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NEARBY



City sees highest number of daily COVID-19 deaths

NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 395 COVID-19 related deaths in the past 24 hours, the highest since the beginning of the pandemic, taking the total number of deaths to 15,772, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Order release of seized Remdesivir, says HC

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the city government to issue orders for the release of Remdesivir, used in the treatment of COVID-19, as soon as the medicine is seized by the police from hoarders and black-marketeers.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Six of a family killed in cylinder explosion

NEW DELHI

Six members of a family died after a cylinder caught fire in a shanty in south-west Delhi's Bijwasan on early Thursday, officials said. Fire officials received a call about a fire in a transformer at Balmiki Colony around 12.30 a.m. Four fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The flames spread rapidly to two shanties nearby.

CITY ▶ PAGE 5

Win for DMK in T.N., Left Front in Kerala, NDA in Assam: exit polls

Close race on the cards in West Bengal; AINRC-BJP alliance may bag Puducherry

SOBHA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

While the exit polls were unanimous in predicting a clean sweep for the DMK-led alliance in the Tamil Nadu Assembly election, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala and the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Assam and Puducherry, the pollsters were divided on West Bengal, predicting a close race between the Trinamool Congress and the BJP.

The Axis-My India exit poll said Trinamool could get 130-156 seats in the 294-seat Assembly, while the BJP could get 134-160 seats. The Left-Congress alliance could draw a blank, or in the best case scenario win two seats. People's Pulse, which did the polls for India TV, predicted 173-192 seats for the BJP, with Trinamool trailing at 64-88 seats. Jan Ki Baat gave the BJP 162-185 seats and Trinamool 104-121 seats. The BJP had won only three seats in the 2016 election. The Republic-TV-CNX poll predicted the BJP winning 138-148 seats and Trinamool 128-138 seats.

While the other exit polls gave an edge to Trinamool, they all said that the BJP would hold on to the gains it made during the 2019 Lok Sabha election, when it won

Pollsters' prediction

| Exit polls for the Assembly elections held in four States and one Union Territory showed the DMK alliance heading for a massive victory in Tamil Nadu, All India Trinamool Congress scraping through with wafer-thin margin in West Bengal and the Left Front and the NDA returning to power in Kerala and Assam respectively

TAMIL NADU (234, MAJORITY: 118)

Poll	DMK+	AIADMK+
India Today-Axis	175-195	38-54
ABP-C voter	160-172	58-70
Today's Chanakya	175(+/-11)	57(+/-11)
P-Marq	165-190	40-65
Republic-CNX	160-170	58-68

PUDUCHERRY (30, MAJORITY: 16)

Poll	NDA	UPA
India Today-Axis	20-24	6-10
ABP-C voter	19-23	6-10
Republic-CNX	16-20	11-13

WEST BENGAL (294, MAJORITY: 148)

Poll	AITC+	BJP+	INC, Left
Axis	130-156	134-160	0-2
ABP-C voter	152-164	109-121	14-25
Chanakya	180(+/-11)	108(+/-11)	4(+/-4)
P-Marq	152-172	112-132	10-20
Republic-CNX	128-138	138-148	11-21

ASSAM (126, MAJORITY: 64)

Poll	BJP+	INC+
India Today-Axis	75-85	40-50
ABP-C voter	58-71	53-66
Today's Chanakya	70(+/-9)	56(+/-9)
P-Marq	62-70	56-64
Republic-CNX	74-84	40-50

18 seats in the State. C-Voter predicted 152-164 seats for Trinamool, with the BJP at 109-121 seats. P-Marq said Trinamool could win 152-172 seats, and the BJP 112-132 seats.

Only two polls gave any seat to actor-turned-politi-

cian Kamal Hassan's Makkal Needhi Maam. P-Marq said the MNM could win 1-3 seats, while Axis-My India gave it 0-2 seats.

In Puducherry, which has 30 seats, C-voter predicted that the AINRC-BJP alliance could win 19-23 seats and the Congress only 6-10 seats. The others would get 1-2 seats.

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

High Courts pull up Centre on pandemic

'What were you doing for 14 months?'

MOHAMMED IMRANULLAH S.
SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
CHENNAI/NEW DELHI

The Madras High Court and the Delhi High Court, hearing separate cases on Thursday, questioned the Centre's actions during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Delhi High Court Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli asked the Centre why States such as Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were allotted more oxygen than they had asked for, while Delhi was not even allotted its projected requirement. "On April 20, Delhi's projected demand was 700 metric tonne, but you allocated 480 metric tonne," the court said. Hearing a *suo motu* public interest litigation, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court Sanjib Banerjee wondered what the Centre had been doing for the past 12 to 14 months without anticipating the second wave. The court said there cannot be adhocracy in dealing with a

pandemic, and that the Centre should have acted in a planned and informed manner with expert advice.

A Delhi High Court Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli asked the Centre why States such as Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were allotted more oxygen than they had asked for, while Delhi was not even allotted its projected requirement.

In a press statement, the Ministry issued a notice that the provisions of the Act would come into effect from April 27. The Act gives more teeth to the office of the L-G of Delhi.

FULL REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 9

Delhi govt's responsibilities remain: Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry said on Thursday that the Government of National Capital Territory (GNCTD) Amendment Act, 2021 "in no way alters the constitutional and legal responsibilities of the elected government" to take necessary action in areas of health and education.

In a press statement, the Ministry issued a notice that the provisions of the Act would come into effect from April 27. The Act gives more teeth to the office of the L-G of Delhi.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 8

Save lives, alleviate pain, says Sonia

SANDEEP PHUKAN

NEW DELHI

Noting that India now needs an absolute one-point programme to save lives and alleviate the pain of millions of citizens, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in an interview to *The Hindu* on Thursday, called for a gigantic collective endeavour cutting across party lines.

"We need to work together and mobilise all assistance and help for the millions in dire need, and we need to ensure that vaccination coverage expands as fast as possible," she said.

"Increasing vaccine supply



Sonia Gandhi

and rate of vaccination is the most urgent task that requires a national effort."

Ms. Gandhi said that in every State, the Congress had shunned a blame game, and prioritised saving lives over

fixing accountability. "We are extending help in whatever way we can," she said.

Ms. Gandhi, however, said that a "political consensus" during a national crisis required the "ability to listen" and not an attitude that "know everything".

She said the Union government declared a premature victory over the novel coronavirus some months ago and started celebrating. Recommendations made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee to be in a state of preparedness were ignored.

INTERVIEW ON ▶ PAGE 9

Two new crematoriums to handle rush of bodies in Patna

AMARNATH TEWARY

PATNA

The Patna Municipal Corporation [PMC] has decided to build new cremation grounds to ease the long lines to cremate bodies. The unprecedented rise in the number of deaths due to COVID-19 has led to a long wait for families to conduct the last rites at the three crematoriums here at Bansh ghat, Gulabi ghat and Khajekalan ghat.

"A nine to ten hour wait

for bodies to be consigned to the flames is quite normal," Munna, a shop owner selling *kafans* [shrouds] outside the Bansh ghat crematorium, said over the phone. "I've not seen such a rush of bodies here in my 15 years of business at the ghat," he said. "On normal days, a maximum of 30 to 40 bodies came to the ground to be cremated. But today it is constant."

A similar situation played out at Gulabi ghat, only four

'Not enough vaccines to inoculate those above 18 years'

Manufacturers requested clarity on stock availability in a couple of days, says Delhi Health Minister

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said that the Capital does not have enough vaccines as of now to inoculate people above 18 years of age from May 1. He said that they have requested for stock from the manufacturing companies.

"We don't have enough vaccines. We have requested for procurement of vaccines from the respective companies. Despite all preparations, availability of vaccines



Vaccination process under way at a centre in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

is needed for the inoculation to begin. As soon as it is made clear and we receive the vac-

ination of people above 18 years of age. He said that the government has not received the schedule from companies yet, which includes how many vials will reach and on which dates.

Fall in TPR

Mr. Jain said that there is a fall in the test positivity rate [TPR] and it is a good sign. "With the positivity rate dropping to 31.76%, Delhi reported 25,986 cases yesterday [Wednesday]. The numbers have been constantly

breaching the 20,000 mark for the past 10-12 days. However, the fact that the positivity rate has been declining is a ray of hope for us. The highest was recorded at nearly 35% about four days ago," he said.

About the number of tests coming down, he said, "The Delhi government has not reduced its testing strategy."

Responding to allegations about the death toll being suppressed, Mr. Jain said that the government has kept everything transparent.

Moradabad administration denies claim

OMAR RASHID

Dentist held for selling Remdesivir

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old dentist has been arrested by a special task force (STF) formed by the Delhi government for selling Remdesivir and a total of eight injections were recovered, a statement said.

All District Magistrates were instructed to form STFs to crackdown on hoarding and black marketing of drugs.

The dentist, Vishu Agarwal, MDS, was apprehended from Barwala Chowk with his car and he was found possessing three injections of Remdesivir without any receipt or prescription.

During interrogation, Dr. Agarwal disclosed that he procured the injections from Nikhil Garg (22) for ₹35,000 per injection and was planning to sell those at ₹45,000 per injection.

"During interrogation, Nikhil disclosed that the recovered injections were procured from one Naveen from Rohini. We have filed an FIR and efforts are being made to arrest Naveen," said Isha Khosla, District Magistrate (North).

Gurdwara body opens 100-bed hospital near Sarai Kale Khan

DSGMC plans to convert it into COVID care facility

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC) has opened a 100-bed hospital near Sarai Kale Khan that provides dialysis. DSGMC officials said that there are plans to convert it into a COVID care facility as well in the near future.

DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said, "Several people are turning up for treatment already. This is the biggest 'sewa' for humanity. There will be over 100 beds reserved for dialysis. This will be a completely free facility and several people have also voluntarily made contributions towards this facility."

With a surge in the number of CO-

Order release of Remdesivir seized from hoarders: Delhi HC

Centre told to expedite installation of oxygen generation plants in the Capital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Delhi government to issue orders for the release of Remdesivir, used in the treatment of COVID-19, as soon as the medicine is seized by the police from hoarders and black-marketeers.

A Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said that the stock that have been seized by the police does not remain unused as case property.

All the medicines or oxygen cylinders, which are seized, can be released and put to use for patients in need, the High Court said.

The court also made it clear that Remdesivir or oxygen cylinders ought not to be seized from patients or their attendants, who may have procured it on the black market, as they may have taken such a step "out of sheer desperation and need".

The High Court also asked the Centre to expedite the installation of the remaining four Pressure Swing Adsorp-



A healthcare worker walks past oxygen cylinders in Delhi on Thursday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tion (PSA) oxygen generation plants, out of a total eight, in Delhi.

It also directed the Delhi government to request the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the supply of the 'on-board oxygen generation system', developed for use on Tejas fighter aircraft, which can be installed in hospitals to produce medical grade oxygen.

The direction came after the Bench was informed that the Uttar Pradesh government had already made such a request for the system, which can produce 1,000 litres of oxygen per minute.

Two judicial officers, Kovai Venugopal and Kamran Khan, have succumbed to COVID-19 and over 60 judges are also infected with the virus.

Taking note of the issue, the Bench asked the Delhi district judges to coordinate with District Magistrates (DMs) to address the medical concerns of judicial officers and their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Senior advocate Sanjoy Ghose said, "We don't want our judges to become martyrs to COVID-19", as he suggested converting dispensaries in residential complexes

of judicial officers and even court complexes into COVID care centres for judicial officers and their families.

The High Court also ordered the Delhi government that the Wednesday's order to take over the supervision of an oxygen refilling plant, Seth Air, which also supplies to neighbouring States, will not adversely affect the oxygen supply to Haryana.

The Haryana government had sought clarification regarding the April 27 order of taking over charge of 'Seth Air', which is situated in Palwal and supplies oxygen cylinders in Delhi and Haryana.

"We make it clear that the direction to take over supervision of 'Seth Air' plant by officers of Delhi government would not have adversarial effects in the supply of oxygen to Haryana in terms of the allocation. Application is disposed of," the high court said.

During the hearing, the court also asked the Delhi government to create a portal for people who wish to donate medical equipment from abroad for COVID-19 patients.

Pet crematorium to be used for last rites of COVID patients

60 funeral pyres have so far been built, says SDMC Mayor

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

With the sole crematorium located in its vicinity overburdened and forced to function beyond capacity over the last 11 days, another facility intended to be the Capital's first funeral venue for pet animals will be utilised for the last rites of COVID-19 patients.

This is despite the capacity of the Dwarka Sector-24 crematorium having been more than doubled – increased by 140% to be exact – between April 19 and April 29 and witnessed the last rites of over 400 people, who lost their lives to the virus.

More to come up
Five dozen funeral pyres have been constructed so far while more will spring up in a matter of time at the dog crematorium, which was being constructed by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on a parcel of land spread across an estimated four acres in Dwarka's Sector-29. It was proposed as a



Pyres burning at a crematorium in Delhi on Thursday afternoon. • V.V. KRISHNAN

pet crematorium by the South civic body last year.

"We have constructed 60 pyres so far at the facility. The situation related to COVID-19 deaths and the sudden surge in their numbers in the national capital is rather dynamic and needs to be addressed on a daily basis. More platforms will be built as and when the need to create them is felt," SDMC Mayor Anamika Mithilesh Singh said.

The Dwarka Sector-24 cremation ground nearby has witnessed the crea-

tion of 413 bodies between April 19 and April 29, according to data recorded by the South civic body.

Beginning with a dedicated capacity of just 20 on April 19, the capacity was increased to 23 on April 20, reached 32 on April 22, and, finally, 44 on April 26.

According to records compiled by the three civic bodies the last rites of 5,808 people took place over the last 11 days and 2,651 of these were at the nine funeral venues under the South civic body.

2 inmates of Tihar succumb to COVID-19

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two COVID-19 positive inmates of Tihar jail died at a hospital in east Delhi on Thursday, officials said.

The deceased have been identified as Kamaljeet (75) and Kehkashan (41), they said. "Murder convict Kamaljeet of central jail number 3, Tihar, tested positive for COVID-19 on April 16. He was admitted to GTB Hospital on April 21 and died on Thursday. Kehkashan of central jail number 6, Tihar, was tested positive on April 17 and was admitted to GTB Hospital on April 22. She also died on Thursday. She was lodged in the jail in a cheating case," a senior jail official said.

Six inmates have died due to the virus since the pandemic began last year. Of them, four died this year. Two COVID-19 positive inmates of Mandoli Jail had died on June 15 and July 4 last year.

According to data shared by prisons department, 303 inmates have tested positive since March 2021. Of them, 33 recovered, four expired and 266 are active cases. A total of 125 staff members has tested positive since March this year. Eight have recovered and 117 are still under treatment, it said. The first COVID-19 infection was reported in Rohini Jail on May 13, 2020.



Vascular and endovascular surgeon at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Ambarish Satwik.

INTERVIEW | AMBARISH SATWIK

Intramural spread of COVID is most difficult to control'

Doctor says there is a consensus that it's an air-borne infection in addition to being a droplet infection

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ

Dr. Ambarish Satwik, vascular and endovascular surgeon at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi calls for the rationing of resources like blood tests so that severe patients who need results with a quicker turnaround time get their report faster. He also stresses on the importance of wearing a mask at home if there is a person developing a respiratory infection so that it does not spread within those living together.

Following are excerpts from an interview.

The nature of the virus is such that entire families are getting infected by just staying at home. How do you deal with such a situation?

■ The intramural spread, which is the spread of the virus inside a household or a closed space, is perhaps the most difficult to control. When you go out, you are wearing a mask but inside a building or office you are not. You obviously can't wear a mask all the time but even if a person is infected and you are sitting around a table eating lunch, everybody around can get it. So at the slightest suspicion of a person developing an upper respiratory infection or fever, the patient must wear a light surgical mask if he or she is not breathless, and others around should wear an N95 mask.

There is an overwhelming consensus that this is an air-borne infection in addition to being a droplet infection that is spread by

coughing or sneezing. Aerosols are produced even when speaking and linger around a room like a cloud. Especially now in summers, with air conditioners on most of the time, the virus thrives and can be around for a few hours depending on the viral load of the person. So, it is important to ventilate the space.

RTPCR tests results are taking long. Do you think people are not starting to take precautions early and are waiting for validation from test results?

■ In terms of precaution, it must be treated as COVID if a person has fever or an upper respiratory infection. However, medication or treatment should not be started without consulting a doctor. The report sometimes can also be a false negative depending on the quality of the test kit used. Some variants are also evading the RTPCR test. Communal air then is the biggest source of contagion. I am not saying that one should wear a mask indoors all the time, but if someone in the house has

fever, which is a sign of infection or high-grade fever and is a sign of pneumonia, they should sleep in a separate, well-ventilated room. Loss of smell is also another indicator that should not be ignored even if the RTPCR test result comes negative.

We have seen a lot of rush at hospitals over the past few weeks. In such a scenario, how do you choose who to admit and who not to?

■ Most hospitals are following a system of rationalisation of beds and there is a system of who requires admission and who does not. This is where some of the blood tests advised to look for inflammatory markers assume significance because there is a rapid or significant rise in inflammatory markers, then that could be suggestive of underlying pneumonia or a spiraling turn for the worse. Most cases of mild and moderate COVID can be managed and have been successfully managed at home if you are in constant touch with a physician over

the phone and following advice strictly.

The government has been engaged in firefighting to upscale health infrastructure. What more needs to be done apart from adding more beds, ensuring medicines are not in short supply and uninterrupted supply of oxygen?

■ Nobody could have anticipated this kind of surge so our unpreparedness for this has been exposed. Both Central and State governments are, I am sure, doing everything possible to deal with the load of cases in the short term, but this is the time to rationalise. What happens is a blood test, for instance, is being prescribed numerous times even for a mild case of COVID. What it does is that it ends up clogging the system and increasing the turnaround time for a test result. A severe patient can't wait three-four days to get their results as several important decisions, such as starting steroids, can get delayed that could lead to a patient not getting timely treatment. You can't squander your resources on patients who don't really require such extensive investigations.

The government will get more beds and streamline supplies to deal with the surge, but this is the time to double down on masking and non-pharmacological interventions because you have to block transmission. Remember, somebody dying of COVID obviously got it from someone else who got it from someone else. If you block the chain of transmission, you are doing your bit.

Delhi police dedicate lane on extreme left for ambulances

Step taken in 15 police districts across Delhi

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Thursday dedicated a lane on the extreme left side of the road at picket checking for ambulances to facilitate them as the movement of emergency vehicles has been increased in city due to the spike in COVID-19 cases, officials said.

The step was implemented on Thursday in 15 police districts across the national capital, they said.

Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava took to Twitter to inform about it.

"Delhi Police stations directed to dedicate a lane on extreme left of road for ambulance and emergency vehicles, including oxygen tankers & cylinders [in emergency]. This done to facilitate them while lockdown violators prosecuted on regular lanes [sic]," Mr. Srivastava tweeted.

Delhi Police PRO Chinmoy Biswas said that the lane has been created



The step has been taken to ensure smooth movement for emergency vehicles. • FILE PHOTO

by putting barricades.

"We have created a dedicated passage for emergency vehicles by demarcating a separate lane on the left side of the road. It will remain closed for entry of other exempted vehicles. A loose barricade will be there when there is no movement of emergency vehicles. As and when staffers at picket see ambulances, oxygen tankers or other emergency vehicles, they will make passage for smooth and hassle-free movement," Mr. Biswas said.

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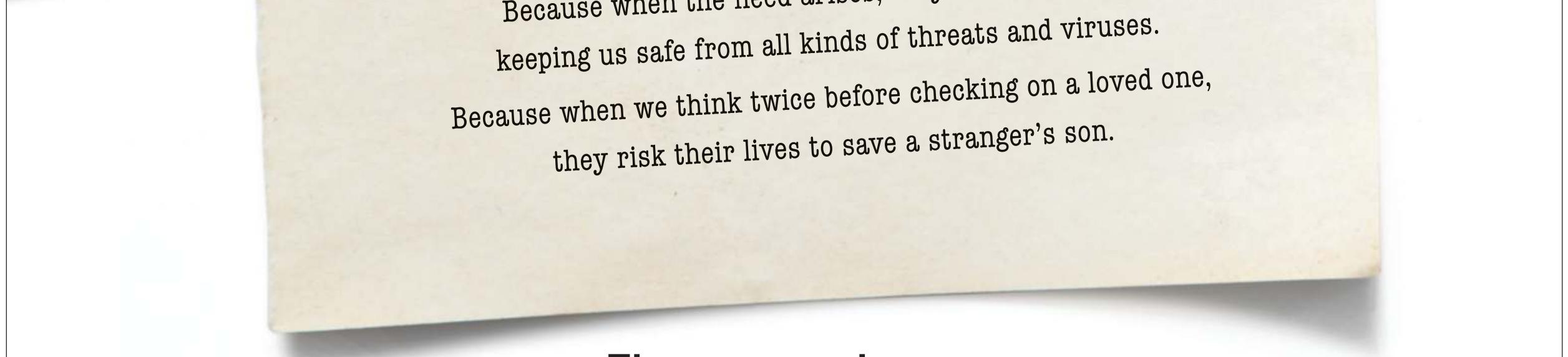
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They made the supreme sacrifice for the nation.
**We pay our respects
with a ₹100 crore contribution.**

•••
They are our hope.

Because when we can't carry the load of weightless masks,
they work caged in PPE suits, carrying out impossible tasks.
Because when we huddled in our homes seeking protection and safety,
they made streets their homes very bravely.

They are our hope.

Because when we stepped out with a prescription, they made sure we
reached home with some courage and of course, the medication.
Because when getting the right care seemed next to impossible, they drove
the ambulance day in and out to make the impossible possible.

They are our hope.

Because when the comforts of our home seemed like a trap,
they strove to save our loved ones without taking a nap.
Because when they found hungry kids crying for bread, they made it their
mission to provide for a night's bed along with that warm bread.

They are our hope.

Because when the need arises, they stand on guard,
keeping us safe from all kinds of threats and viruses.
Because when we think twice before checking on a loved one,
they risk their lives to save a stranger's son.

They are our hope.

Together, let's add belief to this hope.

They have already fought enough battles for us. It's time, we fight for them. Let's protect
ourselves from the clutches of coronavirus, and in turn, protect them.

Let us all promise to wear a mask whenever we step outside, maintain a distance of
6 feet at all times, and wash our hands every chance we get.



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pharmacists, and other healthcare workers. **This is not our duty, but a debt we owe them.**

Because they are truly our hope.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



Professor V.S. Mallar
you will forever remain etched in our memories.

In gratitude:
Batch of 1993,
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Dr. Kumbar
you will forever remain etched in our memories.

In gratitude:
Batch of 1993,
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Timings DELHI		
FRIDAY, APR. 30		
RISE 05:42	SET 18:56	
RISE 22:49	SET 08:15	
SATURDAY, MAY. 01		
RISE 05:41	SET 18:57	
RISE 23:52	SET 09:14	
SUNDAY, MAY. 02		
RISE 05:40	SET 18:57	
RISE 00:00	SET 10:16	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	42	23
Safdarjung	42	23
Palam	43	26

Delhi Palam Today
40°C Morning remain easy. Day would turn hot with the chances of thunder clouds development at few areas.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
40°C Uneasy hot day with partly cloudy to sky. Chances of light thunderstorm and rain at some places.

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IN BRIEF

Honda announces 15-day halt in operations

GURUGRAM
Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) on Thursday announced a temporary 15-day halt of its production operations across its all four plants from May 1 in view of the surge in cases.

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Raise Capital's daily quota of oxygen: Sisodia to Goyal

He says Delhi not even getting its allotted share of 490 MT

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday wrote to Union Minister Piyush Goyal, requesting him to increase the medical oxygen allotted to Delhi to 976 MT a day from the current 490 MT.

Mr. Sisodia also said currently Delhi is not even getting its allotted share of 490 MT a day.

"The people and the Government of NCT of Delhi will be extremely grateful to the Government of India if it can kindly increase the allocation from the present 490 MT per day to 976 MT per day, preferably from nearby oxygen plants, reducing the turnaround time," Mr. Sisodia wrote to Goyal.

'Beds not functional'

He said 5,000 beds are ready at Radha Soami Sat-Sang Beas in Chhattarpur but only 300 are functional due to shortage of oxygen. Similarly, 1,000 beds at Sant Nirankari Mission



An ambulance carrying a patient outside Sardar Patel COVID Care Centre in Chhattarpur. • FILE PHOTO

and 1,500 at Sawan Kripal Ruhani Mission are ready but these also cannot be made functional due to an oxygen shortage, he added.

The additional oxygen allocation is urgently required to prevent the impending medical crisis, he said, adding: "It is also our humble request to provide transport infrastructure, including railways and tankers, for the additional allocation since Delhi is a non-industrial State and accordingly, does not have its own infrastructure."

The Delhi government will work in close coordi-

nation with the Centre and other States to overcome the present "crisis", especially in augmenting the transport infrastructure of medical oxygen, the Minister said.

"Kindly allocate the additional requirements on humanitarian grounds in this hour of an unprecedented health crisis," Mr. Sisodia said in the letter.

AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha on Thursday said as per the Central government's own formula, the appropriate amount of oxygen required for hospitals in Delhi is 976 MT.

"Against this requirement, Delhi has been allocated only 490 MT of oxygen, and the actual quantity received is even lesser at 400 MT. On behalf of the people of Delhi, I request the Centre to show the same magnanimity and large-heartedness when dealing with the demand of oxygen put forward by Delhi," Mr. Chadha said.

'Submit report on roll-out of vaccination programme'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal has sought a report from Chief Secretary Vijay Dev on preparedness to roll out vaccination programme for people above 18 years of age in the Capital on an urgent basis, sources said.

They also said the Chief Secretary was likely to submit the report by Friday evening.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal also convened a meeting on Thursday on the vaccination drive in Delhi.

CM made plan

The government said Mr. Kejriwal prepared a plan to vaccinate all above 18 years in the next 3 months.

More powers to L-G: bureaucrats express varied opinions on new Act

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI

After the Ministry of Home Affairs issued a gazette notification on Wednesday stating that the provisions of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Act, 2021 would be deemed to have come into effect from April 27, *The Hindu*

spoke to former bureaucrats on the development.

The bureaucrats, who served in various capacities over careers spanning decades as part of Delhi's administration, expressed opinions ranging from it being a move in the right direction given the current challenge posed by the pandemic to

questioning its timing due to its inherent potential to trigger a confrontation between elected representatives rendered powerless in one stroke and an unelected appointee chosen by the Centre. The Act gives the Lieutenant-Governor more teeth compared to the CM in administering the city.

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by Ravindra N. Jha

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SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **China**, D/o Dalip Kumar, R/o 6736, Qila Kadam Sarif, Nabi Karim, Delhi. Age: 19 years, Height: 5'5", Face: Oval, Complexion: Wheatish, Built: Normal, Wearing: Green colour suit-salwar and slipper her feet has been missing since 19.04.2021 from the jurisdiction of Nabi Karim, Delhi. In this regard a DD NO. 63A dated 22.04.2021 has been registered at PS Nabi Karim, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far, if any one having any information about this girl please inform undersigned.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638,24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/779/CD/2021

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: **Priyanka Kumari, D/o: Arjun Paswan**, R/o: H. No. 10784, Street No. 7, 100 Quarter, Karol Bagh, Delhi has been missing/kidnapped since 20.04.2021 from her house in the area of P. S. Karol Bagh, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 38A dated 22.04.2021 has been registered at PS. Karol Bagh, Delhi.

missing girl are as under: Age: 19 years, Height: 5'0", Face: Oval, Complexion: Fair, Built: Thin, Wearing: Red Colour Kurti, blue colour jeans and pink colour slipper in her feet. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl kindly inform to the following.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/778/CD/2021

THE HINDU

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER
COMBINED OFFICE BUILDING,
BUILDING CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT

JHARKHAND, RANCHI

Corrigendum (2nd Call)

Letter No:-19 Date: 29.04.2021 Due to Closure of the office in the back drop of the lockdown from 29/04/2021 to 06/05/2021,the last date of submission of Hard Copies(Tender Fee/Cost of BOQ and Earnest Money)for the work" Renovation work of Sadar Hospital „Garhwa,Jharkhand“ published vide Tender Reference No:- BCD/CE/02/Garhwa/2021-22 and PR No 244962 dated 01.04.2021 is extended Up to 07.05.2021 till 11:30 A.M. Accordingly the bid shall be opened on next working day.

The rest condition shall remain as before.

PR No 244962 Nodal Officer, e-Procurement Cell, Office of the chief engineer Combined office Building Building Construction Department, Line Tank Road ,Ranchi

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY Material Management Department

('e'-Tender Notice for the supply of Stores, No. EPS/12/2021) PCMM/WCR on behalf of the President of India invites the following advertised tenders through E-procurement System. No manual/postal offers shall be entertained. Tenders can be accessed under the link website <https://ireps.gov.in> for details and for submission of Tender:

S. No.	Tender No.	Short Description	Tendered Qty.	Opening Date
1.	30211646	Rubber profile set for fixed window	100 Set	27.05.2021
2.	30211644	Entrance door rubber sealing gasket	206 Nos.	27.05.2021
3.	30211638	Foot Step Complete	222 Nos.	27.05.2021
4.	30211650	FPR Window Cover	95 Nos.	27.05.2021
5.	30211649	Entrance door rubber sealing gasket	179 Nos.	27.05.2021
6.	30211663	Stainless Steel Plain Washer	28650 Nos.	27.05.2021
7.	90211086	Stainless Steel Plate Size 5000x1250x4 MM	41273 Kgs	27.05.2021

Principal Chief Material Manager, WCR, Jabalpur

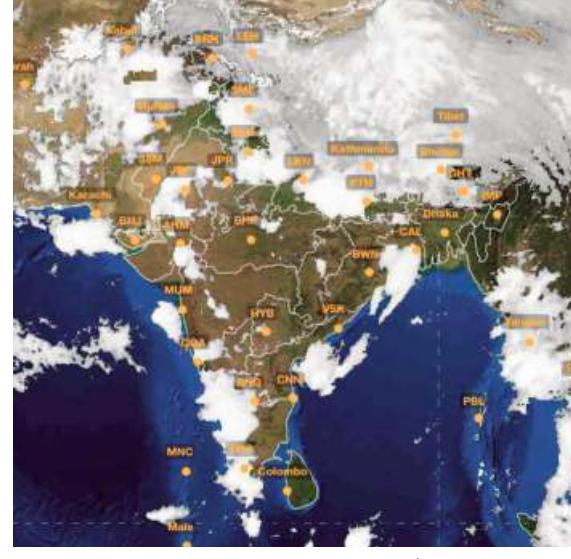
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प्रधान संचयन विभाग, रेलवे विभाग, जबलपुर

</div

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 19.00 hrs)

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Odisha, Telangana, West Madhya Pradesh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Konkan & Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep. Heat wave conditions likely in isolated pockets over south Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Vidarbha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...37.4	26.0	...	Kozhikode	...3.5...	33.5...	27.0
Ahmedabad	...41.5	26.2	...	Kurnool	...40.5...	26.3	...
Aizawl	...27.3	-	...	Lucknow	...37.8...	25.0	...
Allahabad	...42.7	25.0	...	Madurai	...38.2...	27.2	...
Bengaluru	...34.4	23.8	...	Mangaluru	...35.6...	26.0	...
Bhopal	...32.8	22.8	...	Mumbai	...34.0...	27.0	...
Bhubaneswar	...38.3	27.0	...	Mysuru	...-	21.0	...
Chandigarh	...42.3	25.4	...	New Delhi	...42.1...	23.2	...
Chennai	...37.0	28.0	...	Patna	...37.8...	24.2	...
Coimbatore	...36.8	25.5	...	Port Blair	...0.2...	25.3	...
Dehradoon	...38.4	21.1	...	Puducherry	...36.4...	26.8	...
Gangtok	26.7	11.9	...	Pune	...39.2...	23.5	...
Goa	...34.6	26.6	...	Raipur	...42.4...	26.0	...
Guwahati	...3.6	21.0	...	Ranchi	...38.0...	20.8	...
Hubballi	...36.0	23.0	...	Shillong	...0.3...	25.0...	14.5
Hyderabad	...39.3	25.7	...	Shimla	...-	31.2...	19.5
Imphal	...33.7	17.1	...	Srinagar	...26.1...	11.0	...
Jaipur	...42.6	23.0	...	Tiruchirappuram	...33.6...	26.5	...
Kochi	2.32.0	25.4	...	Vijayawada	...39.8...	27.4	...
Kohima	...27.4	10.7	...	Visakhapatnam	...37.6...	27.0	...
Kolkata	...37.7	27.2	...				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	39	53	38	...93	115	...
Bengaluru	10	24	36	103	104	...
Chennai	48	7	35	...55	65	...
Delhi	47	55	18	322	385	...
Hyderabad	4	59	41	...85	112	...
Kolkata	11	19	110	...81	100	...
Lucknow	13	103	38	...34	257	...
Mumbai	...	1	81	180	100	...
Pune	.6	25	54	110	88	...
Visakhapatnam	17	36	22	...53	84	...

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

CITY



Charred remains of the cylinder explosion in south-west Delhi's Bijwasan on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Six of a family killed in cylinder explosion

Fire from transformer spread to shanties

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Six members of a family died after a cylinder caught fire in a shanty in south-west Delhi's Bijwasan on early Thursday, officials said.

According to fire officials, they received a call about a fire in a transformer at Balmiki Colony around 12.30 a.m. Four fire tenders were rushed to the spot. The officials said the fire came from a transformer and flames spread rapidly to two shanties nearby.

There were two to three

shanties in a field at Balmiki Colony, said a senior police officer. Due to the fire and cylinder blast, labourer Kamlesh (37), his wife Budhani (32), their two daughters aged 16 and 12, and two sons aged 6 years and 3 months, died.

After the blaze was doused, fire officials and police personnel shifted the bodies to Safdarjung Hospital. Five persons in the other shanty are safe, police said. A case will be registered under relevant sections of law, they added.

Two held for selling fire extinguisher as cylinder

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two persons were arrested for allegedly cheating a woman by selling her a fire extinguisher instead of an oxygen cylinder on Thursday, police said.

Ashutosh (19) and Ayush (22), residents of Vikaspuri, were arrested from Uttam Nagar and five fire extinguishers were seized. They were selling each fire extinguisher as oxygen cylinder

for ₹10,000, police said. DCP (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said the complainant Geeta Arora, a resident of Shishram Park in Bindapur, alleged that two persons sold her a fire extinguisher in place of an oxygen cylinder. Her relative was suffering from COVID-19 and was having difficulty in breathing. In a bid to arrange an oxygen cylinder, she contacted the accused, who duped her.

At 38,607 COVID-19 cases, Kerala hits a new high

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's COVID-19 graph hit yet another high on Thursday with 38,607 new cases. The average test positivity rate (TPR) was 24.5%.

In all, 5,69,831 persons were in home or institutional

isolation in the State.

Reflecting the case trend, Kerala had 1,652 critically ill patients in ICUs, and those on ventilator rose to 577.

On Wednesday, the State added 48 new deaths.

Ernakulam district reported the highest number of new

cases at 5,369 and Wayanad the lowest at 909.

The Kerala Government Medical Officers Association on Thursday urged the State government to clamp a two-week lockdown to quell rising cases. The Indian Medical Association had earlier suggest-

ed a week-long lockdown. CM Pinarayi Vijayan on Wednesday said there was no plan for a Statewide lockdown, but stricter restrictions would be put in place.

Karnataka's new cases stood at 35,024 on Thursday, 19,637 of them from Bengaluru.

ru Urban. There were 270 more deaths. Of 3,49,496 active cases, 2,431 were in ICUs. The TPR for the day was 19.92%.

Following reports of oxygen shortage, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa asked Deputy Commissioners to ensure

oxygen supply to hospitals. There should be judicious usage of oxygen beds, ventilators, and Remdesivir. Karnataka's Ministers decided to contribute one year's salary for COVID-19 relief work.

(With inputs from Bengaluru)

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Long and tortuous

End of multi-phase Assembly polls is a matter of relief after the surge in COVID-19 cases

With the eighth phase in West Bengal on Thursday, a long and tortuous election process has concluded in four States and one Union Territory to the relief of most electors and candidates. The election spectacle was overrun by COVID-19 towards the end of the agonisingly staggered phases of voting. The current cycle has added to a growing list of concerns that have emerged regarding elections in India in recent years. If electoral bonds for making contributions to political parties emerged as an opaque instrument well before the current round of elections, a serious cause of worry through all the eight phases has been the persistent doubts over the fairness and autonomy of the Election Commission of India (ECI). The ECI made unprecedented seizures of cash and other items that were meant to be used to influence voters. In the absence of a party-wise break up of such preventive measures, parties opposed to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have alleged that they were specifically targeted in search operations. The selective eagerness of central agencies in investigating crimes turns up the heat on non-BJP State governments and parties, and during elections, this raised the possibility of tilting the balance in the contest.

Free, fair and periodic elections are an essential feature of a democracy. Elections are the ultimate opportunity for the people to hold their elected representatives accountable. Election cycles are usually not disrupted, even in challenging situations, for this reason. Ironically, elections can also be easily manipulated into an easy escape route from accountability. This set of Assembly elections in the midst of a pandemic did not generate any meaningful debate on public health or accountability. By denying the crisis in action and messaging, political parties contributed to the current surge in infections. The BJP was particularly irresponsible organising huge rallies, with people violating the mandatory health protocol. The spike in infections from that is already beginning. Considering the unprecedented situation of the pandemic, these elections should have been a quick affair, with limited campaigning. What happened was the opposite. Massive rallies continued even after COVID-19 numbers began to grow exponentially. These Assembly elections would most likely be remembered for worsening a health crisis than for heralding political change. The nature of the results, to be announced on May 2, will likely pale before the magnitude of the unfolding crisis.

Promises to keep

Biden is on course to fulfilling agenda despite opposition at home and challenges abroad

In his first address to a joint session of Congress, U.S. President Joe Biden made clear that his administration would continue pressing forward with promises made during his election campaign last year, including vigorously meeting the health challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, kick-starting the engines of the U.S. economy to provide sustainable job opportunities in the digital era, and reasserting the position of his country as a driving force for democracy worldwide including pushing back on China's aspiration to be a regional hegemon in Asia. Mr. Biden's first 100 days in office have been coterminous with arguably the most fraught times in recent U.S. history, given the devastation wreaked by the coronavirus on life and economic activity – making the U.S. the worst performer worldwide until recently surpassed on this grim scale by India. However, the Democrat has risen to the challenge posed by the virus, when compared to his predecessor Donald Trump's response, in terms of signing into law a \$1.9 trillion pandemic relief bill and funnelling direct payments of \$1,400 per person to more than 160 million households. Reports suggest that this shot in the arm could boost economic growth this year to 6% or higher, and revive the nearly 8.4 million jobs lost to COVID-19 by 2022. Whether this will be enough to mollify the likely anger of wealthy Americans for the tax hikes he proposes to slap them with is unclear. Yet, it is not the economy but the wounds of racist hatred that he will have to work even harder to heal. The recent conviction of the police officer responsible for the death of African-American George Floyd represents but the first step toward bridging the chasm between prejudiced, overzealous law enforcement and racial minorities.

Notwithstanding the considerable progress made by the Biden administration in domestic politics, it is in the international arena that much work remains unfinished to repair the damage wrought by his predecessor, an isolationist who prioritised transactionalism and bilateral *quid pro quo* over strengthening the U.S. as a global voice for plurilateral cooperation and regional engagement. Mr. Biden, contrarily, has thrown down the gauntlet to China, assuring its President Xi Jinping that Washington would continue to maintain a strong military presence in the Indo-Pacific "not to start conflict, but to prevent one". Recognising the multi-dimensional character of Beijing's challenge to the rules-based international order, Mr. Biden has also vowed to stand up to "unfair" trade practices, including disallowed subsidies for Chinese state-owned enterprises and industrial espionage, as well as speak out on perceived violations of fundamental freedoms and rights relating to, for example, Beijing's aggression in the South China Sea and in Hong Kong and the Xinjiang region, respectively. Whether facing conservative opposition to domestic policies or hostile pushback on the global stage from geopolitical rivals, Mr. Biden must hold fast to the values that saw him elevated to the White House.

To stop a third wave, India has to mask up

Public health measures that work best are those that the people voluntarily adopt, drastically reducing transmission



THOMAS ABRAHAM

As the smoke from countless funeral pyres rises above our cities, and desperately sick people line the corridors and wards of our hospitals seeking beds, medication and oxygen to relieve their virus-damaged lungs, it is difficult to see a way out of the worst crisis India has faced since the plagues and famines of the 18th and 19th centuries.

The anaemic pace of the government's vaccination drive is unlikely to slow the ferocity of this second wave of the pandemic, which epidemiological modellers predict could peak by the middle of May and gradually decline. If there is one thing to be learned from the tragedy unfolding before us, it is that unless active measures are taken, this second wave will be followed by a third wave, and perhaps more.

Waves across the globe

If we look around the world, the United States has had three distinct waves since last March, as has Brazil. The United Kingdom had a small first wave, followed by nearly four months when cases were low and the virus seemed to be disappearing. This was followed by two explosive waves, which only subsided after a lockdown and an aggressive vaccination campaign in which 95% of all those over the age of 50 have been vaccinated to date, with the entire adult population to be vaccinated by the

end of summer. South Africa saw a first wave peaking last August, followed by a second wave that began around November, and peaked in the first week of January (<https://bit.ly/3vthF4>).

Given this pattern, a second wave in India was almost a given. And once this wave recedes, it is highly likely that a third wave will build up, unless active measures are taken to stop it building up. Now is the time to think ahead and find ways to prevent the next wave.

Vaccines are the best option. But given India's population, the slow pace of vaccination, inelastic vaccine supplies both in India and globally, and limited finances with State governments which have now been given the responsibility of vaccinating the bulk of the country's population, this is not going to happen quickly enough to blunt either this or future waves.

Tested methods that work

So along with vaccination, it is important to practise the full methods that have been shown to slow the spread of COVID-19 in different parts of the world: mask wearing, physical distancing, hand hygiene and a ban on mass gatherings.

These measures sound mundane and boring, but they work. They may not be as effective as mass vaccination, but in the absence of vaccines, they are perhaps the only way to reduce community transmission and slow the spread of the virus. Consider some of the evidence demonstrating the effect of these measures.

A study last year in the *American Journal of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene* found that countries where masks were widely used (either because of government or



ders or cultural norms) had lower per capita mortality from COVID than countries where there was no universal masking (<https://bit.ly/2RcjyW>). A smaller study of transmission among family members in Beijing households, found that face masks were 79% effective in preventing transmission when they were used by all household members (<https://bit.ly/3e0mRN>).

A comprehensive review of the scientific evidence for the use of face masks, published in January this year in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS)*, concluded that "near-universal adoption of nonmedical masks when out in public, in combination with complementary public health measures" (<https://bit.ly/3nx7WZ>) could reduce community spread, provided the measures were sustained. Mask wearing by itself will not be enough: it needs to be part of a package of measures that include rigorous social distancing, hand hygiene and avoiding mass gatherings.

The question is how can people be persuaded to wear masks? Conventional wisdom in India has it that wearing a mask only works when it is imposed as a police

measure, with fines and punishments for non-compliance. Mask wearing and social distancing cannot be sustained through *lathis*. Public health measures that work best are those that the public voluntarily adopts because they see it as being in their best interests.

Bangladesh shows the way

But there is evidence from an experimental study in Bangladesh that people will use masks enthusiastically if they are provided free, are comfortable, and accompanied with appropriate instructional material. A team of researchers, led by Mushfiq Mobarak of Yale University, carried out an experiment involving 350,000 adults in 600 villages in Bangladesh to try and understand how to increase mask usage. They found that mask usage tripled when they were given away free and accompanied by well-designed instructional material, as well as reminders from religious and community leaders and volunteers. These interventions increased the percentage of people using masks three fold.

Having volunteers in public spaces such as markets to remind people to wear masks and distribute masks to those who did not have them, as well as frequent messages from religious and community leaders, saw an increase in mask usage from 13%, when none of these interventions existed, to over 40% with them. One key to success was mask quality: masks needed to be comfortable to wear in hot and humid conditions, as well as being effective filters. Importantly, those who wore masks were also more likely to maintain social distancing.

Over the last year, India has

built significant capacity to manufacture masks, so supplies should not be an issue. The cost of supplying reusable masks free will need to be budgeted for, but masks are far cheaper than vaccines and the economic benefits of avoiding crippling new waves of the virus should be taken into account.

Reaching out the right way

Communication at the level of communities is the key to getting people to protect themselves this way. People need to be explained the reasons for mask wearing as well as the right way to wear a mask. Imaginative and creative communication campaigns are essential. In Bangladesh, community-level leaders as well as religious leaders were used to reinforce mask wearing and social distancing messages. Most Indian States have reasonable, well-functioning networks of health workers at the village and community levels who can be used in health campaigns.

These solutions may seem simplistic, but if the country is to reduce the impact of future waves, it is essential that they are put in place. Viruses are the most basic of organisms. And often, basic changes in human behaviour can drastically reduce the ability of a virus to transmit. Vaccines are the ultimate solution. But in the meantime, it is important to focus on what can be done right now if further disasters are to be prevented.

Thomas Abraham is adjunct associate professor at the University of Hong Kong and author of *'Twenty-First Century Plague: The Story of SARS' and 'Polio: The Odyssey of Eradication'*. He has been a communication adviser to the World Health Organization

State repression that breaches public peace

Telangana's recent ban on 16 organisations by invoking the Telangana Public Security Act is a smokescreen



KALPANA KANNABIRAN

The Government of Telangana, on March 30, 2021, issued a notification (G.O. Ms.73) banning 16 organisations under the Telangana Public Security Act, 1992 (TPSA), declaring them as 'unlawful associations' and 'new front organisations of the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist)', which was made public three weeks later on April 24, 2021. The belated public announcement was made at a time when citizens organisations and collectives in the State and country were trapped in the coils of the pandemic and largely left by an abdicating state to fend for themselves in life and death.

Health crisis, faltering steps
The ban comes during a surging second wave of COVID-19, in which Telangana has fared poorly. On April 19, the High Court of Telangana described the State government's affidavit in response to PILs urging for greater transparency in control, containment and care as 'wishes washy' and 'disappointing' and wondered whether the State was competing for the first place in the COVID-19 surge – and we might add, the failure in governance reflected therein.

Logically therefore, the attention of the government should be directed at managing the public health crisis and the distress

caused to the people at large, demonstrating due diligence in fulfilling its constitutional obligations under Part IV of the Constitution. This is one part of the tragic story unfolding before us.

Omnibus labelling

The second part is of older vintage (Article 21 rights) and stretches seamlessly over three decades from pre-COVID-19 to COVID-19 times – today ironically from the Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled Centre to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi-ruled State: the banning of the 'unlawful organisations – Telangana Praja Front (TPF), the Telangana Asanghatita Karmika Samakhya (TAKS), Telangana Vidyarthi Vedika (TVV), Democratic Students Organisation (DSU), Telangana Vidyarthi Sangham (TVS), Adivasi Students Union (ASU), Committee for the Release of Political Prisoners (CRPP), Telangana Raithanga Samithi (TRS; not to be confused with the ruling party), Tundum Deeba (TD), Praja Kala Mandali (PKM), Telangana Democratic Front (TDF), Forum Against Hindu Fascism Offensive (FAHFO), Civil Liberties Committee (CLC), Amarula Bandhu Mitra Sangham (ABMS), Chaitanya Mahila Sangham (CMS), and Revolutionary Writers Association. From workers' collectives, to women's groups, students' groups, Adivasi collectives and civil liberties groups – this list trawls in anyone who is likely to resist or protest on any count by merely dubbing organisations as a 'front' or 'new front', or as 'urban guerillas'. We cannot forget that less than seven years ago, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi rode to power on the



strength of these movements.

The reason for the proposed ban is the fact that these activists are 'moving in urban area by adopting various guerilla tactics... to wage war against the state'. Interestingly, the rationale is strengthened by the fact that they have joined hands with several organisations and [are] alluring the members into their folds [sic] inciting inflammatory statements, meetings and rallies highlighting various issues against the State and Central Governments'. The G.O. goes on to state that these organisations are organising protests in the 'barren lands' of Chhattisgarh besides demanding the release of G.N. Saibaba, Varavara Rao, Rona Wilson and other leaders who were arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case, and 'repealing of UAPA Act, Farm Laws, CAA/NRC etc'. Even the reasons for the ban are a medley that stretches from 'waging war' to protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, or the CAA. This omnibus labelling of organisations and so-called crimes in themselves are ground for challenging the ban.

The Bhima Koregaon case is ongoing. Even the investigation is as yet indeterminate. Construing support for the Bhima Koregaon accused as a crime under the TPSA

is a criminal mis-reading and deliberate mis-application of an already draconian law.

Challenging UAPA

The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, or UAPA, is widely challenged by everyone with a rudimentary understanding of the Constitution as being against every constitutional guarantee. As Indian citizens, it is our right to seek its repeal on clearly reasoned grounds which must be heard by courts. Pending repeal, it is our constitutional right to challenge its application in every case in which we believe its application is a travesty of the Constitution. Protesting against the UAPA or seeking its repeal cannot in itself be construed as an unlawful activity, as this notification by the Telangana government seems to suggest. Can we forget the numbers of protesters against the CAA or diligent journalists indefinitely held in custody on manifestly unjust grounds under the UAPA?

This brings us to protests against the CAA and Farm Laws which the G.O. 73 expressly mentions. There has been widespread protest against the farm laws in the State as well as against the CAA. While Telangana Chief Minister, K. Chandrashekhar Rao, refused to take a definite stand on the Farm Laws in the legislative debates on this issue, his stand on the CAA is clear and unequivocal. The Telangana Assembly passed a resolution (<https://bit.ly/3g07TYr>) against the CAA, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register on March 15, 2020, stating that the CAA violated the constitutional guarantees of

equality, non-discrimination and secularism, and will endanger the lives of vulnerable groups who do not possess adequate documentary proof of citizenship – and went on to state that, 'there are serious questions as to the legality and constitutionality of the CAA, NRC and NRC'. There is no indication that the State Legislature has reversed its stand on this question. On what grounds then, has the Chief Secretary of the State issued a notification that directly contravenes the resolution of the State legislature? Have we forgotten that Telangana is not a State where the BJP is in power?

Issue of timing

The timing of this notification merits close scrutiny. In paragraph 2, G.O. 73 states that these 16 organisations 'have as their objective interference with the public administration or the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community... thereby constituting the danger to public peace...'. At a time when the government is facing the heat for mismanaging public health and safety, and therefore endangering public security, the response is to blow out a smokescreen invoking draconian legislation to declare the demand for governmental accountability as an unlawful activity that is evidence of participation in an unlawful association. This amounts to the criminalisation of citizenship, no less. It is state repression that breaches public peace. Not the demand by citizens for state accountability.

Kalpana Kannabiran is a sociologist and lawyer based in Hyderabad

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Looming threat
I write this letter as the former Director of Research and Health, Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University. There is certainly a very important medical emergency, namely Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), waiting to strike across the world (OpEd page, "Antimicrobial resistance: the silent threat", April 29). It is indeed apt to call it a slow tsunami that threatens to undo the medical progress achieved over a century. Though such warnings and threats have been in print for quite a while, nothing tangible appears to have been done by regulatory authorities. Unlike in the developed world, an

antibiotic audit is followed with least regard in the developing world which includes India. Antibiotics are available freely over the counter in pharmacies. It is common sight to find local pharmacies selling a single dose of antibiotics given along with an anti-allergic drug to people who have only a common cold. Though indiscriminate antibiotic usage has been largely curtailed in livestock farming, its usage still persists in the poultry industry and in aquaculture farms to a level that is not required. Clinical laboratories should be equipped with the expertise and the infrastructure to quickly process samples and report AMR patterns to aid the

clinician in choosing the appropriate antibiotic for treatment instead of resorting to irrational selection of antibiotics for treatment. Many herbs, beginning with Allicin (garlic) have shown promising results as antimicrobial agents which the poultry industry has begun to use; this has to be scientifically supported and their usage widened. Before Antimicrobial Resistance becomes a major health emergency, the regulators should wake up and have in place stringent measures.

Ds. V. PURUSHOTHAMAN,
Chennai

India and the pandemic

The article, "Gasp for air, gasping for answers"

(Editorial page, April 29), appears more as an overdramatised, Cassandra-like lament rather than a sensible and well-considered dissection of the pandemic's second wave. One does not treat trauma with expressions of moral affront. The nation is facing a humanitarian crisis and one expects policy experts to offer implementable solutions to provide immediate relief to the people. When a fire is raging we focus on extinguishing it. The second wave is a complex web of reinforcing factors. The search for a single cause such as state failure is a futile exercise. The only discernible cause at the moment is a lowering

of vigil at all levels of society. Sure, the government's vaccine policy could have been designed better. Campaigns against the quick approval of two vaccines did not exactly help to build public confidence. The lack of national unity will derail our efforts to tide over the crisis and signal to the world that India is incapable of coping with the pandemic.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

No myth

It is naive to say that Hindu kings did not own and administer temples

(Editorial page, "Temples are not fiefdoms of the state", April 29). It is not a 'colonial myth', as the

writer claims. For this one does not have to look at 'inscriptions cast in stone'. The Zamorin of Calicut owned 64 temples; they still own 43. The Cochin royal family owned and managed a large number of temples and *uttos* (free kitchen), details of which were given by the 20th century scholar, Kanippayur Shankaran Namboodiripad, in his memoirs. All royal temples had large tracts of land attached to them. They were run by the rental income. Normally, the king appointed a local lord to manage them on his behalf.

P. RAMAN,
New Delhi

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Is the government committed to vaccine equity?

PARLEY

The government has not really thought through the vaccination and pricing policy

The Central government has transferred the responsibility of vaccinating people in the 18-44 age group to the States, and opened up vaccine pricing to market forces, at a time when discussions around the world are about an intellectual property (IP) waiver for COVID-19 vaccines and providing free vaccines. In a conversation moderated by G. Ananthakrishnan, K. Sujatha Rao and K.M. Gopakumar discuss India's vaccination policy and its challenges. Edited excerpts:

The Central government has shifted responsibility for vaccination largely to the States. What is your view on the impact of the new policy?

K. Sujatha Rao: We need to vaccinate about 934 million people above 18 and within that, about 300 are above 45 years and 634 million are in the 18-44 age bracket. We need about 1.8 billion doses. Right now, the production is 60 million doses per month. And about 350 million are yet to be vaccinated in the above-45 age group. The Indian government is committed to providing vaccines to those above 45 and needs about 600 million doses against which it has provided about 100 million. So, at this rate, it will take very long, even if it earmarks 30 million doses per month.

The two companies [Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech (BB)] are saying they can produce, from July, 112 million doses or 115 million doses per month. Even then it will take the Government of India almost 6-8 months to cover the target group. Its focus on the target group has an epidemiological basis, as opposed to the current demand that it should also include those aged 18 to 45. But there is a need for that urgency also, mainly because 45% of deaths are in this age group (20-50 years).

What the government is trying to do is keep the vaccines at market prices. These prices are quite high. The State governments may not be able to afford to supply the vaccines free or only the richer sections among this age group, who can afford the prices, will be able to get vaccinated. It is some kind of market segmentation and fragmentation that the government is trying to

do in order to get supply and demand to sync at some level.

K.M. Gopakumar: The important objective in the policy is to accelerate vaccination but the way in which the new policy is designed, we may not achieve that, precisely because it fragments the market. This is now divided into three categories at differential pricing. This is going to hamper bulk procurement and affordability. Earlier, there was only one procuring agency, the Central government. Now you have States which will compete with private hospitals to procure vaccines. All this will have implications for accelerating the vaccination target.

From a public health approach, how does the present campaign compare with polio and others?

KSR: I think the government has not thought through this policy. It did not think about supply and kept on setting targets for free vaccination. The eligibility criteria has been increasing steadily. That is good, but it did not keep an eye on supply. It did not expect the second wave [of the pandemic]. The anxiety of this wave has triggered a huge demand for vaccines, and in the lull period from October to March, when the pandemic seemed to be petering out, there was a sense of comfort. There was vaccine hesitancy not only due to confusion on the nature of the vaccines, but also [the view] that the pandemic is on its way out.

Given vaccine hesitancy, the government was cautious. It did not make advance purchase agreements or stockpile vaccines. It thought these two indigenous companies would be adequate to cover everyone by the end of the year. Since it did not expect a second wave, the window was lost for sorting out supply, giving the capital investment required by these companies to expand their production, ensuring that other companies got this know-how and also began production, having advance agreements with imported vaccine manufacturers, and so on.

Did we confine ourselves to too few vaccines?

KSR: Yes. Pfizer did offer to enter



the market in February, but it was asked to do a bridging study, which has now been relaxed. Pfizer was not willing to do that. You see, it never really cares for the Indian market. Whatever it was producing was being bought at a huge price in the western market, at \$20 a shot. Pfizer knows that its vaccine is affordable only to a small segment of the Indian population. But India could have tied up with the company nevertheless. We had many other policy options, which we did not explore because we thought these two companies would be adequate.

There is a lot of discussion on public-funded vaccine research. One recent report says the AstraZeneca vaccine is 97% public-funded. Do you have any comment on how this has been commercialised?

KMG: During the TRIPS and access to medicines debate in the early 2000s, we were told that the main justification for IP protection is that it is a mechanism to recoup the investment in research and development (R&D). If there is public investment in R&D, you can separate that from the price of the product. That way you can make the innovation happen as well as ensure access. In the case of COVID-19, as per one calculation, \$93 billion was spent by various governments for vaccine research. Moderna is 100% publicly funded, AstraZeneca, 97%, and for Pfizer, though it denies it receives public funding, BioNTech got huge public funding from the German government. Pfizer also got around \$2 billion as advance market commitment. All these companies received public funding. After this, there is a complete de-risking of R&D as well as manufacturing, but now they are not ready to give up their monopoly.

We need to treat vaccines as a public good because there has been a huge spending of public funds.

K.M. GOPAKUMAR

ly, preventing the scaling-up of production. These companies are not in a position to meet the global demand, but are not ready to share the technology. The developed countries are treating it. We too have taken a lesson. SII, which has received the technology free of cost from AstraZeneca, and funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to expand manufacturing capability, is now indulging in differential pricing, charging a huge amount disproportionate to its expenditure or investment. The problem is monopoly and profit, not the idea of recovering R&D expenditure. We need to treat vaccines as a public good because there has been a huge spending of public funds.

Is there any precedent for States being asked to acquire their own vaccines?

KSR: No, never. The government has had the universal immunisation programme starting from the 1960s. This became a global priority from 1991-92 with the World Health Organization (WHO) piloting it, particularly with the entry of the polio pulse programme. When you do central procurement as a single buyer, you have the advantage of market power and you can beat down the prices. Hepatitis B used to cost ₹750 per dose in the open market, and when the Government of India entered [the scene], it came down to less than ₹200 and crashed further to less than ₹100. When you fragment the market and allow pharma companies to set the price, you are giving away all your advantages to them to make super profits.

the regulatory agencies to share the dossiers with potential manufacturers to speed up the process. So, potential manufacturers in India, China or Brazil have the technological capability without the help of the originator, but the regulatory framework insists that replication requires them to prove clinical safety and efficacy, which are time consuming. We need to take two-pronged action. The RAs need to waive clinical trials by developing an accelerated pathway for the non-originator company, and the national RA should share the dossier with the potential manufacturer.

KSR: Even during H1N1, though the [move] had come from Indonesia and WHO was trying to make the process universally available, Pfizer still had control and was not willing to share, and there was some kind of problem in technology transfer. But if the U.S. supports India and South Africa, there are ways to make this a public good. Right now the inequity is unjustifiable. There is now a clamour for distribution of vaccines equitably. Though GAVI set up a mechanism under COVAX, India became the biggest supplier.

In India we have Covaxin, produced by BB, where the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has been a knowledge partner. I don't know who holds the patent here. I suspect ICMR must be a joint patent holder, and it should be able to leverage that advantage. We have about 20 manufacturing companies and depending on the state of technology and readiness, ramping up production of Covaxin can be done. If BB is saying we have incurred an expenditure of ₹350 crore, some compensation can be given to the company, and since ICMR is a partner, they should be able to make it available to other companies to quickly scale-up the manufacture. There is a lot of scope available if the Centre is genuinely interested in ensuring universal vaccination in the least possible time.

Should the present vaccine pricing policy be reviewed?

KSR: There's no justification whatsoever for the kind of prices that both Adar Poonawalla and Dr. Krishna Ella have given. There is an element of greed and I feel sorry because this is not the moment when these companies should be thinking of profiteering.



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former Union
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is the author of the
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and its impact on
developing
countries



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Creating critical thinkers

The pandemic is an opportunity to re-imagine educational assessments and evaluations

KAMIYA KUMAR

Despite the pandemic unleashing in full force, the debate over the last month has entailed a mindless conversation over holding or postponing board examinations instead of exploring alternatives. Rather than viewing this unprecedented situation as a unique opportunity for re-imaging educational assessments and evaluations in a world that no longer looks the same, the government insists on the possibility of holding exams in person and posing a further threat to the lives of loved ones.

Alternative ways of thinking
Students and parents have valid concerns about the future, which include admissions to higher educational institutions. Nonetheless, considering we are in a worldwide crisis where India cannot afford to have gatherings of small/big groups, why aren't virtual educational committees being organised to rethink approaches on assessing student learning? For instance, one of the challenges is deemed as students 'cheating' if the exams were to be conducted online. However, if question papers were designed in a way that encouraged students to critically engage with the material, contest perspectives and build opinions, no book would be able to provide all the answers.

Relatedly, in light of the right to education that affirms the importance of formative assessments, teachers could be invited to engage in evaluating student's performance across the year. If there are concerns around the tendency of schools to self-bolster their performance, reports, portfolios, samples of responses and grades could be shared across a pool of schools so that teachers can anonymously assess and provide insightful feedback on student performance, until a sense of self-accountability and trust can be cultivated. Opening up possibilities of evaluating students on their performance through the year will contribute towards making evaluation and learning much more holistic.

Further, inviting higher education-

al institutions to facilitate online entrance exams could be another option to explore as students gear up for college admissions. Eventually, the goal could be to involve students in self and peer evaluations so that the ability to reflect while participating in learning communities and giving/receiving feedback prepares them for what lies ahead.

The National Curriculum Framework of 2005 affirms the importance of embracing the emotional, social, physical and intellectual growth of children within a framework of human values. Thus, a question to consider is whether academic performances can continue to be the sole representation of student growth or we can begin to redefine student success based on social, emotional and spiritual development benchmarks.

Redefining education

We have an opportunity to redefine meaningful education and even though it does require a concerted change across curriculum in K-12 schools, the entrance criteria determined by higher educational institutions and what we value as communities and societies, we have to start somewhere. Viewing this crisis as a signal for urgent change, core issues can be engaged with and re-evaluated to prevent students from being trapped in the current system of cramming, rote learning and anxiety. The government needs to give complete autonomy to educational committees composed of students, teachers, educational leaders, scholars and researchers who can advocate, organise and implement this change nationally and internationally. Raising the quality of educational assessments and evaluations by involving higher educational institutions may even prevent a mass exodus to international universities so that young leaders can be nurtured to engage with underlying national challenges and add value by advocating for and sustaining the fabric of a diverse and non-stratified India.

Kamiya Kumar is a Doctoral Student, Teachers College, Columbia University, and teacher, Bluebells School International

NOTEBOOK

Watching a tragedy unfold

Reporters are going to hospitals and cremation grounds whilst battling fear and guilt

HEMANI BHANDARI

In the beginning of March, the COVID-19 health bulletin sent every evening by the Delhi government started showing an upward trend from a few hundred cases daily. On WhatsApp, a fellow reporter predicted, "And just like that we'll reach 1,000". That happened in no time. The cases and deaths have just been soaring since. Suddenly, even before reporters realised it, we were outside hospitals and cremation grounds covering what is unarguably one of the worst horror stories of recent times. For those of us watching this tragedy unfold every day, the distressing visuals will possibly never leave our minds.

Covering stories of COVID-19 victims and their families for the last two weeks has meant being a

witness to their desperation, pleas for help, and sorrow. I saw a son holding his mother as she lay on his shoulder and gasped for breath outside a hospital.

They were looking for a bed. Unable to get one, she died minutes later. A 65-year-old man risked his life and stood in queue to get an oxygen cylinder refilled for his infected son-in-law who was being looked after by his daughter back home. An eight-year-old lost his father to COVID-19 and stood inside the cremation ground, unable to make sense of what had happened. His COVID-19-positive mother, wearing PPE, could not even offer to hug him. I have seen families wait an entire day to cremate their loved ones because cremation grounds have run out of space for the day. Private and government hospitals have

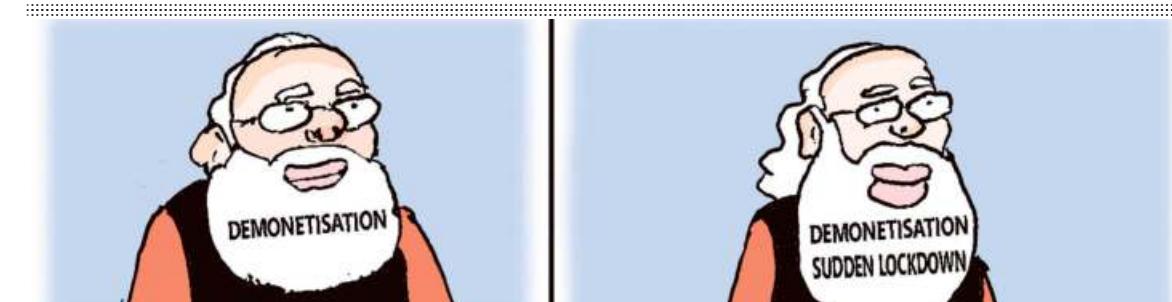
been sending SOS messages on media groups and posting on Twitter asking for oxygen supply. It's been nothing but reporting pure mayhem.

Journalists are perceived to have "connections", so many of us are also flooded with calls and messages from friends, extended family, and even strangers asking for help in arranging hospital beds or oxygen cylinders. While we've been able to help some, we have only been able to tweet the requests of some others, which yielded no results. Social media has been truly helpful during these times, connecting people who need help with those who can provide help.

Amid this havoc, there's the dreaded feeling of getting infected, for reporters are out on the field every day. Despite each of us wearing two masks, a head

cover, a face shield and gloves, and despite our drive to share people's stories, the scare of contracting the virus and endangering the lives of family members remains at the back of our minds. Working in a profession which runs solely on passion is one thing, but the guilt of possibly infecting elderly parents cannot be ignored.

The days are spent shuttling between hospitals and cremation grounds, battling guilt and fear. The nights are spent reflecting on the immense pain and misery surrounding us. Then there is helplessness. The toll this takes on our mental health reflects in the painful adjectives we write in our news reports, the unusually high number of calls we make to close ones and sometimes, the tears that flow freely without any trigger.



FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1971

Adopt the three language formula: Giri

The President, Mr. V. V. Giri, to-day [April 29] appealed to all States in the country to adopt the three-language formula "unreservedly" and implement it "effectively". Mr. Giri said the Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh had already taken "active steps" to implement the formula which, besides emphasising the importance of Hindi, took due account of the claims of English and the regional languages. He hoped the other States would follow their example. "It is time that our languages are used consciously as a cementing rather than dividing force", the President said while inaugurating the golden jubilee celebration of the Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, T. Nagar [Madras], this morning. He said that according to the three-language formula, the mother tongue should be encouraged and developed to the maximum extent so that it could become the effective medium of teaching and intercourse within the State. It should also become the language of the courts and legislatures in due course. English, a well-developed international language, had been and continued to be the binding force of the intelligentsia of the country. It was the language of science and technology and "we cannot discard it in the foreseeable future". Hindi, drawing fresh strength from Sanskrit and other major languages, should be cultivated extensively so that it could serve as a common medium and reflect the national consciousness as Sanskrit did in the past and Persian and English did in recent times.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 30, 1921

Central Sikh League

The Central Sikh League has accepted the draft constitution of Sikh Leagues whose objects include (a) the attainment of Swarajya by the people of India by all legitimate, peaceful and constitutional means, (b) the promotion of unity, fostering of patriotism and public spirit among the Sikhs and development of economic resources. The principle of direct membership of General Sikhs League has been abolished. The League shall now be governed by a council of 101 members exclusive of ex-officio members. Eighty-one of the 101 members are to be elected by District Sikh Leagues according to a scheme to be prepared shortly by the executive council and 20 shall be nominated by these elected members.

FROM PAGE ONE

'Win for DMK in T.N., Left Front in Kerala'

In Assam, the exit polls clearly predicted the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pulling ahead in the 126-member Assembly.

C-voter predicted 71-58 seats for the BJP, 53-66 seats for the Congress and 0-5 seats for others.

The Axis-My India poll predicted a wider margin, with the Bharatiya Janata Party at 75-85 seats, the Congress at 40-50 and others 1-4.

Jan Ki Baat also had similar predictions, with 70-80 seats for the BJP, 45-55 for the Congress and 0-1 for others.

Today's Chanakya put the BJP at 70 seats and the Congress at 56.

Political tussle

For the BJP, the real political tussle will begin post results, with State Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, having played the supporting role for five years, now eyeing the Chief

Minister's post.

In Kerala too, there was no confusion in the exit polls, with all of them predicting a return for the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The last time an incumbent government retained power in the State was in 1977.

Big blow to UDF

Axis My India predicted that the LDF could get 104-120 seats in the 140-member Assembly, with the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) facing near annihilation at 20-36 seats.

If the predictions hold on May 2, it will be a big loss for brand Rahul Gandhi, who spent the longest time in Kerala compared with the other States.

The situation in the Belghata and Manicktala constituencies turned volatile when the supporters of the BJP and the Trinamool Congress exchanged blows. In Manicktala, the situation turned tense when Trina-

'Govt. failed to prepare for second wave'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) on Thursday called upon the Centre and the State governments to comply with court orders regarding oxygen supply, hospital beds and medicines for COVID-19, adding that the governments had failed to prepare for the second wave of the pandemic.

"The Indian government must urgently remedy failures that have aggravated the impact of the second wave and led to people in the country suffering record-high rates of infection and death," the ICJ said in a statement.

It urged the Centre and the State governments to follow judicial orders regarding medical care and vaccines.

ICJ secretary-general Sam Zarifi said: "The Indian federal and State governments failed to prepare for the predictable second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, aggravating the horrific impact of the pandemic and the avoidable tragedy of between 1,500 to over 3,000 deaths daily."

The ICJ noted that India had reported over 2,00,000 cases every day since April 15 and 3,60,960 cases on April 27, the highest in the world. "Many hospitals have reportedly turned away patients due to lack of space, and some hospitals have asked those they admit to sign forms accepting the risk in case of death caused by exhaustion of oxygen supply. The government's failures have driven people to seek recourse in courts," it said.

40 nations offered help, says Shringla

Pak. allows overflight for EU aircraft

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Medical and oxygen-related support is being worked out from at least 40 countries, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said on Thursday. Supplies are expected from Egypt, Uzbekistan, Bangladesh and Guyana, apart from big powers such as Russia, the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.

"Over 40 countries have come forward to offer assistance in whichever capacity possible. We have got commitment of assistance from Europe, Gulf region and even further parts of the world, Australia, New Zealand and countries like Guyana which are located geographically further away," Mr. Shringla told presspersons.

"Partner countries like Russia, and those from Southeast Asia, U.K., France, Germany and our own neighbours have been generous and forthcoming on their own. Many of these countries have put this in the context of the assistance that they have received in the past [from India]. If countries are coming forward, it is also because of the global goodwill that was generated in the past. Our international partnerships and cooperation are supplementing our domestic resources to fight the second wave of the COVID-19."

Among neighbours, the role of Pakistan came for appreciation from the European Union after Islamabad gave quick permission for overflight for EU aircraft. Mr. Shringla said over 550

Kolkata records lowest turnout at 57.53%

Isolated violence reported during the last phase of polling for 35 Assembly seats in West Bengal

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Isolated incidents of violence were reported in the last phase of polling for 35 seats in West Bengal on Thursday as 76.07% voters exercised their franchise till 5 p.m.

The marathon exercise, which started on March 27, has come to a close with Kolkata recording the lowest turnout at 57.53%. Birbhum recorded the highest turnout (81.87%) followed by Malda (80.06%) and Murshidabad (78.07%).

Six arrested

Violence was reported from Kolkata where crude bombs were hurled in front of Mahajati Sadan and Rabindra Sarani in the early hours. Six persons were arrested in connection with the incidents.

The situation in the Belghata and Manicktala constituencies turned volatile when the supporters of the BJP and the Trinamool Congress exchanged blows. In Manicktala, the situation turned tense when Trina-



Quick check: Thermal screening being done at a polling booth during the final phase of the West Bengal Assembly election in Malda district on Thursday. ■PTI

mool candidate Sadhan Pande and BJP's Kalyan Chaubey came face to face with their supporters.

Violence was also reported from Nanoor and Bolpur in Birbhum district. The vehicle of BJP candidate from Nanoor Tarakeswar Saha was attacked when he visited

a village in the constituency. BJP candidate from Bolpur Anirban Ganguly also alleged that the party supporters were attacked in the Ilambazar area.

Supporters of both parties were seen chasing each other with batons and sticks in Birbhum. The Election Commission deployed 641 companies of Central forces for the phase.

Additional DGP (Law and Order) Jag Mohan said 835 persons were arrested across the State, which included four for violating prohibitory orders outside a polling booth and 20 in specific cases. A total of 316 arrests were

made in the Kolkata police jurisdiction. Five firearms and 22 rounds of bullets were also seized, he said.

Eleven Assembly seats of Murshidabad and Birbhum went to the polls along with six in Malda and seven in Kolkata.

Polling was also held at booth number 126 in the Sitalkuchi Assembly segment where it was suspended on April 10, after security forces opened fire in which four villagers died. There was some tension at the polling booth when a vehicle with BJP flags came near it.

Of the 294 Assembly seats, polling for Jangipur and Shamshergunj Assembly segments in Murshidabad has been suspended after the death of candidates.

Chief Electoral Officer Arif Aftab said all measures are taken to ensure counting of votes is carried out as per COVID-19 guidelines.

He said all those who participate in the counting process will have to undergo COVID-19 testing or double dose of vaccination.

IN BRIEF



Plea to exempt COVID drugs, oxygen from GST

NEW DELHI

A group of advocates moved the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking a direction to the Centre and the Office of the GST Council Secretariat to let go of their "apathy" and exempt COVID-19 drugs and equipment from the GST regime with "immediate effect" in public interest.

'Ensure priority for persons with disabilities'

NEW DELHI

After receiving a complaint that persons with disabilities (PWD) were being made to wait for COVID-19 testing, treatment and vaccination, the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Thursday asked the Health and Family Welfare Ministry to ensure PWD are given priority. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 mandates that PWD are given priority when it comes to medical attention and treatment.

Top ULFA-I 'commander' killed, say Assam police

GUWAHATI
The security forces have claimed to have dealt a major blow to the outlawed United Liberation Front of Assam-Independent by killing one of its top 'commanders' in an encounter in western Assam's Bongaigaon district on Thursday. The outfit's self-styled 'colonel' Dwipen Saikia "appears dead with bullet injury" following an encounter, the police said.

NCW launches helpline for pregnant women

NEW DELHI
The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Thursday launched a message-only helpline for providing assistance to expectant mothers. The helpline number is +919354954224, which will be functional round-the-clock. Apart from this, NCW can also be reached at helpatncw@gmail.com

Posts got blocked by mistake: FB

Not taken down on govt. orders: social media giant

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Facebook on Wednesday temporarily blocked posts with a hashtag calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the government's handling of the pandemic.

The social media giant later said these posts were temporarily blocked due to a mistake and were not taken down on government orders.

The posts, which were blocked for a couple of hours, were restored.

Decision overturned

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Oversight Board, an independent body set up by Facebook, on Thursday said it has overturned the social network's decision to remove a November 2020 post alleging that the RSS

The blocking comes a couple of days after the Indian government had asked social media platforms to take down nearly 100 posts which it said were critical of the Centre's handling of the novel coronavirus pandemic and had content related to shortage of medicines, beds, sive posts and misinformation". Following this, Twitter removed over 50 posts from its platform. A majority of these tweets were critical of the Centre's handling of the novel coronavirus pandemic and had content related to shortage of medicines, beds,

'Steel plants had huge oxygen stock'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

On April 21, India had three times more liquid medical oxygen available in the storage tanks of steel plants than the cumulative demand from 12 States with high COVID-19 case loads, according to papers filed by the Union Home Ministry in the Supreme Court earlier this week.

Ten days after this assessment, hospitals in Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and other States continue to complain of shortage of oxygen with relatives of patients sending distress calls for cylinders as hospitals ran out of beds. Around 16,000 MT of liquid oxygen for medical use was available in storage tanks of steel plants on April 21.

The Act also seeks to ensure that the L-G is "necessarily granted an opportunity" to give an opinion before any decision taken by the Council of Ministers (or the Delhi Cabinet) is implemented.

"The objective of the Amendment Act is to make it more relevant to the needs of the capital; further define the responsibilities of the elected government and the Lt. Governor (LG); and, create a harmonious relationship between the Legislature and the Executive. The Amendment would en-

sure better governance in the NCT of Delhi and lead to improved implementation of schemes and programmes meant for the common people of Delhi," the Ministry said on Thursday.

In line with SC
It added that the amendments are consistent with the existing legal and constitutional provisions, and are in line with the two judgments of the Supreme Court on July 4, 2018 and February 14, 2019, respectively.

"The amendments to the GNCTD Act, 1991, in no way alter the constitutional and legal responsibilities of the elected government and the Lt. Governor (LG); and, create a harmonious relationship between the Legislature and the Executive. The Amendment would en-

sure better governance in the Lieutenant-Governor of Delhi. The Act gives discretionary powers to the L-G even in matters where the Legislative Assembly of Delhi is empowered to make laws.

The notification to implement the Act came a day after the Delhi High Court cautioned the Delhi government to put its "house in order" over the issue of inadequate oxygen supply in the city, adding that the Centre would be asked to take over if the Delhi government couldn't manage the situation created by the pandemic at hand.

Delhi is a Union Territory with a legislature and it came into being in 1991 under Article 239AA of the Constitution inserted by the Constitution (Sixty-ninth Amendment) Act, 1991. As per the parent Act, the legislative assembly of Delhi has power to make laws in all matters except public order, police and land.

stitution of India, including subjects such as health, education, etc," the Ministry said.

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'Vaccine Maitri may have to wait till July'

Our needs are far greater and all our partners understand that, says Shringla

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India is unlikely to resume its Vaccine Maitri programme for the neighbourhood, including Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, until at least July, given the sudden shortage of vaccines amidst a surge in COVID-19 cases, and the government's plan for vaccination for all adults set to start on May 1.

India has had to suspend the export of both commercial and grant-based vaccine doses, including to countries in the neighbourhood which had already paid for the shipments, with the last batch going out at the beginning of April, after the second wave of the pandemic hit.

When asked on Thursday, Foreign Secretary Harsh



A file photo of Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, left, receiving the first consignment of vaccines from India.

Shringla would not give a timeline for when the supplies will be restored. "Today, our needs are far greater, and all our partners understand that in this context, today what we require is to ramp up our vaccination programme, to 2-3 billion, so we have to ramp up significantly," he said.

to the Ministry of External Affairs website. Bangladesh had contracted for 30 million doses of Covishield at 5 million doses a month for six months, but only 7 million of the paid shipments actually arrived between January and February.

Sri Lanka placed a commercial order for 1.5 million (15 lakh) doses of Covishield, of which just 5 lakh doses have arrived so far. Sri Lanka and Nepal were last sent shipments through the COVAX alliance on March 6 and 28, respectively, while commercial shipments stopped at the end of February.

Sources said Bangladesh and Nepal have raised concerns about the interruption in supplies officially.

(With inputs from Meera Srinivasan)

'Childhood vaccinations must not be delayed'

Doctors at *The Hindu*'s wellness webinar speak about primary vaccinations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Childhood vaccinations are crucial to ensure the health and well-being of children, and must not be delayed or missed, said experts at *The Hindu*'s wellness webinar, held on Wednesday.

The webinar, part of *The Hindu*'s Wellness Series, focused on vaccination cards, the "passports to health", and was presented by GSK. The panellists were K. Radhakrishna, senior consultant paediatrician and managing director of Omni - RK Women and Child Hospital, Visakhapatnam, and R. Kishore Kumar, consultant neonatologist and founder and chairman, Cloudnine Group of Hospitals.

"Vaccination has been the biggest contributor to the

importance as a health record, and said parents could even maintain a digital record in order to ensure that the information stayed secure.

The doctors also gave a strong message about misinformation around vaccines and said this needed to be combated with vaccine advocacy and education.

Participants in the webi-



Passport to health: A file photo of a child getting polio drops at a camp in Vijayawada.

nar posted dozens of questions. On the necessity of taking the Hepatitis A vaccine, Dr. Kishore Kumar said that Hepatitis A is a disease transmitted by contaminated water and it affects the liver. Though it is a disease that may not kill, the vaccine has no side effects, so it is a vaccine that is one he would definitely recommend.

On an adult having missed the polio vaccine as a child and wanting to know if they could take it, Dr. Radhakrishna said they could take the injectable polio vaccine.

Other questions that were addressed included a query on the meningococ

INTERVIEW | SONIA GANDHI

'We need to work together and mobilise all help for the millions'

Congress has been extending help in whatever way it can and this is the time to provide assistance without fanfare, says the party president

SANDEEP PHUKAN

As the health crisis due to COVID-19 worsens, Congress president Sonia Gandhi says this is the time for a gigantic collective endeavour cutting across party lines, and ensuring that vaccination coverage expands as fast as possible. She says political consensus in a national crisis requires an 'ability to listen' and not an assumption that one knows everything.

Excerpts:

The second wave of COVID-19 has been devastating and India is, perhaps, going through the worst public health crisis in recent history. Who or what do you think is responsible for such a rapid slide?

thought or care about their potential impact.

There is a narrative that blame game and fixing accountability can wait; it is more important to save lives. What is your view?

■ I agree. The absolute one-point programme now is to save lives, to alleviate the pain, suffering and anguish of millions upon millions of our citizens, to deal with the shortages of oxygen, critical medicines and beds in hospitals. That is the approach the Indian National Congress has taken in each and every State. We are extending help in whatever way we can.

This is also not the time, I believe, to take credit for or broadcast what we as a political organisation are doing on the ground. This is the time for work and extend help without fanfare.

I also want to add here that we are all very thankful for the manner in which the international community has

come to our help these last few days.

But I find it quite pathetic that even this is being given a 'spin' to haul the Prime Minister when in reality it is a reflection of his government's incompetence, insensitivity and completely distorted sense of priorities. For example, is this really the time to push on with an unnecessary and wasteful project like the Central Vista Redevelopment Project? Having said this, let me also applaud the manner in which so many civil society organisations and groups and so many individuals in our country have come forward and involved themselves in providing relief and succour. Our frontline health workers

wrote a very sober, dignified and constructive letter to the Prime Minister based on his vast learning and experience. Sadly, the Prime Minister did not even acknowledge the letter, but got the Union Health Minister to mount an extraordinarily personal, discourteous and wholly unethical attack on Dr. Singh and the Indian National Congress. I was actually shocked by his reply as I think many were. I have written a number of times to the Prime Minister as has the former Congress president. There have been no meaningful acknowledgements of these letters as well. By the way, I should mention that I have written ten letters to the Prime Minister over the past fourteen months only on COVID-19 containing constructive suggestions. I want to stress that they share practical ideas for action based on discussions we have had in party forums and with

Recently, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh offered six suggestions with regard to vaccination, but it got a stinging rebuttal from Health Minister Harsh Vardhan. Mr. Rahul Gandhi and you have also been writing to the Prime Minister with suggestions. But there is some criticism that the Congress is trying to 'politicise' a crisis.

■ Yes, Dr. Manmohan Singh



Chief Ministers of Congress-ruled States relying on their present experience. It is not a question of politicising this crisis. We are fulfilling our obligations as a responsible and responsive Opposition.

There are allegations that COVID-19 data is being manipulated to hide the real picture...

■ I think by now it is abundantly clear that the real picture is far worse than what the government would have us believe. And I say this with a full sense of responsibility – the manipulation is maximum in States like U.P., Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh. This has been highlighted by several persons in the media. But all this is symptomatic of a malaise that has afflicted the Modi administration since 2014 – suppress facts that are uncomfortable, doctor data when it puts the ruling regime in poor light and

try and control the narrative. Clearly, for this, government deadlines can be missed but headlines are more important.

You recently said the Modi government's handling of the second wave is a 'complete disaster'. But hasn't the Opposition been critical of the government in whatever they do. Last year, the Modi government was severely criticised for causing immense hardship and 'destroying' the economy by imposing a harsh lockdown. Now, it is being criticised for leaving everything to the States. Where is the political

consensus?

■ Let me point out a couple of things. It is the Union government that has consistently played politics and discriminated against Opposition-ruled States. It is the Union government that has centralised everything. When things appear to be getting better, it takes the credit. When things begin to go awry, it blames the States. Take the issue of vaccines. Was pricing ever discussed with States? In fact, this whole issue of pricing makes little sense and has come under severe criticism from public health professionals. The en-

tire vaccination strategy has been relentlessly and ruthlessly politicised by the Prime Minister. Consensus requires honest consultations, a capacity to listen and not assume you know everything, that the only way is your way.

Regarding your criticism of the new vaccination policy announced by the government, don't you think the vaccine producers need to be incentivised and be paid appropriate prices so that they can expand their capacities and fulfil demand?

■ Well, this needs to be looked at from the point of view of the public. Of course, manufacturers of vaccines need to cover their costs and be assured of reasonable margins. But isn't it the duty of the government – like governments in other countries have done – to facilitate production, to place advance orders and to strengthen supply chains? The Modi government didn't place any orders till as late as January 2021 and that too in numbers that are minuscule compared to the requirement.

If every eligible Indian is to get two doses, we need something like two billion doses, and we need them in a hurry. Our party believes

that in this pandemic, the bulk of the people should be given vaccines for free and the Central government should take the responsibility for ensuring this after negotiating with manufacturers. Instead, they have created a system in which there are multiple prices and an encouragement to profiteering. In fact, the government seems to have completely disowned our younger age group, between 18 and 45, who are expected to pay much higher prices for their vaccinations.

What according to you is the single most important task calling for a national effort?

■ Without doubt, the answer to this question is vaccination. Less than 10% of the target set by the Union government last January has been achieved so far – and I am referring to those who have got both doses. The target itself was 300 million and now of course with the 18-plus category, it will be much more. Increasing vaccine supply and rate of vaccination is the most urgent task. This has to be a collective endeavour. And I would still say that Dr. Singh's suggestion that India should invoke compulsory licensing to expand vaccine availability must be acted upon without further delay. Let the Prime Minister take credit – that won't be anything new – but at least let him act.

Why low oxygen supply to Delhi: HC

'M.P. Maharashtra got more than what they requested, but the capital got less'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the Central government why States such as Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra were allotted more oxygen than they had asked for, while Delhi was not even allotted its projected requirement to treat COVID-19 patients.

"We are not asking you [Centre] to stop giving to these States. But the point is, on April 20, Delhi's projected demand was 700 metric tonnes [MT], but you allocated 480 MT. It doesn't appear to be falling in line," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said.

The Bench's query came after senior advocate Rajeshwar Rao, who was appointed *amicus curiae* to assist the court in the case, on



Gasping for air: A COVID-19 patient with an oxygen tank at a hospital in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

April 20 said Madhya Pradesh had projected a demand for 445 MT, but the allocation given was 543 MT. "Maharashtra had requested for 1,500 MT and it was allotted 1,661 MT," Mr. Rao added.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta said Madhya Pradesh had a surge in demand due to a rise in demand from two

districts. "The Delhi government did ask for 700 MT. The allocation is 490 MT. The actual quantity coming to Delhi is about 335-340 MT, which according to our assessment is sufficient," the Solicitor-General said. "So far as oxygen is concerned, no resource is limited," he added.

The court asked the Centre to respond to the issue.

"People who are close to

us are not getting beds. We are hearing it everyday," Justice Sanghi responded.

"Hospitals have stopped admission because they don't have oxygen," the court said.

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, told the court that there were 16,072 non-ICU beds in the larger hospitals in Delhi. By applying the formula worked out by the Central government, the oxygen requirement was 304 MT.

As of today, there were 4,866 ICU beds, which would further be augmented by another 1,200 ICU beds by May 10. The existing requirement for oxygen was 704 MT, he said.

The court asked the Centre to respond to the issue.

'What were you doing for 14 months?'

There cannot be ad hocism in dealing with a pandemic, Madras HC tells Centre

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.

CHENNAI

Chief Justice of the Madras High Court Sanjib Banerjee on Thursday wondered what the Centre was doing for the past 12 to 14 months without anticipating the second wave of COVID-19 and getting prepared to face it. Referring to the desperate measures being taken when the wave was at its peak now, he said there could not be ad hocism in dealing with a pandemic.

The Centre should have acted in a planned and informed manner after obtaining expert advice, he said.

The observations were made during the hearing of a *suo moto* public interest litigation petition to monitor the availability of hospital beds, medicines, vaccines, oxygen and ventilators in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.



Long wait: People queuing up to get vaccinated at a hospital in Chennai on Thursday. ■ R. RAGU

The court had asked the Centre to respond on how it was helping the State and the Union Territory.

Additional Solicitor-General R. Sankaranarayanan said the Centre was coordinating between pharmaceutical companies that manufactured Remdesivir and the nodal officers of individual States to ensure seamless

supply. However, the Chief Justice, presiding over the first Division Bench along with Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy, said, "Mr. Solicitor, we cannot resist in asking this: All that you are showing is things that were to be hunky dory. But why are we in the present situation? What happened during the last 12 to 14 months? Why

are we jumping into action in the end of April to ensure that June becomes better?"

Mr. Sankaranarayanan responded that the surge was not expected until recently. "Had they anticipated, they would have worked on that," he said. Expressing surprise, Chief Justice Banerjee said, "Sir, without meaning any disrespect to anyone, did they even consult any expert?"

The Chief Justice also referred to several other issues such as the high price of vaccines sold to the State governments. "There cannot be any ad hocism in this. There are many institutions involved, but we have to go into it in a planned and informed manner after obtaining expert advice," the Chief Justice said and adjourned the case to Friday.

Manmohan discharged from AIIMS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) on Thursday after he recovered from COVID-19. Dr. Singh, 88, was admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre on April 19 after testing positive for COVID-19.

Both vaccine doses

The former Prime Minister, however, had taken both his doses of the vaccine before he got infected with the virus.

"The nation is happy and relieved that Dr. Manmohan Singh has recovered and been discharged from hospital. Nation wishes him a healthy and long life," former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram tweeted.

The former Finance Minister also wished a full and speedy recovery to Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, who has tested positive.

Another senior Congress leader, Anand Sharma, also tweeted that he had returned home after recovering.

CSIR - NATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE
(Council of Scientific & Industrial Research)
Uppal Road, Hyderabad-500007, Telangana, India

Advertisement No. NGRI/Gr III/3/2021 dated 23.04.2021
The CSIR-NGRI invites online applications for the posts of Senior Technical Officer - 2 [04 posts], Senior Technical Officer - 1 [07 posts], Technical Officer [06 posts] and Technical Assistant [21 posts].
CSIR-NGRI website www.ngri.org.in may be referred to for further details. The last date for online application is 31.05.2021.
Sd/-
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TENDER ALERT
1) e-Tender No. TW-IT/OT/01/2021-22: Supply, Installation & Maintenance support of Network Items for OPTCL-GRIDCO-SLDC Wide Area Network (OGS-WAN).
2) e-Tender Notice No-NIT-CPC-35/2020-21: Supply, Erection, Testing, Commissioning & Comprehensive AMC (for 07 years) of 157 nos of 0.25 accuracy class A.C static ABT (DLMS) compliant (Category-B) Trivector energy meter suitable for energy accounting/auditing & also interface meters along with supply of 60 nos of metering panels suitable for accommodating 08 nos of such energy meters in each panel for OPTCL System.
For more details please visit: www.tenderworld.com/OPTCL & www.optcl.co.in. CAD-206 OPR-04011/11/0008/2122 HIPR-02/2021-22

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
NORTH EASTERN RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR
"e" Procurement Notice for Bridge Works
Identification No. Bridge Online NCB No.304
No.1868/ / Date : 26.04.2021

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Bridge work Under BSY for Balance work
2. Total No. of Work : 02 (One) No.
3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure
4. Class of Contractor : As per Annexure
5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender On-line for bidding	From	To	Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in O/S E.N.E.R.W.Circle,Keonjhar.
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Superintending Engineer, North Eastern Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar.	Bridge Online NCB No.304	Dt.04.05.21 at 11.00 A.M.	Dt.19.05.21 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.18.05.21 up to 5.00 P.M.	Dt.20.05.21 at 11.00 A.M.	Will be intimated later

• Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Sd/- P.K.Mishra, Superintending Engineer, N.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.
OIPR-2504/11/0006/2122

Chennai Petroleum Corporation Limited
(A group company of IndianOil)

Regd. Office: 536, Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai-600 018
Website : www.cpcl.co.in ; Email id: shankarp@cpcl.co.in
Tel: 044-24349833 / 24346807 Fax: 044-24341753
CIN - L40101TN1965G01005389

EXTRACT OF THE STATEMENT OF AUDITED STANDALONE AND CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021 (₹ in crore)

SI. No.	Particulars	STANDALONE				CONSOLIDATED					
		31.03.2021 Audited	31.12.2020 Unaudited	31.03.2020 Audited	31.03.2020 Audited	31.12.2020 Unaudited	31.03.2020 Audited	31.03.2021 Audited	31.03.2020 Audited		
1.	Total income from operations	14705.48	11470.30	11792.11	41899.07	48706.32	14705.48	11792.11	41899.07	48706.32	
2.	Other Income	28.95	32.66	3.55	106.88	24.13	28.96	3.55	100.97	18.21	
3.	Total Income	14734.43	11502.96	11795.66	42005.95	48730.45	14734.44	11502.96	11795.66	42000.04	48724.53
4.	Total Expenditure	14401.48	11450.07	14183.72	40794.41	51746.48	14401.48	11450.04	14183.75	40793.56	51746.46
5.	Profit / (Loss) for the period (before Tax and Exceptional items)	332.95	52.89	(2388.06)	1276.54	(3016.03)	343.14	62.92	(2375.23)	126.24	(2994.85)
6.	Profit / (Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional items)	332.									

Bengaluru-based Windmills Craftworks recently opened a branch in Dallas, Texas, becoming the first Indian microbrewery to take its brand to the United States

RUTH DHANARAJ

Nothing comes close to encountering the familiar where it is least expected. With Bengaluru-based microbrewery Windmills Craftworks opening a branch in Dallas, visitors to that South Central US state can now kick back with a pint and a smorgasbord of Indian and Texan food.

Conceptualised by Kamal Saagar, founder of Total Environment, an architect-led real estate company in Bengaluru, and Ajay Nagarajan, CEO of Total Environment Hospitality, Windmills The Colony in Texas is the realisation of a dream that had been put on hold.

"We had been working on this project for the last three years and were supposed to launch in April 2020," says Ajay Nagarajan, adding, "Despite the setbacks, we kept working towards our goal, so that whenever the COVID-19 vaccines were available and people could move out freely, we'd be ready to open our doors to them."

Though the Dallas, Fort Worth area is home to many Indians and people of Indian origin, Ajay says, "At The Colony we wanted to ensure there was something for everybody. To that end, our menu is 50% authentic Indian and 50% Texan. You can get a tandoori chicken or a burger, a rib-eye or a fish moilee. Along with our on-site brewery, there's something for everybody here," he says.

"A perfect tandoori chicken has to be 800 grams or less. It was a challenge finding birds of that size in Texas as they were invariably always larger. We had to work with certain gourmet farms to procure them," says Ajay.

"On the flip side, the best Indian spices are actually exported, so we had access to high



quality Indian spices in the US that we sometimes don't get access to in India."

Halal meat, specific butchers, spices and a lot of research went into deciding the dishes and finalising the menu. "Around 18 months," says Ajay, "There's a slight difference in flavours of food ingredients in the US, so a lot of stuff that works in India without much thought, needed to be re-visited out there. Our chefs from India lived in Texas for over a year and developed a menu in a test kitchen where they fine-tuned all the

ingredients."

Ironically, *paneer* proved to be more than a challenge for the team. "In India, the best *paneer* comes from Delhi and we use that for our restaurant in Bengaluru. However, in the US, we couldn't source good quality *paneer*. So instead of compromising on quality, we just don't

have *paneer* on our menu at The Colony," he says matter-of-factly.

The team used Oota in Bengaluru's hyperlocal, regional philosophy for the Texan half of their menu. "We divided Texas into geographical regions, cultural areas and the ingredients available in each area. Then we put together a menu that represented the state of Texas.

Cities like San Antonio and El Paso are close to the Mexican border where you get a lot of Tex Mex and Mexican food. Poole, a shredded pork and hominy soup from this region, is on our menu. Towards the eastern coast abutting Louisiana is Cajun cuisine and a lot of sea food.

At the centre, near Austin and Fredericksburg, there are German and Eastern European influences where settlers moved in over a 100 years ago. So a

there are a lot of sausages, barbecues and a different style of



That first swig Windmills' The Colony caters to both Indian and Texan taste buds, with classics from both sides of the ocean like Texas rib-eye steak (pictured here with a glass of bourbon) and tandoori chicken served with *naan* ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

If you're ever down in Texas, look me up

cooking. Game meat is popular there, so we've included wild boar and venison entrees from there. And at the heartland of Texas, is where you get the steaks. Grapefruit, prickly pear and agave nectar are tropical to Texas and we use them in our salads and salsas."

Apart from juggling spices, ingredients, raw material and chalking out a menu with the best of two worlds, the team at Windmills also had to come to terms with diametrically different work ethics.

Tap that

Easy access to fresher and newer ingredients in the US, meant the team were able to experiment with different hops, malts and processes to come up with new variants of ales, some of which had never been tried in India.

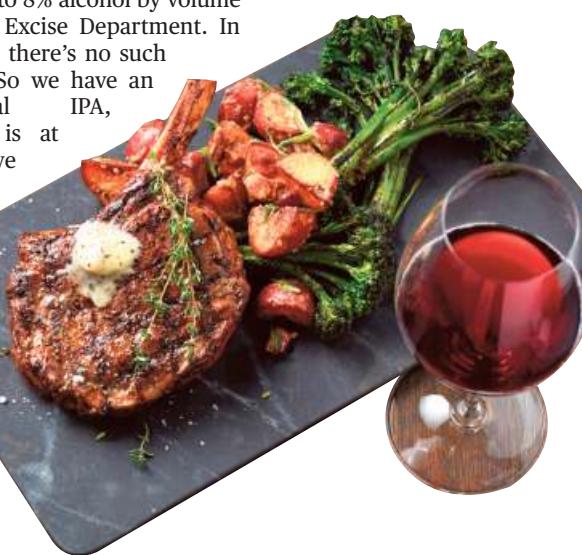
"Our brew master is in the US

and if anything we brewed there works really well, then it is brewed in India too. We were able to keep right on top of the brewing technology with all the ingredients available there," says Ajay, "In India we are restricted to 8% alcohol by volume by the Excise Department. In

the US, there's no such thing. So we have an imperial IPA, which is at 10%, we

have a Russian Imperial Stout that's at 12.5%. So, we have the entire range from a Pilsner at 4% to a Russian Imperial Stout that's 12.5%."

With fresh fruit and purees in the US, such as apricot, peach, passion fruit and more, the team



was able to craft a wider range of beers. "We have a kettle-soured blackberry ale called Blackberry Tart, and our Tropical Saison which has passion fruit, mango and pineapple puree. A lot of people who don't drink beer, but prefer wine or cocktails, are intrigued by these selections," adds Ajay.

"Customers loved a French-Belgian style of beer called Saison, made from a really fantastic strain of yeast that we hit upon there. So now we are brewing it in Bengaluru. The give and take actually helps both sides, it helps us brew better beers in India. In Bengaluru, we have six beers on tap; in Texas we have 14 – including the six from India."

Ear candy

In the pre-pandemic era, Windmills Craftworks in Bengaluru often hosted artistes of international repute such as Zee Avi, the Helge Lien Trio, Blessing Bled Chimanga and others.

In the US, since opening for business in January 2021, artistes such as the Carlos Guedes Trio and the Russell Malone Quartet have enlivened the dining experience at 'The Colony'. Gaby Moreno, Stephan Wrembel and the Hubert Laws Quartet are expected in the following weeks. Halfway across the world, Windmills stays true to its musical inclinations.



Amla Chaas

INGREDIENTS

- 1 amla (remove the seed)
- ½ cup curd
- 1 sprig of fresh curry leaves
- 1 cup water
- Rock salt to taste
- Ice cubes
- ½ teaspoon roasted cumin seed powder
- ½ inch ginger

METHOD

In a blender blend the amla, curd, ginger, curry leaves and rock salt. Add the cup of water and blend well again. Add ice, sprinkle roasted cumin seeds powder and serve.

An everyday buttermilk has salt and roasted cumin powder. Another favourite ingredient is roughly crushed cumin seeds

raw. Instead, the juice extracted after steaming it should go into the buttermilk and then flavoured accordingly. A simple tempering with fresh curry leaves is enough to take the flavour several notches up. Another option is the *amla* (Indian gooseberry) buttermilk. The ideal measurement to make the *amla-chaas* is the juice of one *amla* to every glass of buttermilk."

According to Sangeeta, the easiest flavouring powder that can be made at home and kept to be used readily whenever buttermilk is prepared, is a dry mix of roasted cumin seeds and mint powder. To it, she suggests adding a pinch of roasted asafoetida. She adds, "Serve with freshly crushed mint leaves."

Plain, spiced or flavoured, the ways to enjoy a glass of buttermilk are almost as diverse as India's tastebuds

PRABALIKA M BORAH

Mention the word buttermilk, and fans of this common probiotic drink will begin gushing. Especially during summer, it is hard to find anyone who would refuse a glass.

Buttermilk or *chaas* is the go-to drink in many households, as it is quick to make and easy to fla-

vour (all you need is a sprinkling of readymade *chaat* masala).

An everyday buttermilk has salt and roasted cumin powder. Another favourite ingredient is roughly crushed ajwain seeds.

Chefs suggest adding spices that are used for everyday cooking. Those looking to make buttermilk a post-meal drink, should try flavouring it with a freshly

made paste of mint, coriander leaves and green chillies.

According to home chef Saba Shiraz Khan, who runs Biryani Stories Hyd in Hyderabad, adding one tablespoon of the paste to a litre of buttermilk is enough to flavour it. "This is a favourite drink at our *iftar* get-togethers. When we cater food for parties and buttermilk is requested, we try a range of flavours depending on what kind of food we are serving. Mint-coriander is the most popular, others being jeera and rock salt."

Other readily available ingredients to flavour buttermilk are fresh ginger, and fresh mango ginger.

A hint of pink

Blogger, food and nutrition consultant Sangeeta Khanna suggests making it with a little splash of steamed beetroot juice or with Indian gooseberry.

Sangeeta says, "Beetroot buttermilk looks appealing and is an instant energy booster. A lot of athletes drink beetroot juice. To make the beetroot *chaas*, the beetroot juice should not be used

HORS D'OEUVRES



Immuni-tea

Vestige launched Zeta Premium Spice Tea that claims to come packed with health and taste. Zeta Premium Spice Tea is blended with eight Indian herbs as recommended and outlined by the Ministry of AYUSH. The tea contains ashwagandha, mulethi, tulsi, dalchini, munakka, shunthi, kalmirch, and haldi, herbs that are used to boost immunity and enhance overall well-being in Ayurveda. The tea was launched to cater to the growing demand for immunity-boosting products, triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. Packed with these herbs and spices, the tea comes with the promise of taste.

Mango kombucha

Hydra Kombucha from Hyderabad have come up with a mango jalapeno flavoured kombucha. Rahul, from Hydra Kombucha says they use cold pressed Banganapalle mango juice in the kombucha. Infusing cold pressed mango juice with kombucha increases the shelf life of mango juice and also enhances the flavour. Mango-jalapeno kombucha is seasonal and we make it in small batches."



Gourmet meals to go

The Dinner Box, a gourmet home delivery service that offers meals curated by some of India's most celebrated chefs, is kicking off the brand's summer line-up with chef Hemant Oberoi, who is offering some of his most innovative and crowd-pleasing dishes to customers in Delhi NCR area. Titled 'Journey of Martabaan', the options on the menu are also available at Oberoi's contemporary classic Indian restaurant by the same name in Abu Dhabi. Non-vegetarian diners can begin their meal with Chicken Anticuchos, with panca chili and aji verde, followed by Gandari Kebab, served on sugarcane sticks with coriander chutney. The vegetarian menu features Paneer Anticuchos, with panca chili and aji verde, followed by Candid Batata Vada, spiced potato served on sugarcane sticks. Dhokla Cupcake is followed by Jackfruit Khumb Kebab, with piquante chutney, pav bread, and roasted beet. The service is available for dinner from Wednesday to Friday and lunch and dinner during the weekends (Saturday and Sunday). Diners can pre-order their meals up to 24 hours in advance. More information is available on www.thedinnerbox.in.

The drink made in every Indian kitchen

Plain, spiced or flavoured, the ways to enjoy a glass of buttermilk are almost as diverse as India's tastebuds

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Joe Biden calls for expansion in govt. spending

In address to Congress, he vows to defend human rights abroad, says America's return to the world stage is not temporary

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

In his first joint address to Congress, U.S. President Joe Biden called for a massive expansion in government spending and investment in American society, unveiling a \$1.8-trillion plan that included the provision of universal pre-school, free community college and elderly care under the American Families Plan.

Mr. Biden's speech highlighted his administration's achievements with mass vaccination for COVID-19 and the impact of a \$1.9-trillion relief package passed earlier this year.

The focus of the speech was workers and their families, with Mr. Biden also pitching his \$2.3 trillion in-

frasstructure plan (the American Jobs Plan).

Owing to COVID-19 curbs, the House Chamber on Capitol Hill was sparsely populated with lawmakers from both sides of the aisle. Other attendees included Chief Justice John Roberts and General Mike Milley, the Joint Chiefs of Staff. As has been the practice since the Cold War, there was no 'designated survivor', as several members of Mr. Biden's Cabinet viewed the speech remotely.

The evening also witnessed another first, with two women sitting behind the President – Vice-President Kamala Harris and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. "Madam Speaker, Madam Vice President – [applause] – no President has ever said



Big plans: Joe Biden addressing a joint session of Congress as Kamala Harris and Nancy Pelosi look on. ■ REUTERS

those words from this podium. No President has ever said those words, and it's about time," Mr. Biden said.

The President outlined his administration's foreign policy, especially with regard to China, Russia and Afghanistan. Mr. Biden said he would defend human rights abroad, and assured allies that Amer-

sion in social spending seen in decades. Mr. Biden plans to pay for this with increased taxes, such as on corporations, and a near doubling of capital gains taxes on those earning more than \$1 million each year.

Early on in Wednesday's speech, Mr. Biden spoke of his administration's achievement with vaccination, with the U.S. having administered 220 million shots rather than the original target of 100 million shots in 100 days.

He described the impact of the COVID-19 relief package passed by Congress with anecdotes of a single mother avoiding eviction and a grandmother being able to take her grandchild to the eye-doctor. Mr. Biden called his jobs plan a "once in a gen-

eration investment in America itself" and "a blue-collar blueprint to build America".

On U.S. foreign relations, Mr. Biden said world leaders told him, "We see America is back. But for how long?" He linked America's competition abroad – such as with China – with investing at home.

He talked about his interactions with Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mr. Xi wanting China to lead the world. "He [Mr. Xi] is deadly earnest about becoming the most significant, consequential nation in the world. He and others – autocrats – think that democracy can't compete in the 21st century with autocracies because it takes too long to get consensus," said Mr. Biden.

The KNU, which holds territory along the border with Thailand, on Tuesday attacked and razed an army post, prompting the military to respond with fresh air strikes.

The rise in clashes between the military and ethnic rebels has prompted some observers, including the United Nations, to warn that the country's crisis could spiral into a broader conflict. At least 756 civilians have been killed and more than 4,500 arrested in the military's crackdown on protests, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAP), a local monitoring group.

China launches key module for its permanent space station

'Tianhe' blasts into space from the Wenchang centre

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China on Thursday launched the main module of its first permanent space station that will host astronauts for the long term, in the latest success for a programme that has realised a number of its growing ambitions in recent years.

The Tianhe, or the "Heavily Harmony" module, blasted into space atop a Long March 5B rocket from the Wenchang Launch Center on the southern island province of Hainan.

The launch kicks off the first of 11 missions necessary to complete, supply and



People watching the launch of the Tianhe module on Thursday. ■ AFP

crew the station by the end of next year.

China's space programme also recently brought back the first new lunar samples in more than 40 years and it also expects to land a probe and rover on the surface of

Mars later next month.

Minutes after the launch, the fairing opened to expose the Tianhe atop the core stage of the rocket, with the characters for "China Manned Space" emblazoned on its exterior. Soon after, it separated from the rocket, which will orbit for about a week before falling to Earth, and minutes after that, opened its solar arrays to provide a steady energy source.

A message of congratulations from state leader and head of the ruling Communist Party Xi Jinping was also read to staff at the Wenchang Launch Center.

Sri Lanka and China vowed to enhance pragmatic

'Sri Lanka has prioritised ties with China'

The two countries vowed to enhance cooperation in all sectors, including defence

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka has prioritised developing relations with China and "firmly supports" China's position on issues concerning its core interests, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa told Chinese State Councilor and Minister of National Defence Wei Fenghe, according to Chinese state media.

The Sri Lankan President said his country "has been pursuing an independent foreign policy and will never bend to pressure from major powers outside the region as well as never forge an alliance with any country", Xinhua news agency reported on Wednesday.

Sri Lanka and China vowed to enhance pragmatic cooperation in all sectors, "including the military". While specifics of the enhanced military ties are yet to emerge, senior Sri Lankan Defence officials and the visiting Chinese delegation signed a "Military Assistance Protocol", Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence said in a statement issued after the top Chinese official's departure on Thursday morning.

Thanking China for providing "long-term and precious" support to Sri Lanka, President Rajapaksa said he hoped to learn from the Communist Party of China's governance experience on poverty alleviation and rural revitalisation, Xinhua said in its report.

General Wei, in his talks



Gotabaya Rajapaksa, left, with Wei Fenghe.

with the Sri Lankan leadership, seems to have reiterated his message in Dhaka on Tuesday slamming "powers from outside the region" for forging military alliances in South Asia. Chinese state media quoted General Wei as telling the Sri Lankan leadership, "Certain major countries are keen to form cliques and factions and seek regional hegemony,

which goes against people's shared aspirations and severely harms the interests of the regional countries. China appreciates Sri Lanka's independent and non-aligned policy and will make joint efforts with Sri Lanka to strengthen coordination and safeguard regional peace and tranquillity."

His apparent attack on the India-U.S.-Australia-Japan Quad grouping echoed reservations voiced by Sri Lanka earlier. In October last year, Sri Lanka's Foreign Secretary Admiral Jayanath Colombage had said, "We are observing the rise of Quad as an exclusive military alliance ... If Quad is aiming at economic revival, there are no issues."

Disbanding, says Navalny's network

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Alexei Navalny's political network said on Thursday it is disbanding, as the jailed Kremlin critic appeared in court for the first time since ending his hunger strike.

The hearing is part of an appeal by Mr. Navalny against a defamation sentence for insulting a World War II veteran. The judge rejected the appeal, upholding a fine of 850,000 rubles (\$1,440).

Another court held a hearing on Thursday into a request from prosecutors that Mr. Navalny's regional network and his Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK) be recognised as extremist.

4 killed, one wounded in Germany clinic attack

Police arrest employee on suspicion, order news blackout



A view of the Oberlin Clinic in Potsdam. ■ REUTERS

strong suspicion" of carrying out the assault, police said. The motivation for the attack is not known, they added.

Those killed are believed

to be patients at the clinic, local newspaper *Potsdamer Neueste Nachrichten* reported.

Brandenburg state police were called to the Oberlin Clinic at around 9 p.m. local time on Wednesday, according to reports, with the victims later found in their rooms. Police have also imposed a news blackout.

The clinic specialises in helping those with disabilities and offers live-in care. The site includes housing, schools, and workshops.

U.S., EU nations reject Syria poll in advance

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
UNITED NATIONS, U.S.

Western members of the UN Security Council, led by the U.S., France and Britain, rejected the outcome of Syria's May 26 presidential election in advance.

"The failure to enact a new constitution is proof positive that the so-called election on May 26 will be a sham," said U.S. ambassador to the UN, Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

"France will not recognise any validity to the elections planned by the regime at the end of May," said the French ambassador to the UN, Nicolas de Riviere.

"Elections that take place in the absence of a safe and neutral environment... demonstrate disregard for the Syrian people," said British diplomat Sonia Farrey.

Estonia and other members of the European Union believe a Syrian election must be held under the aegis of the UN and include the opposition and its diaspora, said Estonian ambassador Sven Jurgenson.

After decades, the 'last Jew' in Afghanistan mulls exit

Simentov dreads the Taliban's return

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

For decades, Zebulon Simentov refused to leave Afghanistan, surviving a Soviet invasion, deadly civil war, a brutal rule by the Taliban and a U.S.-led occupation of his homeland. But for Afghanistan's last Jew, the prospect of the Taliban's return has him preparing to say goodbye.

"They [the Taliban] call me an infidel," Mr. Simentov told AFP at Kabul's only synagogue. "I'm the last, the only Jew in Afghanistan... It could get worse for me here. I have decided to leave for Israel if the Taliban returns."

That appears likely given the deal struck by Washington to withdraw all U.S. forces by later this year, and the ongoing peace talks between the insurgents and the Afghan government.

Born in the 1950s in the western city of Herat, Mr. Simentov moved to Kabul during the Soviet invasion in the early 1980s for the capital's then relative stability. Jews lived in Afghanistan for more than 2,500 years,

thousands once residing in Herat. But they steadily left the country since the 19th century. Over the decades, all of Simentov's relatives left, including his wife and two daughters.

Mr. Simentov fondly remembers the years before the Soviet war as the best time for Afghanistan. But events since have made him bitter – particularly the Taliban rule from 1996 to 2001, when the Islamists tried to convert him. "This disgraceful Taliban regime put me in prison four times," he said.

He says when the Taliban were ousted in 2001, he believed that Afghanistan would prosper. "I thought the Europeans and Americans would fix this country... but that didn't happen."

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Commissionerate of Agriculture,
Seshadri Road, Bengaluru – 560001

No.: DDA(FM&MI)/AGR/SAOM&TARPAL/RIP/2021-22 Date: 28.04.2021

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTIFICATION

Department of Agriculture invites Request for Proposals (RFP) from OEM / Manufacturers / Importers / MoU Holders for supply of Small Automated Oil Machines (SAOM) to farmers under Departmental subsidy Programmes and CHSC centers and from OTM / Manufacturers / MoU Holders for supply of 250 GSM Black Colour HDPE Tarpaulins Conforming to IS:7903/2017 (Type-II) of Size 8x6 Mts to farmers under Departmental subsidy Programmes for the year 2021-22. The interested OEM / OTM / Manufacturers / MoU Holders / Importers who are interested to participate in this RFP can submit their proposals through e-Procurement platform (<https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>).

The interested OEM / OTM / Manufacturers / MoU Holders / Importers can download the tender documents through e-Procurement ([website https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in](https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in)) at free of cost by paying applicable e-Procurement processing fees in e-Procurement. The proposals can be submitted for RFP

from 29.04.2021 to 28.06.2021 by payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) as fixed by the Department in e-Procurement portal. The last date for submission of proposals in e-Procurement platform is 28.06.2021 at 4:30 p.m.

The Hard copies (Physical Deposition) of the Technical and Financial Bid along with other relevant documents uploaded in the e-Procurement portal will be received at the Office of the Deputy Director of Agriculture (Farm Mechanization & Micro irrigation), Department of Agriculture, Seshadri Road, Bengaluru-560001 till 5:00 p.m. on or before Dt: 29.06.2021.

The Technical Bids will be opened on 30.06.2021 at 11:00 a.m. at Samruddi VC Hall, Commissionerate of Agriculture, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru-560001.

The interested OEM / OTM / Manufacturers / MoU Holders / Importers have to register at the Centre for e-Governance, 1st Floor, M.S. Building, Bengaluru-560001 and obtain the DSC key or e-token (Helpdesk: 9880177633 / 080-22485867 / 080-22485927).

NOTE: e-Procurement processing fee is non-refundable and Tender documents are non transferable.

Sd/-, Director of Agriculture and Tender Inviting Authority

DIPR/DDU/LC/314/2021-22

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE

Wear Mask

Follow Physical Distancing

Maintain Hand Hygiene

PERIYAR UNIVERSITY

Reaccredited with "A" Grade by NAAC

PERIYAR PALKALAI NAGAR, SALEM- 636 011

APPOINTMENT OF VICE- CHANCELLOR- PERIYAR UNIVERSITY, SALEM SEARCH COMMITTEE NOTIFICATION

The Government of Tamil Nadu Vide G.O. (D) No.41, Higher Education (K1) Department, dated: 20.02.2021 have constituted the Search Committee to recommend a panel of three persons to the Chancellor for appointment of Vice-Chancellor, Periyar University.

The Search Committee invites applications for the post of Vice-Chancellor, Periyar University, Salem, from distinguished academicians with highest level of competence, integrity, moral and institutional commitment and possessing the educational qualifications and work experience as notified by the Government of Tamil Nadu in their G.O.(Ms).No. 187, Higher Education (K-2) Department, dated 14th July 2017, copy of which is available in the Periyar University Website.

www.periyaruniversity.ac.in

The Vice-Chancellor shall hold the office for a period of three years, provided that the person appointed as Vice-Chancellor shall retire from office if, during the term of office, he/she attains the age of 70 years.

Interested candidates possessing the qualifications and experience may download the prescribed application from Periyar University Website from the above web address. The filled in applications may be sent (only in the prescribed form) both by e-mail and by post duly superscribing the Envelope "Application for the post of Vice-Chancellor, Periyar University" so as to reach the following address on or before 05.00 p.m. of 31.05.2021.

Nodal Officer, Periyar University VC Search Committee,

Syndicate Room,

ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY STUDY CENTRE

(Opposite to Rajarathinam Stadium),

No.19, Rukmani Lakshmi Path Road, Egmore, Chennai - 600 008.

email:pvcsearchcommittee@gmail.com

Applications received after the closing date will not be entertained on any account

DIPR / 404 /DISPLAY/2021

CM YK

MARKET WATCH

	29-04-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	49,766	0.06
US Dollar	74.07	0.38
Gold	46472	-0.09
Brent oil	68.1	-0.60

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE	
Adani Ports	746.75	0.50	
Asian Paints	2613.45	-1.10	
Axis Bank	719.40	11.25	
Bajaj Auto	3836.45	-53.30	
Bajaj Finserv	11176.55	687.25	
Bajaj Finance	5484.85	202.95	
Bharti Airtel	540.85	-3.45	
BPCL	419.55	2.05	
Britannia Ind	3468.90	-9.85	
Cipla	906.50	-3.70	
Coal India	128.05	-0.45	
Divis Lab	3910.85	28.25	
Dixit Reddys Lab	5102.30	57.85	
Eicher Motors	2462.90	-58.30	
Grasim Ind	1350.70	9.55	
HCL Tech	909.55	-14.25	
HDPC	2558.85	-38.15	
HDPC Life	674.65	2.05	
Hero MotoCorp	2860.10	-66.15	
Hindustan	372.15	9.55	
Hind Unilever	2407.60	1.05	
ICICI Bank	621.45	0.10	
IndusInd Bank	939.45	12.55	
Infosys	1356.35	0.35	
Indian Oil Corp	88.90	-0.50	
ITC	204.30	-1.20	
JSW Steel	726.50	63.85	
Kotak Bank	1805.00	-6.45	
L&T	1358.65	-17.25	
M&M	774.60	-7.50	
Maruti Suzuki	6565.65	-8.15	
Nestle India Ltd.	16502.55	-131.25	
NTPC	103.05	-0.55	
ONGC	104.05	0.15	
PowerGrid Corp	220.15	-0.75	
Reliance Ind	2024.05	26.75	
SBI Life	928.20	-2.20	
State Bank	359.40	-4.00	
Shree Cement	28444.35	-243.20	
Sun Pharma	644.50	1.10	
Tata Consumer	Products Ltd.	671.85	-5.30
Tata Motors	301.90	-4.00	
Tata Steel	1031.35	59.95	
TCS	3115.25	-8.85	
Tech Mahindra	976.90	-0.50	
Titan	1506.80	-2.05	
UltraTech Cement	6382.45	21.65	
UPL	615.80	7.75	
Wipro	489.85	0.55	

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 29		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.84	74.16
Euro	89.54	89.93
British Pound	102.97	103.43
Japanese Yen (100)	67.80	68.12
Chinese Yuan	11.41	11.47
Swiss Franc	81.20	81.59
Singapore Dollar	55.71	55.96
Canadian Dollar	60.02	60.29
Malaysian Ringgit	17.99	18.07

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF

Honda Motorcycle to suspend operations

GURUGRAM
Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India Pvt. Ltd. (HMSI) on Thursday announced a 15-day halt of production operations across all its four plants from May 1 in view of the surge in COVID-19 cases and multiple lockdowns across various cities. It will use the time for maintenance work.

IOB offers retail loans on digital platform

CHENNAI
Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) said it will offer retail loans on its digital platform. Customers can avail of home, personal and clean loans via the bank's website, Net banking and mobile-banking application while non-customers can apply only through the bank's website, it said.

U.S. growth accelerates 6.4% in first quarter on stimulus boost

Fresh rounds of COVID relief money and easing anxiety boost domestic demand

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

U.S. economic growth accelerated in the first quarter, fuelled by massive government aid to households and businesses, charting the course for what is expected to be the strongest annual performance since 1984.

Gross domestic product increased at a 6.4% annualised rate last quarter, the Commerce Department said on Thursday. That was the second-fastest pace since the third quarter of 2003 and followed a 4.3% rate in the fourth quarter of 2020.

The U.S. economy is rebounding more quickly com-



Miles to go: Still, the U.S. economy remains a couple of years away from full recovery from the pandemic recession. ■ AFP

pared to its global rivals, thanks to two additional rounds of COVID-19 relief money as well as easing anxiety over the pandemic, which has boosted domestic

demand and allowed services businesses like restaurants and bars to reopen.

Still, the economy remains at least a couple of years away from fully reco-

vering from the pandemic recession, which started in February 2020.

Former President Donald Trump's government provided almost \$3 trillion in relief money early in the pandemic, leading to record GDP growth in the third quarter.

That was followed by nearly \$900 billion in additional stimulus in late December. President Joe Biden's administration offered another \$1.9 trillion rescue package in March, which sent one-time \$1,400 cheques to qualified households and extended a \$300 unemployment subsidy through early September.

Lockdowns have hit activity badly in April'

SBI sees ₹1.86 lakh cr. loss to economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



The spate of local lockdowns and restrictions have dented economic activity severely in April, SBI said in a report on Thursday. The bank's research team now pegs the loss to the economy at ₹1.86 lakh crore, higher than the ₹1.5 lakh crore it had estimated last week.

"The SBI business activity index, which has been declining in April '21 has now dipped to a new low of 75.7, the level it had attained in August 2020 and is now a clear 24.3% down from the pre-pandemic level," the researchers said in the report.

All the indicators, except for labour participation and electricity consumption,

have declined significantly during April," said SBI group chief economic adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh, who authored the report.

Maharashtra, M.P., Karnataka and Rajasthan accounted for 75% of the loss.

Maharashtra's loss stood at 43%, said Mr. Ghosh.

'COVID curbs may hurt gold sales'

Current crisis beyond just economics and logistics: WGC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The demand for gold in India could flatten in the April-June quarter on account of COVID-19-related lockdowns, the World Gold Council (WGC) said.

"As lockdowns are reimposed in various regions of the country in response to rising COVID-19 cases, consumer confidence has dipped," said Somasundaram P.R., MD, India, WGC.

"This is likely to impact wedding demand in Q2

Indian pharma frets as China airline uncertainty hits supply

Pharmexcil appeals to Indian envoy to help avoid shortages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD



India's pharmaceuticals industry is concerned that the disruption to Chinese carrier Sichuan Airlines' cargo services to the country may seriously hit the imports of key raw materials and has appealed to the Indian envoy to help find a solution.

"The decision of Chinese state-owned Sichuan Airlines suspending its cargo services to India for 15 days is worrisome," Pharmexcil director general Ravi Udaya Bhaskar said, urging the Indian embassy in Beijing to intervene. Notwith-

standing reports that the airline was mulling a new plan to resume its cargo flights to the region, an industry official said the carrier's services to India remained suspended for a few days now. Sichuan operated to 6 Indian cities and other industries too depend on its services.

Laurus Labs net surges on higher sales

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Laurus Labs has reported a consolidated net profit of ₹297 crore for the quarter ended March on the back of good show in key segments. The drugmaker had posted a net profit of ₹10.15 crore in the same period last fiscal. Revenue from operations increased to ₹1,412 crore (₹839.14 crore). The company has declared an interim dividend of 80 paise per share.

Hindustan Unilever Q4 net rises 13% on volume growth

Home care segment grows 15%, foods category climbs 36%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI



FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd. (HUL) on Thursday reported a 13% increase in consolidated net profit to ₹2,190 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, riding on strong volume growth across categories.

Consolidated total income rose marginally to ₹12,542 crore, the company said in a regulatory filing.

HUL said it witnessed an "underlying volume growth of 16%" during the quarter. The home care category experienced growth of 15%, driven by a robust recovery in fabric wash.

The foods and refresh-

ments and Boost," HUL said.

Beauty and personal care grew 20% with skin cleansing, hair care and oral care achieving high double-digit growth. Performance by the skin cleansing segment was led by 'Lifebuoy' and the premium segment, it added.

On rising commodity prices, the consumer goods company said, "a calibrated approach towards price increase has helped protect our business model even as vegetable oils continue to inflate at record levels."

For FY21, consolidated net profit grew 18% to ₹7,999 crore. Consolidated total income increased to Rs. 47,438 crore, from ₹40,415 crore.

Bajaj Auto Q4 net rises 2%, firm flags input costs

Board names Niraj Bajaj chairman



crore and ₹234 crore as dividend income respectively," it said, adding there was no dividend income in FY21.

The board recommended a dividend of ₹40 per share.

It appointed Niraj Bajaj as chairman effective May 1. Non-executive chairman Rahul Bajaj has been named chairman emeritus.

Equitas SFB Q4 net profit almost trebles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Equitas Small Finance Bank Ltd. (ESFBL) reported net profit for the quarter ended March has almost trebled to ₹113 crore.

Net interest income rose to ₹449 crore from ₹424 crore in the year-earlier period. Net interest margin stood at 7.57%, it said. The percentage of net NPAs to net advances fell to 1.58% from 1.67%. Advances rose 17% to ₹1,7925 crore.

SEBI allows firms 45 days more to file Q4 results

Regulator eases norms on second wave

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

SEBI on Thursday gave 45 days more for companies to file their fourth-quarter results as well as an additional one-month time to submit their annual results as the regulator eased compliance requirements amid the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

The move comes after the regulator received representations from listed entities,

industry associations and market participants requesting extension of timelines for various filings and relaxation from certain compliance obligations due to the COVID second wave and restrictions imposed by various State governments.

With respect to quarterly financial results, companies have been given 45 days till June 30 to file their March quarter results, SEBI said in a circular.

Office of the Managing Director Himachal Pradesh Kaushal Vikas Nigam, Shimla

Invitation for Bids No.:002/2021-22

Date: 29/04/2021

Loan/Grant No. and Title: Loan No.: 3573-IND/ Himachal Pradesh Skill Development Project.

Deadline for submission of bids: 29/05/2021upto 12:30 (IST)

'Shawstopper' Prithvi scorches Knight Riders in blazing innings

Opener smashes 82 off 41 balls, including six successive fours in chase's first over, to power Capitals to seven-wicket win with 3.3 overs to spare

IPL 2021

WRIDDHAAYAN BHATTACHARYYA

Prithvi Shaw's 41-ball 82 (11x4, 3x6) guided Delhi Capitals to a seven-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday.

The fastest fifty of the season (18 balls) so far, packed with classical cricketing shots, was straight out of a coaching manual.

Electing to bowl, DC had restricted KKR to 154 for six. During the chase, Shaw hit top gear in the first over, smashing 24 runs off Shuvam Mavi after a first-ball wide. Shaw unlocked his catalogue – the loft over the bowler's head, the flick over mid-wicket, the exquisite cover drive – as he struck six successive fours.

Shikhar Dhawan (46 off 47) rotated the strike and encouraged the youngster to attack the bowlers.

KKR may have erred by not bowling Pat Cummins (three for 24) up front. The Australian maintained an economy of six while his colleagues went for plenty.



The orchestrators: Prithvi Shaw spearheaded Capitals' chase after Lalit Yadav's twin strike had helped Pant's men restrict Knight Riders. ■ SPORTSPICS/IPL



SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Nitish Rana st. Pant b Axar 15 (72b, 1x4, 1x6), Shubman Gill c Smith b Avesh 43 (38b, 3x4, 1x6), Rahul Tripathi c Lalit b Stoines 19 (7b, 2x4), Eoin Morgan c Smith b Lalit 0 (2b), Sunil Narine b Lalit 0 (1b), Andre Russell (not out) 45 (27b, 2x4, 4x6), Dinesh Karthik lbw b Axar 14 (10b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-6, w-1); Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-25 (Rana, 3.4 overs), 2-69 (Tripathi, 9.3), 3-74 (Morgan, 10.2), 4-75 (Narine, 10.4), 5-82 (Gill, 12.6), 6-109 (Karthik, 16.2).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Ishant 4-0-34-0, Rabada 4-0-31-0, Axar 4-0-32-0, Avesh 4-0-31-1, Lalit 3-0-13-2, Stoines 1-0-7-1.

DELHI CAPITALS

Prithvi Shaw c Rana b Cummins 82 (41b, 11x4, 3x6), Shikhar Dhawan lbw b Cummins 46 (47b, 4x4, 1x6), Rishabh Pant c Mavi b Cummins 16 (8b, 2x4, 1x6), Marcus Stoines (not out) 6 (3b, 1x4), Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 0

(1b); Extras (b-1, w-4, nb-1): 6; Total (for three wkts. in 16.3 overs): 156.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-132 (Dhawan, 13.5), 2-146 (Shaw, 15.2), 3-150 (Pant, 15.5).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Mavi 1-0-25-0, Varun 4-0-34-0, Prasidh 3.3-0-36-0, Narine 4-0-36-0, Cummins 4-0-24-3.

Toss: DC; MoM: Shaw;

Capitals won by seven wickets with 21 balls to spare.

Innings scan

KKR	DC
44	Dots
10	Fours
7	Sixes
45/1	PP
7.70	RR

Next assignment

DC: May 2 vs. PBKS, Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

KKR: May 3 vs. RCB, Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

Bowlers, de Kock get Mumbai Indians back on track

Bumrah, Boult, Chahar limit RR; opener guides chase, helps side bounce back after two losses

AMOL KARHADKAR

Quinton de Kock made his first sizeable contribution with the bat and Krunal Pandya made the most of a promotion up the order to help Mumbai Indians overhaul a target of 172 set by Rajasthan Royals in Delhi on Thursday.

The duo ensured that superlative work of the pace combination of Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult didn't go in vain, with MI completing the chase with nine balls to spare.

RR's total, although a little short of par, was a slightly dicey target. But de Kock (70 n.o., 50b, 6x4, 2x6), having tallied just 47 runs in four previous outings, ensured he took his time before waging an assault on RR's left-arm pace trio.

With Rohit Sharma struggling to time the ball sweetly at the Kotla, it didn't come as a surprise that the MI captain offered catching practice to Chetan Sakariya at mid-on in Chris Morris' first over.

But de Kock, who had gone after Mustafizur Rahman earlier, took charge, finding gaps at will through the middle overs. Once Suryakumar Yadav flicked Morris straight to mid-wicket in the 10th over, Krunal was promoted, with Ishan Kishan having made way for Nathan Coulter-Nile's pace.

The left-handers ensured that the asking-rate never rose to alarming proportions



Gone, going strong: Samson is cleaned up by Boult while de Kock times the ball to perfection. ■ SPORTSPICS/IPL

during their 63-run partnership, Krunal making mince-meat of Rahul Tewatia's spin. With de Kock at his seamless best, Krunal tried to finish the game in a hurry.

Even though he perished in the 17th over, with 26 runs remaining, Kieron Pollard completed the formalities without any fuss.

It was the effort of MI's experienced pace duo, combined with young leggie Rahul Chahar, earlier in the afternoon that kept RR in check. Such was the accuracy

of Bumrah and Boult that RR could neither get off the blocks in a hurry nor end with a flurry. The pair conceded just 20 runs in the first four overs and a meagre 19 between overs 17 and 19, with Boult dismantling Sanju Samson's woodwork with a perfect yorker.

In between, despite Jos Buttler and Yashasvi Jaiswal cutting loose after surviving the initial burst, Chahar got rid of both the openers before the MI support bowlers stifled Shivam Dube.

Next assignment

MI: May 1 vs. CSK, Delhi, 7.30 p.m.

RR: May 2 vs. SRH, Delhi, 3.30 p.m.

Innings scan

RR	MI
37	Dots
14	Fours
7	Sixes
47/0	PP
8.55	RR

IN BRIEF



Rajasthan Royals will contribute ₹7.5 crore towards COVID-19 relief

KOZHIKODE
Rajasthan Royals will contribute ₹7.5 crore towards COVID-19 relief. According to a statement from Royals on Thursday, the players and the management will raise the fund; they have been working with Royal Rajasthan Foundation, the IPL franchise's philanthropic arm, and the British Asian Trust (BAT).

Tendulkar donates ₹1 crore to Mission Oxygen

MUMBAI
Sachin Tendulkar has joined the donation drive by pledging ₹1 crore to Mission Oxygen, an NGO providing oxygen concentrators to patients. "I hope that their effort soon reaches out to many more hospitals across India," Tendulkar tweeted.

Richardson and Zampa land in Australia

MELBOURNE
RCB players Kane Richardson and Adam Zampa touched down in Melbourne on Thursday after cutting short their IPL sojourns,

Cricket Australia announced. RCB later released a statement clarifying Zampa's earlier comments about the IPL bio-bubble being "vulnerable". In the release, Zampa said, "My comments about the vulnerability of the IPL bubble had nothing to do with feeling like the virus would enter the bubble at any stage. The BCCI and RCB had many precautions to make us feel safe."

CM YK

Pakistan dominates day one

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE HARARE

Pakistan dominated the opening day of the first Test against Zimbabwe on the back of some destructive pace bowling by Hasan Ali and Shaheen Shah Afridi in Harare on Thursday.

Hasan finished with 4/53 while Afridi grabbed 4/43 as Zimbabwe – which won the toss and batted – was dismissed for a paltry 176 on a slow pitch at Harare Sports Club.

Zimbabwe was hit hard on the eve of the match when regular skipper Sean Williams was ruled out with a hand injury while another experienced batsman Craig Ervine also failed to recover from a calf injury.

The scores: Zimbabwe 176 in 59.1 overs (Roy Kala 48, Hasan Ali 4/53, Shaheen Afridi 4/43) vs Pakistan 103/0 in 30 overs (Abid Ali 56 batting, Imran Butt 43 batting). Toss: Zimbabwe.

Manchester City decks PSG with a 1-2

De Bruyne, Mahrez fashion stirring comeback after Marquinhos' opener for host

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

REUTERS PARIS

Manchester City took a big step towards its first Champions League final as goals by Kevin De Bruyne and Riyad Mahrez earned it a 2-1 comeback win at Paris Saint-Germain in the semifinal first leg on Wednesday.

PSG went ahead courtesy of a Marquinhos header in the first half, but Mauricio Pochettino's side lost control after the break with De Bruyne and Mahrez finding the back of the net in the space of eight minutes to secure City's 18th consecutive away win in all competitions.

Last year's runner-up PSG then found itself with a higher mountain to climb as midfielder Idrissa Gueye picked up a straight red card in the 77th minute for a reckless challenge on Ilkay Gundogan.

Marquinhos put the hosts in front when he headed home Angel Di Maria's

By the numbers

For the first time, Mbappe completed 90 minutes in a Champions League match without attempting a single shot.
PSG had just one shot in the second period, the fewest it has had in a single half since April 2016, also against Manchester City.
Gueye is the first player to score twice in a single campaign since Alvaro Arbeloa for Real Madrid in 2012-13.
Marquinhos is the only player to score in consecutive seasons after Ronaldo (2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14) and Griezmann (2015-16, 2016-17).
Mahrez has been involved in 20 goals in just 26 starts in the Champions League (8 goals, 12 assists).

whipped corner in the 15th minute. The visitors equalised after 64 minutes when De Bruyne, from a corner by Oleksandr Zinchenko, sent in

a cross and Navas failed to react as it curled into the far corner of the net. Navas was beaten again seven minutes later when Mahrez's free kick

flew through the PSG wall. The result (semifinal, first leg): PSG 1 (Marquinhos 15) lost to Manchester City 2 (De Bruyne 64, Mahrez 71).

Granada rallies to stun Barca

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE BARCELONA

Barcelona spurned the chance to go top of the table on Thursday as a shock 2-1 defeat by Granada added another twist to LaLiga's most unpredictable title race in years.

Barca could have taken control at the top by moving a point ahead of Atletico Madrid with a win, but Granada came from behind to snatch a stunning victory at Camp Nou, in what will be a huge boost to the other title contenders.

Lionel Messi scored his 33rd goal of the season to put Barcelona in front. However, Granada fought back as Darwin Machis equalised and Jorge Molina's header completed a remarkable turnaround.

Barcelona 1 (Messi 23) lost to Granada 2 (Machis 63, Molina 79).

TV PICKS

Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh: 2nd Test: Sony Six (SD & HD), 10 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Muguruza pulls out of Madrid Open

MADRID Garbine Muguruza pulled out of the Madrid Open on Thursday after failing to recover from a leg injury. "This is the worst news and the most painful decision any player can make," Muguruza said. "But the problem has come back and the last scan confirmed that I'm not 100% recovered to be able to compete and the medical recommendation is to rest."

Jeevan and Balaji in quarterfinals

OSTRAVA (CZECH REPUBLIC) Sri Ram Balaji and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan beat the Canadians Peter Polansky and Brayden Schnur 6-3, 6-3 to reach the doubles quarterfinals of the €4,480 Challenger tennis tournament here.



Real defender Carvajal injured

MADRID Real Madrid defender Dani Carvajal has injured a muscle in his right leg, making him a doubt to play at Chelsea in the Champions League semifinals. Madrid did not add on Thursday how long its first-choice right back would be out. But the Spanish club is set to visit Stamford Bridge on Wednesday needing a win to advance to the final. AP

Marsch to replace Nagelsmann at Leipzig

BERLIN RB Leipzig have named Jesse Marsch as coach from next season, replacing Julian Nagelsmann who is joining Bayern Munich, after the American agreed a two-year deal, the club said on Thursday. The 47-year-old Marsch, who was an assistant coach at Leipzig in 2018/19, will join from sister club RB Salzburg, where he won the Austrian league and Cup double last season. REUTERS

Harry Kane hungry for success

LONDON Harry Kane has reiterated his desire to win trophies following a "disappointing season" for Tottenham even as he continues to plunder goals for the club. "It has been a disappointing season if I am totally honest. We have had so many opportunities and we haven't quite got over the line for one reason or another. I want to be winning the biggest prizes there is to offer and we are not quite doing that," he told Sky Sports. AFP

Weightlifting referee Narendra passes away

KOLKATA: International referee (Category 1) Narendra Sharma, 45, a vice-president of the Uttar Pradesh Weightlifting Association and former chief coach of the National team, passed away on Thursday after getting infected by the COVID-19 virus. The Indian Weightlifting Federation (IWLF) president B.P. Bahiya and secretary Sahdev Yadav condoled Sharma's demise.

Vaccination camp at Eden Gardens

KOLKATA: The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and AMRI Hospitals Ltd. will jointly organise a vaccination camp at the Eden Gardens here on Friday. The camp will be held from 11.30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Initially, committee members of the CAB, staff and groundsmen will be vaccinated ahead of the Indian Premier League matches next month.

Sable tests positive for COVID

The steeplechaser's Tokyo preparations suffer a setback

ATHLETICS

STAN RAYAN
KOCHI

Avinash Sable's preparations for the Tokyo Olympics suffered a setback with the steeplechaser testing positive for COVID-19 at the national camp in Bengaluru.

"He tested positive four days ago, but he has no symptoms. He is under quarantine," said a fellow-national camper.

Sable, who has already qualified for the Olympics, had a record-breaking year in 2019 when he entered the final of the Doha World Championships – that also brought him Sportstar's Athlete of the Year award that year.

But the 14-day quarantine, with less than three months to go for the Olym-



Avinash Sable. ■ FILE PHOTO

pics, could hurt his preparations for Tokyo.

Asian Games 1500m champion Jinson Johnson and Olympic-bound race walker Priyanka Goswami

along with three other athletes and race walking coach Alexander Artsybashev tested positive for the virus at the Bengaluru national camp a couple of weeks ago.

The safety question

And that brings one to the big question: Are our national camps safe for athletes?

"The national camps are absolutely the safest place, the athletes are in the green zone, these guys may have tried something, may have gone out, or jumped over the wall like some of them had done earlier, otherwise they would not have got it," Adil Sumariwalla, the president of the Athletics Federation of India, told *The Hindu* on Thursday evening.

"The bubble is so strict, even within the camp there is a green zone and a red zone."

"In fact, the national camps are much safer than staying at home."

He explained that the CO-VID scene in athletics was a lot better than in other sports.

"There are not many cases in athletics. May be in boxing or something, not in athletics. In athletics, there are two – Priyanka and Avinash Sable – who are positive in the Bengaluru national camp as far as the Olympic team goes."

"That is from among 17 people who have qualified for Tokyo. We had managed to do everything possible, we have tried very hard, followed all the protocol, we don't know how it happened."

Every single federation has been completely overtaken by COVID, we have not."

wicket in Test cricket.

His partnership of 209 with Thirimanne is the highest for the first wicket in Tests between the two countries bettering the 144-run stand between Marvan Atapattu and Sanath Jayasuriya in 2001.

Changes

Bangladesh left out Ebadot Hossain, handing teenage left-arm seamer Shariful his first Test cap.

Sri Lanka made two changes bringing in left-arm spinner Praveen Jaywickrama and off-spinner Ramesh Mendis in place of Wanindu Hasaranga and Lahiru Kumara.

The scores: Sri Lanka 291/1 in 90 overs (Karunaratne 118, Thirimanne 131 batting, Oshada Fernando 40 batting) v Bangladesh. **Toss:** Sri Lanka.



Dimuth Karunaratne. ■ AP

The left-hander has been in fine form this year having posted four fifties and two centuries.

His tally of 648 runs is the second highest in Test cricket in 2021, behind England captain Joe Root's 794.

Karunaratne feathered a catch to wicketkeeper Liton Das to give 19-year-old debutant Shariful Islam his first

wicket in Test cricket.

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