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May 8th 2021 edition

Paper tiger

India's national government looks increasingly hapless

Confronted with catastrophe, the state has melted away





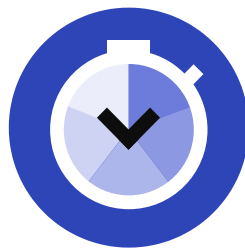
May 8th 2021

DELHI



TWO SHORT months ago Narendra Modi's government was one of the most popular and confident in India's history. Now, judging by fresh election results, by the eruption of criticism even in the largely docile mainstream media, by sharp reprimands issued by top courts, by thumbs-down judgments by seasoned analysts and by a level of rage on social media unusual even for India's hothouse online forums, the prime minister and his government are in trouble.

It is not simply that evidence has mounted of repeated failures to heed warnings of an impending second wave of covid-19, including from the government's own health experts. Nor is it just that Mr Modi and his team have struggled to respond to a calamity greater than India has experienced in generations. Indians



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