

Second wave sweeps state’s rural belt

50 deaths in 10 days in Patiala villages | Case fatality rate 2.86 against 1.73 in urban areas

KARAM PRAKASH

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PATIALA, MAY 11

The virus is fast spreading its tentacles across the countryside with rising number of Covid-19 deaths being reported in the rural areas.

In the past 10 days, 50 persons have died of Covid-19 in villages across Patiala district. The count may be higher as many deaths go unreported due to lack of testing, say health officials.

Suggesting a high case fatality rate (CFR) in the rural areas, Dr Sumeet Singh, district epidemiologist, said rural deaths were contributing around 34 per cent to the total count, while the rural case count was only 20 per cent.

The CFR in rural areas stood at 2.86, compared to 1.73 in the urban areas. As per the Health Department, 3,708 persons tested positive in the rural areas of whom 106 succumbed to the virus between April 1 and May 11.

It is learnt that people in villages do not readily go for testing and treatment, until they reach a critical stage. Further, health facilities in the countryside are said to be scant.



Health officials cremate a Covid patient at Thuhi village in Patiala on Tuesday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

RELUCTANT TO GO FOR TESTING

- People in villages seldom go for testing and treatment, until they reach a critical stage. Further, health facilities rural areas are scant
- Rural deaths contribute 34% to the total count, while the rural case count is 20% in the district
- Between April 1 and May 11, 3,708 tested positive in rural areas. Of these, 106 died

WILL INCREASE SAMPLING

“We will soon increase testing in villages. Besides, we have already issued warnings to practitioners there for causing undue delay in sending Covid patients to appropriate facilities.

Dr Satinder Singh, PATIALA CIVIL SURGEON

A health official said: “Villagers do not go for testing until the situation becomes critical. Only a few undergo testing. As a result, many deaths go unreported. A majority of villagers is

reluctant to visit health centres or hospitals despite having symptoms.”

Patiala Civil Surgeon Dr Satinder Singh said: “We will soon increase testing in villages. Our mobile teams

will hold testing camps at villages. Besides, we have already issued warnings to the practitioners there for causing undue delay in sending Covid patients to appropriate facilities.”

46 dead, 1,627 +ve in Muktsar district

ARCHIT WATTS

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MUKTSAR, MAY 11

In this month so far, 102 persons, including 46 villagers, have died of Covid-19 in the district.

Official data reveals that nearly 47 per cent Covid patients, too, were detected in the rural areas. In the past 11 days, a total of 3,463 persons have tested positive in the district, which included 1,627 from the villages.

Notably, 2,161 patients have recovered so far in the district in the corresponding period.

Health experts said village residents, too, should strictly follow the Covid guidelines. “It is observed that usually people in villages are moving without masks. The latest trend is worrisome. Both the Covid positivity and death rates are increasing at a fast pace in the villages,” they said.

A senior health department official said they had already

COVID METER		
Cases		8,668
Critical		324
Active		75,800
Deaths		217
WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS		
DISTRICT	CASES	DEATHS
Ludhiana	1,386	30
SAS Nagar	1,020	9
Fazilka	702	12
Bathinda	682	27
Patiala	638	17

appealed to village panchayats and residents to strictly follow the Covid guidelines.

Dr Ranju Singla, Chief Medical Officer, Muktsar, said, “The major reason behind the deaths is delay in Covid test and treatment. We are repeatedly requesting those having any symptoms to undergo test. Besides, those who came in contact with a Covid positive patient should also get tested.”



A cop keeps watch at Nangal Kalan village in Mansa. TRIBUNE PHOTO

Mansa village sees 50 cases, sealed by cops

SUKHMEET BHASIN

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

MANSA, MAY 11

Panic is palpable amongst residents of Nangal Kalan village in Mansa district with more than 50 villagers testing positive for Covid-19 and a large number of people developing symptoms such as fever, breathlessness and cough.

The police administration has swung into action and sealed the village. Entry of outsiders has been banned and the police along with health teams are conducting door-to-door testing at the village. A close watch is being kept on the infected patients.

The district administration announced the village a containment zone after a large number of residents tested positive. The panchayat met today at the village dispensary. Sarpanch Paramjit Singh said: “We are making announcements in the village and motivating residents to get tested. The villagers are also being implored to get vaccinated.”

Health Department employee Chanandeep Singh said: “Twelve villages are attached to Nangal Kalan dispensary and so far, 125 persons have tested positive. Of these, 50 are from Nangal Kalan village alone

LOCALS IMPOLED TO GET VACCINATED

“We are making announcements in the village and motivating residents to get tested. The villagers are also being implored to get vaccinated.

Paramjit Singh, NANGAL KALAN SARPANCH

while others are from nearby villagers. Around 30 people are getting tested and vaccinated at this dispensary daily.”

Over the past few days, a large number of infections and mortalities are being reported from villages in southern districts of the state, including Bathinda and Mansa.

Doctors say patients from villages are found to be suffering from lifestyle comorbidities, including obesity and diabetes, deteriorating their condition when they contract the virus.

The rural population is also not enthusiastic about getting vaccinated. Even health teams visiting the rural areas for vaccination are facing resistance from villagers and is a cause for concern as this has also led to a high number of cases in the region over the past one week.

End procurement 18 days early, state urges Centre

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

The Punjab Government has urged the Centre to curtail the procurement process by 18 days. The purchase of wheat in the state will now end on May 13, instead of May 31.

This rescheduling is being requested in the wake of the rising Covid-19 cases in the state. A letter sent today by the Secretary, Food and Supplies, to the Secretary, Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, said: “...as the number of Covid positive

Cites surge in Covid cases

cases is showing an increasing trend in the state, there is a need to consolidate the procurement operations...”

The state had set up additional 1,600 purchase centres this year in the wake of the second wave. To date, 129.35 lakh metric tonnes of wheat has been procured, against the target of 130 LMT. — TNS

Farmers defy norms, rally today

ROPAR, MAY 11

Defying the restrictions imposed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, local farm leaders have decided to organise a second rally demanding repeal of the farm laws at Abi-ana Nangal village in the Narpur Bedi area on Wednesday.

Gurnaib Singh Jetewal, one of the organisers, said the rally was being organised to mark ‘Sirhind Fateh Divas’ in honour of Sikh warrior Banda Singh Bahadur who conquered Sirhind on May 12, 1710, giving right of land to farmers.

WILL KEEP IT LOW KEY

“We are in touch with the organisers, who have promised to hold a symbolic event with a small gathering.

Akhil Chaudhary, ROPAR SSP

The organisers said key farm leaders, including Rakesh Tikait, Balbir Singh Rajewal and Gurnam Singh Charuni would address the gathering of 5,000 people drawn from Ropar, Nawanshahr and

adjoining Himachal Pradesh.

On May 1, the Ropar Kirti Kisan Mocha had organised a ‘Mazdoor Kisan Ekta’ conference at Chahar Mazara village in the district and the police had registered cases against dozens of people for violating the lockdown orders.

Jetewal said the rally was being organised without any permission from the administration, adding they were not worried about police action.

He said farmers had been asked to ferry people in large numbers from villages to the venue. — TNS

Bathinda sees 27 deaths in a day, most hospital beds occupied

BATHINDA, MAY 11

Bathinda district witnessed 179 Covid deaths and around 8,000 cases in the first 11 days of this month.

The high death rate has worried city residents. Bathinda witnessed the highest single-day spike of Covid deaths as 27 fatalities and nearly 700 new cases were reported on Tuesday and now, the active cases stand at 6,714 in the district.

This means that an average 15 to 16 persons are losing their lives daily in the district due to Covid. The number of positive cases has also gone up significantly this month. In April, 8,942 Covid cases were reported whereas in just 11 days of this month, the district has reported 8,079 cases.

The condition is worrisome as 96 per cent of level-3 beds in the district are occupied. Punjab Medical Education and Research



4 TEST POSITIVE AT CANCER INSTITUTE

- Two staffers and a patient at the Advanced Cancer Institute (ACI), Bathinda, are among four persons who have tested positive
- Experts had already cautioned that starting the Covid care facility in ACI would expose patients and staff members to virus
- Defending the move, Medical Education and Research Minister OP Soni said the Covid facility wouldn't impact cancer patients

Minister OP Soni said the positivity rate stood at 23.48 per cent of the total collected samples in Bathinda. Therefore, the situation demanded increasing the level-2 and level-3 beds for the treatment of Covid patients.

“Despite our efforts, we have

only been able to arrange 70-75 level-2 beds in newly the constructed AIIMS, which will be made available soon,” he said.

DC B Srinivasan held a review meeting with officials and took stock of sampling and vaccination drive in the district. — TNS

Cancer treatment won't be hit: Medical varsity

FARIDKOT, MAY 11

Under attack for converting Advanced Cancer Institute (ACI), Bathinda, into a Covid care centre, Baba Farid University of Health Sciences (BFUHS) has claimed the hospital was providing all health-care facilities to cancer patients, besides rendering services to Covid patients. Cancer Institute is a constitute health centre of the university.

“ACI continues to provide services to cancer patients as earlier. As many as 315 new patients came to the OPD in January this year, 432 in February, 478 in March and 408 in April. At least 30 cancer patients visited the hospital between May 1 and May 8,” said Dr Raj Bahadur, Vice Chancellor, BFUHS.

He said 1,839 old patients came to the OPD in January,

No dip in patients' number, says VC

2,213 in February, 2,239 in March and 2,231 in April. Over 400 patients from May 1 to May 8 have visited the institute. In these hours of crisis, the doctors are giving their best available services to cancer patients as well as Covid patients. They should not be discouraged with any criticism, said the VC.

There were 6,450 active cases in Bathinda district alone as daily positivity rate stands at 23.4 per cent. The situation demands further increase in the level-2 and level-3 beds. Despite our best efforts, we only have been able to arrange 70-75 level-2 beds in newly constructed AIIMS, Bathinda, which will be available soon, said the VC. — TNS



Covid patients being cremated at the Durgiana cremation ground in Amritsar. VISHAL KUMAR

Crematoria overwhelmed, kin told to speed up last rites

GS PAUL

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, MAY 11

With Covid casualties on the rise, crematoriums in Amritsar have run out of space.

The caretakers of two main crematoriums — one under Durgiana Temple Managing committee and the other near Gurdwara Shaheedan Sahib — have asked the kin of the deceased to conclude the last rites ‘before time’ to pave the way for others in the queue.

In April, the district witnessed 283 Covid deaths. With 17 more deaths reported to date, the toll has increased to 1,139. Ironically, the residents were reluctant to cremate the deceased on electric crematorium or the LPG furnaces. At the Durgiana crematorium, the electric furnace had been lying for the past four decades but seldom used. The LPG furnace, established a few years ago at a cost of Rs 25 lakh, too, found a few takers.

Durgiana committee president Ramesh Sharma said they were forced to build

ASH STORAGE FULL

“Normally, relatives collect the remains after ‘chautha’. Now, we are urging them to do so in advance to make space for others. Our ash storage, too, is full.

Ramesh Sharma, DURGIANA COMMITTEE HEAD

makeshift pyre pedestals at whatever place they could spare on the premises.

“We have been receiving around 45-47 bodies daily on an average, including 10-12 of Covid patients. To deal with the situation, we have made additional 12 pyre plinths. Still, all the 70 pedestals would be occupied till the kin of the deceased collect the mortal remains. Normally, they collect those on the fourth day after the ‘chautha’, as per the tradition. Now, we have been urging them to do the same in advance to vacate the space for those waiting in the queue for the last rites. Similarly, our ash

storage, too, was full to its capacity as the families seldom collect the ashes for final immersion in holy waters on time,” he said.

Using an adjoining plot “temporarily” to store wood for cremations led to a tiff between the committee and the PUDA, the custodian of the land. “We have again urged the PUDA authorities to charge a reasonable price for the purpose,” he said.

The situation was also edgy at another crematorium near Gurdwara Sheheed Baba Deep Singh. Manager Krishan Gopal said almost all 47 pyre platforms remained booked.

“We have been receiving around 30 bodies daily, including 7-8 of Covid patients. We have told the families to collect the remains on the second day positively and spare the space for the next cremation. We have made 50 additional ash storage boxes. The families can store the ashes in an urn and take those back after ‘chautha’ for immersion,” he added.

BRIEFLY

Journalist dies of infection
Ferozepur: Veteran journalist Rattan Lal (49), working in the border region, has died of Covid-19. He was undergoing treatment at Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital at Faridkot. Lal was associated with the electronic media for several years. He also remained treasurer of the local Press Club. Rattan is survived by his wife and two sons. oc

113 units of blood collected
Abohar: With blood banks running low on stock and increasing Covid cases in Sriganagar, the management of Gurdwara Baba Deep Singh organised a blood donation camp at a short notice. Gurdwara president Harpreet Singh Bhatia said 113 units of blood was collected by a team of Purohit Blood Bank. oc

MANAV MANDER

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, MAY 11

Facing an acute shortage of ‘Fateh kits’, the health department has now decided to give just one kit per family, but extra medicines will be given as per need and the patients’ medical condition.

The kit consists of 18 items, including pulse oximeter, digital thermometer, steamer, face masks, sanitiser, gargle solution and essential medicines such as cough syrup, multi-vitamin, vitamin-C tablets, Vit-D pouches, etc.

Amid shortage, the department was already collecting oximeters back from the recovered patients to distribute among the new ones.

A patient in Ludhiana said he got the ‘Fateh’ kit but it did not have an oximeter and



NOT A WISE MOVE

“Giving one kit to the entire family is of no use. All positive members will be sharing the same equipment. The viral load on the equipment will increase.

Dr Manoj Sobti, MEMBER, MEDICAL COUNCIL

thermometer. “It contained medicines and a manual. I bought oximeter for Rs 1,500 from the market,” he said.

Dr Manoj Sobti, member, Punjab Medical Council,

said giving one kit to the entire family was of no use. “All positive members in the family will be sharing the same equipment. The viral load on the equipment will increase if it is shared by so many people. Taking back oximeters from the recovered patients is also not a wise decision,” he said.

“If possible, fresh equipment and kits should be provided to the patients as Covid is a communicable disease,” he said.

Dr Rajesh Bhaskar, Covid nodal officer, said: “We asked the recovered patients to return the oximeters but we hardly got any and now we have placed a fresh order for the oximeters.”

Despite repeated attempts, Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu could not be contacted for comment.

71 of 80 ventilators sent by Centre ‘faulty’

Rest run for two hours before breaking down abruptly at Faridkot hospital

BALWANT GARG
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDKOT, MAY 11
Seventy-one of the 80 ventilators Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital (GGSMDCH) received from the PM Cares Fund and the ventilator manufacturer AgVa Healthcare have turned out to be non-functional due to various technical snags.

The hospital already had 39 ventilators of which two were dysfunctional. The situation is alarming as at present over 310 Covid patients are admitted to the hospital.

Anaesthetists and intensive care doctors said they didn't trust the ventilators sent by the Centre as those functioned for just one or two hours before abruptly running out of order.

The main function of a ventilator is to provide oxygen at varying levels as the oxygen requirement of every patient is different. Doctors complain



Received under PM Cares, the dysfunctional ventilators are gathering dust at Guru Gobind Singh Medical College and Hospital in Faridkot.

QUALITY SIGNIFICANTLY INFERIOR, SAYS BFUHS VC

- Doctors complain the pressure in ventilators sent by the Centre drops within half an hour of being put to use
- Dr Raj Bahadur, Vice-Chancellor, Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, says the quality of the machines is significantly inferior
- “The functional machines, too, are constantly hit by snags, so we cannot use these for patients until we have a repair mechanism in place,” he adds
- The Punjab Chief Secretary has approved the hiring of engineers and technicians for the repair work. “They are expected to reach Faridkot in 24 hours,” a source said

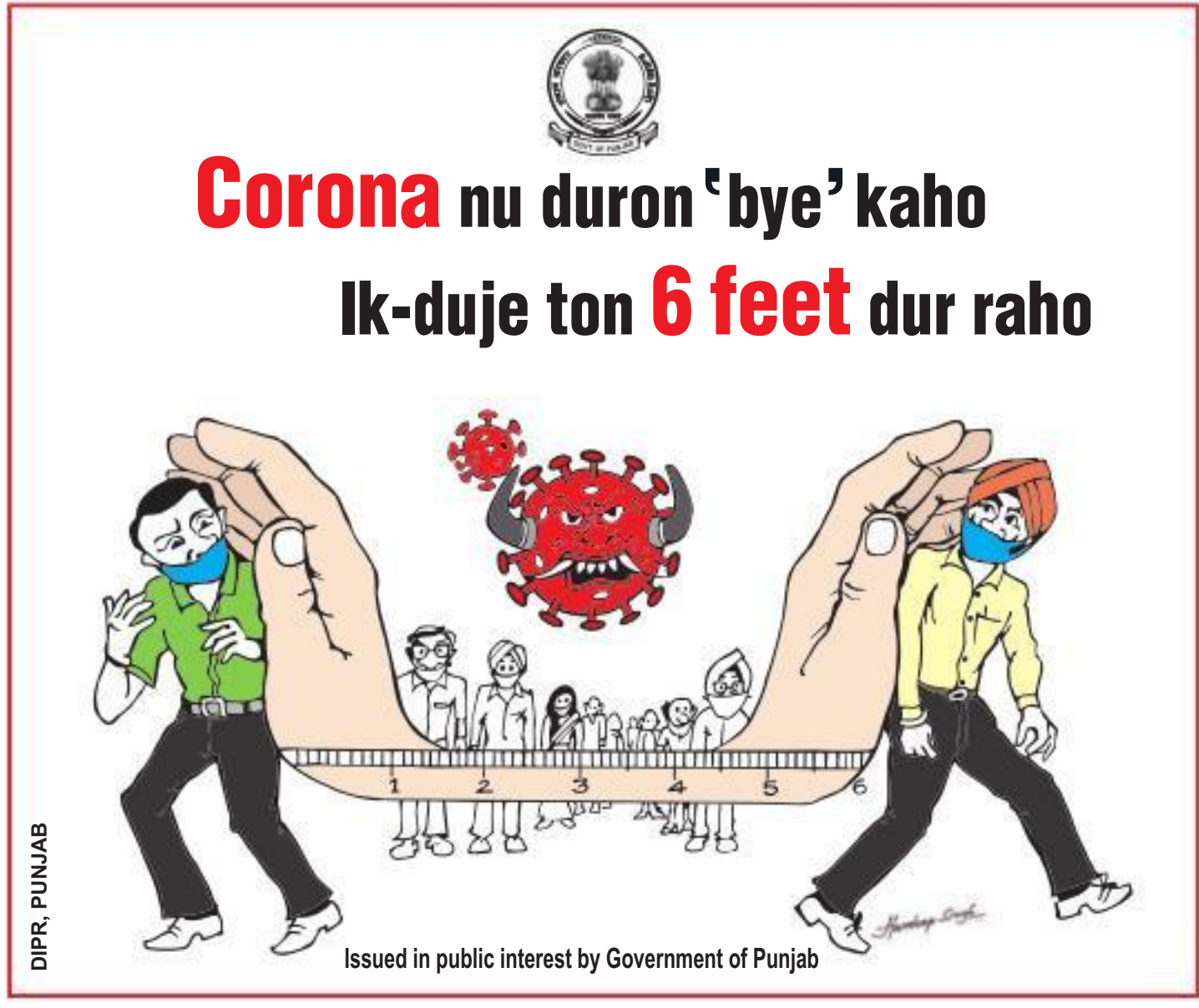
circumstances,” a doctor said.

Dr Raj Bahadur, Vice-Chancellor, Baba Farid University of Health Sciences, of which

GGSMDCH is a constituent college, said: “We have raised these issues with the government. We have even conveyed that the quality of the ventilators provided under the PM Cares Fund is significantly inferior. Besides, the functional machines, too, are constantly hit by snags, so we cannot use these for patients until we have a repair mechanism in place.”

The Punjab Chief Secretary has approved the hiring of engineers and technicians for the repair of these ventilators. “They are expected to reach Faridkot in the next 24 hours,” a source said.

“We want a long-term comprehensive maintenance contract with the agency, which has provided these ventilators,” Dr Bahadur said, adding that despite all these odds, doctors and the paramedical staff at the hospital are trying their best to take care of the patients.



Day after being fired, 1,400 NHM employees rejoin duty

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11
A day after the state government terminated services of around 1,400 striking contractual health employees, most of them rejoined their duties.

Around 3,000 employees working under the National Health Mission (NHM) remained on strike for the past one week as they were demanding regularisation of services. Those who have been terminated include ANMs, nurses, data entry operators, Ayurvedic medical officers, community health officers, multipurpose health workers, etc.

The state's health department officials confirmed that after the termination orders and the government's decision to recruit volunteer staff, the employees rejoined their duties on Tuesday morning.

Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) condemned the dismissal of the striking employees, saying CM Capt Amarinder Singh and Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu adopted a dictatorial attitude

AAP: MOVE TO SACK STAFF DICTATORIAL

- AAP MLA Sarvjit Kaur Manuke said the dismissal of the striking NHM employees was a dictatorial move
- She said the CM had in the last Assembly polls promised that if the Congress came to power, all employees in government agencies on contract would be regularised
- “But today, when the NHM employees are demanding regularisation and equal pay for equal work, the government has adopted a dictatorial approach,” she added

by suppressing their rights.

In a statement today, AAP MLA and Deputy Leader of Opposition Sarvjit Kaur Manuke said the employees working in government departments, boards, corporations and other institutions had the right to protest and strike for their demands. She said the NHM

employees had gone on strike to stress the government to fulfil their demands.

Manuke said the CM had in the last Assembly elections promised that if the Congress came to power, all employees working in government agencies on contract would be regularised. “But today, when the NHM employees are demanding regularisation and equal pay for equal work, the government has adopted a dictatorial approach,” she added.

Manuke said the NHM employees had been at the forefront of the Covid pandemic since last year and these employees were still performing their duties.

The AAP leader further said Sidhu had always threatened the NHM employees instead of solving their problems and fulfilling their demands. “It would have been better if the Health Minister and the CM had talked to these employees and agreed to their demands to end the strike and use their services in the treatment of Covid victims,” Manuke said.

8,760 more birds culled, 4,110 eggs destroyed in Kila Raipur

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, MAY 11
The Animal Husbandry Department today culled 8,760 additional birds at a poultry farm in Kila Raipur.

The administration had ordered the culling of birds after samples taken from Suba Singh poultry farm tested positive for bird flu.



Dr Paramdeep Singh Walia, Deputy Director, Animal Husbandry Department, Ludhiana, said besides culling of birds, 4,110 eggs were



Officials of the Animal Husbandry Department destroy eggs at a poultry farm in Kila Raipur.

destroyed. A rapid response team of the department had earlier culled 31,600 poultry birds at the poultry farm.

In all, 75,000 birds were present at the farm. The National Institute of High-Security Animal Diseases, Bhopal, had confirmed the presence of avian influenza (H5N8 virus) in the samples taken from the poultry farm. The area within 1 km radius of the poultry farm was declared an infected zone, while the 10 km area around it was designated as a surveillance zone.



Punjab Government

led by

Chief Minister

Capt. Amarinder Singh

pays reverence

to the legendary Sikh General


Baba Banda Singh Bahadur

on



311th Anniversary

of Sirhind Fateh Diwas

which symbolizes the historic conquest of Sirhind that ended Mughal tyranny in Punjab thus avenging the martyrdom of younger sahibzadas and the mother of Dasmesh Pita Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.



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	Total	Available	Total	Available	Total	Available
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Private Hospitals	6317	1332	1280	155	986	167
Total (Govt.+ Pvt.)	10212	3100	1863	191	1375	200

Figures as on 11.05.2021 5.00 pm

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I, Rohit Gour s/o Surendra
Kumar Gour r/o Sri Sai Clinic, Old Cinema Road, Khanna - 141401, have declared that I have changed my minor son's name from Krishna Gour to Avyaan Gour. (CL21013156)

I, Rohit Gour s/o Surendra
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Promises to Dalits ‘unfulfilled’, Cong MLAs get into a huddle

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Close on the heels of some ministers and party MLAs holding meetings to exert pressure on the Chief Minister to fulfil the poll promises, Congress Dalit and OBC MLAs, including two Dalit ministers, today met to discuss the inordinate delay in the implementation of promises by their own government.

The development gains importance in the wake of recent announcements by BJP and SAD to give adequate representation to Dalits and OBCs in political hierarchy, including the post of Deputy CM.

Trying to steer clear of the platform being used by party leaders to vent their ire against the Chief Minister over the delay in giving justice to the families of victims of police firing at Kotkapura and Behbal Kalan, the Dalit leaders who met at the house of

Likely to meet Capt over implementation of schemes



Aruna Chaudhary



Charanjit Channi

minister Charanjit Singh Channi made it clear that the meeting had nothing to do with the leadership issue and was confined to discuss the way forward in addressing the long-pending issues.

The issues include implementation of Cabinet decision on 30 per cent reservation for Dalit and weaker sections in political appointments, at least six ministers of the total allowed strength of 18 in the Council of Ministers,

representation for Dalit officers in higher government posts, implementation of 85th amendment to extend benefit of reservation to SC/weaker sections in matters of promotion with consequential seniority, abolition of group D posts, DC rates for safai karamcharis, besides others.

Ministers Charanjit Channi and Aruna Chaudhary, besides 11 MLAs who were present in the meeting and others who joined

over the phone, decided to seek time from the Chief Minister to discuss the urgent matter. The leaders are also likely to seek time from party president Sonia Gandhi over the issues.

It was pointed out that despite raising the issues during Vidhan Sabha sessions, these had not been addressed.

MLA Raj Kumar Verka, who was present in the meeting, said Channi informed the members about the letter on the issues he had written to the Chief Minister and party high command earlier this month. Aruna Chaudhary is learnt to have said the meeting should be restricted to only Dalit issues.

Others MLAs present in the meeting included Sangat Singh Gilzian, Balwinder Singh Laddi, Dr Harjot Kanwal, Santokh Singh Bhalaipur, Joginder Pal, Balwinder Dhaliwal, besides others.

Leadership aware of party men's concerns: Jakhar

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) chief Sunil Jakhar today said the party leadership was aware of the concern of party leaders over punishment to the perpetrators of sacrilege and subsequent police firing incidents and that the state government was duty bound to serve justice.

Breaking his silence on party MLAs regrouping against the Chief Minister over the delay in justice to the families of police firing victims, Jakhar said everyone in Punjab was concerned on the issue. “I, as PPCC president, am duty bound to fulfil the commitment. But I want to assure everyone justice will be done.” He said the party high command was aware of the issue and that he was in touch with state leaders. On ministers and MLAs venting their anger on the state government, he said party issues should be resolved within the party.

Amritsar MLA Dr Raj Kumar Verka, too, said the



JUSTICE WILL BE DONE

“As the PPCC president, I am duty bound to fulfil the commitment. But I want to assure everyone that justice will be done.”

Sunil Jakhar, PPCC CHIEF

issue was already in the notice of the party high command.

Party president Sonia Gandhi is learnt to have talked to the state leadership on the issue after yesterday's CWC meeting.

Meanwhile, senior Congress leader and former PPCC vice-president MM Singh Cheema has urged Gandhi to depute a senior party functionary as a special observer for Punjab to resolve the matter.

Man held for offering bribe to tax official

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau today nabbed a person for offering Rs 50,000 to Additional Commissioner State Tax (ACST) in lieu of exempting GST on tobacco products.

Chief Director-cum-DGP, Vigilance Bureau, BK Uppal said Varun Mahajan of Jalandhar city was arrested on the complaint of ACST (GST), Jalandhar, Dipender Singh Garcha. The complainant approached the VB and alleged accused Varun Mahajan, an agent, was offering him Rs 50,000 to release his consignment of tobacco products without paying GST which was received through the Railways at the Jalandhar station.

After verifying information, the Vigilance laid a reverse trap and Mahajan was arrested on the spot while offering a bribe of Rs 50,000 to the complainant in the presence of two official witnesses.

A case under the Prevention of Corruption Act has been registered against the accused at the VB police station and further investigation is under progress. — TNS

2 toll plaza staffers attempt suicide

SANGRUR, MAY 11

Two employees of the Kalajhar toll plaza here yesterday attempted suicide in front of the Bhawanigarh SDM's office over not getting salaries for the past few months.

A group of employees, under the banner of Toll plaza Workers Union, had gathered in front of the SDM's office. After failing to get any reply on salaries, employees Darshan Singh Laadi and Devinder Pal Singh doused themselves with petrol before the police intervened. They claimed they had not got any help despite repeated meetings with the employer and administration.

“We have been without salaries for several months,

Unpaid for months, douse themselves with petrol

but the authorities are not helping us. Our families have been without proper food and clothing. We have been borrowing money from relatives to make both ends meet. The government must listen to our problems and address these,” said an employee.

SDM Dr Karmjit Singh he said they were trying to help the employees. “They have met me before and I have taken up the matter with the NHAI authorities. We understand their problems and are working at our level to help them,” said the SDM. — TNS

SAD candidate elected Mudki panchayat chief

FEROZEPUR, MAY 11

After much dilly-dally, the nagar panchayat of Mudki got its president recently. During the peaceful election process, under the supervision of Amit Gupta, SDM, the SAD candidate, Gurjit Kaur Brar, was elected the president.

Earlier, the election of the president had to be postponed twice as the ruling Congress was reportedly trying to lure some MCs to make its own president. During the nagar panchayat polls, the SAD had secured eight out of 13 seats, while five seats were won by the ruling Congress. Mudki is the first nagar panchayat in this region, where the SAD secured victory. Former MLA Joginder Singh Jindu said the president had been elected unanimously. — OC

3 killed in car-truck collision

FATEHGARH SAHIB, MAY 11

Three youths were killed in a road accident on the Ludhiana-Chandigarh highway here late last night.

The victims were on their way from Ludhiana to Chandigarh in a car when it crashed into a truck coming from the wrong side near Ranwan village.

The deceased were identified as AAP trade wing state vice-president Sandeep Singla of Dhuri, Congress leader Vijay Agnihotri, alias Goldy, of Ludhiana and Mandeep Singh Dhindsa of Dhuri. All three were close friends.

Khamano SHO Harinder Singh said around 1 am, a Toyota car collided with a truck coming from the wrong side near the Ranwan-Maheshpur T-point.

He said the police

AAP, Congress leaders among victims



The mangled remains of the car after the mishap. TRIBUNE PHOTO

reached the spot and retrieved the three from the car by shattering the windowpanes. He said two persons died on the spot, while the third died on the way to the hospital.

The driver of the truck fled the scene. The police have impounded the truck. The bodies were handed over to the families after post-mortem examinations. — OC

Farmers forced to give land for road project: AAP

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Punjab president and Member of Parliament Bhagwant Mann today accused the Capt Amarinder Singh-led state government of forcibly snatching the land of farmers for the construction of the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway under the Bharatmala Project.

In a statement issued from the party headquarters here on Tuesday, Mann said the Captain government's “dictatorial” decree to forcibly occupy the lands of farmers should be cancelled immediately and the problems of farmers should be resolved before acquiring the land. Mann said the demands of farmers were valid and they should get the price of the land as per the market rate. — TNS

Two held for thefts at nine liquor vends

ABOHAR, MAY 11

The police have arrested two persons who had allegedly burgled nine liquor vends in the past four weeks in Sriganganagar.

The police said Aladdin (22) and Mohammad Subhan, alias Bhani (22), were held after the car, in which they were travelling, was intercepted by a team that was led by ASI Dharminder Singh. Two unlicensed pistols were seized from them. On being questioned, they reportedly confessed to have targeted nine liquor-vends in border area villages. They had allegedly taken away 369 boxes of liquor, CCTV camera, a DVR and thousands of rupees. — OC

Employer not required to assign reason for transferring staffer: HC

SAURABH MALIK

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

An employer is not required to justify or assign reason for transferring an employee from one place to another, the Punjab and Haryana High Court has made it clear. The assertion came as the Bench refused to interfere with the transfer of a police official following High Court orders against posting cops in districts where they were being tried in criminal cases.

The ruling by Justice Suvir Sehgal came on a petition by a police official against the state of Punjab and other respondents. He was seeking the quashing of an impugned order dated April 20 transferring him from Ludhiana (rural) to Khanna.

The petitioner's counsel submitted the impugned transfer order was passed in compliance with interim order dated March 15 by the High Court, whereby it was directed that no police officer would be posted in any district, where he was being tried in a criminal case.

The counsel contended that the petitioner-police official was named as an accused in an FIR lodged on January 3, 2020, for wrongful restraint, rash driving and other offences under Sections 341, 323, 279 and 427 of the IPC at Jagraon city police station in Ludhiana (Rural) district. He was yet to face trial as even the challan had not been presented.

The counsel added, in any case, there was an amicable settlement. A panchayati



compromise was arrived at and the “FIR stood settled”. He added the petitioner's parents were suffering from age-related ailments. His father, a heart patient, was taking treatment from Ludhiana DMC and his transfer would result in hardship.

Justice Sehgal added an employee's transfer was a part of the service conditions and an incidence of service. “An employee cannot insist that once appointed or posted at a particular place, he should continue at the same place as long as he desires,” Justice Sehgal added. Justice Sehgal observed the petitioner had been serving at the same station for the last more than nine years.

He was transferred to Khanna, barely 40 km from his place of present posting. “Therefore, his argument that the transfer will result in a hardship is a fallacy. There is no allegation of mala fide against any official nor is it the argument of the counsel for the petitioner that the service rules prohibit such a transfer,” Justice Sehgal concluded.

‘Expedite work on Basera project’

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday directed the Finance Department to release the sanctioned amount of Rs 60 crore for the first phase of construction of the Maharaaja Bhupinder Singh Punjab Sports University (MBSPSU), Patiala campus.

He asked the department to enhance the allocation for the institution in this year's Budget, saying Rs 15 crore allotted for the univer-

Release funds for sports varsity: CM

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sity was less.

Reviewing the progress of the state's first sports university, the Chief Minister today asked PWD Minister Vijay Inder Singla to assign a Chief Engineer to steer the campus construction, with the help of an external consultant, to ensure speedy completion of the

project.

He also directed Sports Minister Rana Gurmit Sodhi to set up a three-member committee to coordinate with the PWD for expediting the work on the university, which had been functioning from another campus since 2019.

The Chief Minister approved a draft MoU to be signed with the UK-based Loughborough University to institutionalise the collaboration. — TNS

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Son booked, Langah's political career in jeopardy

SLEAZE VIDEO ROW

The Akalis started losing ground after the 2012 Assembly poll due to an assortment of reasons. The first and foremost was Sucha Singh Langah's marginalisation. In 2017, a sleaze video featuring him and a woman surfaced. Subsequently, he was booked in a rape case and later fired by the SAD



Sewa Singh Sekhwan has dealt a crippling blow to the SAD in the area.

Ex-Speaker and yet another heavyweight Nirmal Singh Kahlon's indisposition, too, is not helping things. It is another matter that his son Ravi Karan Kahlon is trying hard to keep the family flag flying high in their home bastion of Patehgarh Churian.

Batala sitting SAD MLA

Lakhbir Singh Lodhinangal has had his wings clipped after the Congress swept the MC polls last month. There are murmurs that he may jump ship ahead of the Assembly polls. Only Gurdaspur SAD president Gurbachan Singh Babbhali is putting up a semblance of a fight.

The Akalis started losing ground after the 2012 Assembly polls due to an assortment

of reasons. The first and foremost was Langah's marginalisation. He lost the 2012 and 2017 polls to Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa. In the run-up to the 2017 Gurdaspur parliamentary bypoll, a sleaze video featuring him and a woman surfaced. Subsequently, he was booked in a rape case and was later fired by his own party. On the other hand, Akal Takht excommunicated him on the basis of “immoral conduct.” He was a sitting SGPC member when the video emerged. For the last several months, Langah has been trying to get reprieve from Akal Takht which may pave way for his political comeback.

Observers opine that with the Sikh clergy in no mood to relent and with his son being booked for a crime as heinous as heroin possession, things are back to square one for Langah in particular and the Akalis in general.

Now, food dept to manage O₂ supply

Drug officers relieved amid rampant black marketing, hoarding of Covid medicines

SUSHIL MANAV
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

With the black marketing and hoarding of Covid-related drugs rampant, the government has relieved the drug control officers from the management and distribution of medical oxygen and handed over the work to the Food and Supplies Department officials.

Additional Chief Secretary (ACS), Food, Civil Supplies and Consumers Affairs, Anurag Rastogi has written to the District Food and Supplies Controllers to station three Inspectors or Sub-

Inspectors at bottling plants in their respective areas for maintaining the record of the quantity of oxygen received by the units through tankers and the number and size of cylinders filled by it.

“There are about two dozen oxygen cylinder bottling plants in the state. Due to the Covid spread, there is a huge demand of oxygen cylinders for patients in home isolation. The monitoring of such plants is of utmost importance for the timely supply of oxygen to such patients. The government has, therefore, decided that the department should accordingly

TO MEET HIGH DEMAND

“There is a huge demand of oxygen cylinders for patients in home isolated. These plants need to be monitored for timely oxygen supply to patients. Therefore, the government has decided that the food department should monitor this task. ❤️ **Anurag Rastogi**, ACS, FOOD, CIVIL SUPPLIES AND CONSUMERS AFFAIRS

monitor this task,” the ACS said in his letter.

On April 24, Additional Chief Secretary, Health and

Family Welfare Department, Rajeev Arora had assigned duties to all drug control officers and senior drug control officers in all 22 districts of the state for the management and distribution of medical oxygen in the state.

“When drug control officers were busy managing the distribution of oxygen, there was no enforcement of drug laws, leading to black marketing and hoarding. It was left to the police to check these activities, as our officers were busy in managing the medical oxygen,” said a senior officer in the Haryana Food and Drug Administration.

Till May 1, the Haryana Police had arrested 33 persons for the black marketing of Remdesivir injections by lodging 13 FIRs against them in eight different districts after the recovery of 101 vials from their possession. Besides, the police had unearthed the sale of fake Remdesivir injections at Karnal, Ambala, Yamunana-gar and in some other districts last week.

“Our officers have not been trained to check the sale of spurious drugs and are not equipped to handle such a crisis or data management,” the officer added.

NCW notice to farm leaders

NEW DELHI/IJHAJJAR, MAY 11

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has issued notices to Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) leader Yogen-dra Yadav and Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) Ekta Ugrahan chief Joginder Singh Ugrahan over the reports of sexual assault on a 26-year-old woman activist at the Tikri border protest site, the women rights panel said on Tuesday.

It is being alleged that Yadav and other SKM protesters were aware of the assault, but didn't inform the police. The NCW has sent a notice to Yadav, seeking an explanation for the delay in informing the police. It has also sought a reply from BKU Ekta Ugrahan chief Joginder Singh Ugrahan on the matter and inform the NCW as to what steps have been taken to ensure the safety and security of women protesters.

DELAY IN INFO ON TIKRI SEXUAL ASSAULT

It is being alleged that Yogen-dra Yadav and other SKM protesters were aware of the assault, but didn't inform the police. The NCW has sent a notice to Yadav, seeking an explanation for the delay in informing the police. It has also sought a reply from BKU Ekta Ugrahan chief Joginder Singh Ugrahan on the matter and inform the NCW as to what steps have been taken to ensure the safety and security of women protesters.

associated with the agitation. The reply has to be communicated to the NCW within 10 days,” the Commission said.

Meanwhile, sources said the SIT formed to probe the sexual assault had issued notices of appearance to 3-4 other persons in connection with the case while a police team carried out a search operation at Tikri to arrest Anoop Singh, who in a video uploaded by him on his Facebook account on Monday, claimed that he was still at the border and would not go back till the farmers' agitation continues. The police could not trace him.

In the video, Anoop also disclosed that a panchayat of farm leaders from Haryana was held at Tikri on May 6 in connection with the case and it came to the fore that incident of molestation happened in the train but there was no truth in the allegations of rape. “I am innocent and being implicated in a false case,” he said, adding that Anil was expelled from Kisan Social Army when he learnt about the molestation. — PTI/TNS

No oxygen crunch in state: CM

Quota hiked to 282 MT | Opens 150-bed centre in Sirsa

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Tuesday virtually inaugurated a 150-bed Covid facility at Baba Tara Charitable Hospital and Research Centre in Sirsa.

Beds with ventilators have also been installed along with the facility of oxygen.

After the inauguration, Khattar said now there was no shortage of oxygen in Haryana. The state quota has increased from 152 MT to 282 MT. Besides this, the

11,637 FRESH CASES

144 DEATHS IN 24 HOURS

ACTIVE CASES 1,08,997

WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS

DISTRICT	+VE	DEATHS
Gurugram	2,659	13
Faridabad	1,255	8
Hisar	928	12

also been made to the Central government, he added.

He said to date, the Covid infection was limited to urban areas but the virus had now started spreading in rural areas too. Therefore, everyone has to remain vigilant.

Teams have been constituted to conduct door-to-door investigation in villages and every department was cooperating for this purpose, the CM said. The CM said ‘theekri pehras’ should be imposed in villages to curb the virus spread.



The LPG crematorium at Assandh. TRIBUNE PHOTO

LPG crematoriums set up

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, MAY 11

To contain the Covid spread, the Urban Local Bodies Department has started Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG)-based crematoriums in Assandh and Taraori, said Vikram Kumar, Karnal Municipal Corporation Commissioner. Earlier, the Gharunda crematorium had the similar facility.

The MC Commissioner said the machines equipped with the LPG furnaces had been installed in Taraori and Assandh. “The Urban

Local Bodies Department had allotted the tender, through which the machines are being installed,” he said, adding that in the crematorium that uses LPG, the body was placed directly into the furnace fuelled by the gas, thus reducing direct contact. It is safer than the traditional method of burning a body over a pyre of wood.

The process to install LPG machine in Nissing was also under way, he added. He directed the secretaries of the civic bodies of the district to sanitise their areas.

Land registration to be on in lockdown

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

The Haryana Government has instructed all deputy commissioners to continue the work of the registration of deeds in tehsils while adhering to various SOPs at regular intervals. An official spokesperson said the letter issued to the DCs said stated that the registration of deeds in the tehsils should not be discontinued. He said during the review of deeds and stamp duty collected in the first week of April and May, 2021, it has been found that the work of the registration of deeds had been stopped in some tehsils. In addition, complaints are also being received from residents of various districts about the non-availability of employees and sub-registrars in tehsils. — TNS

50,000 wheat growers to get dues by today, says Dushyant

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala has issued orders to transfer the payments in farmers' bank accounts on account of wheat procurement with immediate effect whose payments have not been transferred due to various reasons.

He said this after presiding over a meeting with senior officers of the Food and Supplies Department and Hafed today.

He added that around 56,000 farmers were yet to receive payment, of which payment in 50,000 accounts would be made by Wednesday.

Set up isolation centres in villages, officials told

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11

Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, while taking cognisance of the surge in Covid cases in rural areas, has directed the officers concerned to set

up isolation centres in villages that come in the hotspot category by May 15.

He also directed that medical investigation in these villages should be started at the earliest. He said this while presiding over a special meeting held here today with high-level officials for discussing the Covid situation in the state.

He said the medical, paramedical and ASHA workers etc should be deputed on 24x7 duty in these centres.

Treatment of COVID-19 patients in the Government Healthcare Institutions is Free of Cost.

Government of Punjab has capped the treatment charges of COVID-19 patients in the Private hospitals/ Nursing homes/ Clinics.

UNDER THE EPIDEMIC DISEASE ACT 1897 (COVID-19 REGULATIONS 2020), MAXIMUM CHARGES (PER DAY) FOR THE COVID-19 TREATMENT HAS BEEN FIXED AS BELOW:

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

Including management of co morbidities as per orders issued.
* Patients on HNFC may be charged Rs. 2000/- per day over and above the rates of oxygen supported bed.

ADOPT COVID APPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

WEAR A MASK

MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCE

ENSURE HANDWASH/ SANITIZATION

COVER MOUTH & NOSE WHILE COUGHING/SNEEZING

For more information download COVA Punjab App

<https://www.facebook.com/PunjabDOHFW> <https://twitter.com/PunjabDOHFW> <https://nhm.punjab.gov.in/>

FOR ANY COMPLAINT / MEDICAL ASSISTANCE CALL HELPLINE 104

DIAL 104 TOLL FREE MEDICAL HELPLINE 24/7

TEEKA LAGAO PARIVAR BACHAO

Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Punjab

ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ

ਕਣਕ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਖ਼ਰੀਦ

13 ਮਈ 2021 ਤੱਕ

ਕਿਸਾਨ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਪੀਲ

ਜੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਵੀਰ ਦੀ ਕਣਕ ਵੇਚਣ ਤੋਂ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ ਹੋਵੇ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਣਕ 13.5.2021 ਤੱਕ ਨੇੜਲੀ ਮੰਡੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਣ, ਇਸ ਤਾਰੀਖ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਖ਼ਰੀਦ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਮਾਰਕਿਟ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਫ਼ਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਜੀ।

ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ

ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮੰਡੀ ਬੋਰਡ

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Covid corpses on Ganga

Visuals of Buxar and Ghazipur expose bogey of a new India

COVID seems to have taken us back to the colonial times of pestilence and famines, when the poor just floated their dead down the nearest river. All the tall claims of a new India have washed up on the banks of the holy Ganga in Buxar in Bihar. Some say 48, others claim to have counted 150 bodies of suspected Covid victims on the Ganga at Chausa block in Buxar bordering Uttar Pradesh. The gruesome visuals leave us in no doubt, unless UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath disputes it to lock up those who have caught the corpses on camera. The officials on either side of the river are only trying to disown the corpses. Bihar's officials believe that these bodies must have drifted downstream from neighbouring Ghazipur or further up, Varanasi. Tuesday's sighting of bodies at Ghazipur in UP leaves no doubt that villagers upstream are throwing their dead in the river, unable to afford their last rites.

This is the story of Covid hitting the Hindi heartland, particularly UP, which has lost four ruling party MLAs to the pandemic. Union Minister Santosh Gangwar had last week written an angry letter to Adityanath pointing out the glaring lapses, apathy of medical officers and hoarding of oxygen cylinders. UP Minister and Lucknow MLA Brajesh Pathak, Bareilly MLA Kesar Singh (who later died), Mohanlalganj MP Kaushal Kishore, Basti MP Harish Dwivedi, Bhadohi MLA Dinanath Bhaskar, Kanpur MP Satyadev Pachauri and others have written similar letters expressing their inability to help their constituents. Jasrana MLA Pappu Lodhi released a video on social media of his wife lying on the floor of a Covid ward.

There are BJP MLAs who have no qualms about blaming UP's aggravated second surge on the state's panchayat polls and the Kumbh Mela. While they claim that things are getting better, there is no denying that the situation is dismal in UP. This is the real India of mindless politico-religious priorities with no health infrastructure, no advance planning for a known disease, no treatment and finally, no dignity for its dead.

Loot by private labs

Overcharging for RT-PCR tests rampant

IT is a pity that the Covid-hassled public has had to pay the price for the inefficiencies of the authorities in implementing the price cap for RT-PCR testing in private diagnostic laboratories and hospitals. The Punjab Government has fixed Rs 450 for the test. However, in the absence of a strict watch over private labs, overcharging for the test (Rs 900-1,500) is rampant. The loot adds up to a handsome gain, given the huge surge of people queuing up for it. Though it is pinching everybody as when Covid is suspected all members of a family get their samples tested, most people are too sick or resigned to the sorry state of affairs to report the glaring difference. That the dire need of patients, aggravated by the shortage of lab facilities, is being thus milked with impunity ensures that the daylight robbery continues.

Unless the law enforcers take a tough stance and swoop down on the overcharging labs and penalise them, the distressed people will not have much choice but to give in to the swindlers' greed or, go for the worse option in a pandemic situation: not give swabs. Action, if taken, seems to be reactive as the authorities wait for complaints rather than being proactive. This bitter truth is mirrored by the example of Jalandhar, Punjab. The story is, perhaps, similar countrywide.

In mid-March, an FIR was registered against Atulya Lab for allegedly charging Rs 1,500 for the Covid test — without a receipt — when an alert person submitted a video proof to the authorities, which was then examined. The Jalandhar DC had then warned the labs against profiteering and said they would be checked randomly and violators dealt with a heavy hand. Two months on, there seems to be little effect of the stern caveat. A sting operation by some affected people on May 10 revealed three centres, notably, including an Atulya Lab centre, asking for Rs 900-1,200. Based on the videos provided to the DC by *The Tribune*, notices have been issued to the prima facie offenders. When will the common man be assured of the benefit of Covid-specific welfare policies?

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

The highest form of knowledge is empathy. — **Bill Bullard**

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

LAHORE, THURSDAY, MAY 12, 1921

"THE ACID TEST"

AS we already anticipated, the leading Anglo-Indian paper has not failed to interpret the recent speech of His Excellency the Viceroy at Simla to condemn political agitation in India on the ground that particular methods of agitation, especially those adopted by the non-co-operators, have sometimes led to violence and crime. We have pointed out the absurdity of this inference because there is nothing to directly connect mob outbreaks that have occurred here and there with the movement of non-violent non-co-operation, and Mahatma Gandhi and other exponents of non-co-operation have strongly condemned all forms of agitation leading to violence and have not hesitated to reprove in the strongest language possible the perpetrators of crime and disorder. Moreover, we have pointed out the existence in certain places of tyranny on the part of minor subordinates of the Government, who by interfering with the legitimate and peaceful activities of the people, have given them serious cause for provocation. Not a single Anglo-Indian critic has had the fairness to examine if the policy of repression adopted by the authorities has not, to some extent, contributed to the recent excitement of passion and prejudice among ignorant masses, which has in a few instances resulted in crime. His Excellency the Viceroy did not pronounce any definite opinion on the nature of the political agitation, though he was led to connect the agitation with crime in some unexplained manner. But the *Pioneer* and other papers have seized the occasion to discredit the agitation for Swaraj by misrepresenting the character of that agitation. His Excellency the Viceroy, it will be remembered, commended the caution adopted by Mahatma Gandhi in warning his followers against all forms of passion and prejudice and strictly enjoining the doctrine of suffering and *ahimsa*.

Covid blows up in Yogi's face

The state government's skewed priorities and callousness paint a sordid picture



RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

SENIOR JOURNALIST

IT'S a distinction that will not please Yogi Adityanath, who earned the honour of being the country's 'best performing Chief Minister' each year for the four years he has been in office in the 'mood of the nation' survey. Today, his state, Uttar Pradesh, ranks among the five hardest hit by the pandemic. UP recorded 21,331 documented cases on May 10, taking the total to 15,24,767 and 278 reported deaths in a day. It's important to qualify the data with the recorded count and the unrecorded numbers, because by the admission of officials, in UP's backwoods, many families do not report deaths and privately dispose of bodies. Crematoriums and burial grounds are running out of space, besides wood, ghee and the paraphernalia demanded by Hindu rites have become expensive and scarce. Therefore, we will never get an accurate assessment of the lives lost to the pandemic. What the details give is a sordid picture of the UP Government's mismanagement, skewed priorities and callousness.

Once the cities started to report endless death counts that vastly varied from the official versions and social media depicted pictures and videos of round-the-clock burning pyres, overheated furnaces and distraught relatives awaiting their turn with corpses, the government was left with no wiggle space. Adityanath ordered that Lucknow's largest cremation ground at Bhainsakund should be shut off with painted sheets to hide the unfolding horror. Worse was to come. On Sunday, dozens of bodies washed up on the Yamuna banks in Hamirpur district near Kanpur, suggesting that families themselves disposed them of because the local administration would not help with the arrangements. One news report quoted a police official saying



BOTCHING UP: The CM approached the medical crisis with the ruthlessness he exhibited when quashing the protests against the CAA. **PTI**

Were the Kumbh Mela and the panchayat polls worth the price they extracted? The UP Government owes an answer.

that the fear of the virus led the families to cast out the bodies in the river or burn them in the fields, eluding a census. The victims, who probably died gasping for air, were not even given a dignified departure. The survivors can never hope to get the closure that a death brings about when the rituals are appropriately solemnised.

The CM, who presides over UP's largest and richest monastery with unquestioned authority, rules the state similarly through decrees. The Opposition is barely visible and Adityanath's own colleagues have been reduced to nameless, faceless entities. The pandemic was not an exception. In its wake came a series of commandments from Adityanath's office that betrayed a lack of the empathy that human suffering expected from the powerful. He approached the medical crisis with the ruthlessness he exhibited when quashing the protests against the amended Citizenship Act in December 2019.

He threatened to invoke the stringent National Security Act and the Gangster Act against those found 'guilty' of spreading fear and panic on social media and impound their properties—a measure he used against civil society activists. As UP hospitals faced a seri-

ous oxygen crunch, he claimed that there was no shortage of oxygen, hospital beds and life-saving drugs, belying ground truths. The panic-stricken hospital managements and doctors asked that unless the CM recognised the realities, what was the point of cracking down on the so-called offenders? The medical community invited him to personally audit oxygen supplies in hospitals and decide who left the facilities and the patients in the lurch: the doctors or the government that distributes the life-saving cylinders?

The government's top-down attitude was manifest when it mandated that a referral approval letter from the local chief medical officers should be obtained to seek hospitalisation at private and state centres. The procedure took inordinate time that itself cost lives, because even if beds were available, the hospitals would not admit patients without a 'referral'. Under the Centre's pressure, Adityanath partially revoked the fiat. An official letter is now required only to access government hospitals.

Even as the government officially ordered ramping up Covid diagnosis through the RT-PCR, private labs were pressured to scale down testing and

block sample collections by the administration to keep the numbers small.

The deathblow in a chain of disasters came with the Kumbh Mela and the panchayat elections. With the Assembly elections in UP and its neighbour, Uttarakhand, scheduled for February-March 2022, not only was the humongous gathering of pilgrims brought forward by a year from the calendar date, the Centre and the two state governments were keen to keep the Hindu clergy on their side by not downscaling the celebrations. As if the *mela* was not tailored to become a super-spreader, the state election commission—bound by the Allahabad High Court's order—went ahead and held the multi-phased panchayat polls. These elections caused 25 to 30 per cent of city-dwellers, mainly school teachers, to relocate to villages—so far largely untouched by the virus—on polling duty. The first round on April 15 reported numerous cases of teachers testing positive. On April 29, when all the votes were cast, UP's Prathamik Shikshak Sangh, which claims to represent nearly five lakh teachers, listed over 700 casualties. The actual figures could be higher.

The High Court did not reconsider its directive, although its strictures on the deaths resulting from oxygen shortage ought to have rattled any government. It called the lack of oxygen in hospitals a 'criminal act', 'not less than a genocide'.

The state government could have intervened and deferred the rural polls. However, the temptation to use the outcome and amplify the atmospherics in the prelude to the Assembly elections was too big for the BJP. The BJP was sanguine that as a ruling party, it would get a positive mandate that would augur well for its prospects 10 months hence. Although the polls were not fought on symbols, individual candidates were backed by the principal parties. The trends showed that the BJP came a poor second after the Samajwadi Party, which staged an astonishing come-back. But were the politically motivated Kumbh carnival and the panchayat polls worth the heavy price they extracted? The BJP and the UP Government owe an answer.

Jeep drives community project!

CHIRANJIT PARMAR

THE community development programme was launched in India soon after Independence. In Himachal Pradesh, it was started in a few selected districts in 1951-52, and Mandi happened to be one of those places. I used to be a school boy during those days. It was a new type of government programme and very few people knew about it. However, our family was aware of it because one of the officials of this programme was our tenant and he used to keep telling my father about it.

The programme was called the community project at that time. The Mandi project was headquartered at

Bhangrotu, 13 km from Mandi. A farm as well as an orchard of the state agriculture department already existed at that place. It was probably because of this that the headquarters of the project was made at Bhangrotu.

Development blocks and Block Development Officers as organisational wings of this programme, as it is now, came into being much later. At that time, it used to be headed by a project officer. Mian Lal Singh, an officer from the revenue department, was assigned the responsibility of leading the Bhangrotu project. He was a resident of Dudar village near Mandi town. He was considered to be a tough master and a terror among his subordinates. He later retired as a

Deputy Commissioner.

Mian Lal Singh had been provided a jeep for his work. Jeeps had just started coming to Himachal for government work and very few officers had one. Hence, the jeep was considered to be a status symbol.

Mian Lal Singh got 'Community Project' painted in bold white letters under the windshield. This word was unfamiliar to ordinary people. Therefore, everyone wanted to know its meaning. Since Mandi was the district headquarters, the project officer or his colleagues had to visit Mandi almost daily in connection with government work, sometimes even more than once a day. Therefore, this jeep had become a common sight on the

Mandi-Bhangrotu road.

Soon, recruitment of staff for vacant posts in the project also started. The interviews used to be held at the DC's office at Mandi. One day, interviews were being held for the posts of gram sewak. The selection committee was chaired by the DC. One of the members asked a candidate, 'What is a community project?' The candidate immediately replied, 'Sir, the community project is a jeep that runs between Mandi and Bhangrotu.'

The selection committee burst into laughter. The poor candidate could not understand what he had said that made these people laugh so loudly.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Halt Central Vista project

The Central government has urged the state governments to fast-track the ramping up of hospital infrastructure. At this critical juncture, it is the constitutional duty of the Centre to help states by extending financial help liberally for saving the lives of people. The Central government should stop the construction of its Rs 13,450-crore Central Vista project. India, being a poor country, cannot afford such a huge amount of money to be spent on this building as the existing buildings are already serving the purpose. With this amount, four-five PGI-like hospitals can be built. The government has already wasted Rs 3,000 crore on Patel's statue in Gujarat.

SOHAN LAL BHUMBAK, CHANDIGARH

Mega vanity project

Refer to 'Central Vista: Delhi HC to take up early hearing on plea to stop work'; it is hoped that the court will stop work on Central Vista, amidst India's worst health crisis. As India gasps for breath and bodies pile up, massive earth movers are hungrily hollowing out the solid surface between Rashtrapati Bhavan and India Gate. What should be the country's priority today is to provide medical oxygen, ventilators, ICU beds and more hospitals. Allowing people to die for want of oxygen, and go ahead with the project, just for vanity, is a cruel

joke on the people. If you can't give them oxygen and life-saving drugs, don't rub salt into their wounds. Millions of our youth have lost jobs since the first lockdown last year. Hundreds of factories are shut, and the country's economy is in the doldrums. Yet, the priority is not to create mass jobs and remove pervasive poverty, but to build Central Vista.

PS HANSPAL, BY MAIL

All parties to blame

Reference to 'Let's fight Covid crisis calmly & collectively', every previous government is criticising the present government regarding deficiency in medical infrastructure. But every party should introspect. Most of them had ruled different states, and even the country for decades. During their tenure, medical services remained in a pathetic condition. It remained rickety throughout the seven decades after Independence. Governments gave more focus to develop private medical infrastructure which can be availed only by affluent sections of society. All parties have been negligent to develop lifeline infrastructure. In next elections, the public should prefer only those parties which have basic amenities on their agenda on priority.

RAJESH GOYAL, BY MAIL

Increase health budget

The pandemic lessons should bring practicality to the hardships we are facing and provide a direction to figure out the answer to the basic question of how much a government, either at the Centre or the state, is devoted to healthcare facilities. For India, it would be a perfect time to increase investment in healthcare, which was just 1.28% of GDP in 2019 — way lower than the average expenditure by countries clubbed among the 'poorest'.

INDERJEET SINGH, BY MAIL

Why no lockdown?

Punjab CM Capt Amarinder Singh's attitude towards the Covid situation seems to have changed since last year. Is it because of the Assembly elections to be held next year? Last year, a lockdown was imposed in Punjab by the CM on March 22, whereas the nationwide lockdown was declared by PM Modi on March 24. Now, when our neighbouring state Haryana has opted for lockdown, the Punjab CM is not in its favour. Even the weekend lockdown and other restrictions aren't being implemented strictly, unlike last year, when the police even resorted to a lathicharge on violators. Farmer unions are agitating against the weekend lockdown and no action is taken against them.

Is it because the CM wants to portray himself as pro-farmer to garner votes? Every decision seems to be centred around how the Congress can again come to power. Even some medical experts are claiming that a 15-day lockdown can improve the situation. Therefore, lockdown should be imposed in Punjab. There is no meaning of victory over corpses.


RASHPINDER SINGH SIDHU, BY MAIL

Another gimmick

Politicians are gifted with a keen sense to befool people just to garner votes on the eve of elections ('Punjab largesse'). The Punjab Government did nothing tangible to implement the recommendations of the Sixth Pay Commission during its four-year rule, but now, with limited time, CM Capt Amarinder Singh suddenly realised that it is a suitable time to win the favour of employees and pensioners by dangling the carrot of new scales. How can the government that failed to give DA instalments to its employees spend Rs 3,500 crore per annum for its employees? It is a tall order for the cash-strapped government. Due to the wrong policies of successive governments in Punjab, the fiscal health of the state has already deteriorated beyond restoration.

KARNAIL SINGH, KHARAR

China ups the ante with Chabahar push



ABHIJIT BHATTACHARYYA
COMMENTATOR AND AUTHOR

In hindsight, the recent statement of Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif wasn't unexpected: "China wants to play a role in the Chabahar (port) project". It's Iran's nudge to India about the arrival of Beijing in a territory where New Delhi enjoyed prime privilege for some time. Does it constitute a major breakthrough by the Communist Party of China (CPC) by creating a coveted space for itself to counter and confront India in a strategic seaport in a third country? Can India avoid future pressure and tensions in a long, connected terrain spanning Pakistan, Iran and Turkey?

Indeed, true to its fresh understanding of geography, the CPC has posed an extremely challenging task to India, dealing with which could be an arduous long haul, with unprecedented situations likely to emerge. What thus far appeared to have been trumpeted by India — that the India-Iran Chabahar project was New Delhi's answer to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor's (CPEC) fulcrum, the Gwadar port — now constitutes an acid test of India's ability to continue with its avowed power play beyond South Asia.

Although 'unfriendly' China started late, it learnt the geography of the sea fast. That subject has rarely been the forte of Indian rulers since time immemorial. Else, how does one

explain the constantly changing political maps of India with virtually no naval tradition and an uninterrupted loss of territory from 1947 to 2021?

Hence, compulsively, it's time to learn from China the supreme importance of geography for a sovereign nation's self-interest. Else, India will continue to be projected as a 'future potential power', which shows no sign of shedding its tag of laggard.

Coming back to Chabahar, Iran has been forthright. It has given India the signal that the Chinese are more than welcome in Chabahar. "Chabahar is open to cooperation for everybody. It's not against China or the Gwadar port. It's a place where we can all come together to help Afghanistan... the Chinese are interested in playing a role elsewhere in Iran and also in Chabahar," the Iranian Foreign Minister said. The choice of words is aimed at assuring China and Pakistan. But no mention of India means no assurance to India as such.

The message is loud and clear: China looms larger than all South Asian nations taken together because Beijing is "interested in playing a role elsewhere in Iran" and "also Chabahar". Chabahar may be a late addition to Chinese 'interest' in Iran, but its overall importance in Tehran's eyes is long-term. And, why not? When India, owing to US pressure, stopped Iranian oil import in 2019, Tehran's anxiety of dealing with traditionally friendly India was understandable. India couldn't go on its own in the Delhi-Tehran bilateral. Rather, it's been following instructions of the US. Little wonder, China wholeheartedly grabbed the opportunity for long-term fuel supply at financially favourable terms. Holding cold and calculated 'national interest' above everything



Both Iran and China are today on the same page on Chabahar, where India was once perceived to be a weighty player. Of course, India still retains its position and visibility in the Persian Gulf; nevertheless, Beijing has marched a step ahead owing to New Delhi's seasonal foreign power play. Chabahar is part of an important Iranian pivot, with the region adjacent to it accounting for 70% of the world's proven oil reserves and 40% of its natural gas reserves.

LARGER SCOPE: China's role in Chabahar should be seen beyond the Delhi-Beijing tug of war. REUTERS

else. Consequently, both Iran and China are today on the same page on Chabahar, where India was once perceived to be a weighty player.

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Chabahar is part of an important Iranian pivot, with the region adjacent to it accounting for 70 per cent of the world's proven oil reserves and 40 per cent of its natural gas reserves. That one country-bridge connects the

great Eurasian space, South Asia, western highlands of China, the great arc of the Sunni world with unrestricted access to the Indian Ocean after crossing through a narrow channel of a virtually landlocked water body called the Persian Gulf.

Hence, what's unique is the Chinese 'sea sense' of 'forward deployment'. With mounting tensions in the eastern and south seas surrounding mainland China, it's time to switch flanks for a fresh, flexible frontier. Chabahar opens up options for mobilisation during a crisis. In a straight

east-west coastline of 365 nautical miles, the Chinese navy, mercantile marine and fishing vessels have attained advantage over others. From Pakistan's Karachi-Gwadar stretch (289 nautical miles), it has now 76 nautical miles of the Iran-Pakistan Chabahar-Gwadar connect.


The history of 'forward deployment' by the British at the height of European imperialism and the US command and control of oceans in the 20th century comes alive with 21st-century Chinese understanding of geography. No doubt Chabahar is

prima facie projected for economics, commerce and trade. Nevertheless, no port in a strategic location can only be for economics. That's highly unlikely, especially once China comes to the fore.

China's role in Chabahar should be seen beyond the Delhi-Beijing tug of war, as its span and scope are much larger and deeper than that. It's a first step towards a Chinese navy foothold deep inside US Central Command territorial jurisdiction which has its headquarters at MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. The Chinese urgently need more than Djibouti for its expanding armada as its naval competition with the US becomes fiercer.

It has to be admitted that the US Navy is no longer the force that it was at the turn of the 20th century. Today, the gap between strategy and resources is a stark challenge to the US in the West Pacific, arguably the most sensitive and strategic region. China, therefore, definitely proposes to create a fresh seafront in the Persian Gulf-Indian Ocean to expand and consolidate. China has already scaled up its naval inventory to more than 350 combat ships, thereby leaving the US stuck at around 300 vessels. The strategic US goal for 355 combatants remains unrealised. Hence, with three ports (Karachi, Gwadar, Chabahar) in a straight line of 365 km, China has laid the foundation for multiple options and opportunities for a multi-front crisis in the sea along with fresh availability of the Persian Gulf to the Beijing-Shanghai landline, thereby avoiding the potentially turbulent and choppy Indian Ocean-Singapore Strait-Pacific Ocean sealand. It's real-time geography and economics of sea and port craft.

Crematorium workers deserve a life of dignity



MALLEPALLI LAXMAIAH
CHAIRPERSON, CENTRE FOR DALIT STUDIES, HYDERABAD

It is known to one and all that the rate of deaths due to Covid's second wave in India is extremely high. Corpses are lined up for the final rites and the *Dom* workers are toiling day in and day out in order to keep up with the unprecedented rate of death. The reality is harsh and heart-wrenching; there is no statistic of how many of these workers have passed away in recent days due to the disease.

THESE are dark times. Many people are losing hope of seeing their loved ones survive the Covid pandemic. Funeral pyres now require a queue and death is the word that is ringing across India incessantly. In this dire situation, one cannot even afford a decent cremation for one's loved ones. A dignified death has become rare. But the only ones who are in service day and night to those departed are the crematorium workers, known as *Dom*. Members of Dalit castes all over India invariably are the ones who stand at the burning pyre for the last journey of the dead after the rituals are over.

These crematorium and graveyard workers have no relationship with the person who has passed away but will dig the grave for those who must be buried till they have been set in their final resting place. And for those to be cremated, they will set the pyre with wood and stay till there is nothing but embers and ash. Death rituals are extremely religious and require the presence of a *pandit* for Hindus who will oversee the ceremony, which seems to have become a scarce ritual during Covid. Only the *Dom* and the Dalit caste men toil so that your dear departed may reach *sadgati*.

It is well known to us that the work at crematoria is caste-based. Only a few lower castes, apart from Dalits, are in this occupation. Most villages do not have a designated crematori-



DEAD-END JOB: The plight of crematorium workers needs attention even as bodies are piling up during the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. PTI

um or *shamshan*. The ceremonies of death are conducted next to a lake, river or some other water body, which acts as an unofficial crematorium. There is also no designated *Dom*. For millennia, it's the Dalits and other lower castes that have been handling all the unsafe work in the villages and towns. For many years, it was unpaid *begar* with the dead person's clothes as the remuneration. Urban municipalities use them as lowly paid municipal workers and village panchayats engage

them on call.

Due to lack of open places next to rivers and lakes in urban areas, special graveyards and crematoria are the norm and a few Dalits have ended up working in these unsafe and unwanted professions — a profession that has been created by the caste system. *Doms* and *Chamars* in north India and *Mahars* in western India take care of ceremonies related to death — both of humans and livestock. In South India, it's the *Mala*, *Madiga*, *Pariah*, *Pulaya* and

Holey castes. No upper-caste members ever do any of this work because corpses have no value. They cause fear and disgust, and are probably riddled with disease. It can be seen that all the dangerous and unwanted occupations are done by the Dalits as their traditional caste occupations, imposed by the caste system.

It is known to one and all that the fatality rate during Covid's second wave in India is extremely high and the numbers shown officially in government records are far less than the actual figures. In cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad, corpses are lined up for the last rites and the *Dom* are working day in and day out in order to keep up with the unprecedented rate of death. The reality is harsh and heart-wrenching; there is no statistic of how many of these workers have passed away in recent days due to the disease.

Recently, in Hyderabad, a young crematorium worker returning from work was thrashed by policemen during curfew. After a tough day, he and other workers had stepped out for meals. When the police asked them why they were drunk, they said, "No one works sober at a graveyard!" This holds good for many unhygienic professions, including sewer work.

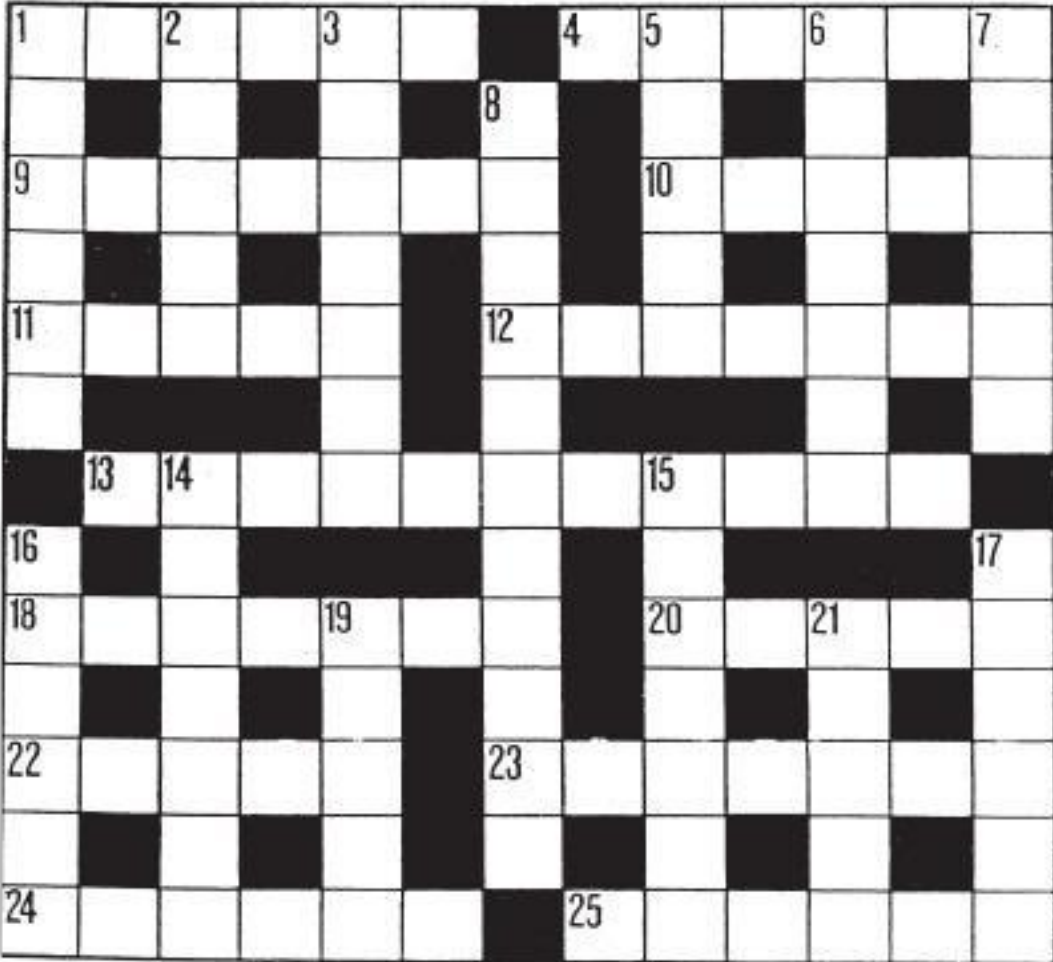
Even as the international and national media are splashing news

and images of Covid cremations in India, nobody has spared a thought for the poor, wretched and hapless crematorium workers who are burning the pyres of lakhs of bodies day and night. When family members of the dead are refusing to attend funerals, it is these workers who have lit a pyre for the dead. These people have been working without regular pay, no protective equipment or masks, not even water and food on the crematorium premises.

It seems that to the government, these workers, mostly Dalits, are worthless. On normal days, the family of the deceased would pay the *Dom* for his services. In these times, no one knows who the corpse belongs to, and these unfortunate workers go on to cremate them or bury them. The bodies pile up faster than they can burn or bury. The Covid-19 pandemic has changed many a tradition in our country. Brahmins who professed that funeral rites are a must have either disappeared or the few who are performing these rites are charging exorbitant rates.

Unfortunately, not a single welfare measure has been undertaken for the crematorium workers by successive governments. One generation after another has been working, prone to diseases and stricken with poverty. Voiceless, they toil and bid the final farewell to the dead. It's time we wake up to better the lives of these workers with welfare and dignity.

QUICK CROSSWORD




YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Make out, 5 Toque, 8 Above reproach, 9 Tower, 10 Control, 11 Cranny, 12 Sullen, 15 Zestful, 17 Bitch, 19 No holds barred, 20 Entry, 21 Trellis.

Down: 1 Meant, 2 Know what's what, 3 Overrun, 4 Trench, 5 Turin, 6 Quadrilateral, 7 Echelon, 11 Cezanne, 13 Umbrage, 14 Closet, 16 Folly, 18 Hades.

SU DO KU



V HARD

CALENDAR




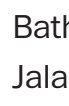

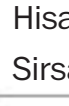
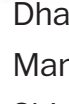
MAY 12, 2021, WEDNESDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2078
■ Shaka Samvat	1943
■ Vaisakh Shaka	22
■ Vaisakh Parvishte	30
■ Hijari	1442
■ Shukla Paksha Tithi 1, up to 3.07 am	
■ Sobhana Yoga up to 11.47 pm	
■ Kritika Nakshatra up to 2.40 am	
■ Moon enters Taurus sign 6.18 am	

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

FORECAST

SUNSET: 	WEDNESDAY	19:07 HRS
SUNRISE: 	THURSDAY	05:30 HRS
Sunny 	Partly Cloudy 	Cloudy 
Rainy 	Foggy 	
CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	31	25
New Delhi	37	24
Amritsar	35	24
Bathinda	40	24
Jalandhar	35	24
Ludhiana	32	24
Bhiwani	36	25
Hisar	38	24
Sirsa	38	24
Dharamsala	25	15
Manali	23	10
Shimla	21	13
Srinagar	22	12
Jammu	34	21
Kargil	12	06
Leh	08	03
Dehradun	32	19
Mussoorie	19	10

TEMPERATURE IN °C

Class X students to be promoted by May 31

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 11
About 1.26 lakh students of Class X of the schools affiliated to the Himachal Pradesh Board of School Education, Dharamsala, will be promoted without appearing in the exams and admitted to Class XI by May 31. The state Cabinet had on May 5 decided to promote the Class X students without holding the board examinations in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases. The Education Department issued a notification in this regard today.

The board will prepare a criterion to tabulate the marks of the Class X students, as per the CBSE formula and guidelines, and declare the results and intimate the schools and



The state Cabinet had on May 5 decided to promote the students without holding the board examinations

the students later on, the notification stated.

“All Deputy Directors and principals/headmasters have been directed to ensure admission of their Class X students as well as the students of nearby high schools and send a consolidated report to the direc-

torate at the earliest,” said Amarjeet Sharma, Director Higher Education.

“The pre-board examinations were held from February 8 to 22 so that we have a score of performance in case the situation goes worst. The pre-board exam results will help in ascer-

PRE-BOARD EXAMS TO DETERMINE MERIT

“Pre-board exams were held in February so that we could have a score of performance if the situation turned worse. The results of the exams will help in ascertaining merit.

— Amarjeet Sharma, DIRECTOR, HIGHER EDUCATION

taining the merit,” he said. Students, who could not pass the Class X exams as per the formula, including marks of internal examinations and internal assessment or could not appear in the examinations, would be given another chance to reappear, he added.

Minister visits patients in quarantine

HAMIRPUR, MAY 11

Rajiv Saizal, Health Minister, visited Covid patients in isolation here today and asked about their well-being. The minister was here to review the measures being taken by the district administration to check the spread of coronavirus.

Saizal said the government was providing the best facilities to them. The Chief Minister was deeply concerned about the patients. He said every help and support would be provided to them on their doorsteps.

While addressing officers of the administration and health department, he said that they should be proactive while taking care of Covid-19 patients.

He said that there was enough stock of oxygen in the state and no dearth of cylinders. — OC

Una man’s mortal remains arrive from Saudi Arabia

Sanjeev Kumar was buried without the family’s consent

the distraught family to get back the mortal remains. When assurances and efforts of the administration and the government did not yield the desired results, the family approached the Delhi High Court, which issued prompt directions to the Union Ministry of External Affairs to get the body back as early as possible.

“It’s been nearly four months since my father passed away. I can’t even describe what our family went through during this time. The entire family is stuck, no one has been able to move on,” said Nancy. She hopes once they are

through with the cremation, some sort of normalcy will return to their lives. “Maybe, we will be able to focus on our lives after the funeral. All we had been thinking all this while was how to get the body back,” she said. Having endured the trauma for four months, Nancy wants the government to ensure that no one else goes through the same pain as they have. “It’s not easy for a family, which is already struggling to cope with the death of a loved one, to run around to get the body back,” she said.

While the body is being sent back, Sanjeev Kumar’s belongings in Saudi Arabia are missing. “Our priority was to get the mortal remains. Once we are done with the funeral, we will think about how to get back his belongings,” said Nancy.

Expect heavy rain, storm in next 2 days

SHIMLA, MAY 11

Two Nepalese labourers were killed as lightning struck them at Mahasu gram panchayat in Sarahan of Shimla district late last evening.

Resham and Vishal, working for Shishupal and residing in Rampur, were returning to their houses after finishing the orchard work when the tragedy struck. As it was raining heavily, both took shelter under a tree and died due to lightning.

Meanwhile, the MeT office issued an orange warning of heavy rainfall, thunderstorm, hails and gusty winds in eight districts Una, Bilaspur, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Solan for May 12 and

Hamirpur, Chamba, Kangra, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Solan and Sirmaur for May 13. It predicted a wet weather in the region till May 15.

Intermittent rain lashed parts of the state and Pandoh was the wettest with 31 mm of rain followed by Chamba 16 mm, Keylong 15 mm, Seobagh 12 mm, Mandi 11 mm, Bajaura, Baghi and Kheri 10 mm each, Rampur 9 mm, Rohru, Narkanda, Bijahi and Ghamroor 8 mm each, Bilaspur, Una and Joginder-nagar 7 mm each, Banjar, Kothi, Sainj and Bhuntar 5 mm each, Manikaran and Berthin 4 mm each and Sark-ahat, Dalhousie, Mehre and Gohar 3 mm each. — TNS

No oxygen shortage in state, supply to be raised, says CM

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 11

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur today said there was adequate supply of oxygen in the health institutions of the state and more oxygen plants were being set up to enhance the supply, besides increasing the bed capacity for Covid patients.

He said that at present, oxygen plants were functional at the zonal hospital Dharamsala; DDU, Shimla; medical colleges at Chamba, Shimla, Tanda, Ner Chowk, Hamirpur and the MMU, Kumharhatti. He said the DRDO would soon set up oxygen plants sanctioned by the Centre at the civil hospital, Palampur; zonal hospital, Mandi; civil hospitals, Khaneri and Rohru in Shimla; regional hospital, Solan, and medical college, Nahar.

Thakur said the Centre had sanctioned 13 more PSA oxygen plants, which were being set up at Palampur, Mandi, Ghumarwin, Hamirpur, Reckong Peo, Ratti, Rampur, Sarahan, Kullu,

EQUIPPED TO FIGHT	
Covid beds in Himachal	3,700
Oxygenated beds	1,804
ICU beds	244
Oxygen production	75.81 MT per day
Consumption	27.83 MT per day
D-type oxygen cylinders	4,728
B-type cylinders	1,535

DDU Shimla, IGMC Shimla, Dharamsala and Ner Chowk.

The Chief Minister said the state was producing 75.81 metric tonnes per day while the consumption was 27.83 metric tonnes per day. The state presently has 4,728 D-type oxygen cylinders and 1,535 B-type cylinders. He said eight industrial units were also manufacturing oxygen in the private sector and the production was 57.03 metric tonnes per day.

He said the government had urged the Union Government to provide 5,000 D-

Type and 3,000 B-Type cylinders to the state. He said the Union Ministry of Health had provided 75,000 PPE kits and 75,000 N-95 masks.

Thakur said the state government was making efforts to enhance the bed capacity in the hospitals. At present, around 3,700 beds were available in various health institutes and almost half of them were unoccupied. The state also has a facility of 244 ICUs and 1804 oxygenated beds. The bed capacity would be enhanced by 1,100 in makeshift hospitals.

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SOLAN, MAY 11

A Covid patient, Babu Ram — who was on oxygen support and was being shifted from a Baddi hospital to Shimla — died allegedly after the oxygen supply exhausted on the way near Parwanoo in an ambulance on Monday evening.

Family members of the deceased told mediapersons at Solan that doctors at the hospital had enquired about the oxygen availability from the ambulance staff before sending the patient.

They were assured that there were two cylinders in the ambulance which would be sufficient. Nalagarh SDM Mahinder Pal said Babu Ram was admitted at the hospital on May 8.

He had an oxygen level of 60 per cent and his attendants wanted to shift him to the IGMC, Shimla. They finally arranged a ventilator bed for him at the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Shimla, and called an ‘108 ambulance’ to shift him on Monday.

Nalagarh SDM to probe the matter, says Solan DC

The deceased’s family alleged that the ambulance had two oxygen cylinders, but before discharging him, doctors had asked ambulance staff to take more oxygen cylinders in view of the high utility of the patient.

The ambulance staff, however, said they had adequate oxygen cylinders. One empty cylinder was also replaced with a filled one by the hospital. Though the paramedic was explained about the need to ensure oxygen support, the patient’s kin alleged no one sat with the patient in the ambulance and he collapsed near Parwanoo due to the lack of oxygen.

The deceased hailed from Hamirpur district and ran a stationary shop at Baddi.

The patient’s family members lamented that they had lost their family member due to the “callous” attitude of the ambulance workers.

64 more deaths, 4,977 new cases

SHIMLA, MAY 11

The highest 64 Covid deaths in a day in the state were witnessed today. Besides, 4,977 cases were reported, taking the tally to 140,759.

Twentyone persons died of the virus in Kangra, 12 in Solan, 10 in Mandi, seven in Shimla, four each in Una and Sirmaur, three in Chamba, two in Hamirpur and one in Kullu. The highest 1,504 cases was recorded in Kangra, followed by 881 in Mandi, 583 in Shimla, 443 in Hamirpur, 335 in Bilaspur, 313 in Una, 274 in Solan, and 266 in Chamba. — TNS

COVID METER		
DISTRICT-WISE COUNT		
DISTRICT	+VE	DEATHS
Una	9,222	140
Solan	17,058	173
Kangra	29,310	551
Chamba	6,450	78
Hamirpur	9,826	117
Sirmaur	10,718	104
Mandi	19,390	232
Bilaspur	8,553	37
Shimla	18,966	414
Kullu	6,870	104
Kinnaur	2,172	26
Lahaul & Spiti	2,224	13
Total	140,759	1,989

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH.	NAME OF WORK/NOTICE/ TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/ EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES
1	HAFED	SHORT TERM E-TENDER NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF COMPOSTABLE CARRY BAGS FOR HAFED SALE OUTLETS.	11.05.2021 24.05.2021	25000/-

WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/AUTH.: www.hafed.gov.in

NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/E-MAIL: 0172-290520
hafed@hry.nic.in

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

PRDH/13/2022/40/290411/31/4

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD/CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	HVPNL	AUGMENTATION OF 132 KV SUBSTATION SAMPLA FROM 2X100 MVA, 220/132 KV T/F TO 3X100 MVA, 220/132 KV T/F FOR 2021-22	10.05.2021 20.05.2021	12.14 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	pro@hvnpn.org.in
2	HVPNL	1. PAINTING OF RUSTED AND UN-GALVANIZED TOWERS OF 66KV NARAINGARH-BILASPUR UP TO SADHAURA S/C LINE FOR THE FY - 2021-22. 2. PAINTING OF RUSTED AND UN GALVANIZED TOWERS OF 66KV NARAINGARH-SUGARMILL S/C LINE FOR THE FY 2021-22.	10.05.2021 20.05.2021	7.02 LACS	www.hvnpn.org.in	pro@hvnpn.org.in
3	HARYANA TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORP.	CONVERSION OF EXISTING LIBRARY INTO CONFERENCE HALL AT REGISTRAR CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, HARYANA SAHKARITA BHAWAN, BAYS NO. 27-30, SECTOR-2, PANCHKULA	11.05.2021 18.05.2021	13.20 LACS	haryanatourism.gov.in	9216400440 haryanatourism@gmail.com
4	THE ROHTAK CO-OP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD. A UNIT OF HDDCF LTD.	SUPPLY/INSTALLATION & COMMISSIONING OF AUTOMATIC MILK/LASSI POUCH FILLING MACHINE MAKE SAMARPAN/NICHROME/VIJAYPACK RMC PACKAGING	11.05.2021 20.05.2021	25000/-	www.vitaIndia.org.in	01262-277364 vitarohatak@gmail.com
5	HARTRON	SUPPLY & INSTALLATION OF CCTV SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM AT 21 NOS KGVBS ON BEHALF OF HSSPP	12.05.2021 01.06.2021		https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2580096 dhardware.harttron@gmail.com

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

PRDH/13/2022/100/290311/31/4

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF DEPARTMENT	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE DEPARTMENT	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	IRRIGATION KARNAL	CONSTRUCTION OUTFALL GATE AT RD 0 AND SUMP WELL AT RD 13400 AND REMODELING OF 1 NO. CULVERT AT RD 3300 BAZIDA DRAIN +1 OTHER WORK	12.05.2021 19.05.2021	52.96 LACS	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	0184-2258008 xenindiv@yahoo.com
2.	FOREST PANIPAT	PLANTATION STATE SCHEME 32 HA.5 RKM + 2 OTHER WORKS	11.05.2021 17.05.2021	62.16 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0180-2650331 dfopanipat04@yahoo.co.in
3.	FOREST PANIPAT	PLANTATION STATE SCHEME 29 HA.5 RKM + 2 OTHER WORKS	12.05.2021 18.05.2021	64.97 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0180-2650331 dfopanipat04@yahoo.co.in
4.	IRRIGATION JIND	CONSTRUCTION OF CANAL REST HOUSE IN YAMUNA WATER SERVICES CIRCLE OFFICE CAMPUS, JIND + ONE OTHER	CLOSING DATE 03.06.2021	318.87 LACS	hid.gov.in	xenwsjd@gmail.com
5.	PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING KURUKSHETRA	ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OF RURAL WATER SUPPLY SCHEME OF PHE SUB DIVISION NO.4 KURUKSHETRA FOR THE YEAR 2021-22 (FAILING UNDER PHED KURUKSHETRA) REPAIR OF PUMPING MACHINERY OF EXISTING 33 NOS. TUBEWELLS AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO. (FOR ONE YEAR) + 4 OTHER WORKS	05.05.2021 19.05.2021	42.10 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	0172-2583005 eeccoord@phedharyana.gov.in
6.	HEALTH DEPARTMENT KAITHAL	RBSK VEHICLE	11.05.2021 22.05.2021	EMD 25000/-	dhs.cskt@hry.nic.in and Haryanahealth.nic.in	9991134904 drugstorekt@gmail.com
7.	IRRIGATION KAITHAL	RE-CONSTRUCTION OF CROSS REGULATOR CUM FALL AT RD 150000 OF SIRSA BRANCH. + 1 OTHER WORK	18.05.2021 09.06.2021	4.89 CRORE	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	01746-298412 xensarasvatidnkt@gmail.com
8.	HEALTH DEPARTMENT ROHTAK	REGARDING SHORT TERMS TENDER NOTICE FOR PURCHASE OF MEDICINES AND CONSUMABLES ETC. FOR DISTT. ROHTAK	CLOSING DATE 17.05.2021	20000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	9896004141 dhs.csrkt@hry.nic.in
9.	HEALTH DEPARTMENT AMBALA	E-TENDER FOR THE SUPPLY OF FINGER TIP PULSE OXIMETER, STEAMER, DIGITAL THERMOMETER, AYUSH KWATH, GILGY TABLETS AND ANU TAIL ON RATE CONTRACT OF ONE YEAR	12.05.2021 16.05.2021	EMD 50000/-	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	7015996787 dhs.csamb@hry.nic.in
10.	WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT AMBALA	PROCURING FOOD ITEMS REQUIRED UNDER ICDS IN AMBALA DISTRICT	06.05.2021 24.05.2021	36 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01712530910 poamb.wcd2@gmail.com
11.	PWD (B&R) NARNAUL	SPECIAL REPAIR OF ROAD & PARKING IN JUDICIAL COMPLEX AT MOHINDERGARH IN MOHINDERGARH DISTRICT.	11.05.2021 01.06.2021	9.97 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01282251267 pwd-eeepd-narnaul@hry.nic.in
12.	IRRIGATION KAITHAL	CARRING OUT SURVEY FOR SCHEME OF CONSTRUCTING OF VR BRIDGE AT RD 29678 OF KAITHAL DRAIN INCLUDING DETAILED DESIGN & DRAWING WORKING DESIGN BY VETTING THE CONCERNED DESIGN & DRAWING FROM NIT KURUKSHETRA/IT, PREPARATION OF DETAILED ESTIMATE WITH BOQ AND OTHER RELATED WORKS, MODIFICATION AND SITE VISIT FOR THE WORK INCLUDING GEO TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION.	CLOSING DATE 17.05.2021	EMD 25000/-	www.etenders.hry.nic.in	01746222384 xenktl@gmail.com
13.	PWD (B&R) FATEHABAD	SPECIAL REPAIR OF RATIA FATEHABAD ROAD TO SUKHMANPUR KM 0 TO 3.85 (ROAD ID 5556) IN FATEHABAD DISTT. (RE-INVOID) AND OTHER 03 WORKS	10.05.2021 31.05.2021	81.74 LACS	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	01667220120 dalipkambqj1986@gmail.com
14.	HEALTH DEPARTMENT, PANCHKULA	E TENDER FOR PURCHASE OF ITEMS FOR COVID PATIENTS IN HOME ISOLATION, PANCHKULA	10.05.2021 17.05.2021	30 lacs	https://etenders.hry.nic.in	7015995169 dhs.cspk@hry.nic.in

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

PRDH-11/2022/280/290211/31/4

Physically challenged, but serving patients with zeal

RAJIV MAHAJAN

NURPUR, MAY 11

A physically challenged multipurpose health worker, posted in the Primary Health Centre (PHC), Rinna, in Nagni gram panchayat, Nurgpur, has become a source of inspiration for others.

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has exempted physically challenged and pregnant women employees from performing pandemic-related duties.

However, Rajesh Sahotra, a disabled health worker, has been discharging his field duty for the past over one year.

He turned down the option of staying at home and continued to serve Covid patients.

Sahotra claimed that he had not availed even a sin-



Rajesh Sahotra hands over a kit at a Covid patient's house.

gle leave during this period on Covid duty.

The Health Department is taking his services in vaccination and testing camps being organised in

the Rinna PHC. He is also distributing medicine kits among the patients undergoing home quarantine.

After declaring two micro-containment zones by the local administration after a spurt in Covid cases, Sahotra visited patients on their doorsteps, counselled them and handed over kits. Despite being a regular blood donor and social activist, he was appointed president of the Nurgpur unit of the Non-Gazetted Officer (NGO) Federation.

He said it was my duty to serve human beings. “My conscious doesn’t allow me to take the benefit of the MHA guideline and stay at home without doing any work. I am enjoying serving patients in the crisis,” he said. He claimed that he was getting a regular support of senior officials.

Sentence in Gudiya case on May 18

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MAY 11

The CBI special court today deferred announcement of quantum of sentence in the Gudiya rape and murder case to May 18. The court had held lone accused Anil Kumar, alias Nilu, a chirani

(wood cutter), guilty of rape and murder on April 28.

The verdict was announced by Special judge Rajiv Bharadwaj after hearing both the defence and prosecution through video conference. The special judge said that out of the 14 crucial points of evidence

produced by the CBI, 12 were found to be against Nilu, the most important evidence being matching of his DNA with samples found on the crime spot.

The accused, Nilu, was held guilty under various sections of the IPC and the POCSO Act.

Three Lashkar ultras killed in Anantnag

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11
Three Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) militants were killed in a joint operation by security forces in Anantnag district of Jammu and Kashmir.

Officials in the security establishment said the forces launched a cordon and search operation at Vailoo in Komernag area of the district early on Tuesday following inputs about the presence of militants.

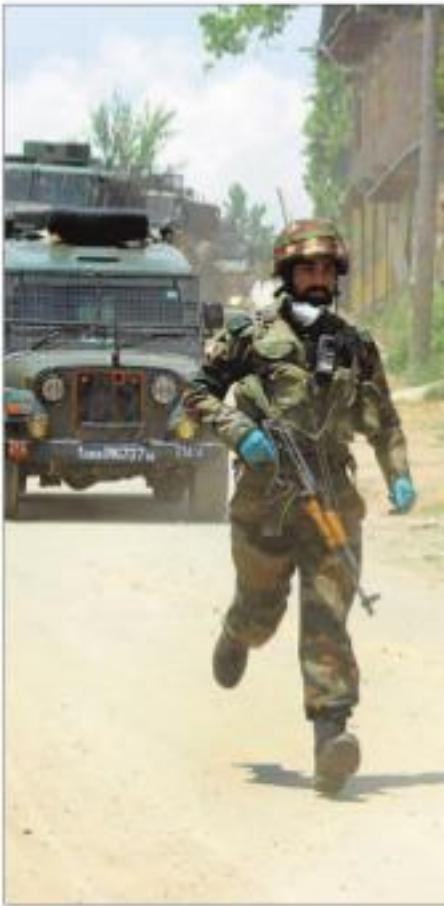
“As the presence of militants was ascertained, they were given an opportunity to surrender. However, the militants fired indiscriminately at the search party, which too retaliated, leading to the encounter,” a senior security official said.

The official said the joint teams of the forces rescued all civilians trapped in the area and halted the operation till the time all of them were safely evacuated.

“After ensuring all civilians are safe, the operation was resumed and all the terrorists were eliminated. The bodies of the militants were retrieved from the encounter site,” the official said.

The slain militants were

Were involved in
attacks on forces



identified as Ilyas Ahmad Dar (alias Sameer), Ubaid Shafi (alias Abdullah) and Aqib Ahmad Lone (alias Sahil), the official said.

According to police records, the killed terrorists were “linked with proscribed terror outfit LeT and were part of the groups involved in several terror cases, including attacks on security forces and security establishments”, the official added.

Tarigami seeks release of ‘political detainees’

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11
Mohammed Yousuf Tarigami, CPM leader and an MLA in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday demanded the release of Kashmiri “political detainees” lodged in various jails within the Valley in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases.

The surge had put their lives in congested jails at risk and the government should release them on humanitarian grounds, he demanded.

“Releasing all political prisoners in these tough times can end the miseries of their families too. The present situation is a humanitarian crisis of the worst kind and the government needs to take a holistic view,” he said.

Tarigami said releasing prisoners before Eid could be a good gesture by the government. He also cited the Supreme Court’s recent directive to consider release of prisoners by adopting the guidelines of the National Legal Services Authority on the issue to decongest jails.

He said hundreds of Kashmiri prisoners, including teenagers, were languishing in jails within and outside J&K for years now. “Some of them are behind bars for years together and their cases need to be reviewed in the light of Supreme Court directions,” he said.

UT announces welfare measures for Covid-hit

SRINAGAR, MAY 11

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Tuesday announced several welfare measures for families severely hit by the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The J&K Government has taken several measures to help those who unfortunately lost their loved ones to Covid-19. Senior citizens who have lost only earning member of the family will be provided special pension for life. Children who have lost their parents to the Covid-19 pandemic will be provided with special scholarship,” the office of Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha announced on Twitter.

The government said it had decided to reach out to every such family and they would be provided with financial assistance for self-employment.

“At a time when this global pandemic has rendered daily workers jobless, the government has decided to provide Rs 1,000 per month to all registered construction workers, panywalas, palkiwalas, pithuwalas for the next two months,” it added.

The government has directed all officers concerned to ensure the supply of rations to all ration card holders on priority. Installments of social welfare schemes such as old-age pension, Laadli Beti, PMAY, MGNREGA and



WILL GET PENSION, SCHOLARSHIP

- Senior citizens who have lost the only earning member of the family will get special pension for life
- Children who lost their parents due to the pandemic will get special scholarship
- All registered construction workers, panywalas, palkiwalas, pithuwalas to get ₹1,000 a month for next two months

other welfare schemes would be released immediately, it added.

In these challenging times, the old-age homes and orphanages will be extended all the support from the government, including rations, the government said.

“Our biggest priority is to defeat this pandemic. I urge all of you to follow Covid-appropriate behaviour and get vaccinated. We will soon prevail together over this pandemic,” it added. — PTI

Door-to-door tracing starts in Jammu dist

JAMMU, MAY 11

A massive door-to-door exercise was started across Jammu on Tuesday to ‘trace and isolate’ probable Covid-positive patients as part of the ongoing efforts to contain the pandemic, officials said.

Jammu district tops the Covid fatality chart with a total of 686 deaths till Monday evening with over 300 of the patients succumbing to the infection in the past three weeks. The district has 7,630 active cases, which is also the second highest in the entire UT.

Seeking cooperation of the

people to the drive, Jammu Deputy Commissioner Anshul Garg said it was an attempt to reach out to each of the 4.5 lakh households in the district in the next four days to trace and isolate probable positive patients, promote Covid-19 SoPs and lend a helping hand.

Earlier, in a video message, the DC said since more than 10 per cent positivity was recorded over the past few days, the door-to-door campaign was part of various measures already taken by the administration to tackle the situation. — PTI

Jabs effective against...

FROM PAGE 1
effective against the variant and prevent severe disease,” Anurag Agarwal, Director, CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, told *The Tribune* a day after the WHO classified the Indian variant as a “variant of concern”.

Agarwal said India had classified B.1.617 as a “variant of concern” long ago.

“When the WHO does the same thing, it applies to the world. Otherwise B.1.617 has been a variant of concern in India. The moot point here is that as of today, there is no evidence that variants can escape vaccine effective-

ness,” he said.

The B.1.617 variant emerged in Maharashtra in late 2020 and has spread throughout India and at least 40 countries. It is linked to the massive Covid surge in India over the past 1.5 months. The authors further argue against using the term “double mutant” for the Indian variant, saying, “The fold reduction in the ability of two key mutations of B.1.617 — L452R and E484Q — to avoid neutralising antibodies elicited by the vaccine was no greater than the individual mutations alone, arguing against use of the term double mutant.”

44heldfor flouting norms in Rajouri

JAMMU, MAY 11

The police on Tuesday arrested 44 persons and slapped FIRs against several others for violation of lockdown along with Covid-19 guidelines in Jammu and Kashmir’s Rajouri district, officials said.

A total of 38 FIRs have been registered against violators, 44 persons arrested and 141 persons fined during a drive against the those breaking the law, they said. Furthermore, 21 vehicles have been seized while 17 commercial establishments have been sealed as per procedure under the law, they said.

The officials said that with the continuing rise in Covid-19 cases, all members of the public were advised to avoid unnecessary travel. The people are requested to adhere to Covid protocol and containment measures that are in place to prevent the further spread of infection, the officials said. The J&K administration has extended curfew measures in place to check the spread of the virus till May 17. — PTI

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REGISTRAR

Don't create false panic: Nadda...

government’s fight against the pandemic was driven by belief in science, support for innovation, trust in Covid warriors and cooperative federalism. “While there are a few members of your party doing commendable work in helping people, their hard work gets eclipsed by negativity spread by senior members of the party. One would wish that while India is fighting Covid-19 with utmost courage, the top Congress leaders would stop misleading people, creating false panic and even contradicting their stands just based on political considerations,” he wrote.

Citing high mortality rate in Congress-ruled states, including Punjab, he said, “There are other aspects that also

need greater thought. For instance, the data from February and March would reveal which states failed to track the rising cases. Why are mortality rates in states such as Punjab so high? These are questions you must ask your own Chief Ministers.”

Nadda also hit back over the criticism of the BJP for holding big poll rallies while cases surged across the nation and the ongoing construction of the Central Vista project. He said the need for a new Parliament building was raised during the Congress-led UPA regime with the then Speaker Meira Kumar underscoring the need for it. “Yet, the Congress does not believe in facts. People are also contrasting the Congress’ stand

on Central Vista with the Chhattisgarh Government going ahead to build a new Assembly complex,” he said.

Accusing the Congress of “ignoring” the Centre’s advisories on the second wave, he said it was doing no favours to itself by opposing lockdowns and then demanding it.

The Congress leaders, he said, held massive election rallies in Kerala causing a spike in cases, and were now “grandstanding” about poll rallies elsewhere.

The BJP leadership is in a damage-control mode over perceptions over the Centre’s handling of Covid crisis with leaders taking to newspaper columns to present the BJP-led government’s point of view on related issues.

Now, bodies found floating...

The post-mortems were conducted at the ghat itself as the bodies were highly decomposed.

An administrative officer in the district, on condition of anonymity, said: “The autopsies of the highly decomposed and bloated bodies could not establish the cause of deaths.”

Reacting to the development, Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said the incident was “unfortunate” and asked the states (UP and Bihar) concerned to take immediate cognisance.

“The incident of corpses found floating in Ganga in Buxar region of Bihar is unfortunate. This is definitely a matter of investigation. The Modi government is committed to the cleanliness of ‘mother’ Ganga. This incident is unexpected. The states concerned should take immediate cognisance in this regard,” the Union Minister said in one of his Twitter posts.

Vax crunch, but Punjab...

Despite the Centre opening vaccination for the 18 to 45 age group from May 1, the Punjab Government had deferred inoculation in this category till it “had sufficient stock”. It had said it would first vaccinate those in the 45-plus category, besides the frontline and health-care workers. Significantly, Punjab has been facing a shortage of doses even as the fatalities have been mounting. The number of doses administered weekly has been continuously declining.

Spike in Covid deaths, but...

other facilities,” he said. A mobile testing van visits Khudana village for a couple of hours after every few days. “It is insufficient considering the population of the village,” said Prem. In Bawaniya village as well, eight persons passed away in a week. Village resident Vijay Singh said, “Several children have flu-like symptoms. In the absence of testing facilities, we are at the God’s mercy.”

Deputy Commissioner Ajay Kumar said, “The number of deaths in the district has gone up from 37 to 75 in 11 days. The macro-containment zones have been doubled to 19. A list of villages with high number of patients and deaths has been drawn up. Auxiliary nurse midwives and health workers are enforcing home isolation.”

After UP floats global vax tender...

today said the state will float a global tender to procure vaccines, accusing the Centre of forcing states to compete for vaccine procurement globally. Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, meanwhile, wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ensure the vaccine formula of Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute was shared with other manufacturers to boost national production.

Kejriwal said this would help acquire a national safety net ahead of the third wave and could be done by invoking relevant provisions of the Patents Act and issuing compulsory licences to firms. A royalty from the profits of manufacturers could be given to Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute, said Kejriwal. The Congress had made a similar demand earlier.

Uttarakhand too has written to the Centre asking if they could directly import vaccines; this on a day when Andhra Pradesh CM YS Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote to the PM urging transfer of Covishield and Covaxin technologies to other job manufacturers under the Patents Law. Reddy said at the current pace, it may take several months to get everyone vaccinated.

The Centre, meanwhile, held a vaccine review meet-

States free to import

Drug controller had on May 5 issued guidelines for states and private entities to import vaccines not licensed for use in India but authorised by regulators of the US, UK, EU and for those on WHO emergency use list.

WHAT IMPORTER NEEDS

- New drug permission from the drug controller under the New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules 2019
- Import licence
- Registration licence

ing with states asking them to prioritise second doses and reserve 70 per cent stocks provided free of cost by the government of India for the second doses.

Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said, “There is an urgent need to address a large number of beneficiaries waiting for the second dose. States can reserve at least 70 per cent of the vaccines supplied to them from the Government of India channel (free of cost) for second dose vaccination and remaining 30 per cent for first dose.” A pre-bid meeting for the UP Government’s global tender for Covid vaccines is expected to be held tomorrow.

SIT begins probe into Tikri...

protesters who had gone to the state to hold public meetings during the Assembly polls. She died of Covid on April 30, but her father on May 8 night lodged a police complaint alleging his daughter was sexually assaulted by Anil Malik in Tikri while Anoop Singh helped him in the crime. Both ran the ‘Kisan Social Army’ outfit and had been camping at Tikri for a few months. The police booked six persons, including Anil, Anoop, Ankush Sangwan, Jagdish Barar, Kavita and Yogita, under relevant sections of the IPC.

HP issues...

in view, the state clinical committee has issued a treatment protocol for the judicious use of steroids by Covid patients.

“The state clinical committee has recommended that for those in home isolation, inhalable steroids like Budesonide may be taken via metered doses inhaler/dry powder inhalers at a dose of 800 mcg twice a day for five days,” he said.

He, however, cautioned that these should be taken only if fever or cough persists after five days of disease.

**MAHARAJA AGRASEN MEDICAL COLLEGE,
AGROHA (HISAR) HARYANA 125 047**

E-Tender Notice for ICU Ventilators

E-Tender is invited for purchase of ICU Ventilators Maharaja Agrasen Medical College, Agroha (Hisar). Details may be seen at <https://etenders.hry.nic.in/nicgep/app>

Tender ID:- 2021_HRY_171372_1

DI-2580

Sd/- **Dy. Med. Supdt.
For Director**

Public Notice

Sh. Gaurav Sharma, Section Officer, office of District Social Security Officer, Fatehgarh Sahib is absent from duty without leave since **01.12.2018**.

The Punjab Government has appointed the undersigned to conduct regular enquiry against him. In spite of two notices sent to him to attend the enquiry proceedings, he did not appear. Now, this notice is issued to him to attend enquiry proceedings on the next date of hearing fixed for **24.05.2021 at 11.00 a.m.** in the office of the undersigned. If he fails to appear, proceedings will be conducted ex-parte.

**Sd/- Dr. V.K. Bansal,
LL.M, Ph.D.,
F.I.C.A.
(Inquiry Officer),
Room No. 215, 2nd Floor,
Academy Block, Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration (MGSIPA), Sector-26, Chandigarh.**

DPR/Pb/4455

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੋਰਡ
ਆਨਲਾਈਨ ਟੈਂਡਰ ਨੋਟਿਸ
ਟੈਂਡਰ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਨੰਬਰ 6 (2021) ਮਿਤੀ: 10.05.2021

ਕਾਰਜਕਾਰੀ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ (ਸ), ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੋਰਡ, ਗੁਰਦਾਸਪੁਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੋਰਡ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਨਿਸ਼ੀਏਟਿਵ ਡੇਕੋਰਾ/ਫਰਮਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਲਈ ਆਨਲਾਈਨ ਟੈਂਡਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ:-

- (1) ਮਾਰਕੀਟ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਫਤਹਿਗੜ੍ਹ ਚੂੜੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਟਾਲਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਲਿੰਕ ਸੜਕਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਮਾਰਕੀਟ ਕਮੇਟੀ/ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੋਰਡ ਵਿੱਚ ਫਿਰ ਪ੍ਰਥਮ ਪੁਲਾਂ/ਪੁਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਨਾ।
- (2) ਮਾਰਕੀਟ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਦੀਨਾਨਗਰ ਅਪੀਨ ਪੈਦੀ ਲਿੰਕ ਸੜਕ ਚੱਕ ਰਾਮ ਸਰਾਏ ਤੋਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਲਸੇਨ ਰੋਡ, ਵਾਇਆ ਮਕੌੜਾ ਪੱਤਣ, ਪਿੰਡ ਤੁਰ ਚਿੱਥ ਭਰਿਆਲ, ਮੰਮੀ ਚੰਦਰਗਾ ਡੇਰਾ ਰਾਮਲਾ, ਝੁੱਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਕੁੰਕਰ (ਲੈਕਸ 0-1.515, ਪਾਰਟ-ਏ) ਅਤੇ (ਲੈਕਸ 1.515 ਤੋਂ 8.695 ਕਿ.ਮੀ) ਪਾਰਟ-ਬੀ (ਮਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਕੰਪੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ ਪੀਸੀ. ਸੌਂ ਸਮੇਤ ਪੁਲੀਆਂ, ਨਾਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਈਡ ਡਰੇਨ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਨਾ (ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ 2018-19 ਡੈਸ਼-ਏ)
- (3) ਮਾਰਕੀਟ ਕਮੇਟੀ, ਦੀਨਾਨਗਰ ਅਪੀਨ ਪੈਦੀਆਂ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਲਿੰਕ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਰੀਸਟੋਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਕਰਨਾ (ਮਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਕੰਪੈਕਸ਼ਨ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ ਪੀਸੀ. ਤੱਕ)

ਵੈੱਬਸਾਈਟ <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਲਵੋ।

ਨੋਟ:- ਸੋਧ ਜੇਕਰ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਸਿਰਫ ਵੈੱਬਸਾਈਟ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

DPR/Pb/4460 **ਸਹੀ/- ਕਾਰਜਕਾਰੀ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ (ਸ), ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬੋਰਡ, ਗੁਰਦਾਸਪੁਰ।**

OFFICE OF THE
MUNICIPAL COUNCIL, ZIRAKPUR
(Distt. S.A.S. Nagar)

ਦਫਤਰ ਨਗਰ ਕੌਂਸਲ, ਜ਼ੀਰਕਪੁਰ (ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਐਸ.ਏ.ਐਸ. ਨਗਰ)

ਨੰਬਰ: 240 ਮਿਤੀ: 11.05.2021

ਪਬਲਿਕ ਨੋਟਿਸ

ਨਗਰ ਕੌਂਸਲ, ਜ਼ੀਰਕਪੁਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਕਿਸ਼ਨਪੁਰ ਦੀ ਹੱਦਬਾਹ ਨੰ. 54, ਰਬਾੜਾ ਕਿਸ਼ਨਪੁਰ, ਬੇਣਟੀ ਨੰ. 8/8, ਖਾਰਾ ਨੰਬਰ-11(3-13), 12(4-0), 13(4-0), 14(4-0) ਵਿਚ 13 ਬਿੰਬੇ, 11 ਬਿਸਵੇ, 6.40 ਬਿਸਵਾਸੀ ਦੇ ਏਰੀਏ ਦੀ ਨਗਰ ਨਿਗਲਬੰਦੀ ਸਕੀਮ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਰਾਹ 192 ਪੰਜਾਬ ਮਿਊਂਸਪਲ ਐਕਟ, 1911 ਜਾਰੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਨੋਟੀਫਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਨੰਬਰ ਸੀ.ਟੀ.ਪੀ. (ਸਮ)-2020/2946, ਮਿਤੀ 14.10.2020 ਰਾਹੀਂ ਅਨ-ਬਿਲਟ ਘੋਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਅਮ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਸੂਚਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੱਤਰ ਨੰ. ਸੀ.ਟੀ.ਪੀ. (ਸਮ)-2021/164, ਮਿਤੀ 12.01.2021 ਰਾਹੀਂ ਲੈਆਉਟ ਪਲੈਨ ਡਰਾਇੰਗ ਨੰਬਰ ਐਮ.ਸੀ.ਜ਼ੀਰਕਪੁਰ/2870, ਮਿਤੀ 24.12.2020 ਦੀ ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਕੀਮ ਦੀ ਵਾਈਨਲ ਨੋਟੀਫਿਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਅਮ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਨੂੰ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਜਾਰੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼/ਸ਼ੁਆਹ ਜੇਕਰ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਨੋਟਿਸ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੋਣ ਦੀ ਮਿਤੀ ਤੋਂ 30 ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ-ਅੰਦਰ ਇਸ ਨਿਮਨਸਤਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਫਤਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਦੇ ਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸਕੀਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਕਾਗਜ਼ਾਤ ਨਗਰ ਕੌਂਸਲ, ਜ਼ੀਰਕਪੁਰ ਦੀ ਡਰਾਇੰਗ ਬਰਾਂਚ ਵਿਖੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕਮ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਦਫਤਰੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਦੇਖੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੋਟਿਸ/ਇਤਰਾਜ਼/ਸ਼ੁਆਹ ਆਦਿ 'ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।

ਸਹੀ/- ਕਾਰਜਸਾਧਕ ਅਡਸਰ, ਨਗਰ ਕੌਂਸਲ, ਜ਼ੀਰਕਪੁਰ।

**NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE**

WHERE, AS Shri Yogender Kumar Sharma S/O Sh Gopal pd. Sharma track maintainer village Dhariya Tehsil Nadauti Thana Nadauti, Distt. Karoli State Rajasthan PIN 32215 remained unauthorized absent from 03.04.2018 to till date and failed to report for duty at his working place. WHERE, AS Shri Yogender Kumar Sharma has been Charge sheeted for a major penalty vide no 12/E/32/D&AR/SRE/SF-5/Y.K/2021 dated 30.01.2021and got served to registered letter on 01.02.2021 on the above noted address but Sh Yogender Kumar Sharma did not turn up for his duty and no any reply for regarding his long unauthorized absentee It appears that said Shri Yogender Kumar Sharma is evading the service of letters. His it is evident that said Shri Yogender Kumar Sharma is no more interested to serve the Railways and therefore by way of this publication is here by informed to attend the office of SSE/Pway/YJUD to report for duty within 10 days of the publication of this notice otherwise the Railway administration shall proceed to take disciplinary action against said Sh Yogender Kumar Sharma.

No. 12/E/32/D&AR/SF-5/Y.K./2021 DATED 22.04.2021

**Assistant Divisional Engineer
N/Rly/Saharanpur**

1009/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

ਈ-ਟੈਂਡਰ ਨੋਟਿਸ
ਨਗਰ ਨਿਗਮ, ਫਗਵਾੜਾ

ਮੀਮੋ ਨੰ: 780/CE ਮਿਤੀ: 11.05.2021

ਨਗਰ ਨਿਗਮ, ਫਗਵਾੜਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ Sterilization of stray Dogs in Phagwara City ਲਾਗੂ 3.76 ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਵਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਿਤੀ 25.05.2021 ਤੱਕ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਠੇਕੇਦਾਰਾਂ/ਫਰਮਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸੂਚੀਬੱਧ ਈ-ਟੈਂਡਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਵੈੱਬਸਾਈਟ www.eproc.punjab.gov.in 'ਤੇ ਦੌਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਸਹੀ/- ਨਿਗਰਾਨ ਇੰਜੀਨੀਅਰ, ਨਗਰ ਨਿਗਮ, ਫਗਵਾੜਾ

DPR/Pb/4470

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.
(Regd Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)
Corporate ID No. U40109PB2010SGC033813
(Contact Number: 96461-16006)

Tender Inquiry No. 02/DY. CE/DS/JAL, 02/DY. CE/DS/KPT, 02/DY. CE/DS/HSP and 02/DY. CE/DS/NSR/2021-22 **Date: 11/05/21**

DY. CE/DS Circle, PSPCL, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur and Nawanshahr invites e-tender to carry out the execution of works comprising only labour component for execution of various works such as releasing of/twell connection, Deloading of overloaded Uf, bifurcation of feeders, releasing isd/gsc connection or any development work to be executed during year 2021-22 all divisions under DS Circle, Jalandhar, Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur and Nawanshahr for the year 2021-22. For detailed MIT & Tender specification please refer to website <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 11/05/2021 onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

C180/21 DPR/Pb/4457

GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB
E-Tender Notice No. 205 ct .11.5.2021

The Department of Punjab W/S & Sew. Board, re-invites/invites online bids for the following :-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Closing Date and Time
1	O & M of Water Supply Lines and 2 No. TWells at Ghanaur for the Year 2021-22 (1.5.2021 to 31.3.2022) for 11 Months	25-5-2021 at 5.00 PM
2	O & M of Sewerage Scheme at Ghanaur for the Year 2021-22 (1.5.2021 to 31.3.2022) for 11 Months	
3	Providing & Laying of W/S Lines and all other works contingent thereto in Old Ganesh Nagar at Rajpura.	

For details logon to : www.eproc.punjab.gov.in

**Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Pb. W/S & Sew Divn. No. 1,
Patiala. 0175-2200731
eep1.pwssb@punjab.gov.in**

DPR/Pb/4462

**NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE**

WHERE, AS Shri Vikas kumar S/O Sh Harpal singh Saini track maintainer Village Mullapur Kadiom Post Office Nagrapur, Saharanpur State Uttar Pradesh PIN 247001 remained unauthorized absent from 26.03.2019 to till date and failed to report for duty at his working place. WHERE, AS Shri Vikas kumar has been Charge sheeted for a major penalty vide no 12/E/32/D&AR/SRE/SF-5/V.K/2021 dated 30.01.2021and got served to registered letter on 01.02.2021 on the above noted address but Sh Vikas kumar did not turn up for his duty and no any reply for regarding his long unauthorized absentee. It appears that said Shri Vikas kumar is evading the service of letters. His it is evident that said Shri Vikas kumar is no more interested to serve the Railways and therefore by way of this publication is here by informed to attend the office of SSE/Pway/YJUD to report for duty within 10 days of the publication of this notice otherwise the Railway administration shall proceed to take disciplinary action against said Sh Vikas kumar.

**Assistant Divisional Engineer,
N/Rly/Saharanpur**

No. 12/E/32/D&AR/SF-5/V.K./2021 DATED 22.04.2021 1010/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

OFFICE OF THE CANTONMENT BOARD, JALANDHAR
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR RUNNING COVID WARD

The Cantonment Board, Jalandhar maintains “The War Memorial XXIX Punjabis Cantonment General Hospital” at prime location of Jindan Road near Sadar Bazar Jalandhar Cantt. Considering the requirement of setting up medical facilities to overcome present Covid Pandemic, the Cantonment Board, Jalandhar intends to open and run 10 bedded Covid Isolation & Treatment Centre with Oxygen facility (Level 1 & Level 2) on PPP mode in order to provide medical facilities to the citizens at reasonable cost (02 Beds will be reserved for Cantt Board staff/their family Members).

Expression of Interest are invited from established/experienced/reputed Medical Consultants/Organizations for a period of 06 months or till the time there is no requirement for operating the facility further and any order with regard to the same from the Central /State Govt. to close such centers, whichever is earlier. However, if the situation continues even after 06 months, MoU/Agreement may be extended as per mutual consent of the both parties on the same terms and conditions.

The Board will provide the basic Infrastructure support viz furnished ward having 10 bedded capacity equipped with oxygen facility, attached toilet, staff room, electricity, furniture, ACs (wherever required) etc Covid Isolation & Treatment Centre in Cantt. General Hospital. The successful offerer shall obtain necessary permission for running of Covid Isolation/Treatment Centre from District Administration/Health Department and will provide medical services - consultation, treatment, nursing service as per guidelines of the Govt. issued from time to time for treatment of Covid patients, adequate supply of Oxygen, medicine, medical equipment, Ambulance and house keeping services, food to patients, disposal of medical waste etc. The successful offerer shall be responsible for running the Covid Isolation/ Treatment Centre to provide treatment to the covid patient/Covid suspected patients in the Centre on CGHS/Govt. approved rates.

The Interested Medical Consultants/Organizations may obtain EoI form from the office of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar free of cost by 13.05.2021 up to 1700 hrs which will be submitted on 17.05.2021 up to 1600 hrs, and will be opened on the same day at 1630 hrs in the office of the Cantonment Board Jalandhar.

The Board/undersigned reserves the right to accept/reject any or all EoIs without assigning any reasons therefor.

Telephone: 0181-2260250
e-mail: cbjalandhar2011@gmail.com
DI-2578

**(Jyoti Kumar) IDES,
Chief Executive Officer,
Cantonment Board Office, Jalandhar,**

GLOBE TROT



DEMANDING SALARY HIKE: Nurses protest outside the French Health Ministry's office in Paris on Tuesday. REUTERS

Nutrition expert of Indian descent wins World Food Prize
WASHINGTON: Dr Shakuntala Haraksingh Thilsted, a global nutrition expert of Indian descent, has won the prestigious 2021 World Food Prize for her groundbreaking research in developing holistic, nutrition-sensitive approaches to aquaculture and food systems.

NASA spacecraft begins trip home with asteroid rubble
CAPE CANAVERAL (US): With rubble from an asteroid tucked inside, a NASA spacecraft fired its engines and began the long journey back to Earth on Monday, leaving the ancient space rock in its rearview mirror: The trip home for the robotic prospector, Osiris-Rex, will take two years.

Bahrain prince-led team conquers Mt Everest
KATHMANDU: A 16-member Bahrain Royal Guard team led by Prince Mohammed Hamad Mohammed Al Khalifa on Tuesday became the first international team to conquer the new altitude of Mount Everest. The Bahrain Royal Guard team successfully reached the peak of Mt Everest early Tuesday morning. PTI

China's population may begin to decline by 2022

Likely to cause labour shortage, impact economic prospects

BEIJING, MAY 11 China's population grew at its slowest pace to reach 1.41 billion, keeping its status as the world's most populous country amid official projections that the numbers may decline from next year, leading to labour shortage and a fall in consumption levels, impacting the country's future economic outlook.

According to the seventh national population census released by the Chinese government on Tuesday, China's population in all 31 provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities reached 1.41178 billion up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010. The figures do not include Hong Kong and Macao. "Data show that China's population has maintained slow growth in the past decade," Ning Jizhe, head of the National Bureau of Statistics, (NBS) said while releasing the census results.

The country's population on the mainland has reached 1.41178 billion, up by 5.38 per cent or 72.06 million from 2010, the latest census data



FAMILY PLANNING POLICY: A steady decline in China's population has been attributed to its one-child policy. PTI

DEMOGRAPHIC CRISIS

- China stopped the one-child policy in 2016 and allowed two children
- However, it has had very limited impact to halt the declining population as few people came forward to have a second child
- The census results reveal China's population is not just declining but its demographic structure is also deteriorating with a growing aging population

shows. As China faced population decline, India, whose population was pegged around 1.366 billion in 2019, is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027, according to a UN report released in

June, 2019. The highest growth of China's population of 2.1 per cent was registered in the census survey held in 1982 after which the population continued to decline at a steady pace, which officials blamed on the

US expands Pfizer shots for 12-yr-olds

WASHINGTON, MAY 11 US regulators on Monday expanded the use of Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine to children as young as 12, offering a way to protect the nation's adolescents before they head back to school in the fall and paving the way for them to return to more normal activities.

Shots could begin as soon as Thursday after a federal vaccine advisory committee issues recommendations for using the two-dose vaccine in 12 to 15-year-olds. An announcement is expected on Wednesday.

Most Covid-19 vaccines worldwide have been authorised for adults. Pfizer's vaccine is being used in multiple countries for teens as young as 16, and Canada recently became the first to expand use to 12 and up.

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

The Food and Drug Administration declared that the



Mulls joint production of J&J vaccine in India

New Delhi: The US is looking at joint production of Johnson and Johnson's vaccine in India and ways to help manufacturers like the Serum Institute of India (SII) boost production, Daniel B Smith, the Charge D'Affaires of the US embassy, said on Tuesday. PTI

TRACKING VIRUS

NATIONS	DEATHS
US	5,96,186
BRAZIL	4,23,436
MEXICO	2,19,089
UK	1,27,609
ITALY	1,23,031

WORLDOMETER
TILL MAY 11, 11 PM

Pfizer vaccine was safe and offered strong protection for younger teens based on testing of more than 2,000 US volunteers aged between 12 and 15 years. — AP

26 die as Israel hits Hamas

GAZA CITY (GAZA STRIP), MAY 11 Israel unleashed new airstrikes on Gaza early Tuesday, hitting a pair of high-rise buildings believed to be housing militants, as Hamas and other armed groups bombarded southern Israel with hundreds of rockets.

The conflict escalated relentlessly throughout the day, and Israel vowed that its strikes would only increase.

'Stepping up strikes'

Jerusalem: Israel will step up its Gaza strikes, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday after a surge in cross-border Palestinian rocket launches killed two women in a southern city. REUTERS

The latest exchange of fire was sparked by weeks of tensions in contested Jerusalem. Since sundown Monday,

26 Palestinians — including nine children and a woman — were killed in Gaza, most by airstrikes, Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military said at least 16 of the dead were militants.

During the same period, Gaza militants fired hundreds of rockets toward Israel, killing two Israeli civilians and wounding 10 others. — AP

7 kids among eight killed in Russian school shooting

19-year-old arrested

MOSCOW, MAY 11 At least seven schoolchildren and a teacher were killed on Tuesday and many more wounded after a teen gunman opened fire in a school in the Russian city of Kazan, the mayor's office said, prompting a Kremlin call for tighter gun controls. Two children could be seen



Medics help a woman board an ambulance in Kazan on Tuesday. PTI

leaping from the third floor of the four-storey School Number 175 to escape as gunshots rang out, in a video filmed by an onlooker that was circulated by Russia's RIA news agency.

Calling the attack a big tragedy for the whole country, Rustam Minnikhanov, the head of the wider Tatarstan region, said there was no evidence that anyone else had been involved.

"We have lost seven children...four boys and three girls. And 16 persons, 12 children and four adults, are in hospital," Minnikhanov said. "The terrorist has been arrested. He's a 19-year-old who was officially registered as a gun owner."

Footage posted on social media showed a young man being pinned to the ground outside the school building by a police officer. — Reuters

BUSINESS

USD \$	EURO €	POUND £	JPY ¥	YUAN ¥	CAD \$	AUD \$	SGD \$	HKD \$
₹73.44	₹89.26	₹103.80	₹0.67	₹11.42	₹60.64	₹57.49	₹55.35	₹9.45

BSE
340.60
49,161.81

NSE
91.60
14,850.75

GOLD
₹45,910
Mumbai (MCX)

SILVER
₹71,600
Mumbai (MCX)

Moody's slashes India's growth forecast to 9.3% for current fiscal

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 Moody's Investors Service on Tuesday slashed India's growth forecast for the current financial year to 9.3%, from the 13.7% projected earlier, on account of the negative impact of the second wave of Covid.

India is experiencing a severe second wave of coronavirus infections which will slow the near-term economic recovery and could weigh on longer-term growth dynamics, it said. "As of now, we expect the negative impact on economic output to be limited to the April-June quarter, followed by a strong rebound in the second half of the year."

"As a result of the negative impact of the second wave, we have revised our real, inflation-adjusted GDP growth forecast down to 9.3% from 13.7% for fiscal 2021 and to 7.9% from 6.2%



NEW PROJECTIONS

- The global ratings agency had earlier projected 13.7% growth for the current fiscal
- On the fiscal front, it expects a marginal shortfall in revenue due to surge in Covid and a redirection of spending toward healthcare and virus response relative to what the government budgeted in February
- It expects government's fiscal deficit at 11.8% of the GDP as compared to previous forecast of 10.8%

in fiscal 2022. Over the longer term, we expect growth of around 6% thereafter," Moody's said.

On the fiscal front, Moody's expects the renewed surge in the virus to contribute to a marginal shortfall in revenue

and a redirection of spending toward healthcare and virus response relative to what the government budgeted in February.

"As a result, we now expect a wider general government fiscal deficit of about 11.8% of GDP in fiscal 2021, compared with our previous forecast of 10.8% and an estimated 14% in fiscal 2020," it added.

Moody's said the combined impact of slower growth and a wider deficit would drive the general government debt burden to 90% of GDP in fiscal 2021, gradually rising to 92% in fiscal 2023.

India is facing the world's worst outbreak of Covid, with more than 3 lakh new cases daily being reported for two weeks now, and the new cases reached more than 4 lakh new daily cases over the weekend. — PTI

Demand for casual wear surges amid pandemic

VIJAY C ROY
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, MAY 11 The demand for casual and comfortable clothing has gone up significantly, thanks to work-from-home (WFH) culture and curbs on going out amid the Covid pandemic.

According to apparel makers, there is a huge transition from formal to casual wear. During the pre-Covid times, formal wear used to constitute 60% demand but now it has come down to 40%, with casual wear dominating the market. As a result, major apparel hubs in the northern region — Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Panipat, Gurugram and Noida — have started producing more casual clothing than formal wear.

"With a majority of employers offering WFH, the demand for comfort wear has gone up. There is an increased focus on fitness and we are



During the pre-Covid times, formal wear used to constitute 60% of demand but now it has come down to 40%, with casual wear dominating the market.

rolling out an athleisure line of clothing to cater to this new opportunity," said Joe Kuruvilla, CEO, Lifestyle Business Raymond Ltd.

The emerging mega consumer shift during the Covid is hygiene, health consciousness, casualisa-

tion and comfort wear and a significant channel shift is towards online commerce.

According to the industry, the pandemic, subsequent lockdowns and the economic fallout that ensued has resulted in consumers spending less on discretionary items such as apparel and substituting formal wear with comfort clothing in the short term.

"Earlier, out of total apparels outsourced by major players, formal wear accounted for 60-65%. Now, it has come down to 35-40%, indicating customers' shifting preference towards casual wear," said Harish Dua, MD, KG Exports, Ludhiana.

"We envisage casualisation trends to continue but also see a significant comeback to office/formal wear as the pandemic wears off and people start returning to offices," said Kuruvilla.

IN BRIEF

NEW DELHI

Ruchi Soya acquires Patanjali's biscuits biz

Ruchi Soya Industries on Tuesday announced the acquisition of biscuits business from Patanjali Natural Biscuits Pvt Ltd (PNBPL) in a slump sale at Rs 60.02 crore. The company said its Board had approved the signing of a business transfer agreement in this regard with the PNBPL. PTI

MUMBAI

Nomura cuts India's FY22 growth estimate to 10.8%

Japanese brokerage Nomura on Tuesday cut its GDP growth estimate for the current 2021-22 fiscal to 10.8% from the earlier 12.6%, blaming the impact of the second wave-induced lockdowns. It said the activity levels have dropped further to 64.5% of the pre-pandemic levels in the week to May 9 as per a proprietary index. PTI

MUMBAI

Groww to buy Indiabulls Mutual Fund for ₹175 cr

Online investment platform Groww on Tuesday said it will acquire Indiabulls Mutual Fund for Rs 175 crore. The digital platform will acquire Indiabulls Asset Management Company and the trustee company for Rs 175 crore, which includes a cash and equivalent component of Rs 100 crore, an official statement said. PTI

NEW DELHI

JSW Hydro Energy raises \$707 m via green bonds

JSW Energy on Tuesday said its subsidiary JSW Hydro Energy has raised \$707 million through green bonds abroad. According to statement, JSW Hydro Energy has priced the fixed rate senior secured green 144A/Reg S Bond for a 10-year tenor at 4.125%. PTI

TaMo reviewing CCI order on probe against commercial vehicle business

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 Homegrown auto major Tata Motors on Tuesday said it is reviewing the order by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to initiate investigation against its commercial vehicles business in India for alleged abuse of its dominant position.

Last week, the CCI had passed an order directing the Director General, CCI, to initiate investigation against the company for alleged abuse of



Last week, the CCI had passed an order to initiate probe against Tata Motors for alleged abuse of dominant position with respect to dealership agreements in its commercial vehicles business in India.

dominant position with respect to dealership agreements in its commercial vehicles business in India.

The order came on complaints filed against Tata Motors, Tata Capital Financial Services Ltd and Tata Motors Finance Ltd. The CCI had observed the complainants were primarily aggrieved that Tata Motors has imposed unfair terms and conditions in the dealership agreement for commercial vehicles. — PTI

Taking action to access \$1.2-bn arbitration award against India, says Cairn Energy

THE CASE FILE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11 UK's Cairn Energy Plc on Tuesday said it is taking all necessary actions to access the \$1.7 billion it was awarded by an international arbitration tribunal after overturning a retroactive tax demand slapped by the Indian government.

The firm invested in the oil and gas sector in India in 1994 and a decade later it made a huge oil discovery in

■ In 2006, Cairn listed its Indian assets on the BSE. In 2011, the government passed retroactive tax law and billed Cairn ₹10,247 cr plus interest and penalty for the reorganisation



Rajasthan. In 2006, it listed its Indian assets on the BSE.

Five years after that the government passed retroactive tax law and billed Cairn Rs 10,247 crore plus interest and penalty for the reorganisation tied to the flotation.

The state then expropriated and liquidated Cairn's remaining shares in the Indian entity, seized dividends and withheld tax refunds to recover a part of the demand. — PTI

Mairaj positive despite personal loss

VINAYAK PADMADEO

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

When the plans to hire a chartered flight to transport India's full rifle and pistol team to Croatia was being finalised, there was one man in the team who was still wondering what would happen to his training plans.

Skeet shooter Mairaj Ahmad Khan had sent at least three proposals to Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) officials to train in Italy with his coach Ennio Falco. The proposals were rejected as Italy was under a complete lockdown then. While he was waiting to take the first available flight to Italy — he had all but decided to buy tickets on his own — tragedy struck the Khan household. Mairaj's father Ilyas Ahmad Khan passed away in April.

"I am a firm believer that

Skeet shooter lost his father, was in quarantine after Covid scare



Mairaj Ahmad Khan has endured much in the last one month. FILE

it was Allah Tallah's will. God forbid if I were out of the country, who would have helped my mother during this loss? At least I was with him in his final journey," Mairaj said.

"It was a tough time for our family. Sometimes I feel he is still in Khurja (his hometown). However, like I said, being the eldest son, I was there for his last rites. His is an irreplaceable

loss," he added.

Covid scare

After this, Mairaj had a scare and had to quarantine himself after coming into contact with a Covid-19 patient. "It was not bad. I got time to stay indoors and rest a bit as I had shot a lot," the 45-year-old said.

"I had shot two back-to-back World Cups (in Cairo and New Delhi), not to mention hundreds of hours in training. So this time in quarantine was a blessing in disguise as it gave me time to rest," added Mairaj who will be the oldest shooter in India's team at the Tokyo Olympics.

Italy beckons

Mairaj will soon join his skeet teammate Angad Vir Singh Bajwa in Italy. The TOPS has cleared his training stint and has also sanctioned travel of his personal trainer Jitender Arya. The

two are set to take a flight for Italy on Saturday morning.

"They have sanctioned the stint till June 28. But I can extend it further and may head to Tokyo from Italy itself," the 2016 Olympian said of his training plan.

"If the stay does not get extended then I will return and train here for 10-12 days and then leave for Tokyo," he added.

Making his training base in Capua at Falco's range, Mairaj will be taking part in a couple of competitions, including the Fitav GP and the Beretta Gold Cup. He has an option to take part in the Croatia World Cup as well.

"We will decide on participation in the Croatia World Cup a little later. My coach (Falco) is not keen for me to participate as he reckons that top skeet shooters will not come for that competition. We will decide on it later. We have enough time," he said.

India's Olympics shooters fly to train in Croatia

After long stint there, will travel straight to Tokyo Games

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Olympics-bound Indian shooting team today left for Croatia in a chartered flight for a two-and-a-half month training-cum-competition tour. This is their final preparatory tour before the Tokyo Olympic Games begin on July 23.

With coaches and support staff in tow, a 13-member Indian shooting team took off for Zagreb, where it will undergo a training camp before leaving for Osijek to take part in the European Championships (May 20 to June 6) followed by the combined ISSF World Cup (June 22 to July 3).

The two Olympics bound skeet shooters, Angad Vir Singh Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan, will be based in Italy.

Former India shooter Suma Shirur, now the high-performance coach of the national rifle team, wrote on Twitter: "With a 'Bharat Mata ki Jay' we get ready to depart for Croatia. From there straight to Tokyo 2020 Olympics. 80 days in total. The Indian shooting team needs your blessings to give their best."

The chartered flight was arranged by the NRAI.

After the stint in Croatia, the team will directly leave for Tokyo to partici-



Chandigarh's Anjum Moudgil was among the Indian shooters who left for Croatia for a training and competition tour. PHOTO: ANJUM MOUDGIL/TWITTER

pate in the Olympics.

9 coaches

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

There will be nine coaches for the 13 rifle and pistol shooters but some coaches like Samaresh Jung, Jaspal Rana and Ronak Pandit could not leave today due to various reasons.

Foreign rifle coach Oleg

Mikhailov was also a part of the travelling contingent but longtime pistol coach Pavel Smirnov could not leave as he did not get his visa. He is likely to join the team next week. As per the standard Covid-19 protocols in Croatia, the Indian contingent will serve mandatory quarantine before starting training.

"Long tour ahead, wish us luck. Hope we are able to win medals and raise spirits of the nation," world No. 1 10m air pistol shooter Elavenil Valarivan wrote on Twitter. — TNS, agencies

BRIEFLY

MUMBAI

Bumrah, Mandhana get Covid-19 vaccine jab

India's star pacer Jasprit Bumrah and women's national team opener Smriti Mandhana today said they received their first dose of the Covid-19 vaccine. "Vaccinated. Please stay safe everyone," Bumrah tweeted. Bumrah is expected to lead the Indian pace attack in the upcoming World Test Championship final against New Zealand and the subsequent away series in England.

LAUSANNE

Boxing Worlds for men to be held in Oct-Nov in Belgrade

The World Championship of boxing for men will be held from October 26 to November 6 in Belgrade, Serbia, the international boxing association (AIBA) announced today. The event was to be held in India but the country lost the hosting rights after failing to pay the host fee last year.

TOKYO

Iniesta extends Vissel Kobe contract by two years

Former Barcelona midfielder Andres Iniesta said today he has extended his contract with Vissel Kobe by another two years and wants to keep working towards making the Japanese side the best in Asia. Spanish World Cup winner Iniesta, who also celebrated his 37th birthday today, signed a three-year contract with Kobe in 2018 after leaving Barcelona, where he won nine La Liga and four Champions Leagues titles.

ROME

Buffon to leave after nearly 20 years with Juve

Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon says he will leave the club when his contract expires at the end of the season but could still join another team if he receives a suitable offer. The 43-year-old first joined the Turin club from Parma in 2001 and has been there ever since, with the exception of one season at French side Paris Saint-Germain in 2018-19. AGENCIES

TODAY ON TV

EPL

CHELSEA VS ARSENAL
STAR SPORTS 00:45AM
(THURSDAY)

Aussies in Maldives rattled by Chinese rocket debris

MALE (MALDIVES), MAY 11

Australian cricketers, coaches and officials were rattled by the sonic boom of the Chinese rocket debris that crashed into the Indian Ocean on Sunday.

The Aussies, including Test stars Steve Smith, David Warner and Pat Cummins, are quarantining at a resort here after the IPL was postponed indefinitely.

"We heard the bang around 5.30 a.m. this morning (Sunday). Experts say the noise we heard is the crack in the atmosphere which sets off a wave of sound, not the actual impact of the rocket," Warner told an Australian newspaper from Maldives.

The Aussies who were at the IPL when it was called off — numbering nearly 40

— were sent to the Maldives as there is a ban on direct flights from India to Australia due to the pandemic situation in India.

The contingent will fly back to Australia once it completes the quarantine period mandated by the country.

China had, on April 29, launched a module for setting up its first permanent space station in orbit and

it was known that the rockets carrying the main module would re-enter earth's atmosphere on Saturday or Sunday.

The China Manned Space Engineering Office had allayed global fears that the falling debris would cause any damage, saying that most of the debris would burn up in the atmosphere. — IANS

Change is coming, it's inevitable: Djokovic

Youngsters will take top rankings sooner or later, says world No. 1



Novak Djokovic in action during his second round match against Taylor Fritz at the Italian Open. REUTERS

playing a lot and building their ranking points," he added. "Medvedev as well, of course, and challenging for the top spots. Dominic Thiem has been there for many years. It's inevitable that it's going to happen. The change on the men's rankings, top of the rankings is coming. Whether it's going to happen in a month or a year or whatever, I don't know."

I'm going to fight on: Nadal

For Nadal, the success of the younger players was normal but the Spaniard was not ready yet to write off his chances at the French Open, which he has won 13 times.

"I don't like to hide the truth," Nadal said today. "We are not playing as many tournaments as we did before. It's normal that after almost 20 years on the tour there is another generation that is winning tournaments. We have been achieving almost every single important event for the last 19 years. Nothing strange. 100% ready to accept that. But I'm going

to keep fighting for the things. That means that in three weeks, two weeks-and-a-half, there is another Grand Slam that I like to play. I'm going to fight to try to play well there."

Focus on Slams

While the 39-year-old Federer missed most of the last 14 months due to knee problems, Djokovic passed his record for the most weeks as world number one in March.

MCC not keen about bamboo bats, says they're illegal

LONDON, MAY 11

The Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), guardian of cricket's laws, has said that bats made of bamboo would be "illegal" under the current rules governing the game.

However, MCC said they will discuss the matter dur-

ing their laws sub-committee meeting.

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

made from willow.

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

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

Shah and Tinkler-Davies found the bamboo bat to be "stiffer, harder and stronger than those made of willow, although more brittle" and also supposed to have a larger "sweet spot, closer to the toe of the bat." — TNS, agencies

As Britain opens up, R&A hopes for big crowds at Open

LONDON, MAY 11

This year's British Open could be played out in front of "significant numbers" of spectators, organisers the Royal and Ancient (R&A) said. The 149th Open, cancelled last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic, will take place at the Royal St George's in Sandwich on the Kent coast on July 15-18.

An easing of restrictions means up to 10,000 fans will be permitted at outdoor sports events. — Agencies



Any player who has an FIDE standard rating of under 2,000 can play with Viswanathan Anand by donating \$150. FILE

Play Anand, 4 other GMs for a good cause

Money raised from online event would be donated for Covid relief

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Former world chess champion Viswanathan Anand and four other Grandmasters will play exhibition matches against any individual player online on Thursday to raise funds for Covid-19 relief in the country.

The four GMs who would feature in the exhibition matches along with Anand are Koneru Humpy, Harika Dronavalli, Nihal Sarin and Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa.

"We all know India is struggling hard against Covid-19. At this time, we all have been affected in some way. I don't think there is a single person young or old who has not been affected by this," Anand said in a video message posted on chess.com.

"Let us support Covid relief in India. You can play some of

India's finest Grandmasters, and have chess.com match your donations. Please sign up to participate in Checkmate Covid this Thursday," Anand said. "I look forward to being there and hope we raise money and spirits!"

Any player who has an FIDE standard rating of under 2,000 can play with Anand by donating \$150 and with any of the other four GMs by donating \$25.

The funds raised would go to Red Cross India and the Checkmate Covid initiative of the All India Chess Federation. — TNS



An ignition ceremony for the Tokyo Olympics torch relay being held in Fukuoka, southwestern Japan, on Tuesday. AP/PTI

Torch relay pulled off streets in Hiroshima

TOKYO: The Tokyo Olympics torch relay is being pulled off the streets in Hiroshima prefecture as Covid-19 cases rise in Japan barely 10 weeks before the opening ceremony. Hiroshima Governor Hidehiko Yuzaki said that a ceremony next week without the relay is likely to still take place. This is at least the sixth change to the relay — from rerouting to cancellation — in the last several weeks. The relay began on March 25 in northeastern Japan and is to end on July 23 at the opening ceremony of the Olympics. It involves 10,000 runners crisscrossing Japan. AP/PTI

26 Covid patients die at Goa hospital

CM announces setting up ward-wise mechanism to ensure smooth supply of O₂

PANAJI, MAY 11
Goa Health Minister Vishwajit Rane on Tuesday said 26 Covid-19 patients died at the state-run Goa Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) in the early hours and sought an investigation by the High Court to find out the exact cause. He said these fatalities occurred between 2 am and 6 am “which is a fact”, but remained evasive about the cause.

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who visited GMCH, said the gap between the “availability of medical oxygen and its supply to Covid-19 wards in the GMCH might have caused some issues for the patients” even as he stressed that there is no scarcity of oxygen supply in the state.

Speaking to reporters, Rane admitted the shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen at the GMCH as of Monday.

“The high court should investigate the reasons behind these deaths. The HC should also intervene and prepare a white paper on oxy-

gen supply to the GMCH, which would help to set the things right,” the Health Minister said after CM’s visit to the GMCH.

Rane said the medical oxygen requirement of the facility as of Monday was 1,200 jumbo cylinders of which only 400 were supplied.

“If there’s a shortfall in the supply of medical oxygen, the discussion should be held about how to bridge that gap,” he said. Rane said a three-member team of nodal officers set up by the state government to oversee Covid-19 treatment at GMCH should give its inputs about the issues to the CM.

Earlier in the day, the CM visited Covid-19 wards in the GMCH where he met patients and their relatives.

“There are issues over the availability of oxygen in these wards which need to be sorted out,” the CM said.

He announced the setting up of a ward-wise mechanism to ensure a smooth supply of medical oxygen. — PTI

MINISTER SEEKS PROBE

“The High Court should investigate the reasons behind these deaths. The HC should also intervene and prepare a white paper on oxygen supply to the GMCH, which would help in setting the things right.”

Vishwajit Rane,
HEALTH MINISTER, GOA

CM: NO SCARCITY OF OXYGEN SUPPLY

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said the gap between the “availability of medical oxygen and its supply to Covid-19 wards in the GMCH might have caused some issues for the patients” even as he stressed that there is no scarcity of oxygen supply in the state



Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy sprays disinfectant in a market in Hyderabad on Tuesday. PTI

AP announces ₹10L aid to victims’ kin

AMARAVATI (AP), MAY 11

The Andhra Pradesh government on Tuesday announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of 11 Covid-19 patients, who died in a hospital in Tirupati due to problem in oxygen supply.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy announced this during a videoconference with district Collectors.

Eleven Covid-19 patients died due to a problem in oxygen supply inside the ICU in

Ruia hospital late on Monday night. There was a five-minute lag in reloading liquid medical oxygen, which caused the pressure to drop, resulting in the deaths, Chittoor district Collector M Hari Narayanan had said.

Meanwhile, a team of engineers from the Eastern Naval Command of Indian Navy visited Ruia Hospital to inspect the oxygen supply system and suggestive corrective measures, if any. — PTI

OXYGEN HOARDING CASE Kalra fails to get protection against arrest

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

A Delhi Court on Tuesday refused to give any interim relief from arrest to businessman Navneet Kalra for the second time in the alleged oxygen concentrator hoarding and black marketing case.

Additional Sessions Judge Sumit Dass also placed his anticipatory bail before the District and Sessions Judge which will now decide which court will hear the plea on Wednesday. “Bail application placed before the District Judge South East at 10 am tomorrow; they will send it to the concerned court. There is no interim relief or any sort of protection to the accused yet,” the judge remarked. — PTI

Modi thanks Bhutan PM for Covid support

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering on Tuesday as the two leaders noted that the coronavirus crisis has further highlighted the special friendship between the two countries.

The Bhutanese prime minister expressed solidarity with the government and the people of India in their efforts against the recent wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, a statement from the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) said.

Prime Minister Modi conveyed his sincere thanks to the people and the government of Bhutan for their good

IN SOLIDARITY

Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering expressed solidarity with the government and the people of India in their efforts against the recent wave of the Covid-19, a statement from the PMO said

wishes and support, it said.

He also appreciated the leadership of Bhutan’s King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in managing Bhutan’s fight against the pandemic, and extended his best wishes to the prime minister for the continuing efforts. — PTI

2 Navy ships bring 100 MT O₂

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Stepping up the Covid relief operation, two more Indian warships, INS Kochi and INS Tabar, reached the New Mangalore Port on Tuesday carrying critical medical supplies.

Both ships with cumulative consignment of 100 MT liquid medical oxygen (LMO) in five containers and 1,200 oxygen cylinders had loaded the consignment from Kuwait.

The shipment has been handed to the Indian Oil Corporation. Meanwhile, a 255-bed covid care hospital has been opened in Lucknow under the corporate social responsibility of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and UP CM Yogi Adityanath visit the newly launched HAL Covid hospital in Lucknow on Tuesday. PTI

hospital which will be managed by the UP Government through Care India, an NGO and charity organisation. The technical support is being provided by the HAL. This is the second facility created by the MoD in Lucknow. The DRDO provided 500-bed facility opened last week.

Meanwhile, the Army’s Western Command in collabo-

Twitter donates \$15 mn for Covid relief

WASHINGTON, MAY 11

Microblogging giant Twitter has donated \$15 million to help address the Covid-19 crisis in India which is battling the unprecedented second wave of the deadly pandemic.

Twitter CEO Jack Patrick Dorsey on Monday tweeted that the amount has been donated to three non-governmental organisations – Care, Aid India and Sewa International USA.

While CARE has been given USD 10 million, Aid India and Sewa International USA have received USD 2.5 million each. “Sewa International is a Hindu faith-based, humanitarian, non-profit service organisation. This grant will support the procurement of lifesaving equipment such as oxygen concentrators, ventilators, BiPAP (Bilevel Positive Airway Pressure) and CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure) machines as part of Sewa International’s ‘Help India Defeat COVID-19’ campaign,” the San Francisco-based company said in a statement. — PTI

Stalin at swearing-in



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin arrives for the oath ceremony of the newly elected MLAs in Chennai on Tuesday. PTI

China warns B’desh of ‘substantial damage’ if it joins US-led Quad

DHAKA, MAY 11

China has warned Bangladesh against joining the US-led Quad alliance, saying that Dhaka’s participation in the anti-Beijing “club” would result in “substantial damage” to bilateral relations.

The unusual warning from Chinese Ambassador to Bangladesh Li Jiming came weeks after visiting Chinese Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe emphasised to Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid that Beijing and Dhaka should make joint efforts against powers from outside the region establishing a “military alliance” in South Asia and practising “hegemonism”.

“Obviously, it will not be a good idea for Bangladesh to participate in this small club of four (Quad) because it will substantially damage our bilateral relationship,” Ambassador Li said at a virtual meeting organised by the Diplomatic Correspondents Association, Bangladesh on Monday.

Reacting to the Chinese

WE’RE SOVEREIGN STATE

“We are an independent and sovereign state. We decide our foreign policy. But yes, any country can uphold its position.”

—Dr AK Abdul Momen,

BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER

envoy’s controversial remarks, Bangladesh Foreign Minister Dr AK Abdul Momen said Dhaka maintained a non-aligned and balanced foreign policy and it would decide what to do according to those principles.

“We’re an independent and sovereign state. We decide our foreign policy. But yes, any country can uphold its position,” he told the media on Tuesday. “Naturally, he (Chinese ambassador) represents a country. They can say what they want. Maybe they don’t want it (Bangladesh joining the Quad),” Momen said. — PTI

NHRC seeks report from Centre, states on Covid mgmt

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has sought a report from the Centre and states on action taken on its 2.0 Advisory to combat the second wave of Covid and medical relief to patients.

In a notice to the Centre and the states, the Commission has asked for submission of the report within four weeks.

In its May 4 advisory, the Commission had stressed the need to take immediate action against those hoarding and black marketing of essential medicines, oxygen cylinders. It also asked for revving up the production, transportation and distribution of essential resources.

Its recommendations include provision of free treatment to Covid patients who approached any public health facility. Also, it asked for instituting functional and effective Help-Desks in all public and private hospitals for preliminary check-up.

Besides, there should be universal coverage and non-discriminatory pricing of Covid vaccines in all health facilities of the country, and if feasible, vaccination should

GIVES THEM 4 WEEKS

- In a notice to the Centre and the states, the Commission has asked for submission of the report within four weeks
- In its May 4 advisory, the Commission had stressed the need to take immediate action against those hoarding and black marketing of essential medicines, oxygen cylinders

be made free for everyone irrespective of private or public health establishment along with adequate testing facilities for Covid infection, and timely reports

The Commission had also underlined the need for better management of crematoriums and burial grounds, using electric crematorium and App based interventions to be promoted among stakeholders. The protection of rights of Covid warriors engaged should be ensured and the body of a deceased Covid patient should be treated with dignity and handed over to the family ensuring all Covid protocols.

Moreover, it wanted practical time restrictions should be imposed for buying essential commodities.

’71 war veteran Sqn Ldr Bhalla dies of Covid

MUMBAI, MAY 11

Squadron Leader Anil Bhal-la (ret’d), who as a young Flying Officer flew MiG-21 sorties during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, has died after battling Covid, his family sources said on Tuesday.

The 74-year-old flying ace, a native of Mumbai, died on Monday night at Hyderabad where he had settled after retirement from the Air Force in 1984, the sources said.

During the 1971 war, he flew several “active attack missions” to heavily defended targets like the Governor House in Dhaka, which became instrumental in forcing Pakistan’s surrender, a former colleague said. — PTI

Kerala’s ‘Iron Lady’ dies

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAY 11
Legendary Marxist firebrand and former minister KR Gowri, one of the founding leaders of the Communist movement in Kerala and the lone woman member in the state’s first cabinet, died at a private hospital here on Tuesday.

She was 102 and had been suffering from various age-related ailments for some time, party sources said.

The chief of Janadhipathya Samrakshana Samithi (JSS), the veteran politician breathed her last at 7 am while undergoing treatment in the ICU, they said.

One of the most powerful and tallest women leaders of Kerala politics, Gowri Amma, as she was fondly called, belonged to the erstwhile



Communists who had toiled hard to build up the Left movement in the southern state battling police brutality under the colonial regime and stiff opposition from the then administrators.

Her vibrant political activism, fierce fights against the feudal system and strong stand taken for the women cause have garnered her the nickname ‘iron lady’. — PTI

PM Modi calls off UK visit in June for G-7 conclave

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called off his visit to the UK next month for an in-person visit to attend the G-7 summit.

This is the second overseas visit cancelled by the Prime Minister after he put off his in-person summit with EU leaders on May 8 and instead had to settle for a hybrid conference.

“While appreciating the invitation by UK PM Boris Johnson to attend the G7 Summit as a Special Invi-

COVID CONCERNS

“While appreciating the invitation by UK PM Boris Johnson to attend the G7 Summit as a Special Invitee, given the prevailing Covid, it has been decided that PM Modi will not attend the G7 Summit in person.”

— Ministry of External Affairs

tee, given the prevailing Covid, it has been decided that PM Modi will not attend the G7 Summit in

person,” said a Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) statement.

The Indian team led by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar that had attended the preparatory Foreign Ministers’ meeting had landed in a controversy over the Covid issue.

Though Jaishankar had to self-isolate following reports that two diplomats from his accompanying team had tested positive for Covid, the minister later suggested in a social media post that the reports of positive tests were a false alarm.

Centre accords CISF cover to all 77 BJP MLAs in Bengal

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 11

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has accorded central security cover to 77 newly elected BJP legislators in West Bengal. They will be guarded by commandos of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

The decision was taken following a report of a four-member fact-finding central team, which visited the state following the post-poll violence there.

Officials in the CISF said that keeping in view the comparatively large number of protectees in one go, they were recalibrating the strength of personnel to be

WHY THE DECISION

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deployed for VIP security in West Bengal.

The officials further said security cover of 17 protectees had been withdrawn after the elections concluded. They had ‘Y’, ‘Y’ plus and ‘Z’ category security cover, involving a

large number of personnel.

“The relieved commandos will now be attached with the newly elected MLAs. Their number is enough to provide ‘X’-category security cover to all legislators,” said a senior CISF official.

The protectees, whose security has been withdrawn, are mostly BJP leaders from other states and party office-bearers, who were accorded VIP security during their stay in West Bengal during the election campaign.

Under the ‘X’ category security, two or three armed commandos escort a protectee and under the ‘Y’ category, four to five commandos do the job.

Governor to meet sufferers of post-poll violence

KOLKATA, MAY 11

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar is set to visit Cooch Behar on Thursday to talk to people affected by post-poll violence in the district. Dhankhar this evening tweeted that he will be leaving Kolkata by BSF helicopter on May 13 to visit “post poll unprecedented violence affected areas” such as Sitalkuchi “and other places in Cooch Behar to connect with sufferers”.

In Sitalkuchi five people had died, including four in firing by Central forces, on the day of polling on April 10. Later, after the announcement of the election results on May 2, there was violence targeting BJP workers in Cooch Behar by alleged TMC supporters. — TNS

2 BJP MLAs to quit; will retain LS seats

KOLKATA, MAY 11

West Bengal BJP MLAs Nishith Pramanik and Jagannath Sarkar, who are also members of the Lok Sabha, are expected to resign from the post of MLAs and retain their membership of Parliament.

While a majority of 77 newly elected BJP members have taken oath already as MLAs, Pramanik and Sarkar have not done so. The BJP Central leadership has also okayed the duo’s appeal to allow them continue as MPs.

Union Minister of State for Environment and Forest Babul Supriyo, who is an MP from Asansol constituency, and Loket Chatterjee, Lok Sabha member from Hoogly, had also contested in the just concluded Assembly elections in West Ben-

Central leadership allows them to continue as MPs

gal. But Supriyo and Chatterjee failed to make in the Assembly.

Resignation by Pramanik and Sarkar will bring down the strength of the BJP in the 294-member West Bengal House to 75 and necessitate byelection in the Dinhatra and Shantipur Assembly seats, won by Pramanik and Sarkar, respectively.

Elections in three more Assembly seats in the state are due. These include Jangipur and Samserganj. The byelection will have to be held in Khardaha as victorious TMC candidate Kajal Sinha died of Covid before the results were announced. — TNS