31). The dangerous Jonny Bairstow (30) and Vijay Shankar (8) soon followed.

With the pressure mounting, skipper Kane Williamson (20) went for the big shot only to be caught at deep midwicket by Morris off Tyagi as wickets tumbled at regular intervals. Mohammad Nabi (17 off 5) injected some hope in the SRH camp, as he smashed Tewatia for two sixes in the 14th over. However, the Afghan was back in the dug out after a quick cameo. With 91 needed in the last five overs the lower and middle order struggled. In the end the, top heavy SRH did not have enough fire-power to pull off the mammoth chase.

Earlier, put in to bat, Buttler and Samson stitched a 150-run partnership for the second wicket after the Royals lost opener Yashasvi

IPL POINTS TABLE

	Team	Played	Won	Lost	NetRR	Pts
1	CSK	7	5	2	+1.263	10
2	DC	7	5	2	+0.466	10
3	RCB	7	5	2	-0.171	10
4	MI	7	4	3	+0.062	8
5	RR	7	3	4	-0.190	6
6	PBKS	7	3	4	<i>-0.264</i>	6
7	KKR	7	2	5	-0.494	4
8	SRH	7	1	6	-0.623	2

Buttler's sublime cooks SRH's goose

Opener hits maiden IPL ton (124 off 64 balls) in RR's 55-run win

Jaiswal (12) cheaply. While the Englishman hit the ball 11 fours apart from eight maximums, Samson also had four fours and two sixes to his credit. For SRH, Rashid Khan (1/24), Vijay Shankar (1/42) and Sandeep Sharma (1/50) picked a wicket each.

Put into bat, the Royals were off to a sedate start as they managed just five runs of the first two overs. Williamson, searching for wickets early on in the innings, introduced spin in third over by bringing in star bowler Rashid.

his class and

trapped the youngster

pacer Khaleel Ahmed.

leg before. RR skipper Sam-

son, who was dropped on 23

by Manish Pandey in the 10th

over, announced his arrival

with a six over mid-wicket off

At the other end, Buttler,

who looked in sublime

touch, also hit Bhuvnesh-

war Kumar for two bound-

aries in the sixth over as

the Royals amassed 42

runs for the loss of one

wicket in the Powerplay.

The duo continued to hit

boundaries at regular in-

tervals at the small Feroz

Shah Kotla ground, col-

lecting 18 runs, which

included two sixes, off

all-rounder

mad Nabi 1-0-21-0.

Jaiswal smashed three fours, before the Afghan showed

Shankar in the seventh over.

Having successfully navigated Rashid's four overs, Buttler and Samson upped the ante in



runs, Williamson turned to Mohammad Nabi, who is playing his

second game of the season but Buttler hammered the off-spinner for two sixes and as many fours. Vijay Shankar managed to get rid of Samson in the 17th over with young

Riyan Parag (15 not

out) walking in. (PTI)

SCOPEROAPD

SCOREDOARD				
Rajasthan Royals				
Jos Buttler b S Sharma124				
Y Jaiswal Ibw b Rashid Khan12				
S Samson c A Samad b V Shankar48				
Riyan Parag not out15				
David Miller not out7				
Extras: (LB-5, W-8, NB-1)14				
Total: (For 3 wkts in 20 overs)220				
Fall of Wickets: 17-1, 167-2, 209-3.				
Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 4-0-37-0, Sandeep				
Sharma 4-0-50-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-24-1, Khaleel				
Ahmed 4-0-41-0, Vijay Shankar 3-0-42-1, Moham-				

Sunrisers Hyderabad

Manish Pandey b Mustafizur	31
J Bairstow c A Rawat b R Tewatia	30
K Williamson c C Morris b K Tyagi	20
V Shankar c Miller b C Morris	8
K Jadhav b C Morris	19
M Nabi c A Rawat b Mustafizur	17
A Samad c A Rawat b C Morris	10
Rashid Khan c C Morris b Mustafizur	0
Bhuvneshwar Kumar not out	
Sandeep Sharma not out	8
Extras: (LB-1, W-7)	8
Total (For 8 wkts in 20 overs)	165
Fall of Wickets: 57-1, 70-2, 85-3, 105-4, 127-5,	142-6,
142-7, 143-8	
Bowling: Kartik Tyagi 4-0-32-1, Mustafizur Ra	hman
4-0-20-3, Chetan Sakariya 4-0-38-0, Chris Mo	rris 4-

Star-studded RCB stand in way of

KKR revival

Star-studded Royal Challengers Bangalore would look to get their mojo back when they face struggling Kolkata Knight Riders who need a complete overhaul for their IPL revival here on Monday.

AHMEDABAD

 $From \, leading \, the \, table \, with \, four \,$ wins on the trot, the Virat Kohliled team has slipped to third spot at the halfway stage after suffering two defeats from their last three matches. In fact, RCB would have lost three in a row if pacer Mo-

hammed Siraj had not defended 14 runs in the final over against Delhi Capitals' explosive duo of Rishabh Pant and Shimron Hetmyer.

The onus would be on their famed batting lineup of Kohli, AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell to start firing once again and put pressure on the KKR batsmen. Talented opener Devdutt Padikkal would also be keen to get back among runs as he has not clicked after his unbeaten 101 against Rajasthan Royals. Having started the season with much promise under Eoin Morgan, KKR so far have failed to inspire, suffering five defeats in seven matches.

AHMEDABAD

IPL franchise Punjab Kings skipper K L Rahul has been diagnosed with acute appendicitis and has flown to Mumbai for surgery and further treatment, which will keep him out of action for at least a week. Mayank Agarwal will lead the side in Rahul's absence, starting with Sunday's match against Delhi Capitals here.

"K L Rahul complained of severe abdomen pain last night and after not responding to medication, he was taken to emergency room for further tests which revealed that he was diagnosed with acute appendicitis," the team said in a statement.

"It will be resolved surgically and for safety measures, he has been transferred to the hospital for the same," it added. Rahul is expected to operated on Sunday night at the Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai. The team expects him to return to action within a week or 10 days.

"Post his surgery, his recovery will be in a bubble so

Kolkata Knight Riders

Match

starts at

KKR: Eoin Morgan (c), Dinesh Karthik, Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana, Tim Seifert, Rinku Singh, Andre Russell, Sunil Narine, Kuldeep Yadav, Shivam Mavi, Lockie Ferguson, Pat Cummins, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Sandeep Warrier, Prasidh Krishna, Rahul Tripathi, Varun Chakravarthy, Shakib Al Hasan, Sheldon Jackson, Vaibhav Arora, Harbhajan Singh, Karun Nair, Ben Cutting, Venkatesh Iyer and

Royal Challengers Bangalore

RCB: Virat Kohli (C), AB de Villiers (W), Devdutt Padikkal, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Pavan Deshpande, Shahbaz Ahmed, MS Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Daniel Sams, Har-

shal Patel, Glenn Maxwell, Sachin Baby, Rajat Patidar, Mohammed Azharuddeen, Kyle Jamieson, Dan Christian, Suyash Prabhudessai, K S Bharat and Finn Allen.

7.30pm They are at the sixth spot in the eightteam table, staring at early elimination for a third season in a row. The biggest letdown for KKR this season has been their top-order batting as the top three Shubman Gill, Nitish Rana, Rahul Tripathi have failed to give the team a decent start.

Supremely-talented Gill is struggling in the T20 scheme of things and has failed to convert his starts at the top, while the likes of Nitish Rana and Rahul Tripathi have been patchy.

Head coach Brendon McCullum had questioned their batsmen's "intent" after they posted a belowpar 154/6 to go down to Delhi Capitals by seven wickets in their last match. At the same stage, under Dinesh Karthik in IPL 2020 in UAE, the team had fared a shade better with four wins and three defeats, before he relinquished the captaincy to let English World Cup-winning skipper Morgan lead the side.

Given the current scenario, skipper Morgan needs to take some tough calls with regards to his top-order, something he has stuck to since match number one against Sunrisers Hyderabad this season. It's a pity that KKR are yet to give an opportunity to new signing Karun Nair who has a strike rate of 155.49 and has two centuries as a T20 opener.

They also have uncapped talented batsman Venkatesh Iyer. The bowling on the other hand has impressed, especially the spin duo of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakravarthy. Their eight overs against the likes of Kohli, De Villiers and Maxwell would be key as they look to avenge their first leg defeat. (PTI)

Rahul hospitalised with appendicitis, Agarwal to lead Punjab in his absence

that he remains in a protected environment (amid the COVID-19 pandemic)," said a BCCI source.

Rahul's absence is a big blow to Punjab Kings, who are trying to get their campaign back on track. The skipper has led from the front, scoring 331 runs at an average of 66.20. His friend and Karnataka teammate Agarwal will lead the side at least for the next three games.

Agarwal had missed the last game against RCB due to an injury he suffered in the previous match against Kolkata Knight Riders. He has now regained full fitness. Being an Indian player and an integral part of the playing eleven, the management chose Agarwal to lead the side while Rahul is recovering. (PTI)

Madrid Open: World No.2 Osaka shocked

KAROLINA Muchova added yet another stunning win over a top player to her collection with a 6-4. 3-6. 6-1 upset of world No. 2. Naomi Osaka in the second round of the Madrid Open on Sunday.

The rising Czech captured her third win over a top-5 player this season, and her 10th top-5 win in her career overall, with her onehour and 49-minute victory over reigning Australian Open champion Osaka. Fresh off her top-20 debut in

the WTA singles rankings on Monday, Muchova continued to impress in her Madrid tournament debut, as she plays only her second event since her breakthrough semi-final run at the Australian Open earlier this year, according to wtatennis.com.

Muchova struggled with an abdominal injury after her Melbourne exploits, which included a win over world No.1 Ashleigh Barty. But the Czech looked in fine form against Osaka, as she survived a second-set comeback by the No. 2 seed. Muchova had 29 winners, two more than Osaka. and converted half of her eight break points on the day.

Both players displayed power-

aka faltered early, double faulting down break point to cede a 2-1 lead to Muchova. Osaka could not recover that break, as Muchova punched away a volley in the next game to save the only break point she faced in the set. Muchova eased to the one-set lead, ending the opening frame with another unreturned serve.

Muchova took control early in the second set as well, breaking for another 2-1 lead with continued aggression. However, Osaka was up to the task, increasing the intensity with her stellar forehand and earning her first break of the day with that wing to level the set at 3-3.

Osaka grabbed the momentum and dominated behind that shot. knocking off five games in a row to sweep through the rest of the set and tie up the match at one set apiece. While the players had roughly equivalent success behind their first serve in each set, Muchova's first-service percentage dropped from 73 in the opener to 52 in the second set.

In the decider, though, Muchova got back on track. At 1-0, the Czech fired a passing winner to set up break point, then used a deep return to earn an early

> break. Muchova was untroubled the rest of the way, zipping home from there to notch her 10th matchwin of the season and claim her spot in the Madrid round of 16. (IANS)



Substitutes put Inter on brink of **Serie A title** ROME

A Europa League final in his first season. An almost-certain Serie A trophy in his second

Just like at Juventus and Chelsea, Antonio Conte is leaving his mark at Inter Milan. The Nerazzurri won at last-placed Crotone 2-0 on Saturday to give themselves a chance to clinch the Serie A before the weekend ends. Inter moved 13 points clear of city rival AC Milan with four games to play.

If third-placed Atalanta doesn't win at Sassuolo on Sunday, Inter will seal its first league title since 2010. What's more, Inter is poised to end a nine-year stranglehold on the Serie A title by Juventus — with Conte himself having started the Bianconeri's run.

"This is satisfying and the players deserve congratulations," Conte said before joining his already-celebrating team to sing and dance in the changing room. It was quite a different scene in the home team's changing room, as Crotone was relegated. \

"I made the most difficult choice by coming to Inter," Conte added, referring to the club's long dry spell.

"I love a challenge and came here to challenge myself." Conte also excels at challenging his players.

Players like talented Denmark midfielder Christian Eriksen, who was largely an enigma during his first year with Inter after transferring from Tottenham midway through last season.

Eriksen, who has developed into one of the keys of Inter's unbeaten run during the second half of this campaign, scored the opening goal midway through the second half on a play that began with a backheel flick from fellow substitute Alexis Sanchez. (AP)



Happier with my two wickets than the 87-run knock: Pollard

NEW DELHI

MUMBAI Indians (MI) batsman Kieron Pollard said that the unbeaten 87 he scored against archrivals Chennai Super Kings (CSK) "has to be somewhere near the top" among the scores of matchwinning knocks he has played in his more than decade-long stint in the Indian Premier League (IPL).

But, despite the stroke-filled knock that included eight sixes and six boundaries, the West Indian was "more impressed with his bowling" which fetched him two wickets for 12 runs in two overs.

The allrounder dismissed South African Faf du Plessis on 50 and then got rid of Suresh Raina for

two, as CSK made 218 for 4 in the allotted 20 overs. But thanks to Pollard's pyrotechnics, MI reached the imposing target off the last ball of the innings.

"All I want to do is make my father and my family proud," said an emotional Pollard after the match on Saturday.

"The last couple of months have been very difficult for me losing a close person, a dear person to my heart who introduced me to cricket. He was here a couple of years ago in the IPL as well. He got the opportunity to see us win in 2019 and he passed away. All I want to do is to continue to make him proud. Make my family proud,"

said Pollard

'Corona wave ruined plans to train Indian athletes for Olympics'

New Delhi

THE second wave of Coronavirus in India has ruined plans to prepare top athletes for the Tokyo Olympic Games, says Adille Sumariwalla president of Athletics Federation of India (AFI).

However, Sumariwalla points out that the top athletes gave a good account of themselves during the Federation Cup Athletics Championships in March.

"It raised hopes of a good season ahead, but AFI's road map for the Tokyo Olympics got disrupted due to a surge in pandemic in India. Foreign exposure tours for top athletes didn't go as planned due to travel restrictions put in place by several European nations for Indians and it made things more challenging to send the athletes abroad for training," Sumariwalla said in the latest AFI newsletter.

Ten individual athletes, including javelin thrower Neeraj



Chopra and Shivpal Singh, have achieved quota places for the Tokyo Olympics. The national mixed 4x400m relay team, by virtue of being finalist at the 2019 Doha World Championships, has also qualified for the Tokyo Olympics.

Last week, the national relay team was unable to go to Poland, via the Netherlands, to compete in the World Relays and it was a big setback for AFI to prepare athletes for the Olympics. World Relays competition was

a qualification event for the Olympics. The AFI was hopeful of the women's 4x100m relay team earning a berth for the Olympics.

"In these challenging times when summer heat is soaring in Patiala and European countries having 15-day quarantine rules in place for the Indians, it is tough to find a right place to train. With Olympics around the corner undergoing quarantine for 15 days would completely spoil the show," Sumariwalla said.

Despite setbacks, Sumariwalla is hopeful of a solution. "The AFI is working to find the best place to train in Europe ahead of the Olympics," he said. The Olympic Games are scheduled to be held in July-August. (IANS)

Former national selector Rungta dies of Covid-19

New Delhi

FORMER BCCI selector and Rajasthan captain Kishan Rungta died of COVID-19 at a hospital in Jaipur.He was 88.

The veteran administrator tested positive for the virus last week and died on Saturday. "Former Raiasthan first class cricketer and ex-national selector Kis han Rungta has died of COVID-19," a BCCI source confirmed to PTI.

Rungta served as a national selector from Central Zone in 1998. He played 59 first class games between 1953 to 1970. scoring 2717 runs. His late elder brother Purushottam was a BCCI treasurer in the 1970s. Purushottam's son Kishore held the same position in the early 2000s.

The Rungta family dominated Raiasthan cricket for nearly five decades before Lalit Modi beat them in the elections and wrested control in mid 2000s. (PTI)

Hindustan Football Club chief DK Bose passes away

New Delhi

DILIP Kumar Bose, chairman of the Hindustan Football Club. passed away at a hospital in Delhi on Saturday evening. He was in his early 70s. Bose, whose team has played the I-League second division several times and won the Delhi Soccer Association (DSA) Senior Division League several times, was admitted to the Indian Spinal Injury Centre at Vasant Kunj on April 29. Bose was also a member of the executive committee of Foot-

FD president Shaji Prabhakaran said, "The departure of DK da is a personal loss." (IANS)

ball Delhi (FD) for several years.

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