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OF ASIAN C'SHIPS SPORT

The Tribune

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PM TO VISIT CYCLONE-HIT WB,
ODISHA TODAY BACK PAGE

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Bid to defame India, says govt as Twitter toolkit row escalates

Tribune News Service

NEW DELHI, MAY 27
The tussle over handling of certain messages by Twitter escalated today with the Union Government calling a statement issued by the social media platform alleging intimidation as "baseless" and an attempt to "dictate terms to the world's largest democracy and defame India to hide own follies".

Twitter, through its actions and "deliberate defiance", sought to "undermine" India's legal system, said a three-page note issued by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

In its statement, Twitter called a visit by the Delhi Police to its offices in the Capital and Gurugram three days ago as "intimidation tactics" and a "potential threat to the freedom of expression". The Delhi Police claimed

ATTEMPT TO IMPEDE PROBE: DELHI POLICE

New Delhi: Accusing Twitter of not cooperating with investigation into the complaint lodged by a Congress leader on the controversial toolkit issue, the Delhi Police said, "(Twitter's) statement is not only men-



dacious but designed to impede a lawful inquiry. Twitter is purporting to be both an investigating authority as well as an adjudicating judicial authority. It has no legal sanction to be either."

WHATAPP USERS NEEDN'T FEAR: PRASAD

Guru New rules only empower the ordinary users when they become victims of abuse and misuse. WhatsApp is obliged to reveal the first originator of an offensive message

Ravi Shankar Prasad, IT MINISTER

the statement was "mendacious" and designed to "impede a lawful inquiry". Twitter had

GOOGLE TO COMPLY WITH LOCAL LAWS, SAYS PICHAI

Guru Google will comply with local laws and engage constructively with govt as they adopt regulatory frameworks, CEO Sundar Pichai said.

NBA DEMANDS EXEMPTION

The News Broadcasters Association has urged the Centre to exempt traditional TV news media from the ambit of the new IT rules.

Political effort to tarnish image of govt: EAM in US

NEW DELHI, MAY 27
External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar has alleged "a political effort" to tarnish the government's image and said there is a difference between the political imagery that has been "concocted" and the actual governance record.

"I would be very open about it. I mean these are people (in the government at the Centre) who perhaps are less from the English-speaking world, less connected to other global centres. So there is a difference. And I think sometimes that difference is judged politically harshly and it is often used to create a certain narrative," he said

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

CANADA
STARTS HERE

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To spur imports, India waives local trials for foreign vaccines

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The Punjab Government today extended Covid restrictions till June 10, but removed the cap on the number of passengers in personal vehicles and allowed elective surgeries in both private and government hospitals.

The OPD services have been

Pb & Hry HC for uniform test rates at pvt centres

allowed to resume in government hospitals. To deal with a possible third wave, CM Capt Amarinder Singh asked the health authorities to strengthen the health infrastructure and seek 500 paediatric ventilators from the Centre.

Taking note of overcharging by some private hospitals, the CM directed that 11x5 feet display boards specifying charges be put up at the entrance of health facilities. **INSIDE**



NOT OFF-THE-SHELF ITEMS, EXPLAINS UNION GOVT

Guru Buying vax internationally is not similar to buying 'off-the-shelf' items. Vaccines are in limited supply globally, and companies give preference to countries of origin. The Centre

RAMPING UP DOMESTIC PRODUCTION

Bharat Biotech to enhance monthly manufacturing capacity from 90 lakh doses to 10 or 12 by Oct

CONTINUE WITH COVID NORMS TILL JUNE-END, STATES TOLD

2,11,298 FRESH CASES
TOTAL DEATHS 3,15,235 **ACTIVE CASES** 24,19,907
3,847 DEATHS IN 24 HOURS
REVIVAL OF CONSUMPTION MUST FOR GROWTH: RBI PAGE 10

Fateh kits not in sync with fresh guidelines

MANAV MANDER

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, MAY 27
The use of antibiotics in the treatment of Covid-19 has been discontinued by the state but these are still part of the 'Fateh kits' provided to patients under home isolation. The guidelines have been updated but the state has failed to update the kits and continues to deliver the old packets.

Doxycycline tablets, found in the kit, were used last year to treat Covid-positive patients but are now no longer part of the state's guidelines.

In 2020, doxycycline tablet was recommended for 5 days and ivermectin for 3 days but subsequently in April this year, doxy was dropped and ivermectin included for mild patients in home isolation



Tougher curbs, 13 G'gram villages stay Covid-free

SUMEDHA SHARMA

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

GURUGRAM, MAY 27
While Covid spread in rural areas continues to be a challenge for the state, 13 local villages have managed to remain virus-free.

As per a survey of 166 villages, 13 have not reported a single Covid case in the past 40 days, while 65 reported one case each. Seven of the Covid-free villages are in Pataudi block, four in Farukhnagar and two in Sohna.

Yash Garg, DC, said, "The villages which managed to keep Covid at bay followed the norms religiously. The panchayats ensured a complete lockdown, barring the entry of outsiders, and held frequent sanitisation drives."

Gurugram has so far reported 250 patients in rural areas, many of whom remained in home isolation.

DOXY OFF THE LIST

■ Antibiotic doxycycline discontinued for treatment but still provided to patients in home isolation in Punjab

■ In 2020, doxycycline tablet was recommended for 5 days and ivermectin for 3 days

■ Subsequently in April this year, doxy was dropped and ivermectin included for mild patients in home isolation

mild patients for three days. Dr Bishav Mohan, a senior cardiologist at Dayanand Medical College and Hospital

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IN BRIEF

India abstains from UN motion on Israel

NEW DELHI: India abstained from a United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) resolution establishing a commission of inquiry to probe alleged rights violation and abuses in occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and in Israel. — TNS

IMA files complaint against Ramdev

NEW DELHI: Seeking the registration of an FIR against Yog Guru Ramdev over his alleged "dishonest and wrongful representations" on allopathy, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Thursday lodged a complaint at the IP Estate police station in New Delhi. — TNS



8 OTHERS, SHOOTER DEAD

■ Taptejdeep Singh Gill, who migrated to the US in 2005, was a light rail operator
■ Eight other persons, besides the shooter, were killed in the incident
■ His co-workers hailed him as a hero, saying he left the office room to rescue others

the shooting that took place at a rail yard. His co-workers hailed him as a hero, saying he left the office room to help others escape the line of fire. The shooter, Samuel Cassidy

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

Trying to save others, Tarn Taran man dies in California rail yard shooting

GURBAXPURI

TARN TARAN, MAY 27
The death of a 36-year-old engineer belonging to Gagrawal village, 50 km from here, in a shooting incident at San Jose in the US state of California, has sent shockwaves in the region.

The victim, Taptejdeep Singh Gill, a baptised Sikh, was employed as a light rail operator at Valley Transportation Authority. He was among 10 persons killed in

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Curbs extended till June 10

Nod to resume OPDs, elective surgeries in govt & pvt hospitals

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The Punjab Government today extended Covid restrictions in the state till June 10, but removed the cap on the number of passengers in personal vehicles and allowed elective surgeries in both private and government hospitals.

With a decline in Covid cases, the OPD services have been allowed to resume in government hospitals. Some government hospitals had already started OPD operations at 50 per cent capacity, which would be scaled up to 100 per cent. The elective surgeries were discontinued on April 12 to ensure adequate beds for serious Covid patients.

The decisions were taken at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh. While the limit on the number of passengers in personal vehicles is being removed, the curbs on commercial passenger vehicles and taxis shall continue to be in place.



The CM directed the health authorities to strengthen the Covid care infrastructure to deal with a possible third wave and seek 500 paediatric ventilators from the Centre.

Taking note of overcharging by some private hospitals, the CM asked the health authorities to ensure hospitals displayed 11x5 feet boards at their entrance specifying service charges. He directed continuous monitoring of high-risk individuals and

that all mid-level IAS and PCS transfers in various departments be put on hold till the Covid crisis continued.

Given the comfortable oxygen situation currently, the CM directed that oxygen may now be allowed to be used for essential non-medical purposes. However, a three-day buffer stock of medical oxygen would have to be maintained. The daily oxygen demand in Punjab has come down from 304 MT to 236 MT over the last 10 days.

PASSENGER CAP GOES

- Limit on passengers in personal vehicles goes, but cap remains on commercial vehicles
- All mid-level IAS, PCS transfers on hold till Covid pandemic continues
- To check overcharging, private hospitals to display 11x5 feet board at entrance specifying service charges
- Oxygen now allowed to be used for essential non-medical purposes
- 500 paediatric ventilators to be sought from the Centre

pregnant women in home isolation through special teams.

With the villages badly affected in the second wave, it was important to drive a strong campaign for "Corona Mukt Pind", he said, directing the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs and DCs to form such RCVs to be the torchbearers in the war against the contagion. Existing clubs can also become RCVs, he said, adding that these could work as a powerful support system for the panchayats and municipalities in the war against Covid.

Govt mulls 'Covid volunteers' to stem spread in rural areas

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Thursday rolled out a new initiative, involving youth, to take forward the state's Mission Fateh 2.0 as part of the 'Corona Mukt Punjab Abhiyan' (Covid-free Punjab Campaign), with directions to form groups of seven rural corona volunteers (RCVs) per village or municipal ward as a cadre to fight the pandemic.

Interacting with youth from rural and urban areas through video-conferencing, the CM said as a result of the support of the people, the number of cases in the state had come down from around 9,000 to 4,000+ in a matter of about three weeks. But given the impact on rural areas this time, the situation continued to be grave, he said.

BADGES, STICKERS FOR THOSE JABBED

CM Capt Amarinder Singh on Thursday said the distribution of one lakh badges and four lakh car stickers carrying the message "I am vaccinated" had begun. He urged people to flaunt their vaccination status to motivate others. He also said 15,000 sports kits would be distributed among rural corona volunteers.



With the villages badly affected in the second wave, it was important to drive a strong campaign for "Corona Mukt Pind", he said, directing the Department of Sports and Youth Affairs and DCs to form such RCVs to be the torchbearers in the war against the contagion. Existing clubs can also become RCVs, he said, adding that these could work as a powerful support system for the panchayats and municipalities in the war against Covid.

CM should go out to know reality: Ex-MLA

Chandigarh: A former Congress MLA from Batala on Thursday urged CM Capt Amarinder Singh and his ministers to go out in the field to get first-hand experience of the ground situation, especially in the Covid care centres, so that they come to know of serious shortcomings in the fight against the pandemic. "Sitting in Chandigarh will not resolve the problems," said Ashwani Sekhri, who has been sidelined in the party. TNS

02 concentrators, oximeters donated

Chandigarh: The Ankur Narula Ministry, Khambra Church, Jalandhar, has donated 20 oxygen concentrators, 150 pulse oximeters, masks and sanitizers to the state government. Health Minister Balbir Sidhu said such gestures would go a long way in fighting the pandemic. The organisation was setting up a Covid care centre, which would provide medical facilities as well as nutritious food to patients. — TNS

188 black fungus cases so far, 40 not Covid-linked

Tribune News Service



COVID METER	
Cases	3,914
Critical	358
Active	48,231
Deaths	178
WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS	
DISTRICT	CASES
Ludhiana	411
Jalandhar	401
Bathinda	344
Muktsar	313
SAS Nagar	278
DEATHS	17
12	13
7	4

been on steroid therapy and 122 on oxygen support prior to onset of mucormycosis.

As many as 154 had diabetes, 56 were immunocompromised, and 47 had comorbidities. A total of 156 are currently under treatment, nine have been cured while 23 have died.

Group head Dr KK Talwar said help was being taken from foreign specialists to deal with the problem. Medical Education Secretary DK Tiwari said maximum cases had been reported at Patiala GMC (16), followed by Amritsar GMC (10), Faridkot GMC (8) and Mohali GMC (2).

Health Secretary Hussan Lal said of the 188 cases, 40 were not related to Covid, while 148 were of infected persons, with 133 having

Jab for shopkeepers, vendors from June 1

18+ group drive extended to hospitality, public transport sectors

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27
The vaccination priority list for 18-45 age group in the state will be expanded from June 1 to include shopkeepers and their staff, hospitality sector, industrial workers, rehriwalas/street vendors, delivery boys, bus/cab drivers/conductors and members of local bodies.

Announcing this today, Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh said so far, 4.3 lakh individuals on the existing vaccination priority list of construction labour, co-morbid individuals and families of healthcare workers in the age group had been vaccinated. Chairing a virtual Covid review meeting, Capt Amarinder expressed happiness over the fact that many donors had contributed to the vaccination fund in the state.

Besides shopkeepers and their staff members, as well as industrial workers, the expanded priority list, effective from June 1, will include staff working in hotels, restaurants, marriage palaces, caterers, including cooks, bearers, etc.

In addition to rehriwalas, other street vendors will also leave work owing to the lockdown imposed by the state government. He urged the CM to give Rs 5,000 assistance to taxi/auto drivers and labourers, besides order loan companies to stop collection of instalments for some time.

He said they were forced to



VACCINES AVAILABLE	
45+group	Doses
Covishield	36,000
Covaxin	50,000
RECEIVED SO FAR	
18+group	Doses
Covishield	4,30L
Covaxin	0

become eligible, especially those serving food items — juice, chat, fruit etc. — as well as delivery boys, LPG distribution boys. Bus drivers, conductors, auto/cab drivers, mayors, councillors, sarpanches and panches will also be covered in this phase of 18-45 age group vaccination.

In terms of the existing vaccine stocks, the state had a balance of 36,000 Covishield and 50,000 Covaxin doses (received from the Government of India) for the 45+ age group. These were sufficient only for a day, the meeting was informed.

In the 18-45 age group, the state had received 4,29,780 of the 30 lakh Covishield doses ordered while no Covaxin dose had been received so far though advance payment had been made for 1,14,190 doses.

Villagers' indifference to norms worries officials

Tribune News Service

AVERSION TO MASKS
A majority of people don't wear face masks in villages. Also, many still show reluctance to Covid test and hide their symptoms. Govt doctor

especially those living in villages, to follow the guidelines for their own safety. "However, it is observed that a majority of people don't wear the mandatory face mask in villages. They wear it only while travelling on any major road or coming to the town. Further, a number of people still show reluctance to Covid test and hide their symptoms," said the doctor.

Give relief to virus-hit cabbies, traders: AAP

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27
AAP leader Harpal Singh Cheema on Thursday wrote to Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh demanding financial assistance to taxi drivers, labourers, shopkeepers, small artists and other poor sections hit by the pandemic.

He said they were forced to

leave work owing to the lockdown imposed by the state government. He urged the CM to give Rs 5,000 assistance to taxi/auto drivers and labourers, besides order loan companies to stop collection of instalments for some time.

SGP president Bibi Jagir Kaur said a total of 5,000 Covaxin doses worth Rs 53 lakh had been procured which would be administered free of cost. The camp would be organised at the Golden Temple entrance plaza. Meanwhile, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal

Free vax camp by SGPC tomorrow

AMRITSAR/ABOHAR, MAY 27

The SGPC has announced to organise a free vaccination camp against Covid on Saturday, while formally inaugurating "Coviserv" campaign launched by a Rajasthan-based Prandhan Trust here today.

SGP president Bibi Jagir Kaur said a total of 5,000 Covaxin doses worth Rs 53 lakh had been procured which would be administered free of cost. The camp would be organised at the

5,000 Covaxin doses worth ₹53L procured



Golden Temple entrance plaza. Meanwhile, SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal

₹8.58 cr given under Smart Village drive

Chandigarh: The state government under its Smart Village campaign has started de-watering and de-silting ponds across the state. Rural Development Minister Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa said the campaign was a source of income for the poor during the pandemic, providing 3,38,123 man-days of employment under the drive. A sum of Rs 8.58 crore had been transferred to the beneficiaries so far. — TNS

6 years on, project to build two hospitals in Mansa hangs fire

SAMEER SINGH
Tribune News Service



The proposed site for the project on the Khokhar road.

interest did not let it happen. We had suggested land for the project on the Khokhar road area, but objections were raised by some sections on flimsy grounds. Land could not be provided as there was no consensus among councilors on the matter."

The Health Department wrote to the Nagar Council on numerous occasions and letters were issued for acquiring land, but the latter's nonchalant approach hit the project. Manjit Singh, general secretary, PPCC, said, "We all are passing through tough times when we need hospitals and doctors more than anything else. Had such projects been taken on priority earlier, it

would have been of great assistance to patients. I have met with representatives of the Nagar Council and after prolonged discussion asked them to start the process to provide the land for the project."

Dr Sukhwinder Singh, Civil Surgeon, Mansa, said, "Despite being asked to provide the land for the construction of hospitals, the Nagar Council could not do so. Now, we will check with the higher authorities whether the funds sanctioned for the project are still available or have been utilised for some other work. If the funds are available, we will initiate the process to acquire land for the project afresh."

Suspend biometric system for ration: State to Centre

RUCHIKA M KHANNA
Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27
Amid the virulent second wave of the Covid-19, lakhs of persons from socially disadvantaged sections stand chance of being exposed to the virus as the Punjab Government has started distributing ration under the public distribution system (PDS), using Aadhaar-based biometric authentication system.

For getting ration, the beneficiaries are required to mark their attendance by pressing a button on the ePOS machines. This could become a breeding ground for the virus. Last year, after the pandemic hit the country, the use of the system was suspended by the government. However, this time the Government of India is insisting that the ration be distributed using the biometric authentication, say sources in the state Food and Supplies Department. This is because ration meant for public distribution has been allegedly siphoned off by unscrupulous elements, say the sources. Though the government has reportedly asked

the Centre to waive the rule, citing the health risk, it has so far not been exempted.

Information available with The Tribune shows that over 17 per cent of the wheat for the May-June period, has already been distributed to 7.36 lakh cardholders under the Food for All Scheme till today. The drive to distribute the ration using ePOS started on May 15. There are 1,900 ePOS machines, which have been sent to 17,000 fair price (ration) shops to be used by 39,03,616 card-holders to get 5 kg per person per month share of wheat.

Free distribution of ayurvedic drug for Covid patients begins

Tribune News Service

BATHINDA, MAY 27

The free distribution of Ayush-64, an ayurvedic medicine effective in treating Covid-19 patients, has started in the state. The first consignment of around 12 lakh tablets has already arrived from the Ministry of Ayush and further distribution through Sewa Bharti (a social service organisation roped in by the ministry) has started in different districts. This medicine is given to patients who have mild, moderate or no symptoms but are undergoing treatment in home isolation as an adjunct to standard medical care (allopathic medicine).

As per ayurvedic doctors, this medicine, if given with standard care, has proved quite effective in treating patients and also aid in reducing the recovery period. Ayush-64, a drug developed to cure malaria in 1980, has been recommended by the ministry after thorough research and several trials.

Talking to The Tribune, Dr Sanjeev Kumar, Assistant Director, Central Ayurveda Research Institute, Patiala, said: "We received 12 lakh tablets on May 10 from the Ayush ministry out of which we gave 10 lakh to Sewa Bharti on May 16 for further distribution. Several clinical studies have revealed that the medicine exhibits early clinical recovery of Covid-19 patients without further progression. The medicine is given to patients in the age group of 18-60 years and not to pregnant and lactating women."

Pardeep Kumar Monga, state in charge for Ayush-64 distribution who also heads Sewa Bharti, said: "We have already started providing the medicine to patients in a few districts and distribution will be intensified through our 47 centres in the state in the coming days."



Officials with the consignment of Ayush-64 in Bathinda. TRIBUNE PHOTO

HC orders uniform rates for Covid tests in Pb, Hry, Chd

Amid third surge warning, govt seeks 200 ventilators for paediatric use

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The state today sought the Punjab and Haryana HC's urgent intervention for additional ventilators for paediatric use following apprehensions of a third wave.

The request came as the Bench issued a slew of directions on uniform rates for Covid-19 tests and reduction in the rates for HRCT (chest) by private diagnostic centres.

The Bench of Justice Rajan Gupta and Justice Karamjit Singh also called for setting up ICU control rooms for the relatives to remain in regular touch with patients and to be aware of their medical condition.

The Bench also made it clear that fact-finding inquiries on overcharging by some private



NEED TO BE PREPARED

If the third wave is to hit, and it is to hit the junior citizens of the state, ventilators will be immediately required and we should be prepared for it. Atul Nanda, ADVOCATE-GENERAL

hospitals could be called for and examined by the court at an appropriate stage to see if further action was required.

As the case came up for resumed hearing, Punjab Advocate-General Atul Nanda told the Bench that the positivity rate in urban areas had come down to 2.98 per cent and to 3.74 per cent in rural areas. Nanda said around 200 additional ventilators would be required. "As far as the ventilators are concerned, 55 are

not working. We have written to the Centre to immediately attend to it. We are also demanding ventilators for paediatric use. If the third wave is to hit, and it is to hit the junior citizens of the state, this will be immediately required and we should be prepared for it," Nanda added.

Additional Solicitor-General of India Satya Pal Jain, in response, submitted the needful would be done without delay. "If any further

request is received from UT Chandigarh or Haryana in this regard, it shall also be considered forthwith and necessary steps taken," he added.

The Bench also directed that the rates for rapid antigen test (RAT) and RT-PCR test in the two states and the UT were required to be uniform. Taking a cue from the rates prescribed by Punjab for private labs — Rs 350 for RAT and Rs 450 for RT-PCR — the Bench asked Haryana and UT to reconsider.

The Bench also described as reasonable reduced rate of Rs 1,800 charged by private diagnostic centres for HRCT (chest) in the UT, before expressing "hope and trust" that Punjab and Haryana, too, would impress upon private diagnostic centres to reduce the rates on similar lines.



MOST IN RURAL BELT

- Majority of the incidents have been reported from rural areas, especially in Ludhiana, Tarn Taran, Sangrur, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ferozepur, Mansa
- An official says if not controlled, it may significantly affect the telecom connectivity and deprive people of uninterrupted services

enable work from home, virtual meetings, e-commerce, e-education, e-health and various other initiatives of the government, including vaccination, which requires technology and connectivity support."

To counter these fake and

misleading messages, the Department of Telecommunications has already clarified that there is no link between 5G technology and the spread of Covid and urged people not to be misguided by rumours.

"Moreover, testing of 5G network has not yet started anywhere in the country. So, the claim that 5G trials or networks are leading to the spread of virus is baseless," the Department of Telecommunications said.

The association has also written to Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan in this regard.

Dr Bishav Mohan, senior cardiologist, DMCH, said:

"Whosoever is spreading this false information should be put behind bars. Covid spread is not linked to mobile towers or 5G trials. Instead of falling prey to such fake messages, people should focus on taking precautions and getting vaccinated."

Entrance test for Army postponed

Tribune News Service

FARIDKOT, MAY 27

Common Entrance Examination (CEE) for Army recruitment, which was scheduled for May 30 at Army Public School, Ferozepur Cantt, has been postponed due to Covid-19 situation.

In this CEE, candidates from Bathinda, Faridkot, Muktsar, Ferozepur and Fazilka were to participate. All these candidates, eligible for the CEE, have already been declared medically fit during an Army recruitment rally held from April 1-9 in Ferozepur.

"The fresh date for the test will be announced later and the candidates will be informed accordingly to collect fresh admit cards from Army Recruiting Office, Ferozepur," said Gagandeep Kaur, public relation officer (defence).

Last yr's result awaited, Edu Dept readies for next exam

BALWANT GARG

Tribune News Service

FARIDKOT, MAY 27

Though government schools have been directed to begin preparing Class X students for the National Talent Search Examination (NTSE) scheduled for May 31, the result of the exam conducted last year is yet to be declared.

Hold on December 20, 2020, the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) usually declares the result within 40-50 days after the exam. The delay has left many meritorious students sulking as they get scholarship in private institutions on the basis of their result in NTSE-Stage I. But as the results have been withheld



NO NCERT NOD YET

- National Talent Search Exam Stage-I for Class X Students was held on Dec 20, 2020
- The result is usually declared within 40-50 days, but amid pandemic many meritorious students have been left in the lurch for want of scholarship
- Jagtar Singh Kulria, Director, SCERT, Punjab, says they are waiting for the NCERT nod to declare the results

amid pandemic, these students are being forced to pay full fee for their courses.

Jagtar Singh Kulria, Director, SCERT, Punjab, said they were waiting for the NCERT nod to declare the results.

On January 11, 2021, the SCERT had announced that the NTSE-Stage II exam would be held on February 14, 2021. This exam is conducted after students are shortlisted on the basis of their performance in Stage-I exam. Later, the Stage-II exam was postponed to June 13. "However, due to the pandemic-induced lockdown across the country, the exam has been deferred for indefinite period," Kulria said.

TREATMENT PROTOCOL FOR MUCORMYCOSIS (BLACK FUNGUS)

Any treating Hospitals / Physicians requiring advice regarding treatment protocols of Mucormycosis can approach the expert committee at :

Email: mucorpunjab@gmail.com / Mobile No.: 8872090028

Expert Committee has listed any of the 4 drugs depending on the condition of the patient to be used in the treatment of Mucormycosis:

- Conventional Amphotericin B ■ Liposomal Amphotericin B
- Posaconazole 300 mg ■ Itraconazole 200 mg

Any hospital requiring above medicines for treatment of Mucormycosis can approach the above committee. These drugs shall be made available to the patient (through treating hospital), subject to availability of these drugs.

All patients of mucormycosis are required to be Notified by the treating institutions / physician under Epidemic Diseases Act

Department of Health & Family Welfare, Government of Punjab

For health related information & suggestion
DIAL 104 24X7 TOLL FREE MEDICAL HELPLINE

'मासिक धर्म स्वच्छता दिवस'

28 मई 2021

साफ सफाई हो पूरी खुशियां कैसे रहें अधूरी

रोज नहाएं और शरीर को साफ रखें

स्वच्छ साधन (सेनेट्री नैपकिन / पैड) का प्रयोग करें

गंदे सेनेट्री नैपकिन (पैड) को कागज़ में लेपेट कर कूड़ेदान में फेंके या सेनेट्री नैपकिन इंसीनेटर मशीन में जला दें

हर 4-6 घंटे में सेनेट्री नैपकिन (पैड) बदलें

इसके बाद साबुन से हाथ धोएं

COVID-19 टीका लगने के बाद भी एहतियात बरतें

मास्क सही ढंग से पहनें

हाथों को नियमित रूप से साबुन व पानी से धोएं या सैनिटाइज़र का प्रयोग करें

आपस में 2 गज़ की दूरी बनाएं

लक्षण दिखने पर तुरंत सुबूत करवाएं

लक्षण दिखने पर तुरंत परीक्षण करवाएं

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश

epaper.tribuneindia.com

Blamed for virus spread, over 20 5G towers damaged in 3 weeks

MANAV MANDER

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

LUDHIANA, MAY 27

Over 20 telecom towers have been damaged in the state in the past three weeks after misleading messages, videos and recorded audios, linking Covid to telecom network and 5G network testing, have gone viral on the social media.

The Bench also directed that the rates for rapid antigen test (RAT) and RT-PCR test in the two states and the UT were required to be uniform.

Taking a cue from the rates prescribed by Punjab for private labs — Rs 350 for RAT and Rs 450 for RT-PCR — the Bench asked Haryana and UT to reconsider.

The Bench also described as reasonable reduced rate of Rs 1,800 charged by private diagnostic centres for HRCT (chest) in the UT, before expressing "hope and trust" that Punjab and Haryana, too,

would impress upon private diagnostic centres to reduce the rates on similar lines.

- Majority of the incidents have been reported from rural areas, especially in Ludhiana, Tarn Taran, Sangrur, Gurdaspur, Jalandhar, Ferozepur, Mansa
- An official says if not controlled, it may significantly affect the telecom connectivity and deprive people of uninterrupted services

enable work from home, virtual meetings, e-commerce, e-education, e-health and various other initiatives of the government, including vaccination, which requires technology and connectivity support."

To counter these fake and

misleading messages, the Department of Telecommunications has already clarified that there is no link between 5G technology and the spread of Covid and urged people not to be misguided by rumours.

"Moreover, testing of 5G network has not yet started anywhere in the country. So, the claim that 5G trials or networks are leading to the spread of virus is baseless," the Department of Telecommunications said.

The association has also written to Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan in this regard.

Dr Bishav Mohan, senior cardiologist, DMCH, said:

"Whosoever is spreading this false information should be put behind bars. Covid spread is not linked to mobile towers or 5G trials. Instead of falling prey to such fake messages, people should focus on taking precautions and getting vaccinated."

करते हैं आरक्ष, होंगे सभी स्वस्थ

For more information, contact below helpline numbers

8558893911 (For Entire State) & **1075** (Except Gurugram & Faridabad)

Haryana Government's Relief Schemes Related to Covid-19

Sh. Manohar Lal, Chief Minister, Haryana

Free of Cost Treatment to COVID-19 Positive Patients

- Free treatment to every COVID-19 patient in all Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals (including Remdesivir injection and other expensive medicines).
- Free treatment to patients of all BPL families in private hospitals also. Complete payment to these private hospitals through <https://gmdahrheal.in/> portal by the Government.
- For other COVID-19 patients also the Maximum Rates Prescribed for Tests, Oxygen Beds, Ventilators, I.C.U. beds, Ambulance etc. in private hospitals.
- Financial assistance of Rs. 1000 per patient per day to private hospitals.

Financial Assistance to Home Isolated COVID-19 Positive Patients

Financial Assistance of Rs. 5000 per patient through D.B.T. to those Home Isolated COVID-19 positive patients of BPL families who have been infected after March 1, 2021

Financial Assistance in Case of Death Due to COVID-19

- Financial assistance of a lump sum amount of Rs. 2 lakh to BPL families, in case of death of a family member between 18 to 50 years of age due to COVID-19 after March 1, 2021
- The Government will pay or reimburse insurance premium of Rs. 330 per person under **Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana**, for BPL families so that they could be provided with financial assistance of Rs. 2 Lakh, in case of any natural death.

Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

राष्ट्रीय स्वास्थ्य मिशन

स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश

Information, Public Relations & Languages Department, Haryana | www.prharyana.gov.in | @Cmohry | @DiprHaryana

New SIT begins recording statements of witnesses

Tribune News Service

FARIDKOT, MAY 27

The newly formed Special Investigation Team (SIT), which is probing the Kotkapura police firing case, reached Faridkot on Thursday to record the statements of witnesses in the October 14, 2015, incident.

While SIT members declined to share any information with mediapersons, sources revealed the SIT had summoned about 40 persons

KOTKAPURA FIRING

for recording statements. About 25 persons recorded their version of the police firing incident. The SIT will continue to record the statements of the witnesses on Friday.

The SIT has invited any person who was witness to the incident to get his or her statement recorded. Earlier, the SIT had visited Kotkapura to inspect the spots where the firing had occurred. The new SIT was constituted

after the Punjab and Haryana High Court had quashed the investigation reports of the SIT led by IGP Kunwar Vijay Pratap Singh in the Kotkapura firing case.

Most of the witnesses, who appeared before the SIT here on Thursday, had also earlier deposed before the SIT led by Kunwar Vijay Pratap.

Speaking to *The Tribune*, some of the witnesses said their statements before the new SIT were same as they had given to the old SIT.

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

After days of hiatus in the infighting between warring factions of the state Congress, the party high command is learnt to have finally constituted a three-member committee to listen to the Chief Minister's camp and disgruntled leaders.

The panel comprises Congress MP Mallikarjun Kharge, former MP Jai Parkash Aggarwal, and AICC general secretary and Punjab affairs in charge Harish Rawat. Both Kharge and Aggarwal are said to be confidants of the Gandhi family.

The dissident Congress leaders, led by ministers Sukhjinder Randhawa and Charanjit Channi and MLA Pargat Singh have been questioning the Chief Minister over delay in giving justice in sacrilege case and subsequent police firing incidents. Pargat has gone to the extent of saying the popularity graph of the CM had gone down since the last elections.

Will hear out disgruntled Cong leaders, CM loyalists

Randhawa and Channi had held meetings with Rajya Sabha MP Partap Singh Bajwa and Navjot Singh Sidhu. Some ministers and MLAs had also extended support to the rebel leaders, but did not go public. On the other hand, the Chief Minister's camp has been going all out to woo the MLAs by addressing their long-pending issues.

It is learnt the dissident leaders had sought a direct audience with party's former president Rahul Gandhi, while refusing to air their grouse in virtual meeting with the high command as they feared their phones were being tapped by the state government.

A senior Congress leader said the three-member committee would listen to the disgruntled party leaders and CM's loyalists, besides other MLAs.

Of 74, only 10 owners join probe into Majrian scam

JUPINDERJIT SINGH
Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The Punjab Vigilance Bureau's probe into the 2,714-acre land scam at Majrian village in Mohali has turned murkier.

After processing ownership records of about 700 acres, the VB has come to know that there were 74 owners of different pieces of land. Of these, only 10 have joined the investigation so far. The remaining have not responded to the summons.

Land prices at Majrian and other villages in the periphery of Chandigarh had multiplied fast in the last decade when influential persons moved there to develop farm houses, resorts or high-rise residential buildings.

Sources in the department said the owners who did not join the investigation were already under suspicion. "Either the piece of land has a proxy owner or it is benami,"

**FAIL TO RESPOND TO SUMMONS**

After processing ownership records of about 700 acres, the VB has come to know that there were 74 owners of different pieces of land. Of these, only 10 have joined the investigation so far. The remaining have not responded to the summons.

said the sources. The VB believes there could be proxy owners as one of the four persons arrested for tampering with the records of the village common land so that it could be sold illegally was Hans Raj, a driver of property dealer and main accused Sham

Lal. Sham Lal is absconding. The VB had on May 9 arrested four of the 11 persons booked for selling the shamlat (village common land) in a fraudulent manner at Majrian.

Under the rules, the village common land or the panchayat land cannot be sold or bought. However, around two decades ago, the land mafia started buying and selling hundreds of acres by tampering with revenue records.

Some of the present owners, may be the victims of the land scam, as they trusted revenue officials who approved the sale-purchase.

VB officials have already announced that 558 acres of land was registered in 14 fake names by tampering with the mutation number 3159. The VB officials said in connivance with revenue officials, the original documents under which land had been transferred were destroyed from the records of the Revenue Department.

Day after voting, 9 names dropped

SAURABH MALIK
Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

Two days after a committee set up by the Punjab and Haryana High Court cleared a list of 27 advocates for senior designation, more than 30 per cent of the names have failed to find favour with the full court.

Available information suggests nine of the names were dropped from the list following voting by the full court, taking the total down to 18. One name was, however, added after the candidates left out by the committee were considered by the full court, comprising the Chief



Another added to senior advocates' list after review by full court

Justice and other judges. It is believed a majority of the judges was in favour of designating the advocate as senior, following which her name was included in the final list, taking the total to 19.

The list, signed by the Chief Justice and the other judges, has two women advocates. One of the lawyers was enrolled in 1978, while the youngest was enrolled in 2003. The initial list cleared by the committee had apparently failed to find ready approval by the full court. The judges attending the meeting not only voted on the names of the 27 short-listed candidates, but also "ticked" against the names of left-out applicants they considered deserving.

In all, 113 advocates had initially applied for the senior tag, but one died due to Covid during the process. The remaining

112 applications were scanned by the "permanent committee for designation as senior advocates" before the applicants were interviewed. The list of the short-listed candidates was then placed for discussion before the full court.

But some of the judges during the meeting expressed displeasure with the list. A substantial number of judges was, rather, of the opinion certain other names were also required to be included.

The judges then resorted to voting upon the names of short-listed candidates and also tick-marked the names from the original list of applicants.

Hundreds set to join three-day Patiala dharna

**JYANI SERVES NOTICE ON PRIVATE CHANNEL**

- Former Health Minister and BJP's Fazilka ex-MLA Surjit Kumar Jyani's counsel sent a legal notice to a private news channel on Thursday for allegedly breaching code of ethics and broadcasting standards by distorting facts of his interview on May 25 on the ongoing farmers' protest
- The counsel alleged due to twisting of facts, his client's image had been tarnished, causing him mental harassment. The counsel, on behalf of Jyani, has demanded an unequivocal apology in this regard

3K EXPECTED ON DAY 1

Over 3,000 farmers will be in attendance on the Day 1 and gradually the numbers will increase. Efforts will be made to follow social distancing norms. Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan, BKU General Secretary

WILL SPREAD INFECTION

Over 3,000 farmers will be in attendance on the Day 1 and gradually the numbers will increase. Efforts will be made to follow social distancing norms. Sukhdev Singh Kokrikalan, BKU General Secretary

especially when it came to relaxations for the poor, who had to pay lakhs of rupees at private hospitals".

All preparations are complete and over 3,000 farmers will be in attendance on the first day and gradually the numbers will

increase. All efforts will be made to follow the social distancing norms," he said, adding the central and state govern-

ments were responsible for the plight of the farmers.

Meanwhile, health officials said holding such an agitation at this juncture was ill advised as many villages had been declared containment zones and if farmers from these villages attended the event, it was likely the virus would spread further.

"We have recorded a spike in cases in the rural areas. If they attend gatherings now, chances of its spread increase further, putting others at risk," said an official.

However, farm unions are adamant as thousands of protesters are camping in Patiala.

"The dharna will be held to expose the government on unfulfilled vacancies in the health sector and how the poor were being fleeced in the name of treatment. Where were the governments during rallies and similar gatherings?" said a farm leader. — TNS

Excise Department suspends inspector

MUKTSAR, MAY 27

The Excise and Taxation Department has suspended its inspector, Mandeep Singh, posted at the authorised bottling plant at Badal village for alleged negligence in keeping a vigil over its functioning.

"Since a large number of bottles of Royal Shot, Blue Legacy and Big Barrel brands were found without bearing holograms from some rooms located in an

illegal bottling plant: Hunt on for 4th suspect

orchard at Badal village on Saturday, the Inspector has been placed under suspension. Even the CCTV cameras of the authorised bottling plant had remained non-functional on some days in the recent past, which is mandatory for such plants," said a source — TNS

Ensure no illegal felling, says NGT

PATIALA, MAY 27

Disposing of an application by Sangrur residents, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Department of Forests to ensure no illegal felling of trees is done and remedial action is taken.

The residents had approached the NGT after several trees were axed by the Public Works Department (PWD) in the name of widening of road from the Fountain Chowk to Kali Mata Mandir. — TNS

Three Patiala jail officials suspended

PATIALA, MAY 27

A month after three prisoners escaped from the Central Jail here, the Prisons Department has suspended two assistant jail superintendents and a warden

for negligence. Two of the three prisoners are still at large.

Additional DGP (Prisons) PK Sinha ordered suspension of assistant jail superintendents Tarlochan Singh and Kuldip

Singh and warden Sant Singh on the basis of an inquiry report.

While one of the accused was arrested along with an aide, the other two are absconding. — TNS

SC panel notice to state

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has issued a notice to the Punjab Government to ensure immediate release of roll numbers to SC students studying under the Post-matric Scholarship Scheme in the state.

Pertinently, some private colleges in Punjab, especially in Barnala district, are forcing SC students to submit fee as a precondition for the release of their roll numbers. The NCSC has issued a notice to the Punjab Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary, Department of Social Jus-

tice; Barnala DC and SSP asking them to submit with 15 days, the facts and information on the action taken in the matter.

NCSC chairman Vijay Sampla warned that non-issuance of roll numbers or withholding of degree of any student admitted under the scholarship scheme of the state.

Sampla cautioned the officers that if action taken report was not received within the stipulated time, then he panel might issue summons for personal appearance. — TNS

7TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY

It has been seven years today since the sad demise of our respected Dr. SATYAPAUJAGAT (Ex-Director Health Services Punjab). You will always be missed. Loved and remembered. Whatever we are today, it is because of your blessing and constant inspiration. Fondly remembered by:



Dr. Satyapaul Jagat

In 12 days, 1.25 crore screened in villages

Over 91K found with flu-like symptoms, treated

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, MAY 27

The multidisciplinary teams, formed on the direction of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, have successfully conducted the health check-up of around 1.25 crore people residing in 25,49,464 households in rural areas of the state in the past 12 days.

During the door-to-door drive, which started on May 15, as many as 91,439 persons were found suffering from flu-like symptoms and were provided timely treatment.

As per an official spokesperson, samples of as many as 1,07,852 (90,474 for rapid antigen tests and 17,378 for RT-PCR tests) were taken in the state under the Haryana Village General Health Check-up Scheme, in which 3,781 patients were found positive. In Haryana, the strategy of test-track-treatment certainly proved to be effective as the positivity rate has come down to 3.47 per cent.

Under the scheme, 8,000 multidisciplinary teams were



Doctors examine a patient at care facility in Gurugram. S CHANDAN

2,322	FRESH CASES	
98 DEATHS		
IN 24 HOURS		
ACTIVE CASES 28,189		
WORST-AFFECTED DISTRICTS		
DISTRICT	+VE	DEATHS
Sirsa	193	8
Gurugram	171	1
Hisar	213	12

formed for conducting door-to-door health check-up of each rural household for the early detection of Covid. The teams are closely monitoring every

patient and those having mild or moderate symptoms are being asked to stay in home isolation, while those who don't have the facility are made to stay in quarantine centres being set up in the village itself.

It is expected that the health check-up of the rural population is likely to complete within the next two days.

The spokesperson said in just a short span of time, not only the health infrastructure had been strengthened in terms of increasing the number of oxygen beds, ventilators, essential medicines at both PHCs and CHCs, but 1,746 village isolation facilities had also been opened in each village.

formed for conducting door-to-door health check-up of each rural household for the early detection of Covid. The teams are closely monitoring every

HARYANA

Half of Rewari centres run out of doses

RAVINDER SAINI

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

REWARI, MAY 27

Half of the vaccination centres in the districts have run out of doses. On Thursday, vaccines were administered at 22 of 42 centres. Dr Ashok Kumar, nodal officer for the vaccination programme, confirmed this.

Making matters worse, the department is flooded with the demand for doses. More than 10 government departments and banks have approached the authorities with requests to organise vaccination camps.



WHAT THE RULEBOOK SAYS...

Only 20% of doses are reserved for govt and bank staff, while the rest are to be given to general public at vaccination centres. We choose one or two depts every day and vaccinate a limited number of employees. A health official

The department started facing shortage of doses when the Centre announced that vaccination would be open for everyone above 18 years. Dr Kumar said, "The health authorities have received requests for special camps from the Departments of Animal Husbandry and Dairy, Higher and School Education, and Panchayati Raj, judiciary; banks; BSNL; Railways; and Haryana Roadways."

He said, "A few camps for government departments have already been held."

17 DMs TO AUDIT BILLS

After several fleecing plaints, the admin has deployed 17 duty magistrates to audit bills issued to Covid patients by private hospitals. TNS



This has reference to advertisement published in this newspaper on 27th March 2021 for requirement of Land for Retail Outlet (Petrol / Diesel Pump) in the State of Haryana.

It is to notify that the last date for submission of application is extended till 10th June 2021. All other terms and conditions remain same. The applications already received will be considered valid and those applicant need not to apply again.



An Initiative of the Government of Punjab to create awareness on the significance of MENSTRUAL HYGIENE

State-wide Launch:

Udaan

Distribution of free sanitary pads to needy women/girls by

Smt. Aruna Chaudhary

Social Security, Women and Child Development Minister

**on International Menstrual Hygiene Day
May 28, 2021 (Friday) | 11:30 am onwards**

“ I am sure that this laudable step of the Social Security and Women & Child Development Department would go a long way in empowering women and girls through good and safe menstrual health and hygiene. Besides, this unique initiative would also inculcate a sense of confidence and security amongst them to continue with daily activities during menstruation. ”



Capt. Amarinder Singh

Chief Minister, Punjab

Beneficiaries to be covered through Anganwari Centres:- • School drop-out/out-of-school girls and young women not attending college • Women from BPL families, residing in slum areas & Homeless women • Itinerant traveller (banjara) families • Poor women not covered under any other scheme.

9 sanitary pads would be given to each beneficiary per month

Total project cost approx. ₹40.55 Cr./year

Live streaming of the launch program will be available at:

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

https://youtu.be/cMaVqNi18_s

Department of Social Security, Women and Child Development, Punjab

BRIEFLY
CHANDIGARH
Officer gets additional charge

Hema Sharma, Additional Chief Electoral Officer, Haryana, has

been posted as Director, Women

and Child Development Depart-

ment; Special Secretary, Women

and Child Development Depart-

ment; Secretary, Haryana State

Commission for Protection of

Child Rights; and Managing

Director, Haryana Women Devel-

opment Corporation Limited in

addition to her present duties. TNS

Women teachers get benefit

In consonance with instructions issued by the Chief Secretary's office on February 13, 2020, the state has decided to give five marks to regular women teachers during the online transfer if their husbands are employed in any department, corporation or board of the state or Central governments. TNS

JAGAT GURU NANAK DEV PUNJAB STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY, PATIALA
(Established by the State Legislature Act No. 19 of 2019)
Advertisement No 04/2021

Online applications are invited for various Non-Teaching posts in the University. Online registration of application for these posts will start w.e.f. 28.5.2021 and ends on 21.6.2021. Last date for submitting Hard Copy of the online submitted application is 30.6.2021.

For further details visit University website <http://www.psou.ac.in>.

Patiala
28.5.2021

REGISTRAR

DPR/Pb/4872

BABA FARID UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
SADIQ ROAD, FARIDKOT (PUNJAB) - 151203
Ph.: 01639 - 256232, 256236

E-TENDER NOTICE

Short Term E-tenders are invited for following works upto 07-06-2021

(1) Construction of MS Shed & Platform for (PSA) Oxygen Generation Plant (2) Supply, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of 180 DG Set with AMF Panel for (PSA) Oxygen Generation Plant (3) SITC of copper pipe for Oxygen gas from (PSA) to MCH building at GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot (4) Supply & Installation of 30 KVA online UPS for Nuclear Medicine in GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot.

The tenders are invited for following works upto 18-06-2021

(1) SITC of Hospital Elevator (Stretcher Lift) 26 persons/ 1768 KG for (G+3/4 Stops) for Super Specialty Block (2) Construction of VRDL Lab at Second Floor in GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot (3) Replacing damaged RCC parapet, wall of ducts on external faces of GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot (4) Special repair of toilet block of MSc & BSc Nursing Hostel (5) Providing & installation of 10 numbers High Mask Lights with 200 watt 6 LED lights in GGS Medical Hospital, Residential & University Campus at Faridkot (6) Supplying 56" ceiling fan & 15" exhaust fan for GGS Medical Hospital, Faridkot (7) Supply, Installing Testing & Commissioning of HVAC Services for Modular Operation Theaters floor of Super Specialty Block in GGS Medical College & Hospital, Faridkot (8) CMC for 83 Tr. Ductable & Package AC unit of Radiotherapy and Emergency O.T (9) CMC for 70 HP VRV Unit of Plastic Surgery of Super Specialty Block at GGSMC Faridkot.

Other terms and conditions can be downloaded from <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>. The tenders will be accepted in e-tender mode only. Bidder can also download tender notification and document from university website:- www.bfuhhs.ac.in

REGISTRAR

The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

Managing Yaas disaster

Odisha, West Bengal did well in limiting damage

C YCLONE Yaas, designated 'very severe' by meteorological experts, made landfall on the country's east coast on Wednesday, leaving a trail of destruction in Odisha and West Bengal. Farther inland, Jharkhand too was affected as Yaas developed into a deep depression over it and interior Odisha. The damage was severest in Odisha and West Bengal — according to initial estimates by their governments, hundreds of villages and towns were inundated, lakhs of homes destroyed, property washed away or lost and infrastructure ruined. The damage to farmland and standing crops, and loss of livestock will be more accurately worked out in time, providing us a clearer picture of the losses. With thousands of big trees uprooted in forests and reserves, the impact on ecology and environment would be severe, too.

Amidst this horror, one figure stands out — while even one death is one too many, the single-digit toll suggests that the governments were effective in their efforts to minimise the loss of lives. Lakhs of people were evacuated from their homes and housed in shelters. The Coast Guard ensured that fishing boats returned safely before the storm hit. Personnel from the National Disaster Response Force — which deployed 113 rescue teams — and the Army rescued hundreds of people who had either refused to evacuate or were trapped by the storm. All in all, considering the severity of the storm and the density of population in the affected areas, it seems like a job well done. Barely a week earlier, Cyclone Tauktae struck the west coast, causing 174 fatalities, while 81 persons are still missing. While Tauktae was more powerful of the two, it seems the loss of lives due to Tauktae could have been lesser if more urgency had been displayed — in the case of the ONGC Barge P305, for instance.

India Meteorological Department chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra has suggested that the increased frequency of intense cyclones could be linked to climate change, though he did admit that more research and analysis is needed on the subject. Experts believe that climate change is leaving a cascading effect on our ecosystem — melting glaciers, rising sea levels, unseasonal snow and heat could be at the bottom of many natural disasters. This could be interpreted as nature's increasingly insistent warning to us.

Cover priority groups

Remove bottlenecks impeding vaccination drive

A T least 20 doctors are dying every day in the country due to Covid-19 during the second wave, according to the Indian Medical Association. This alarming fact underlines the vulnerability of healthcare workers who are risking their lives daily in the line of duty. This priority group was the first to get the jab when the vaccination programme was rolled out in mid-January. However, universal coverage of this high-risk category continues to be a bridge too far in several states. In Punjab, for instance, about 28 per cent of the healthcare workers have not even received the first dose. Unprotected against the virus, they are more prone to contracting the infection and thus becoming a liability rather than an asset to the authorities which need all hands on deck to handle the unprecedented emergency.

Right from the outset, Punjab has been struggling to address vaccine hesitancy among health personnel. Despite the government's repeated warnings, some doctors and other medical professionals have stayed away from the inoculation drive. Their reluctance to take the shot has rubbed off on the masses. Ensuring their compliance through a carrot-and-stick approach is a must to give a fillip to overall vaccination.

The inoculation drive has also been impacted by the digital divide. Though walk-in vaccination is now underway for adults in the below-45 category, there is no denying that preference is being given to those who have booked online appointments. It's disturbing to know that over 90 per cent of the slots for vaccination (18-44 age group) in the remote Dodra-Kwar area of Shimla district have been booked by outsiders as the locals are hampered by lack of Internet connectivity. A similar problem cropped up in Lahaul and Spiti last week as tourists from Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan grabbed half of the slots meant for residents of the tribal district. Such irregularities are worsening the situation at a time when vaccine supplies are already running low. The authorities must remove the bottlenecks so as to save as many lives as possible.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Money can buy the necessary police order. Justice is sold to the highest bidder. — Rohinton Mistry

ON THIS DAY...100 YEARS AGO

The Tribune.

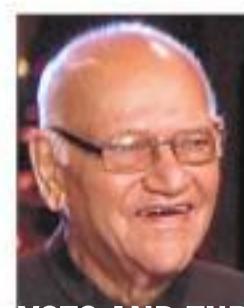
LAHORE, SATURDAY, MAY 28, 1921

THE PRESS ACT-II

WE have said that what the circumstances call for is not a modification of the Press Act, but its total repeal. We will now proceed to answer some of the objections which can conceivably be urged against this view by an imaginary opponent. It may be said, in the first place, if the Press Act is repealed, what guarantee is there that the Press will not abuse its liberty? The reply is that there is no guarantee even now, as the actions under the Act and the warnings abundantly show. In reality, there is not and there cannot be any absolute guarantee, whether in India or any other country, that liberty shall not be abused. That, indeed, is not liberty which is not capable of being and is not liable at times to be abused. The only guarantee that exists elsewhere and can exist in India itself, apart from the known consequence of the abuse of liberty, consists in the healthy checks imposed by public opinion, and it is the part of wisdom and of expediency on the part of the Government to stimulate these checks by eliminating possible causes of discontentment and dissatisfaction, and by giving the people an interest in the Constitution. Something in this direction has been done already and with very good results. The revolutionaries of a by-gone age have declared that they have now ceased to be revolutionaries and become constitutionalists. We must clearly go forward in the same direction. And from this point of view, the repeal of such a measure as the Press Act is bound to do great good. Let not the Government perpetually move in a vicious circle of its own creation. Let it not imagine, as it has been doing all these years, that the bitterness which bad measures engender can ever be a valid ground for the continuance of those measures, or forget that the best way of removing the irritation is to remove the irritant.

From Bombay to Mumbai

Political stranglehold on the judicial process must be loosened for the system to function



TRYSTS AND TURNS

JULIO RIBEIRO



BEWARE: The politician-police-criminal nexus that is clouding the security scenario can't be allowed to function at the cost of the safety of the common man. PTI

If police officers are encouraged to probe, prosecute, try and execute the sentence, they will turn into criminals in uniform!

organised the Sena's cadres on para-military lines, with *shakha pramukhs* leading bands of lumpen elements for skirmishes with the police. In 1968, the city saw the first major conflagration with Sainiks emerging from every *chawl* and *basti* taking on the might of the state. They demanded white-collar jobs for the locals and to a noticeable extent the demand was conceded and the Sena did manage to make a dent in the political landscape. It is now a major player in Maharashtra.

I joined the IPS in 1953. I spent my first 15 working years in the districts before winding my way to the metropolis. In 1968-69, when I was placed in charge of a zone in Mumbai City that stretched from Dadar to Mulund in the eastern suburbs, the phenomenon called the Shiv Sena had begun taking root in the city. Its leader Balasaheb Thackeray had channelled the frustrations of the local Mahashtrians, mostly natives of the Konkan, and escalated political violence to a scale not witnessed in the city earlier.

Till the Shiv Sena replaced the communists as the ruling Congress's main opponents in the city, the police had to contend with *morchas*, rallies and other political demonstrations. The police were able to deal with such opposition fairly easily. Since maintenance of order on the streets was the paramount concern of the colonial administration, the police were geared up for such tasks.

This changed when Thackeray

the request of lawyers leads to a stage where people encourage vigilanism and shortcuts for getting justice. There is an inherent danger in resorting to instant justice. If police officers are encouraged to investigate, prosecute, try and execute the sentence, they will turn into criminals in uniform!

It is important to restore post-colonial efficiency. As a young law student, I used to watch trials in Sessions Courts. Day-to-day hearings were the norm. Trials used to finish within three days, on an average, and cases were decided within a year of the commission of the offences. The expectation of being found guilty and punished was sufficient to deter those who were inclined to err. Since that fear has been obliterated, crimes have risen.

The stranglehold of elected politicians on every aspect of the judicial process system has to be loosened for the system to be put back on the rails. The appointment of top police officers, the supervision of prosecutors and the selection of judges need the attention of the thinking public. The political class should not be allowed to play ducks and drakes with appoint-

ments and transfers. They have a responsibility to the people who have elected them to high office.

The recent case of Mumbai's Commissioner of Police reacting like a sour puss to his transfer from that coveted position to a nondescript job typifies the rot that has set in the country's police force. He accused the Home Minister of summoning subordinate officers and demanding that they collect a hundred crores a month from law-breakers and deposit the monies with him! This he disclosed after he was shifted!

Stories of the minister ordering transfers for cash had been doing the rounds of police circles for some time. An earlier Home Minister of the same party, the NCP had been accused of this insidious practice a decade or more ago. I had written about him in the newspapers of the time. But this time all lines have been crossed.

The Union Home Ministry resorted to a subterfuge to get the allegations investigated by one of its own agencies, the NIA. But since the cause was a good one, activists did not complain. But our enthusiasm was dampened when we realised that the NIA and its political masters are going to nail only the state's Home Minister, the BJP's political opponent, and not the other essential partner in crime without whose connivance the scam could not have been conceived. I am referring to the puppeteer pulling the strings that made encounter specialist Waze and other police officers of the subordinate level dance to an agreed tune. Waze was the chief's right-hand man. He had been under suspension for nearly two decades facing a murder charge. Why was he reinstated, and by whom? Can an investigative agency worth its salt exculpate one of the two main players in a crime? In this case the entire force knows who was playing what part in the drama. If they find that one of the main culprits has got off by cozying up to one group of politicians intent on spiting the other, the politician-police-criminal nexus that is clouding the security scenario will continue to function at the cost of the safety of the common man.

The lasting appeal of nambardari

SURINDERJIT SINGH SANDHU

IN 1997, land revenue (*mamla*) and water rate (*abiana*) were abolished, and the issue of abolishing the post of *nambardar* remained a hot topic. It was considered that since other types of recovery of government dues will continue, and identification of people for various purposes will be needed, the post of *nambardar* should continue. The remuneration of a *nambardar* used to be *pachotra*, i.e. 1/5 of the land revenue of a revenue estate. This was replaced by a fixed monthly honorarium. In both cases, the amount paid to a *nambardar* is a pittance. But the clamour for the post and its glamour never waned.

At a divisional headquarter, a CM was discussing some issues with the

Divisional Commissioner. 'Ministers of your area and almost all the MLAs are not happy with you, they say that you never pick up their phones,' he said. The commissioner replied, 'They are right, sir; they interfere in my court work, mostly so in *nambardari* cases and that I cannot allow.'

The CM remarked, 'They don't even spare your court! Don't worry.'

The family of a senior high court lawyer, who also worked as Additional Advocate-General, owned the maximum land in his village. His father had retired as a senior civil servant and his uncle was the *nambardar* of the village.

Nambardari had remained in the family for close to 100 years. So, when the *nambardar* died, everyone felt that *nambardari* should remain in the family. When the proclamation was made in

the village to fill the vacant post, family conferences were held to discuss who should apply for the post. It was decided that the advocate should apply. Initially, he was reluctant as his name had been recommended for the post of a high court judge. However, family sentiments prevailed and he went to the tehsil office and applied for the post. Two other candidates jumped in the fray. After about 10 adjournments in six months, the tehsildar recommended his name to the SDM. The SDM took another two months to endorse the recommendation to the Collector.

By then, scores of complaints had flown around, alleging that the family was like the dacoits of Chambal, sycophants of the British, traitors, and what not. The advocate perceived that even

the Chief Justice had started suspecting his credentials. All this was happening because the other two candidates were mischievous and aligned to a powerful political leader of the area. The advocate was worried as he was not finding a way to wriggle out of this ticklish situation. After hearing the arguments in the case, the DC fixed the date for the pronouncement of the judgment. It fell like a bombshell when the advocate's name was rejected, as he was not residing in the village. The family persisted to file appeal in the court of the commissioner, but the will of the advocate prevailed. He convinced everyone by asking, 'Do you want me to become a judge or a *nambardar*?'

He became not only an HC judge, but also its Chief Justice in due course.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Covid vaccination

It is heartening that India has achieved the milestone of vaccinating more than 20 crores of its population in 130 days and has become the second country after the US to reach this figure. No small achievement for a vast country like ours. The figures would have been much better had the country maintained the pace of inoculation at the level it was started. In the midst of the second wave, we can no longer afford to slow down the vaccination drive. We must identify the means to speed up inoculation by ramping up production and making it available all over the country. It also needs to be ensured that people taking the first dose are given the second dose in the stipulated time since they will remain vulnerable till even after a few days of the second dose.

DINESH KUMAR VERMA, PANCHKULA

Why PM's photo?

Refer to the PM's photo on vaccine certificates; what a publicity culture our politicians have developed! It's shameful that politicians must have their stamp on everything. What's the need for the photo? Is it his personal property? A politician, whoever he may be,

serves the country in his official capacity, for which he is paid a huge amount. When the country is passing through a catastrophic phase of Covid, such leaders are adopting all means to gain cheap popularity.

GURSHARAN SINGH KAINTH, AMRITSAR

Nehru stands tall

Refer to 'A thousand lies can't dwarf...'; it is quite painful to note that Nehru is presented poorly in the eyes of the present generation by his opponents. Nehru was the PM of this country for a full 17 years, and made huge contributions in the freedom struggle of this country along with Mahatma Gandhi. He is rightly called the architect of modern India. His book, *The Discovery of India*, is the most inspiring book for young readers even today.

RAVINDER KUMAR JAIN, LUDHIANA

Nehru did err

The article 'A thousand lies can't dwarf the giant Nehru was' is in appreciation of Nehru, but his great failures in matters of J&K, Sikhs of Punjab, and the border dispute with China are still lingering and have cost the Indian polity and economy dearly. At least the Sikh issue could have been resolved by him because it was entirely in his hands, but he said he was prepared

to face 'civil war' (October 1952, 'Times', London). It turned out to be worse than that. It cost his daughter's life, besides the lives of thousands of Sikhs, and the breaking of social bonds.

BALDEV SINGH, MELBOURNE

Balanced path

Reference to 'Regulating digital media'; the claim of India is genuine against WhatsApp, but for the greed of financial profits, the company is discriminating against India on the grounds of privacy rights. Just because India does not have a data protection law, WhatsApp is taking advantage of it. The nations having proper data protection laws, like European economies, have tightened the hands of WhatsApp and allow users not to share their privacy. In these stressed conditions, India is facing several problems. The two should think and negotiate for a balanced path. If this platform is used with some seriousness, it can change the world at the ground level.

JASKRAT SINGH BATRA, MUKSAR

Cyber harassment

Refer to 'Statute needed to curb gender-based cybercrime'; indeed, cyber harassment, rape and death threats clutter the overburdened

headspace of the 21st century woman. It is imperative to introduce a statute and also make the toughest provisions in the IT Act so that such crimes can be curbed. All measures should be taken to check cybercrime in online and offline modes.

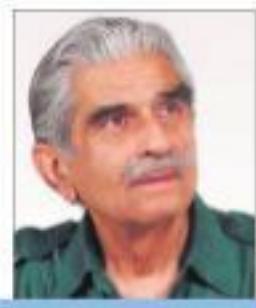
SAROJ BALA, SIRSA

Tokyo Olympics

Opinion polls show that the majority of Japanese public is opposed to holding the games ('Cancel or not to cancel Tokyo Olympics'). But then cancelling the Olympics and Paralympics will cost Japan around 1.81 trillion yen (\$17 billion). Japanese newspaper publisher Asahi Shimbun (an official partner of Tokyo Olympics) called for the summer games to be cancelled, in an editorial citing risk to public safety and strain on the medical system from the pandemic. Shimbun later said it remained committed to being an official partner of the games and that its editorial division had its independent mission. Was it a tactful retraction? Pragmatic and practical, as the Japanese are, it would be anachronistic to counsel them. Even then, being a fellow human being, it may be submitted that in the totality of the circumstances cancellation may be a better choice.

BEANT SINGH BEDI, MOHALI

Ladakh has lessons for India's China policy



MAJ GEN ASHOK K MEHTA (RETD)

MILITARY COMMENTATOR

SOON after disengagement from the Pangong Tso Lake in February during which India generously surrendered its vital ground on Chushul heights for the Chinese vacating the Fingers area, it was clear even to the blind that for the PLA, it was the end of disengagement from friction areas, despite commitment to follow up within 48 hours after the 10th round of talks to address other friction areas. Fifty days lapsed before the notional 11th round was held. The PLA had drawn curtains. Editor of *Global Times* Hu Xijin wrote gratuitously that India should be happy with Chinese withdrawal from Pangong Tso. The PLA added it hoped India could 'cherish the positive trend in de-escalation' but did not acknowledge the remaining unresolved friction areas. The statement came from the Western Theatre Command, Chengdu, not the usual MoD in Beijing.

State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi continued to harp on 'rights and wrongs of last year's crisis' (blaming India) adding that the boundary dispute which was left over by history was not the whole story of India-China relationship, suggesting that it needed to be decoupled from bilateral relations. Wang has echoed China's standard line: both sides are not a threat to each other but an

opportunity for development; both should help not undercut each other and intensify cooperation instead of harbouring suspicion. Wang is insisting: "Now that withdrawal in Pangong Tso is over, bilateral ties can resume."

Besides squandering its trump card on the Kailash range, India's self-inflicted injuries are couched in denial: "Not an inch of ground has been lost" (COAS General MM Naravane and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh); and "no PLA on Indian territory" (Prime Minister Narendra Modi). The Chinese could not have hoped for a more generous adversary. Their official version of casualties at Galwan was: four Chinese martyred due to action by a foreign army (not India). The altered version was necessary to avoid generating nationalistic feelings.

If India wavered over the PLA intrusions, Foreign Minister S Jaishankar steered its politico-diplomatic posture with a firm and steady hand. He has consistently called for complete disengagement from all friction points — term Restoration of Status Quo Ante (RSQA) May 5 2020, not used — and made clear that peace and tranquility in border areas is the basis of normal relations. Jaishankar's international reiteration on this was on May 5 at a Global Dialogue in London: "It is not realistic to have good relations in other domains when there was tension on the border. I can't have friction, coercion, intimidation and bloodshed on the border and then say, let us have a good relationship...it is not realistic." The soured relations were overtaken by President Xi Jinping's first message to Modi in 14 months of providing help during the catastrophic spike in Covid-19 pandemic in India which was followed by Wang's telephone call on April 30.



FLASHPOINT: China hasn't acknowledged unresolved friction areas. PTI

One year on, the lessons from Ladakh could be termed as under:

- The Chinese succeeded in intelligence and operational trickery through multiple intrusions from Depsang to Demchok, promulgating the 1959 claim line further west. China has created buffer zones on Indian territory 18 km deep at Depsang and blocked patrolling by occupying Bottleneck and Y-junction. Most significantly, it inveigled India into vacating the critical Chushul heights dominating the Chinese launch pads.
- The primacy of Chinese threat over Pakistan's has finally been accepted. This has enabled the rebalancing of forces and strategic reserves across the new LAC front and by year-end will likely minimise the Pakistan challenge.
- The Chinese have effectively demonstrated their classic policy of

two steps forward, one step back.

- India's delayed force deployment, non-use of kinetic force sans counter-intrusions failed to obtain the vacation of PLA intrusions like it did in Depsang (2013), Chumar (2014) and Doklam (2017).
- India's key response has been politico-diplomatic: you (China) cannot have normality in bilateral relations while amassing troops along the border.

The Chinese have raised the stakes: "There has been some wavering and back-peddalling in India's China's policy because of which practical cooperation between the two countries has been affected", hinting that India's active participation in Quad would harm its coveted strategic autonomy.

India has to create counter-coercion strategies on land and in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The priority must be to build credible deterrence in the eastern Indian Ocean from the Andaman and Nicobar chain of islands to Malacca Straits against the Chinese blue water navy already active in IOR.

Another area of concern is the Chinese military build-up in Tibet: a new military base opposite Bhutan; an airport at Yadong opposite Nathu La and new military facilities in Chumbi valley near Sikkim. Xi's grand plan of 2017 of building villages in another country's territory — these have come up wholesale in Bhutan, Arunachal Pradesh and Nepal.

Amish Mulmi, in his book *All Roads Lead North* (2021), mentions Chinese encroachment in September 2020 in Limi valley in Humla, which was confirmed by a Nepali lawmaker but denied by the government.

Last month, in a minor breakthrough, Chinese and Indian policymakers engaged in a Track-II dialogue between Ananta Aspen Centre and the Chinese Reform Forum, Beijing, at New Delhi. Any false hope of restoration of status quo ante May 5 was dispelled by the Chinese interlocutors who provided no explanation for troop mobilisation and indicated no appetite for settling the boundary question which they recommended be best left to the next generation. Some glimmer of hope and dialogue was seen from the future summits of BRICS (India takes over the chair from Moscow in February), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation and the Russia-India-China conclave. India can keep China out of 5G trials and 55 apps but de-coupling on trade \$86.6 billion) is unthinkable as are replacing the existing medical supply chains. China is the only country that has been able to secure itself from the pandemic and will leave India more economic ground to catch up.

The ultimate insult China inflicted on India was ignited last month on Chinese social media by the Political and Legal Affairs Committee linked with the Communist Party of China. The debate mocking India's mishandling of the pandemic compared it with its own deft management, showing in two parallel images: a rocket launch in China and a cremation ground in India with the caption 'China lighting a fire', India lighting a fire'.

According to General Naravane, the RSQ ante May 5, 2020, will take a long, long time. Jaishankar believes it could go the Sumdorong Chu way which took 10 years and laments that the "1988 consensus has broken down".

Vaccines the key to global economic recovery



SUSHMA RAMACHANDRAN

SENIOR FINANCIAL JOURNALIST

As far as India is concerned, the IMF has cautioned that things cannot go on as usual. If vaccination policies are not altered, it expects less than 35% of the population to have been covered by the end of 2021.

It has thus proposed that one billion doses of vaccines be bought to enable at least 60% of the population to be covered by this time. The IMF is confident that the Centre has enough resources to make these purchases.

INTERNATIONAL financial institutions are aware that vanquishing the Covid-19 virus is the first step towards global economic recovery. No wonder then that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has outlined an action plan to defeat the pandemic with vaccinations as its cornerstone. The proposal envisages vaccinating at least 40 per cent of the population in all countries by the end of 2021 and at least 60 per cent by the first half of 2022. The cost of vaccinations and related health measures are considered affordable at \$50 billion, given that the benefits amount to an estimated \$9 trillion. This is a strategy that rightly looks forward to global cooperation to resolve a global crisis, even though there has been little coordination in the international response to the pandemic.

The plan has been presented in the backdrop of IMF's growth projection of a healthy 6 per cent for 2021 following the 3.5 per cent contraction in 2020. But the bulk of this upgrade is due to the revival of advanced economies. Even in this group, only the US is expected to have a significant bounce back while the euro area is likely to revive more slowly. The linkage between vaccinations and higher growth has been well established. The US, for instance, is poised for faster growth as it has managed to fully vaccinate about 39 per cent of its population. Similarly, the UK has rapidly covered about 34 per cent of its population. On the other hand, even rich countries like Germany and France with relatively smaller populations have only



VITAL COG: The IMF wants 40% of the population in all countries vaccinated in 2021. PTI

reached about 14 per cent. Other developing economies, including those in Africa, are lagging in the vaccination race. And while advanced economies may feel comfortable in moving ahead of the curve on vaccination, the virus is no respecter of geographical boundaries. Few countries will remain safe if the rest of the world remains unvaccinated.

As far as India is concerned, the IMF has cautioned that things cannot go on as usual. The government will be well advised to heed these warnings. If vaccination policies are not altered, it expects less than 35 per cent of the population to have been covered by the end of 2021. It has thus proposed that one billion doses of vaccines be bought to enable at least 60 per cent of the population to be covered by this time. Despite the Central Govern-

ment suggesting states do their own procurement, the IMF is confident that the former has enough resources to make these purchases sans external support.

The comments of the IMF come at a time when the entire vaccine programme in the country seems to be grinding to a halt. In spite of assertions made by the Covid Task Force about adequate stocks when the programme was rolled out in January, it seems plans for supplying vaccines to the entire country did not factor in the need to place advance orders on manufacturers or to provide funding to ramp up capacities. One reason for this apparently lackadaisical approach is the notorious reluctance in this country to invest in areas that require research and development. In sharp contrast to this attitude,

many nations unquestioningly poured billions of dollars into the highly successful Covid vaccine programmes last year. Another factor is the historical deeply ingrained distrust of private industry in the bureaucracy that seems to have permeated more deeply into the Modi government than even the previous administrations. Reports had appeared about an antagonistic approach by the economic ministry officials at preliminary meetings with corporate leaders after the government took over. This suspicious mindset could have been the reason that funds sought for enhancing capacities were not given right away to the two major vaccine manufacturers as would be expected during a crisis of such epic proportions.

The policy response to criticism over the vaccine strategy has also been extremely reactive and has laid policy-makers open to even greater censure after changes were made in the initial approach.

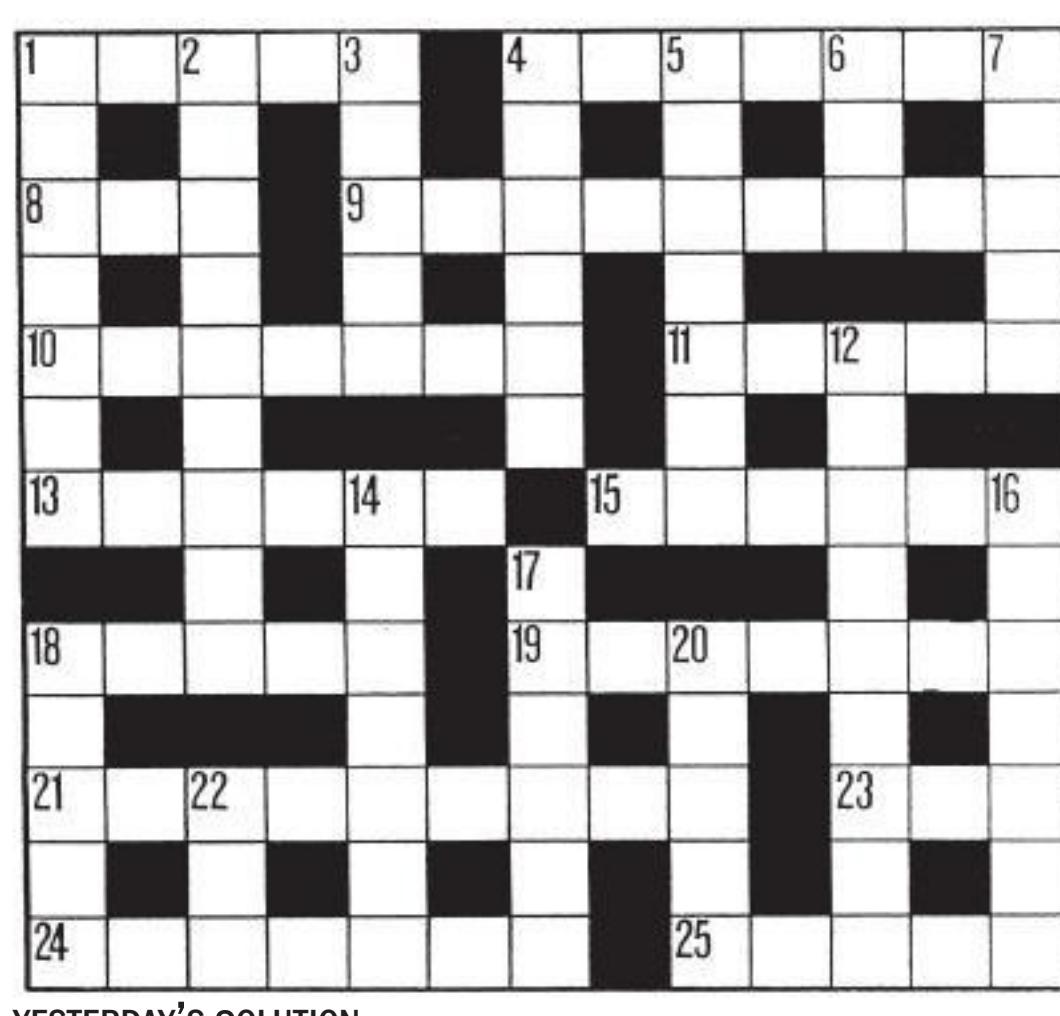
The charge of over-centralisation was met with the decision to allow states to carry out procurement of their own vaccines. This was clearly not a viable strategy, as is evident from the fact that global manufacturers like Pfizer and Moderna have rebuffed state governments, maintaining they only deal with Central governments. It is also not ideal for individual states country to compete in global bidding for vaccines.

A recurring demand was also made to involve the private sector in vaccine distribution. The response has been to allow private hospitals to purchase vaccines and allow significantly higher

rates for vaccinations. This is not a proposal that should have been acceded to given the fact that the Covid pandemic is a public health crisis. Offering vaccines at higher prices to those who can afford to pay is clearly creating a situation of inequity. Such inequality should not be allowed to enter the arena of public health. In the current situation of shortages, supplies will naturally gravitate to the highest bidder; hence the rich will get quicker access to vaccines than the poor. The original system of supplying vaccines through private sector medical facilities, but at a slightly enhanced rate should have remained in place. Allowing the private sector to purchase and sell vaccines is a viable plan only in the long run when vaccines are plentiful and it is useful to provide multiple options to consumers.

The IMF's global plan comes as a timely reminder of the critical interdependence among nations during this unprecedented health emergency. India would do well to heed the advice to either purchase or create sufficient manufacturing capacity so that one billion doses are available this year. The policy must also be tailored to keep procurement in the hands of the Central Government and give distribution to the states. In addition, direct financial support needs to be given to domestic manufacturers so that production capacities can be raised to meet the country's needs. The IMF's comment that pandemic policy is economic policy needs to be kept in mind. Unless the vaccine imbroglio is resolved, economic revival will be a distant dream.

QUICK CROSSWORD

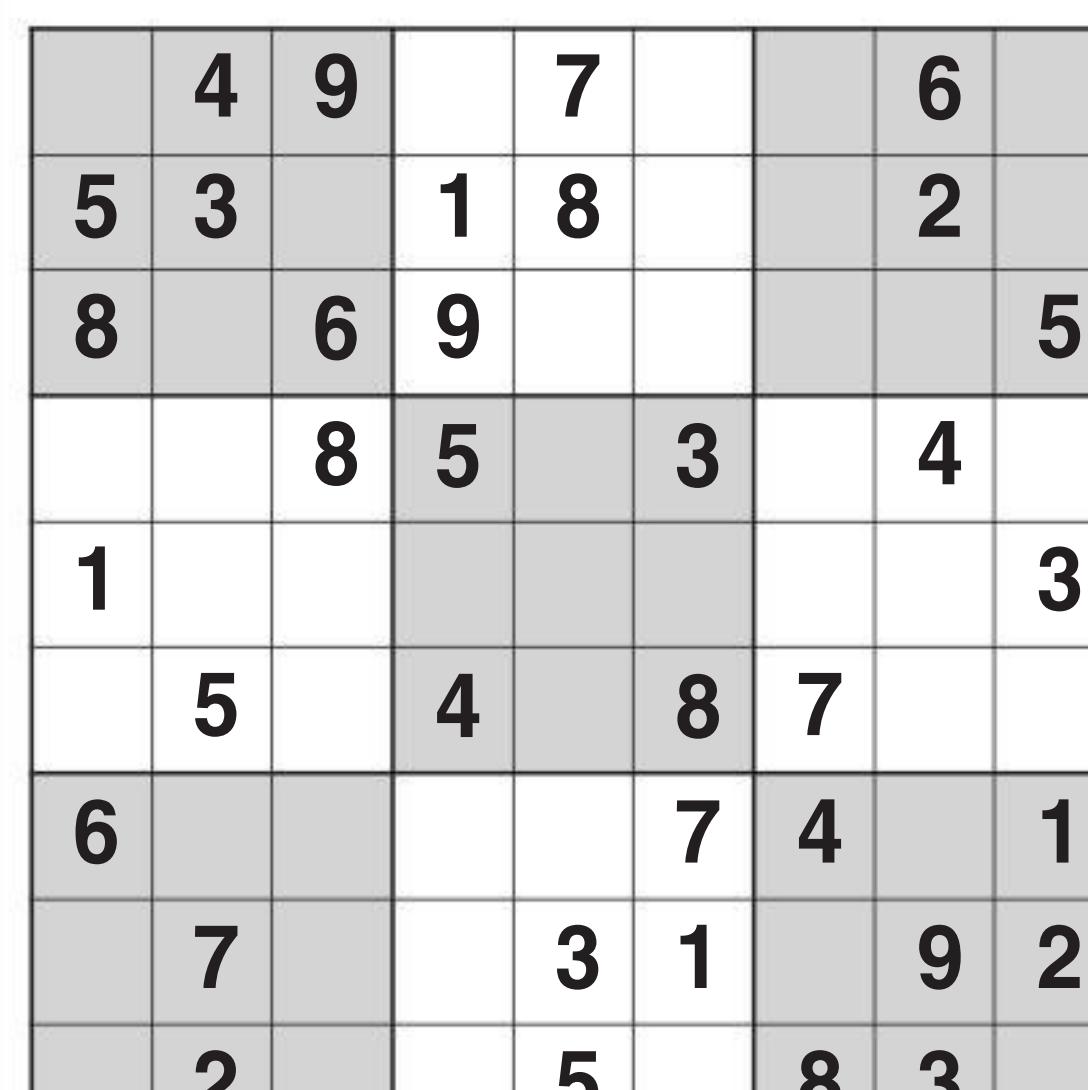


YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

Across: 1 Witchcraft, 8 Drive, 9 Close-up, 10 Trickle, 11 Get on, 12 Enlist, 14 Stable, 17 Roost, 19 Romania, 21 Ceiling, 22 Rouse, 23 Magic Flute.

Down: 2 Initial, 3 Cheek, 4 Cachet, 5 Amongst, 6 Treat, 7 Open sesame, 8 Do the trick, 13 Setting, 15 Banquet, 16 Tragic, 18 Odium, 20 Moral.

SU DO KU



V. EASY

CALENDAR

MAY 28, 2021, FRIDAY

■ Vikrami Samvat	2078
■ Shaka Samvat	1943
■ Jyestha Shaka	7
■ Jyestha Parvishtha	15
■ Hijari	1442
■ Krishan Paksha Tithi 2, up to 9.37 am	
■ Sadhya Yoga up to 2.57 pm	
■ Moola Nakshatra up to 8.02 pm	
■ Moon in Sagittarius sign	
■ Gandmool up to 8:02 pm	

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

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

FORECAST

SUNSET: FRIDAY 19:17 HRS

SUNRISE: SATURDAY 05:23 HRS

Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Cloudy	Rainy	Foggy
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CITY	MAX	MIN
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Chandigarh	41	24
New Delhi	39	23
Amritsar	42	23
Bathinda	44	23
Jalandhar	42	23
Ludhiana	43	24
Bhiwani	42	24
Hisar	43	24
Sirsia	43	26
Dharamsala	31	17
Manali	27	11
Shimla	29	17
Srinagar	29	12
Jammu	40	24
Kargil	16	07
Leh	13	03
Dehradun	36	23
Mussoorie	26	16

TEMPERATURE IN

Top IB, RAW men get 1-year extension

NEW DELHI, MAY 27 The government today issued order giving one-year extension to Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW) chief Samanta Goel and Director, IB, Arvinda Kumar.

Through another order, the government indicated there would be a change of guard in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K)'s bureaucratic leadership, as Chief Secretary BVR Subrahmanyam would come back to the Centre after seeing through the process of the state losing its special status and turning into a Union Territory (UT). The tenure of both officers was set to end on June 30.

IAS officer Arun Kumar Mehta will take over as the Chief Secretary of the UT, replacing Subrahmanyam, who, on his return from J&K, will take charge as the Officer on Special Duty in the Commerce Ministry. On June 30, the latter will take charge as the Commerce Secretary.—TNS

IN BRIEF

Chargesheet in Tgana cash-for-vote scam

NEW DELHI: The ED on Thursday said it had filed a chargesheet against Telangana Congress MPA Revanth Reddy, TRS MLA Venkata Veeriah and a few others under the PMLA in connection with the alleged 2015 cash-for-vote scam. PTI

First case of white fungus detected

NEW DELHI: Sir Ganga Ram Hospital on Thursday reported the first Indian case of white fungus (Candida) in a Covid patient, a 49-year-old woman, who complained of abdominal pain, vomiting and constipation. TNS

No adverse effect if shots mixed: Govt

NEW DELHI: The Health Ministry on Thursday said mixing of Covid shots would not cause any adverse reactions in people, but urged health workers not to mix the doses and follow the national protocol that mandates two doses of the same vaccine. TNS

Monsoon likely to hit Kerala on May 31

NEW DELHI: Conditions are becoming favourable for the onset of southwest monsoon over Kerala around May 31, the IMD said. The normal onset date of seasonal rains over the Indian mainland is June 1. TNS

Centre rejects NYT report on Covid toll as 'outrageous'

NEW DELHI, MAY 27

The government on Thursday rejected as "baseless and outrageous" a New York Times report that estimates Indian Covid toll at 42 lakh in a worst case scenario, 13.3 times the official toll of 3,15,235.

The report cites experts to present three scenarios. In the best case, they estimate real

Student organisations for 'open book' exam mode

CBSE CLASS XII EXAMS

VIBHA SHARMA
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MAY 27

Student organisations are keen on 'open book' and at-home exams for Class XII (CBSE) students. After the ABVP and NSUI, the Students Islamic Organisation of India too has written to Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', pressing for the "open book" mode.

Opposing physical exams, the SIO had earlier sought that the board exams be cancelled and students be promoted on the basis of internal assessment and Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE).

In another letter to Pokhriyal, SIO president Mohammad Salman Ahmad said: "Considering that cancellation of the board exams is not acceptable to most state governments, question papers and answer-sheets



OPTIONS PROPOSED BY THE UNION GOVERNMENT

OPTION A: Holding regular exams for 19 major subjects in the existing format at designated examination centres

OPTION B: Conducting examinations of 90-minute duration instead of three hours in schools where students are enrolled

can be made available to students at their homes. The answer-sheets can then be sent back to the exam centres. Physical examination should not be allowed under any circumstances."

A majority of states favour short-duration, multiple-choice exams. However, Delhi, West Bengal and Punjab are opposed to the idea, arguing that the safety of students and teachers is a must and

they must be vaccinated first. However, vaccinating all students may not be possible because of the scarcity of vaccines and the fact that a large number of students are below 18 years of age, say sources.

Augment vax supply first: Pb

CHANDIGARH: Punjab wants all children appearing for the Class XII CBSE exams to be vaccinated first. Education Minister Vijay Inder Singh argued: "When internationally, vaccines like Moderna are being administered to children in the 12-17 age group, why not in India?"

Punjab has 1.34 lakh teachers. It does not have any data on the number of teachers vaccinated so far. After students were infected with Covid-19, Punjab had shut its schools on March 12, but the teaching staff continued to report on duty. Teachers' unions claim at least 30 teachers have died due to the virus.

"We definitely need to pursue the issue of vaccinating students and teachers with the Centre," Singla stressed. — Sanjeev Singh Bariana

Staff must be jabbed: Hry

CHANDIGARH: Haryana is ready to hold Class XII CBSE exams as and when the Centre decides. Haryana Education Minister Kanwar Pal Gujjar said the staff on exam duty should be vaccinated before the exams. "We are ready to hold the state board exams for Class XII from June 20. The number of Covid cases are expected to fall by then. Covid protocol should not be a problem. We can similarly hold the CBSE Class XII exams too," he said.

Dismissing as "impractical" the proposal to ensure vaccination of all students before the exams, he said such a move would delay the exams by at least two months. "Teachers and staff involved in conducting the exams should be vaccinated," Gujjar stressed. — Geetanjali Gayatri

Can't vaccinate all students: HP

SHIMLA: The HP Government is willing to hold CBSE Class XII exams if cases in the state decline. It says vaccinating all students and teachers is simply impossible. "Vaccinating about 17,000 students appearing for the exam and the teachers and non-teaching staff on exam duty is not feasible," maintained Education Minister Govind Thakur. "There is shortage of vaccines in the world over. Also, vaccine for the 4-18 years group is still at the trial stage," he said.

Himachal is in favour of students taking the exams in their respective schools and the exam time curtailed to 90 minutes for a multiple choice question paper. Importantly, the HP Board exams, in which about 1.10 lakh students are to appear, are also on hold. — Bhanu P Lohumi



NDRF personnel remove an uprooted tree from the roof of a house near Digha in Purba Medinipur district.

PM Modi to visit cyclone-hit Odisha, West Bengal today

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

DIDI TO MEET PM

■ Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Kalaikunda IAF base on Friday to apprise him of the damage caused by Cyclone Yaas.

■ Mamata will also undertake an aerial survey of the cyclone-affected areas on Friday. She will make a brief halt at Hingalganj in Sunderbans.

Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister chaired a meeting to review the impact of Yaas. Officials made a detailed presenta-

tion on various aspects of preparedness, assessment of damages and related matters," a senior PMO officer said.

"It was discussed that about 106 teams of the NDRF were deployed with 46 teams each in West Bengal and Odisha that rescued more than 1,000 persons and removed more than 2,500 trees/poles obstructing roads. The Army and Coast Guard also rescued marooned persons, while the Navy and the Air Force were on the alert," he said.

"Power has been restored in most of the areas," the official said.

With Antigua and Barbuda Prime Minister Gaston Browne saying that fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi, who has been found in Dominica, will be repatriated to India, the agencies today said they were in touch with authorities in Dominica.

Talking to a news agency, Browne is reported to have said Dominica had agreed for Choksi's repatriation and Antigua would not accept him back. He is learnt to have said he had requested PM Skerrit and law enforcement in Dominica not to return Choksi to Antigua where he had

legal and constitutional protection as a citizen.

Choksi is wanted by Indian investigating agencies in the Rs 13,000-crore PNB scam on fraud charges. He went missing on Sunday from Antigua and a manhunt was launched by the Antigua police.

Officials in the MEA here said the agencies through diplomatic channels were "in touch with both the governments — Antigua and Dominica". This is the domain of the MHA, ED and CBI and they are making the efforts, officials said. — TNS

To support its contention, the police have also provided the data on the sudden spurt in the purchase of tractors and trolleys in Haryana and Punjab a few days before the planned rally in Delhi.

The chargesheet names actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu and others as accused in the case. It was filed on May 17. — TNS

R-Day violence deep-rooted conspiracy: Cops

NEW DELHI, MAY 27

The Delhi Police in its chargesheet have claimed that the violence at the Red Fort on January 26 last year as part of the farmers' agitation against three agri-laws was a conspiracy to capture the place and convert it into a new protest site.

Sources say the chargesheet also alleges that the violence was part of a "deep-rooted and premeditated conspiracy" and an occasion like Republic Day was chosen to tarnish the image of the Union Government at home and abroad.

To support its contention, the police have also provided the data on the sudden spurt in the purchase of tractors and trolleys in Haryana and Punjab a few days before the planned rally in Delhi.

The chargesheet names actor-turned-activist Deep Sidhu and others as accused in the case. It was filed on May 17. — TNS

Bid to defame...

FROM PAGE 1
Sambit Patra, on an alleged toolkit of opposition Congress to target the government over Covid as containing "manipulated media", which prompted the police to visit its offices late on Monday. The government had asked Twitter to remove the "manipulated media" tag, a directive the social media giant didn't comply with.

Twitter said, "We will strive to comply with the applicable law in India. But just as we do around the world, we will continue to be strictly guided by principles of transparency, a commitment to empowering every voice on the service and protecting freedom of expression and privacy under the rule of law."

The government said protecting free speech was not the prerogative of a private, for-profit, foreign entity like Twitter. "The government respects the right of people to ask questions and also criticise on these social media platforms, including Twitter," it said.

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