



Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Ajit Singh loses fight to COVID-19

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Three militants killed, one held during Shopian encounter

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NEARBY



Delhi reports 335 COVID-19 deaths

NEW DELHI
Delhi reported 335 COVID-19-related deaths over 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 18,398, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday. Also, 19,133 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 12,73,035. A total of 78,780 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 11,64,008 people have recovered.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

FIR against Lucknow hospital for false alarm

LUCKNOW
A private hospital in Lucknow has been booked for putting up a notice stating oxygen shortage in the facility and "creating an atmosphere of fear", said officials on Thursday. The administration claimed that the hospital had sufficient stock of oxygen cylinders and was allegedly trying to hoard them. The director of Sun Hospital was booked.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

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SC wants formula on oxygen supply ahead of third wave

It draws govt. attention to reports that children may be affected in next wave

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday highlighted the need for the Union government to start preparations for oxygen allocation to the States and its supply and distribution ahead of a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The court drew the attention of the government to reports that children may be affected in the next wave.

A Bench of Justices D.Y. Chandrachud and M.R. Shah said the government needed to finalise a formula for allocation, supply and distribution of oxygen in a "scientific manner" ahead of the coming wave. It said the "rough-and-ready" formula devised presently on the "oxygen-for-bed" arrangement would hardly work. The current formula of allocating oxygen to Delhi, for example, on the basis of the number of ICU/non-ICU beds grossly underestimated need for oxygen.

"Also, not everyone who went to a hospital required an oxygen bed and not everyone required ICU or ventilator. There are many who have been asked to stay at home and quarantine," Justice Chandrachud said, picking holes in the formula.

The court said the formula for allocation and distribution of oxygen should be



D.Y. CHANDRACHUD, SC JUDGE
We need to reassess the basis for oxygen allocation. We are in stage two of the pandemic. Stage three might have very different parameters... But, if we prepare today, we will be able to handle stage three. It is about proper allocation of oxygen and working out the modalities, including proper distribution. A buffer stock has also to be created



M.R. SHAH, SUPREME COURT JUDGE
At the moment we are only looking at Delhi. But what about the rural areas where most people are suffering? We have to consider a pan-India situation as well as the future situations

based, among other things, on an "oxygen audit", that is, to determine the actual need of oxygen in a State.

"We need to reassess the basis for oxygen allocation. We are in stage two of the pandemic. Stage three might have very different parameters... But, if we prepare today, we will be able to handle stage three. It is about proper allocation of oxygen and working out the modalities, including proper distribution. A buffer stock has also to be created," Justice Chandrachud pointed out.

The court underlined the importance of vaccination. "Children are going to be affected. They will be taken into hospitals. They will be accompanied by parents.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

HC fumes as govt. refuses to drop GST

The government should review its resistance to exempting the GST levied on oxygen concentrators imported for personal use, the Delhi High Court observed on Thursday, after the Finance Ministry conveyed its inability to accept the court's order issued on Wednesday. The Bench also criticised the Centre's PR exercise amidst the pandemic. ▶ PAGE 8

'COVID surge has exposed Capital infra'

The Delhi High Court on Thursday observed that the current COVID-19 surge has "completely exposed" the existing medical infrastructure of the Capital and that the Delhi government's counsel was "behaving like the ostrich with its head in the sand". The observation came when Delhi government urged it not to include certain remarks. ▶ PAGE 2



surge.

In the judgment, Justice Chandrachud said the case posed a delicate balancing of powers between the HC and the ECI, which are both constitutional authorities.

The court said that except in cases of child sexual abuse and marital issues, the phenomenon of free press should extend to court proceedings.

"Citizens have a right to know about what transpires in the course of judicial proceedings. The dialogue in a court indicates the manner in which a judicial proceeding is structured... Arguments addressed before the court, the response of opposing counsel and issues raised by the court are matters on which citizens have a legitimate right to be informed," Justice Chandrachud observed.

The court referred to how the Gujarat High Court had recently introduced live-streaming of its proceedings in a bid to enhance public participation in the dispensation of justice.

"In this backdrop, it would

be retrograde for this court to promote the rule of law and access to justice on one hand, and shield the daily operations of the High Courts and this court from the media in all its forms, by gagging the reporting of proceedings," Justice Chandrachud said.

The court said oral observations made during course of a hearing do not bind the parties and do not form a part of the judgment. An exchange of views was intrinsic to the applicability of mind and the process of judging.

On the nature of the remarks made by the Madras HC, the apex court said "a degree of caution and circumspection would have allayed the problems in the present case. All said and done, this is in the past and does not constitute a part of the record".

The court said the remarks may have been a manifestation of anguish at the rising cases of COVID.

"We must emphasise the need for judges to exercise caution in off-the-cuff remarks in open court, which may be susceptible to misinterpretation. Language, both on the Bench and in judgments, must comport with judicial propriety. Language is an important instrument of a judicial process which is sensitive to constitutional values," Justice Chandrachud noted.

EU to discuss U.S. vaccine patent plan at Friday summit

REUTERS GENEVA

France joined the United States on Thursday in supporting an easing of patent and other protections on COVID-19 vaccines that could help poorer countries get more doses and speed up the

end of the pandemic.

The move to support waiving intellectual property protections on vaccines under World Trade Organization rules marked a dramatic shift for the United States – and drew cheers from activists, complaints from Big Phar-

ma, and a lot of questions about what comes next.

Attention is now turning to those richer nations, notably in the European Union, and France was the first to voice its support. "I completely favour this opening up of the intellectual proper-

ty," French President Emmanuel Macron said.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also said he supported the idea of a waiver on patent protections for coronavirus vaccines.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Nasheed hurt in IED blast near residence

MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO

Speaker and former President of the Maldives Mohamed Nasheed was injured in an explosion in capital Male on Thursday night. He sustained injuries and was admitted to a local hospital.

Deputy Speaker Eva Abdulla tweeted, "Following an explosion near his residence, Speaker of Parliament Mohamed Nasheed has sustained injuries and is currently receiving treatment at ADK Hospital. We will keep the public informed on President Nasheed's condition as we receive updates."

According to sources, the explosion took place when Mr. Nasheed was about to get into his car, just after 8.30 p.m. local time, near his residence. Preliminary reports indicated that an Improvised Explosive Device (IED), apparently fastened to a two-wheeler parked nearby, had blown up, injuring the Speaker and one of his bodyguards.

Tweeting on the development, Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid said: "Strongly condemn the attack on Speaker of Parliament, President @MohamedNasheed this evening. Cowardly attacks like these have no place in our society. My thoughts and prayers are with President Nasheed and others injured in this attack, as well as their families."

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Death toll zooms in weeks in 15 U.P. districts

Several backward and rural districts bear the brunt of second COVID-19 wave

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

While major districts such as Lucknow, Varanasi, Prayagraj and Kanpur continue to be the worst affected by the pandemic, recorded deaths due to COVID-19 doubled or tripled in 15 districts of Uttar Pradesh, including many smaller and relatively rural centres, over the past three weeks.

In another three dozen odd districts, the death toll also increased substantially over the same period. U.P. has 75 districts.

From April 15 to May 5, the death count doubled or tripled in Hathras, Kasganj, Mahoba, Chitrakoot, Bhadohi, Hamirpur, Baghpat, Amethi, Auraiya, Jalaun, Banda, Ghaziabad, Sonbhadra, Chandauli and Gautam Buddha Nagar, as per the official data of the State health department.

The death toll in Kasganj

increased fivefold from 6 to 30; Mahoba 13 to 34; Chitrakoot 17 to 50; Bhadohi 31 to 63; Hamirpur 21 to 61; Auraiya 50 to 106; Jalaun 53 to 136; Banda 48 to 118; Baghpat 36 to 76; Amethi 44 to 88; Chandauli 76 to 204; Sonbhadra 82 to 161. While the death toll almost tripled in Ghaziabad from 104 to 288, a similar trajectory was seen in neighbouring Gautam Buddha Nagar, where the recorded deaths rose from 98 to 271.

Mahoba, Banda, Hamirpur, Chitrakoot and Jalaun are all in the drought-prone region of Bundelkhand, while Auraiya, Sonbhadra, Chandauli are among the backward and rural-dominated districts in the State.

Rural polls link

In more than three dozen other districts, including many small and backward centres, the deaths due to COVID-19

have seen a steady and substantial rise. In the last two weeks, opponents of the ruling BJP as well as its own MLAs and teachers' unions have said that COVID-19 was rapidly spreading in rural U.P., with many blaming the recently concluded panchayat polls for the increase in cases and deaths. In Kannauj, the deaths rose from 55 to 86; Basti 100 to 82; Hapur 68 to 105 and Etawah 111 to 208.

The State government on May 5 launched a testing drive for COVID-19 in all 97,000 revenue villages. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed officials to carry out door-to-door screening and checking of temperature and oxygen levels of people and tests of people with symptoms.

U.P. on May 6 recorded 26,789 fresh positive cases out of 2.25 lakh samples tested, as against 31,165 positive

cases out of 2.32 lakh samples on May 5. However, the number of daily deaths only dropped marginally over the 24 hours, from 357 to 353. On May 6, Lucknow recorded 65 deaths while 49 died in Kanpur, which has officially recorded 161 deaths in three days.

Monitoring panels
CM Adityanath said in the screening by monitoring committees in the villages 69,474 persons were found to be symptomatic and when tested, 3,551 were found positive. They were provided medical kits for home isolation, the government said.

"Doctors should be in constant contact with these patients through tele-consultation. Advanced medical facility should also be provided to them as per the requirement," Mr. Adityanath instructed officials.

The first meeting of the Cabinet will be held on Friday evening, sources said.



FILE PHOTO: JOTHI RAMALINGAM .B

Mr. Stalin, though, he is at number 22.

Mr. Duraimurugan will also handle the subjects of Minor Irrigation, Assembly, Governor and Cabinet, Elections, passport, Minerals and Mines.

Palanivel Thiagarajan, son of former Speaker PTR Palanivel Rajan, who holds an MBA in Finance from the

Ma Subramanian is Medical Minister, Duraimurugan will handle Water Resources

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

DMK president M.K. Stalin, who will be sworn in Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu on Friday, will head a 34-member Cabinet that includes veterans and 15 new faces and just two women. The Cabinet size is four more than that of the outgoing Edappadi K. Palaniswami Ministry.

While old warhorse and party general secretary Duraimurugan will be the number two in the Cabinet handling the newly established Department of Water Resources, the limelight in the midst of the raging second wave of COVID-19 pandemic is on former Chennai Mayor Ma Subramanian, who has been appointed Minister for Medical and Family Welfare including the Health portfolio. In the pecking order of



SHOT OF HOPE: (From left) Youngsters at a vaccination centre after getting their vaccine shots; others wait for their turn in Delhi on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



'Surge has exposed medical infrastructure'

HC takes grim view of reports of hoarding and black marketing of oxygen cylinders, COVID medicines

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday observed that the current surge in COVID-19 cases has "completely exposed" the existing medical infrastructure of the Capital and that the Delhi government's counsel was "behaving like the ostrich with its head in the sand".

The stern observation of a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli came when senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, urged the court not to include certain remarks about the state of medical infrastructure in Thursday's order.

"You [Mr. Mehra] are behaving like the ostrich with its head in the sand. When you defend this situation, you are not rising above politics. We always call a spade a



Workers refilling oxygen cylinders at a plant in Mayapuri in Delhi on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

ing a plea by a 53-year-old COVID patient seeking an ICU bed with a ventilator as his oxygen saturation levels had fallen to around 40.

Equal treatment

While ordering the government to provide sufficient infrastructure to undergo the treatment required to save his life, the court added that the 53-year-old not being able to approach the court cannot be a reason to pass an order in his favour so that he can "steal a march over others" who may not have had the same option.

"We cannot lose sight of the fact that thousands of others are afflicted by the same disease in the city and whose condition may be as bad as that of the petitioner, if not worse," the court said.

The High Court was hear-

Delhi government to ensure that medical treatment is provided to all who are suffering from COVID-19.

"In case they require hospitalisation, it shall be provided. If medicines, it shall be provided. If oxygen, it shall be provided. If ICU with or without a ventilator, the State would be obligated to provide that too," the court said.

The Bench also took a grim view of reports of hoarding and black marketing of oxygen cylinders and medicines used for treating COVID-19. "We are still not understanding the gravity of the situation and that is why we are not coming together, which is why we are seeing instances of hoarding and black marketing. Our moral fabric has been dismembered to a great extent," the High Court remarked.

Four arrested for black marketing of oxygen concentrators in Delhi

Police have recovered 419 such devices from accused

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

and some "suspicious activity" was going on, a senior police officer said.

After searching the res-

taurant, one person was found working on a laptop. He was getting online orders for oxygen concentrators, he said.

Thermal scanners, masks

The police searched the res-

taurant premises and a total of 32 boxes of oxygen con-

centrators, one box of thermal scanner and one box containing N95 masks were

recovered, which the accused would sell at exorbitant prices in the black market, the DCP said.

Invoices of these oxygen concentrators were recov-

ered. MRP stickers men-

tions prices of ₹69,999 per

concentrator were also recov-

ered, the police said.

The police got to know that the owner of the res-

taurant-cum-bar was one Nav-

neet Kalra, he said.

A detailed investigation is

being carried out and efforts are being made to recover

more concentrators and nab

other offenders who are be-

hind this black marketing racket, they said.

Delhi Police seeks undertaking from officers not willing to get jab

158 policemen test positive for COVID-19 on Thursday

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

After finding out that 8% Delhi police personnel are yet to be vaccinated, Delhi Police demanded undertaking from the officers who are not willing to get the COVID-19 vaccines due to health reasons.

On Thursday, a total of 158 policemen tested positive for COVID-19. As many as 61 policemen have died due to the disease since the beginning of pandemic last year.

The officer said that after it was found that 17 Delhi police personnel, each having received only the first vaccine shot, had succumbed to the second COVID-19 wave and sudden surge of positive cases in the force, all district DCPs and heads of other units were asked to provide up-



Around 94% policemen have been vaccinated so far. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

dated data of vaccination of policemen.

It was found that only 94% of around 90,000 police personnel have been vaccinated. As many as 74,109 policemen have received their first dose of vaccine, while 64,407 have got both doses.

Muktesh Chander, Special CP and Nodal Officer (Covid) said that some police personnel have not received even the first dose of vaccine, des-

pite knowing that vaccination minimises the effect of the virus on an infected person. Since policemen have more chances of getting infected, it is expected that they take both doses of vaccine, unless advised otherwise by doctors at vaccination centres.

The order further reads that all district/unit DCPs, including higher offices where police personnel work and are not allocated to districts/units, shall be advised to get vaccinated and ascertain the reasons for not having done so and send a report to their respective Special CPs for briefing to Commissioner of Police.

As per Delhi police, 12,308 policemen have tested positive and around 3,500 are under treatment.

Out of work this lockdown, people await free ration

Many ration card-holders say facility has not begun yet despite announcements by Centre, Delhi govt.

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

For 27-year-old Poonam Rawat, who is expecting her second child this week, battling the COVID-19, lockdown, and lack of access to foodgrains has begun taking a toll.

Ms. Rawat, a resident of Panchsheel Vihar, is among several people, who do not possess a ration card and hence, has not been able to get access to ration, specially during the lockdown. The lockdown has once again been extended in the national capital to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"My husband and I tested positive on April 10 and he has been out of work since then. He used to work as a delivery boy in restaurants and now they have said that he might not get paid for the previous month as he could not work. My second child is due



Several people are finding it difficult to make ends meet during this lockdown. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

made by both the Central and Delhi governments on the provision of free ration, several ration card-holders in the city said that no such facility had begun yet.

Yashoda (30), mother of three - the youngest being 10 months old - said that they have been struggling to fend for themselves since the lockdown as her husband, a street vendor, has also been out of work.

"Both of us are out of work now. I had to borrow around ₹2,000 from a relative to buy basic grains to sustain for a few days. The e-coupon, which was issued to us last year, helped us a lot. However, this year we are distressed.

Any kind of aid from the government at this point would help us immensely but it does not seem to be the case at the moment," said Ms. Yashoda.

Despite announcements

Lal Gumbad camp, said that only one member in the family of six had a ration card, against which, they have received nothing yet for this month.

"We had visited the ration shop two days back but we did not receive our quota. We are extremely hassled at this point. The lockdown has meant that we have no source of income. Even if the free distribution begins, how will the quota for one person be enough for all of us, given the current circumstance?" said Ms. Reshma.

Subodh Bind, a resident of Pul Mithai area, said that several NGOs were coming forward to provide aid to those who are out of ration and do not possess ration cards.

Stating that mechanisms should be in place to distribute food and grains among those in need, Anjali Bharad-

waj of the Delhi Rozi Roti Adhikar Abhiyaan said, "First, in our audits, we have found that several of the ration shops were found to be closed. At such a time when there is immense economic distress, it is unacceptable that the governments are simply announcing, but not distributing. Second, neither the Chief Minister nor the Centre have said anything about those who do not have ration cards."

E-coupons

"The Delhi government had itself said that 60 lakh e-coupons were distributed last year during lockdown. So what happens to those people now? There is a state of utter hopelessness. People are not getting work during this lockdown. They should at least get their ration on time," said Ms. Bharadwaj.

'Look into plea on charges of cremation, ambulances'

Need policy to regulate charges: NGO

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked the Delhi government to treat as representation a petition alleging overcharging for cremations and ambulance services going on in Delhi during the COVID-19 crisis.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jasmeet Singh said the decision be taken as early as possible while closing a plea by NGO Distress Management Collective.

Delhi government Additional Standing Counsel Anuj Aggarwal said that municipal bodies be also asked to treat the NGO's plea as a repre-

sentation as they are also running crematoriums.

The NGO, in its plea, contended that "there is a dire need for a policy to regulate the charges levied for cremation and burials".

"It is seen that due to the lack of such policy, the caretakers and other private parties involved with the functioning of the crematoriums and burial spots specifically assigned for COVID deaths, are charging for cremations and burials as per their own whims and fancies," it said.

The NGO said that ambulance service providers across Delhi were charging unjustified fares even for a short distance.

The Committee, headed by Justice Vipin Sanghi, was

Right to Life under Article 21 is the most precious Fundamental Right of every citizen of India. It unconditionally embraces even an undertrial/convict walled off from the society

HIGH-POWERED COMMITTEE

of the opinion that the actual population inside the jail has not only stressed the administration but has also jeopardized the necessity of observing social distancing, which is the need of the hour to prevent the spread of virus amongst the inmates.

"In a matter of few weeks, this second wave has left eve-

ryone gasping for air. It has led everyone struggling to breathe or with asphyxia, which is the most terrifying human experience," the Committee said.

"Right to Life under Article 21 is the most precious Fundamental Right of every citizen of India. It unconditionally embraces even an undertrial/convict walled off from the society," the Committee added.

DG (Prisons) has said that on the basis of the criteria set by the Committee, approximately 4,000 undertrial prisoners (UTPs) would be in custody, facing trial in a case which prescribes a maximum sentence of 10 years or less and are not involved in multiple cases, will also get the benefit of interim bail.

Prisoners, who may be considered for grant of inter-

Wrestler's death: raids on in search of Olympian

Search for Sushil Kumar under way

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi police raided several locations in Delhi-NCR in search of Olympian Sushil Kumar and others, who were allegedly involved in the murder of a 23-year-old wrestler, said a senior police officer on Thursday.

The officer said that during the raid, Mr. Kumar was found missing. His role came under the scanner in the murder case after the statements of victims were recorded and CCTV footage were analysed.

On Wednesday, three wrestlers were brutally assaulted by a group of men inside Chhattarpur Stadium. The injured wrestlers were hospitalised where Sagar succumbed to injuries. The other two persons are currently undergoing treatment.

The police said that Mr. Kumar's last location was traced to Uttrakhand and then his phone was switched off. They have sent teams to all possible locations in search of him.

"We arrested one Prince Dalal (24) from Jhajjar, Haryana, and a gun was recovered. It was found that the scuffle ensued over some property dispute. We have recovered CCTV footage from the stadium and are identifying suspects," said the officer.

CMYK

Timings		
DELHI		
FRIDAY, MAY 07		
RISE	05:36	SET 19:00
RISE	03:21	SET 15:12
SATURDAY, MAY 08		
RISE	05:36	SET 19:01
RISE	03:50	SET 16:05
SUNDAY, MAY 09		
RISE	05:35	SET 19:02
RISE	04:19	SET 16:58

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	40	27
Safdarjung	40	27
Palam	40	27

Delhi Palam Today
30°C A comfortable morning and hot day with occasional partly cloudy sky. Light winds would prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
40°C Rise in day temperature. A hot day with partly cloudy sky. Chances of thunder clouds development at few places.

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IN BRIEF

Over 300 cases filed for hoarding oxygen

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police has registered over 300 cases in connection with cheating and black marking or hoarding of oxygen cylinders and medical equipment during the ongoing pandemic, officials said on Thursday. Delhi Police PRO Chinmoy Biswas said a total of 303 FIRs have been registered so far. Of them, 225 FIRs were registered in connection with cheating people on the pretext of providing Remdesivir and oxygen cylinders.

COVID care facility opened at Golden Tulip

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM
A few Gurugram based citizen-focused organisations have set up a private COVID care facility for the elderly, who need basic isolation facilities and routine monitoring and are unable to take care of themselves at their homes.

Given the enormity of the challenge and amid a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in Gurugram, Sarovar Hotels and Resorts, in partnership with Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, iamgurgaon and Emoha Elder Care, announced the opening of a 60-bed private COVID care facility at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Sector 29, Gurugram, said a press statement.

This facility was made possible through the Corporate Social Responsibility spending by these citizen-focused organisations. This facility is designed to be a 'home' for elders to recover in peace with dedicated oxygen concentrators, on-site clinical and nursing attention, vital monitoring, online activities for emotional well-being and most importantly a caring homely atmosphere, said the press statement.

Capital reports 19,133 new cases, 335 deaths

Positivity rate falls below 25%; people still struggling for beds

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 335 COVID-19-related deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 18,398, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Out of the 78,780 tests done in the day, 19,133 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 12,73,035. Of the total cases, 11,64,008 people have recovered, leaving the active case tally at 90,629.

A bigger cause for optimism was that the test positivity rate fell to 24.29% on Thursday, 26.37% on Wednesday and 29.56% on Tuesday. This means that about 24 out of 100 people taking the test are now COVID-19 positive.

The positivity, which is the percentage of people testing positive out of the total tests done, has fallen below 30% after almost two weeks. There was a sharp rise in pos-



Rapid antigen test in progress at a centre in the Capital.

• FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

itivity from 3.5% on April 1 to 36.2% on April 22. But since then, it has stayed below it. Lowering positivity is a good sign, according to experts. Ideally, it should be below 5%.

Difficulty for beds

At Lok Nayak Hospital on Thursday evening, the situation was better compared to two weeks ago, when there was a mad rush of ambulances. But people said that they

were still finding it difficult to find hospital beds. "On April 28, this was the sixth hospital we came to. First, they said that there were no beds. We waited from 7.30 p.m. and finally when our oxygen cylinder got over at 12.30 a.m. and the patient was about to fall, they gave us a bed," said Rakesh Saini, whose mother-in-law is admitted at the hospital. The family was desperately looking for an ICU bed for her on Thursday evening, but with no luck.

Oxygen supply meets demand for first time

Capital received 730 MT of oxygen against similar requirement, says CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

There was a glimmer of hope on Thursday that the oxygen crisis in the city would soon end as Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal shared that the Capital had received 730 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen from the Central government on Wednesday against the 700 MT required daily.

Mr. Kejriwal thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Central government, the Supreme Court and the High Court for their effort to ensure that the Capital received oxygen as per the demand for the first time since the oxygen crisis started and hoped it was not a one-off instance.

The Chief Minister said that if the Capital gets an adequate supply of 700 MT oxygen, it will be able to set up a COVID Care Centre with 9,000-9,500 beds and assured citizens that the Delhi government will not let anyone die due to shortage of oxygen.

"Until the second wave of COVID-19 is not curtailed, we



Preparations in full swing to set up a COVID-19 facility at Ramlila Maidan in Delhi on Thursday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

need 700 MT oxygen daily. It shouldn't be the case that one day we receive 700 MT and the next day we again get only 300-400 MT, because this will create turmoil in the hospitals again. We need this supply every day to increase the number of beds with oxygen," Mr. Kejriwal said.

Reinstate beds

Several hospitals were forced to reduce the number of beds due to the lack of oxygen and the Chief Minister requested them to reinstate the number of beds that ex-

isted earlier and add more beds. "If big hospitals cut down the number of beds, it will lead to complete mayhem. It is my request to all the hospitals to reinstate the number of beds. I hope 700 MT of oxygen will be available each day, which will allow us to create 5,000 beds in Radha Soami Satsang centre, 2,500 beds in two places in Burari, 1,000 beds in Commonwealth Games Village and 1,000 beds in Yamuna Sports Complex," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He hoped the situation that prevailed over the past

few weeks with hospitals sending SOS calls to the government saying they have only minutes or hours of oxygen left would not recur.

Praise for youth

Commenting on the vaccination drive that opened up for the 18-44 age group category this week, Mr. Kejriwal said vaccination is the only solution to this problem and the youth have shown great enthusiasm to get inoculated.

"Around 1,30,000 people in the 18-44 age group have been vaccinated in the past three days. We have the resources to multiply the vaccination drive, but now there is a problem of shortage of vaccine. We are waiting for the supply, and if we get sufficient supply in a timely manner, we will open multiple centres," the Chief Minister said.

He added that till now, in Delhi, 35,74,000 doses of vaccine have been administered, out of which 28 lakh people have taken the first dose, and 7,76,000 people have taken both.

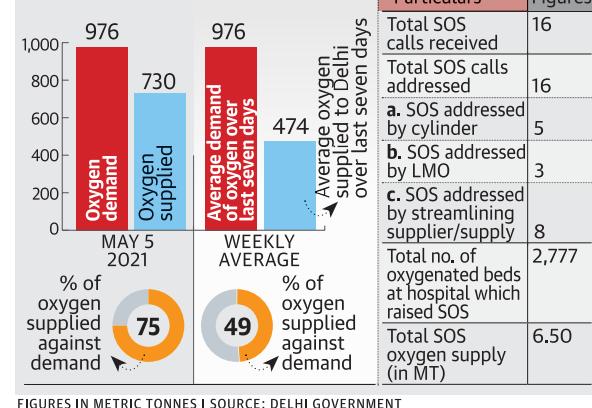
Number of SOS calls falls from 48 to 16 in a day

2,777 patients admitted to these hospitals were provided oxygen support, says Raghav Chadha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Breath of fresh air



Chadha said.

He added that 730 MT of oxygen led to a significant reduction in SOS calls from hospitals but pointed out that out of the 730 MT of oxy-

gen, around 250 MT did not come from regular sources.

"It came from an ad-hoc arrangement. I appeal to the Central government to turn this into a permanent one," Chadha said.

Own source

The Capital has also been trying to set up its own source of oxygen and reduce dependence on suppliers from outside the State. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that he had inspected the in-

stallation of the new oxygen plant at Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra Hospital that had been imported from France. "I want to thank the French government for their support. We are setting up 48 such plants across Delhi to address the shortage of oxygen out of which 21 are being imported from France, and the rest are from India. Though these are small plants, I feel they will provide a lot of support to the entire system," Mr. Chadha said.

The plant at Harishchandra Hospital has the capacity to fill 50-60 cylinders a day and if taken directly through the pipeline, 33 patients can be sustained on it for 24 hours.

Dwarka Malkhana. The police said no useful purpose would be solved to retain the oxygen in the police malkhana and the same should be circulated back for the use of needy patients.

"It is pertinent to mention that judicial officers, due to their nature of work are also exposed to deadly virus. A large number of judicial officers and their families in Delhi are infected with COVID-19 virus and unfortunately two members of Delhi Judiciary namely Family Judge Sh. Kavita Venugopal and Metropolitan Magistrate, Dwarka, Kamran Khan are suffering from COVID-19.

+

Metropolitan Magistrate Anuj Bahal gave the order after Delhi Police filed an application seeking releasing the oxygen concentrators saying these oxygen concentrator can be used for saving life of the police personnel who are suffering from COVID-19.

The 12 oxygen concentrators were seized from two persons and all of them were deposited in Police Station

Token system in place to streamline oxygen supply in Millennium City

90 tokens will be distributed at three counters in a day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

The Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) on Thursday introduced token system to streamline the supply of liquid oxygen for COVID-19 patients in home isolation. A total of 90 tokens will be distributed per day at three different counters.

The MCG has set up three counters at Sector 34, Sector 42 and the office of the municipal body near Sadar Bazar. Thirty tokens each will be distributed at

these centres from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The token will be valid for two days and the beneficiaries can procure the liquid oxygen from Star Gases plant in Sector-7, Manesar. Those seeking token must carry the patient's RT-PCR report, Aadhaar card, address proof and the doctor's report.

Ambulance charges
The district administration also fixed the hiring charges for the ambulances to transport the patients in Gurugram. As per the rates

fixed by the administration, the ambulance owners can charge ₹1,000 and an additional ₹25 per km for transporting patients for a distance of more than 7 km.

Similarly, the initial charges for up to 3 km are fixed at ₹500. For a distance between 3 and 7 km, the initial charges are ₹750.

A makeshift hospital and two isolation centres are also being set up in different parts of the city in view of the increasing cas-

A drive in the rain



Vehicles passing through a flyover during a brief spell of rain that lashed through the city on Thursday. • R.V. MOORTHY

Man with Down syndrome dies of no oxygen at hospital, alleges family

Lok Nayak Hospital Medical Director denies claim saying that they never ran out of medical oxygen; adds they did their best to save him

NIKHIL M BABU

NEW DELHI

Family members of Prashant Sharma, 34, who died at Lok Nayak Hospital on May 1 morning, alleged that he died as there was "no oxygen" available at his bed.

About two-three hours before he died, he pulled the oxygen mask he was wearing and gestured to me by shaking his hand that oxygen was not coming. I also put my finger inside the mask, where the pipe connects to it and there was no pressure. There was no oxygen. He started gasping and then he started falling unconscious. Finally, he took his last breath at 7.47 a.m.," his sister Meghna Sharma (29), narrated the ordeal from their residence in



Family members of deceased Prashant Sharma showing his photograph on Thursday. • R.V. MOORTHY

If we had run out of oxygen, then a large number of people would have died, as we have around 1,500 patients

hospital added around 8-10 cylinders for 48 patients in the ward," said Ms. Meghna, adding that CT scan was done on the 16th day of admission, despite several requests.

She also alleged that he did not get proper medical care at the hospital. "Two more patients, who were on beds next to us, an uncle and an aunt, died in the one-hour window on May 1 as

there was no oxygen. And this was just on my right side and I didn't even get time to look to the left side," Ms. Meghna said.

'Not true'

However, when contacted, Suresh Kumar, who is the Medical Director of the hospital, said it was "not true" and the hospital never ran out of oxygen.

"Oxygen never got over at the hospital. It's true that sometimes we had only three or four hours of oxygen left, but we never ran out of oxygen. If we had ran out of oxygen, then a large number of people would have died, as we have around 1,500 patients," Dr. Kumar said.

"The CMO [Chief Medical Officer] said that it was a sev-

ere case and he came with an oxygen saturation of 60%. We did everything possible to save him," he added.

<h4

Tea estate shut in Assam after 198 test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Local authorities have closed a tea estate in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh district after 198 workers and members of their families tested positive for COVID-19.

The Zaloni Tea Estate was declared a containment zone on Wednesday. District Surveillance Officer of Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Nabajyoti Gogoi said the cases were reported over the past 48 hours. "The patients have been kept at the tea garden hospital and in some empty houses within the estate. Health officials have been vaccinating other workers of the garden and their family members who tested negative," he said. About 60 other cases were also reported from two adjoining tea estates. An average of 4,596 people tested positive in the last three days in Assam. The number of cases on May 3 was 4,489 – twice that of 2,385 recorded on the previous day. The number of people who died has been increasing from 29 on May 3 to 41 and 55 in the next two days.

Lockdown in Meghalaya
The Meghalaya government announced a total lockdown in Shillong and elsewhere in the East Khasi Hills district from 8 p.m. on Wednesday till 5 a.m. on May 10. A weekend lockdown has been enforced in the other districts of the State.

FIR against Lucknow hospital for false oxygen shortage alarm

Facility created 'atmosphere of fear', tried to hoard oxygen, alleges top official

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A private hospital in Lucknow has been booked for putting up a notice stating oxygen shortage in the facility and "creating an atmosphere of fear," said officials on Thursday. The administration claimed that the hospital had sufficient stock of oxygen cylinders and was allegedly trying to hoard them.

The director of Sun Hospital was booked under Sections 188 and 269 of the IPC, Sections 51 and 52 of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Epidemic Diseases Act in Vibhuti Khand police station.

The notice

On May 3, the hospital had allegedly put out a notice signed by its administrator, Udit Singh, on social media – asking family members of patients who were on oxygen support to take their patients elsewhere. After repeated re-



Relatives of COVID-19 patients queue up to collect free oxygen in Lucknow. ■ PTI

quests to the U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath and the Centre "we are not able to get enough oxygen supply," said the notice.

The Lucknow administration said they carried out an inspection at the hospital but found that the facility had a sufficient supply of oxygen. In his police complaint, Superintendent of CHC Chinhata Suresh Pandey said it was found that the hospital had eight jumbo oxygen cylinders, two B-type filled cylinders and oxygen concentrators. At that time, 25 COVID

patients were admitted to the hospital, 20 of whom were on oxygen support, said Mr. Pandey.

"After the examination from the medical point of view, it was established that the hospital had sufficient oxygen in proportion to the admitted patients," the FIR said. The official also said that on May 1, when it had 18 patients, the hospital had received 26 jumbo cylinders while on May 2, the number of patients was 17, it had got 58 jumbo cylinders. The ac-

tion against the facility comes after Mr. Adityanath instructed officials to take action against hospitals if they found reporting scarcity of oxygen supply just to "create fear."

On May 4, the Allahabad HC had observed that the deaths of COVID patients due to lack of supply of oxygen to hospitals "is a criminal act and not less than a genocide by those who have been entrusted the task to ensure continuous procurement and supply chain of the liquid medical oxygen."

The court made the remarks while asking DMs of Meerut and Lucknow to verify the deaths of five patients in the ICU of the new trauma centre of Medical College Meerut last Sunday and the reports of two hospitals allegedly taking their hands off admitted COVID-19 patients only because they did not get the oxygen supply despite demanding it.

Burial of COVID-19 victim opposed in Manipur, citizenship questioned

Group says 42-year-old professor was not 'indigenous' to State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A Manipur-based group has opposed the burial of a COVID-19 victim who taught in a Haryana university but was born in adjoining Myanmar.

The United Naga Council (UNC) mourned the death of the 42-year-old Nehingpao Kipgen at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in New Delhi on May 2 but questioned his citizenship and the "legal ground" for the burial of his body in Manipur's Kangpokpi district.

His relatives are from Kangpokpi and his wife is from Churachandpur [Manipur]. He did all his schooling in Manipur, did his PhD in Hyderabad after studying in the U.S. in between, and has been teaching in India

SPOKESPERSON OF THADOU STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

State of Manipur," the council said on Wednesday.

The Thadou Students' Association, General Headquarters said Dr. Kipgen was a citizen by convention although he was born in Teijang village in Myanmar.

adherence to COVID protocols during the homage rituals and burial at Leikot village in the district's Saitu-Gamphazol subdivision.

Buried on Wednesday

Dr. Kipgen was buried late Wednesday evening.

The Thadou Students' Association, General Headquarters said Dr. Kipgen was a citizen by convention although he was born in Teijang village in Myanmar.

"His relatives are from Kangpokpi and his wife is from Churachandpur [Manipur]. He did all his schooling in Manipur, did his PhD in Hyderabad after studying in the U.S. in between, and has been teaching in India," a spokesperson of the association said.

The Thadous belong to the Kuki-Chin group who live on either side of the India-Myanmar border.

Many are believed to have crossed over to Manipur since the 1940s.

Punjab appoints nodal officers for tax exemption on imported COVID relief items

State allocates ₹10 cr. to departments of health, education, social security, women, among others, for helping the needy through involvement of NGOs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab government has appointed nodal officers to facilitate individuals and organisations in getting tax exemption on any COVID relief to be imported into the State from

abroad. "In the ongoing fight against COVID, the Punjab government has appointed two nodal officers to facilitate the individuals-organisations in getting tax exemption on any COVID relief to be imported into the State from abroad,"

said an official statement.

The statement added to facilitate the flow of aid from outside India, the Government of India has provided exemption from customs duty and integrated tax on goods for COVID relief imported into

country. "The same concessions could be availed for such imports if they were sent free of cost from outside India and are distributed free within the country. For claiming these exemptions, anyone could approach the nodal of-

ficer appointed by the State government," it said, adding that Kumar Rahul (IAS) and Ravneet Singh Khurana (IRS) have been appointed as nodal officers.

The State has allocated ₹10 crore to the departments of

Vini Mahajan, after chairing a meeting of the apex committee for providing financial assistance to the NGOs, here solicited support of the NGOs and appealed to them to come forward to help the State in fighting the second COVID wave.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

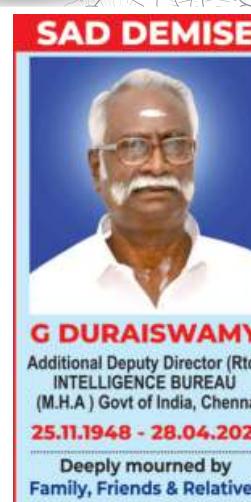
DEATH

DR. M SHAMSUDHEEN
(May 14, 1959 - May 1, 2021)
"When a great passes, for years the light he leaves behind him lies on the paths of Men."

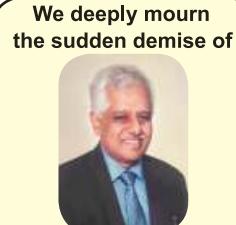
On your 7th day since demise, we remember you for how you made us strong, inspired us to thrive, and helped us grow better. You were a man of incredible integrity. Your philanthropies celebrated symphonies of humanitarianism and benevolence. You pioneered a great industry and at your demise we lost the light beamer.

May your soul rest in peace, Sir. Salute!
Joining in Grief
-Team IndusViva

DEATH

Mrs. S. KRISHNAVENI Age: 69
(Kanchi Kamakshi Ambar Upasak)
Reached Last Stage of Life on May 2021.
Deeply Mourned by
Huband : K.S. Subramanian (Retd. IAS), Chennai
Daughter & Stl. : Vijayaveena & Kallingal
B. Narayanan & Kallingal,
Son : K.S. Ayyappan,
Grand Daughter : A.K. Thejas & Kamakshi & Kallingal,
Grandson : A.K. Vishnu
Mob : 9884290060G DURAIISWAMY
Additional Deputy Director (Rtd)
INTELLIGENCE BUREAU
(M.H.A) Govt of India, Chennai.
25.11.1948 - 28.04.2021
Deeply mourned by
Family, Friends & Relatives
95000 11636

DEATH

Shri. Ravi Krishnamurthy
(Retd. Vice President, Bosch Ltd.; Independent Director)
26.04.1950 - 03.05.2021

A loving husband, dutiful son, encouraging father, supportive brother, doting grandfather & a friend to all. Your warmth & spiritual strength will stay with us forever.

Fondly remembered by:

Wife: Anuradha Ravi
(Retd. Addl. Director, DRDO)

Mother: Saroja Krishnamurthy

Daughters & Sons-in-Law:

Dr. Renuka & G. Vidhyashankar

Ranjita & Dr. Prajwal Sabnis

Grandchildren: Ragini & Shiv

Brother: K. Venkatesh & Geetha;

Sister: Ramaa & N.G. Shankar

In-Laws: Indira & Nandanbalan,

A.R. Ramathanan,

A.R. Srivinasan & Veena

Family and Friends

C-95 2nd Cross Street

Maharaja Nagar, Tiruvellveli - 627 011

Contact: 9489116295, 9900096614

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Muralidhar Vemuri
Emeritus Professor,
Jawaharlal Nehru University
January 1, 1950 - May 4, 2021

"His memory is as alive today

As in the hour he passed away"

Nalini Vemuri
Anand Vemuri
Mukund Vemuri
wosn014@gmail.com
Ph: 9891053453

DEATH



Birth: 25.06.1947 Death: 03.05.2021

Thiru K. RAMAKRISHNAN Avt
Chartered Accountant

We regret to inform the demise of our beloved father

father on 03.05.2021.(Monday)

Daughters

MUTHULAKSHMI - KARTICK

MEENAKSHI - KRISHNAN

and

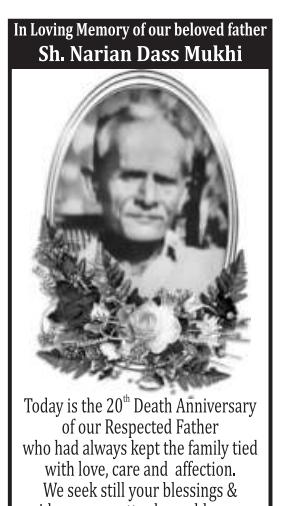
Grand Children

C-95 2nd Cross Street

Maharaja Nagar, Tiruvellveli - 627 011

Contact: 9489116295, 9900096614

REMEMBRANCE



In Loving Memory of our beloved father

Sh. Narian Dass Mukhi

Today is the 20th Death Anniversary of our Respected Father who had always kept the family tied with love, care and affection. We seek still your blessings & guidance no matter how old we are.

MUKHI FAMILY

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is a notice to the general public that a political party has registered itself by the name of "AVADH JANSHAKTI PARTY". The office of the party is located at No.3/76, VikalpKhand, Gomtinagar, Lucknow-226028, Uttar Pradesh. This party has submitted its application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Name/Address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:- President: Gomti Nandan Chaturvedi, S/o Shri Satya Prakash Chaturvedi, R/o No.538 K4/4, Street Mohan-Peekli Koti, Vill. Town P.S./ District: Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. General Secretary: Manish Saran S/o Dr. VK. Srivastava, 10 N.N. 10/10, Gomti Nagar, Gomti Nandan, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-District-Lucknow-226010, Uttar Pradesh. Treasurer: Avinash Kumar S/o Surendra Bahadur R/o H.No. 498 214, Faizabad Road, Lucknow, Distt. Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. In accordance to the provisions of the Registration of "AVADH JANSHAKTI PARTY" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Ashok, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

The General Public is hereby informed by the advertisement that, Chet Ram

Shri Narayan Lal & Kanta W/o Chet Ram both

R/o S-33A, 1st Flr, St. No. 1, Vishwas Park, Ultam Nagar, N.Del-90, Have Disowned &

Severed all their Relations and Ties with

their Son Manish Kumar & his wife

Kavita Mehra (Who also Dr. Lala Ram), Both R/o S-33A, 1st Flr, St. No. 1, Vishwas Park, Ultam Nagar, N.Del-90 due to their

Misbehaviours. Bad Conducts & Misdeeds

& So we have permanently Debarred them

from Moveable & Immovable Properties.

We shall not be held responsible for

any Acts & Misdeeds done by them in Future

Over ₹15 cr. collected from COVID violators in Odisha

Over 500 arrested, 21K vehicles seized

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha police on Thursday said they have collected ₹15 crore from COVID-19 violators in the State.

"We have collected little over ₹15 crore from people violating COVID-19 protocols. People who were not found wearing masks coughed up fines to the tune of ₹6.34 crore and ₹8.29 crore has been collected from those misusing vehicles during COVID restrictions. Besides, people have been fined for not maintaining social distance," said Director General of Police Abhay.

Over 1.5K excise cases

IN BRIEF



Central Crime Branch arrests conman from T.N.

BENGALURU
The Central Crime Branch (CCB) on Tuesday arrested a 45-year-old conman who allegedly duped a businessman of ₹7.2 crore by promising to get him a ₹360 crore business loan at a lower interest rate in November last year. The accused, Hari Gopalakrishna, hails from Tirunelveli in Tamil Nadu.

Woman killed by elephants in A.P. village

VIZIANAGARAM
A woman was killed by wild elephants moving along the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha border at Patakallikota village in Vizianagaram district in the early hours of Thursday. Allada Appamma, 40, had gone to harvest vegetables when she was attacked. The CPI(M) said the government should compensate her kin.

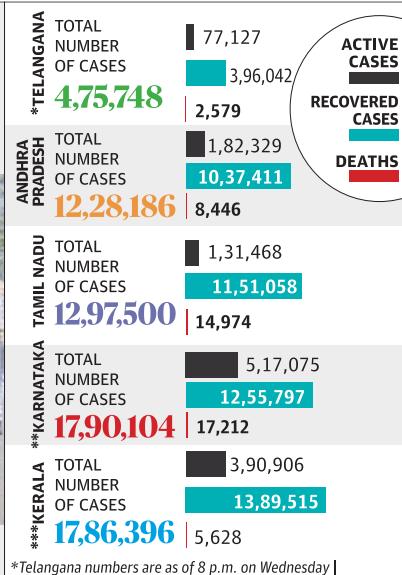
Kerala to go into full lockdown mode tomorrow

Spike in cases

The second wave of the pandemic has created a huge demand for hospital beds. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Critical condition: A medical team shifting a COVID-19 patient to the Government General Hospital in Ongole. ■ KOMMURI SRINIVAS



'Centre slow in clearing essential items imported by Maharashtra'

Tope raises issues of vaccine shortage, halt to oxygen supplies from Karnataka

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE
Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Thursday claimed that the Centre's Department of Pharmaceuticals was slow in granting clearance to essential items imported by the State government.

Complaining again about the lack of vaccine supplies from the Centre, Mr. Tope said that its decision to halt oxygen supplies from neighbouring Karnataka could make the situation dire for Maharashtra.

"Given the dire shortage of vaccines, especially Bharat Biotech's Covaxin, several senior citizens are awaiting their second dose. Hence, the State government may take a decision on a priority basis to give the doses earmarked for the 18-44 age group to senior citizens who are yet to get their second vaccine shot," the Health Minister said.

Mr. Tope further said that the State would feel the pinch following the Centre's decision to stop oxygen from



An elderly couple arrives to receive COVID-19 vaccine at Nair Hospital in Mumbai on Thursday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

Karnataka. "Maharashtra has a daily requirement of 1,750 metric tonnes of oxygen. It is not proper to stop our given allocation at this critical stage. Talks are on at the highest levels to sort this out," Mr. Tope said.

He alleged that the Centre's Department of Pharmaceuticals was not giving speedy approval to various essential items that the State had ordered from abroad.

"The Union government's procedure is taking more time. It takes numerous clearances and approvals before

853 deaths push State's toll to 73,515

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PUNE
Maharashtra's recoveries marginally outpaced its cases on Thursday, with 63,842 patients being discharged against 62,194 new COVID-19 cases reported as the State's active case tally dipped to 6,39,075.

The State again recorded a very high number of fatalities, with 853 deaths pushing the death toll to 73,515. Of these, 331 deaths occurred in the last 48 hours and 247 during the last week. A further 275 were from the period before the last one week.

Pune district reported 9,700 new cases to take its total case tally to 8,99,360.

Mumbai reported 3,028 new cases to take its total tally to 6,68,085 while the active count has declined to 55,601.

HC allows recording of IPS officer's statement

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court on Thursday allowed the Maharashtra government to question senior IPS officer Rashmi Shukla in Hyderabad after the State assured that she would not be arrested till the next date of hearing in the case of alleged leakage of information about police postings.

A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Manish

Pitale was hearing a petition filed by Ms. Shukla saying she apprehended arrest and sought no coercive action against her by the Cyber Crime Department. The plea said, "The approach of the State is to arm-twist Ms. Shukla by a bogus and frivolous case." Senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani for Ms. Shukla said she had been charged under the Information Technology Act and the Officials Secrets Act.

Sanatan Sanstha member gets bail in Dabholkar case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to Sanatan Sanstha member Vikram Bhave, an accused in the 2013 murder of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar. Mr. Bhave, who is currently lodged at the Yerwada Central Jail, will be released after submitting a cash bond of ₹1 lakh.

A Division Bench directed him not to leave the jurisdiction

of the National Investigation Agency's court in Pune. He filed an appeal before the High Court after his second bail was rejected by the special Unlawful Activities Prevention Act court in Pune on January 21, 2020.

The special court had held that there was sufficient incriminating material against him. It also relied upon a confessional statement by one of the shooters and co-accused Sharad Kalaskar.

Oxygen supply: Centre moves SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Centre on Thursday approached the Supreme Court against a Karnataka High Court order to increase the daily allocation of oxygen to the State to 1,200 MT from 865 MT.

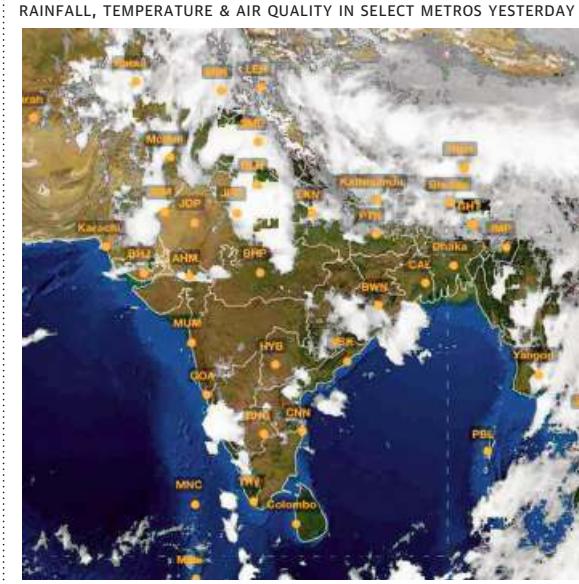
Solicitor General Tushar Mehta mentioned before a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud. However, the Bench said it could not look into the issue as it did not have the records of the case.

The Bench said it would consider the plea if the Chief Justice of India allocates the case to it.

The High Court had on May 5, considering the grave need for oxygen for treating COVID-19 patients in the State, ordered an increase in supply.

The Centre had, on May 1, increased the allocation from 802 MT to 865 MT.

WEATHER WATCH



CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...33.4...	24.3	...	Kozhikode	...34.8...	27.3	...
Ahmedabad	...42.2...	27.2	...	Kurnool	...39.0...	28.1	...
Aizawl	18.9	...	Lucknow	...36.5...	24.2	...
Alappuzha	...39.0...	25.6	...	Madurai	...37.4...	27.0	...
Bengaluru	...33.0...	23.9	...	Mangaluru	...33.8...	25.0	...
Bhopal	—	...	Mumbai	...34.2...	26.8	...
Bhubaneswar	...39.2...	25.5	...	Mysuru	...36.0...	21.4	...
Chandigarh	...36.9...	24.0	...	New Delhi	...39.5...	26.5	...
Chennai	...31.6...	28.0	...	Patna	...36.4...	20.6	...
Coimbatore	...36.0...	25.3	...	Port Blair	...56.3...	24.1	...
Dehradoon	...33.6...	20.7	...	Puducherry	...35.0...	25.8	...
Gangtok	...37.6...	15.4...	13.3	Pune	...39.5...	24.5	...
Goa	...35.0...	27.8	...	Raipur	...39.0...	25.4	...
Guwahati	...27.0...	21.9	...	Ranchi	...34.9...	19.1	...
Hubballi	...33.0...	24.0	...	Shillong	...21.0...	13.3	...
Hyderabad	1.5...	37.7...	23.7	Shimla	...26.0...	16.6	...
Imphal	...29.7...	16.3	...	Srinagar	...21.6...	10.5	...
Jaipur	...41.0...	27.0	...	Thiruvananthapuram	...34.0...	25.2	...
Kochi	...33.8...	26.0	...	Tiruchi	...38.2...	27.0	...
Kohima	...20.5...	13.8	...	Vijayawada	...36.6...	27.6	...
Kolkata	15.3...	35.2...	22.2	Visakhapatnam	34.6...	36.4...	23.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO.	NO.	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	40	48	35	73	50	—
Bengaluru	5	7	61	25	50	—
Chennai	60	5	35	23	28	—
Delhi	2	24	40	79	344	—
Hyderabad	12	74	21	42	62	—
Kolkata	12	—	118	60	56	—
Lucknow	8	33	52	175	147	—
Mumbai	49	10	5	32	111	—
Pune	6	17	54	66	70	—
Visakhapatnam	16	41	6	29	57	—

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Rohtak, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 259 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 17.

AQI Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO: 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: 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 and premature death in people with heart disease

WEST

Paucity of doses puts the brakes on vaccination in State

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

Even though Maharashtra tops the chart in the number of individuals receiving the double doses of COVID-19 vaccines, the inoculation has

slowed down over the past week.

Despite the shortage of vaccines, the overcrowding at vaccination centres in urban areas of the State, especially Mumbai and Thane, has trig-

gered the fear of these centres turning into hotspots for COVID-19 infection.

On April 26, Maharashtra recorded the highest number of vaccine doses administered, at 5,34,228. On the

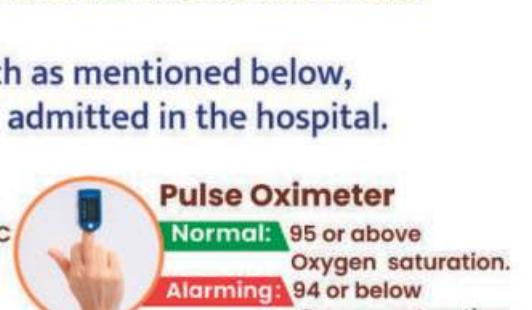
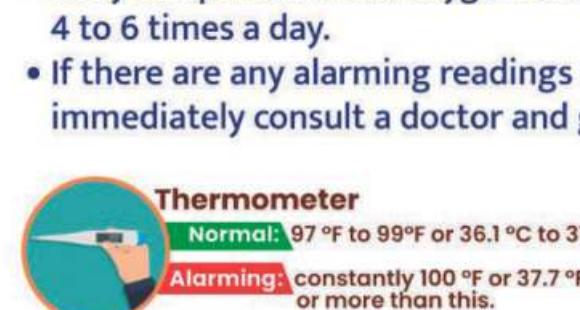
same day, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray congratulated health professionals and announced that the State had set up the infrastructure to vaccinate more than eight lakh citizens a day.

Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation

Any individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the age group of 50yrs + should preferably get admitted at NMMC Covid centre or any Pvt. Hospital as a precautionary measure.

GUIDELINES FOR HOME ISOLATED COVID POSITIVE PATIENTS

- Separate Room with attached toilet.
- Consent letter from a physician advising Home isolation.
- Thermometer, Pulse oximeter, face mask and sanitizer must be available
- Body temperature and oxygen level should be checked and noted 4 to 6 times a day.
- If there are any alarming readings such as mentioned below, immediately consult a doctor and get admitted in the hospital.



Important

6 Minutes Walk -



Hat-trick

The onus is on Ms. Banerjee to end violence and triumphalism of her supporters

Mamata Banerjee was sworn in as Chief Minister of West Bengal for a third consecutive term on Wednesday, following the resounding victory of the Trinamool Congress (TMC) in the Assembly election. The TMC has won 213 seats, compared to 77 won by its principal challenger the BJP. The TMC's 47.9% vote share is an all time high for any party, and nearly 10 percentage points more than that of the BJP. The Left-Congress alliance drew a blank, another first in the electoral history of the State. The sheen of the TMC's astounding success has been somewhat dimmed by violence, attributed largely to its cadres, that has claimed at least 14 lives since the counting of votes on Sunday. True, TMC workers have also been killed, but as the ruling party, the onus is on it to end the violence. It is reassuring that Ms. Banerjee has promised after taking oath that ending the violence and controlling the pandemic were her priorities. She must not read this colossal mandate as a public endorsement or even tolerance of the grass-roots ferocity and authoritarianism that have become hallmarks of her party. Ms. Banerjee's personal responsibility is high considering that people reposed their trust in her despite the high-handedness of local TMC leaders. The burden on her is heavy, and she has a tough act to do in reining in her own party.

As much as the Bengal verdict is in favour of the TMC, it is also against the BJP which did not want to take an organic route to emerge as a natural party of governance in Bengal. Without a party organisation and mass leaders, it engineered defections, tried brazen communal polarisation and misused central agencies, as it went for the jugular. Its bombast and hubris were out of touch with the sensibilities of Bengalis. Its growth from three seats in 2016 to its current tally is impressive. The BJP must now pause and rethink its strategy for the path ahead. Its attempts to give a communal colour to condemnable political violence indicates that the BJP is not open to that. If it wants to be a truly national party, the BJP must be respectful of India's regional, religious and cultural diversities. The Congress and the CPI(M) that sought to overcome their failure to build a programmatic politics through opportunistic alliances, including with the communal Indian Secular Front, must also now learn that there are no short cuts in politics. With the TMC reigning supreme, and the BJP falling short in understanding the State, the Opposition space can still be fought for. To reclaim relevance, these parties need to replace their current leaders, do some honest soul searching, and build a new politics.

A lending hand

The RBI has signalled it is aware of the burden on health-care providers during this period

The Reserve Bank of India's move on Wednesday to step in and join the fight against the second wave of the pandemic through the announcement of measures aimed at alleviating any financing constraint for those impacted, including the health-care sector, State governments and the public, is a welcome and timely intervention. The furious pace at which new COVID-19 infections and fatalities have been mounting in recent weeks has not only overwhelmed the nation's health infrastructure but has begun to significantly impair economic activity, just as the economy appeared to have turned the corner from last year's debilitating contraction. "The fresh crisis is still unfolding," Governor Shaktikanta Das said in his unscheduled address, acknowledging the challenge ahead. Stressing that it is imperative to both save lives and restore livelihoods, Mr. Das proposed a calibrated response, mooted a ₹50,000 crore term liquidity facility to boost credit availability for ramping up COVID-related health-care infrastructure and services. Lenders have been urged to expedite lending under this 'priority sector' classified scheme to entities including vaccine manufacturers, hospitals, pathology labs, suppliers of oxygen and ventilators, importers of COVID-related drugs and logistics firms. And although Mr. Das said the scheme would also cover patients requiring treatment, he failed to spell out how those most in need of financial assistance to cover their surging medical bills could borrow the funds. In directing the flow of credit to the sector most in focus at the moment, the RBI has signalled it is cognisant of the burden on health-care and allied providers. However, how much lending capital-stressed banks would be willing to write into their 'COVID loan books' remains to be seen.

The central bank's focus on small borrowers including unorganised businesses and MSM enterprises, both through enhanced provision of credit via small finance banks and a fresh resolution framework for existing borrowings, is also heartening as these economic participants were already among the worst-hit during last year's contraction. However, the norms laid down for resolution including the proviso that only those borrowers who had not already availed of restructuring assistance and whose loans were 'standard' as on March 31, 2021, would be eligible for fresh resolution lays an onerous burden on those that the RBI itself admits are the 'most vulnerable'. Mr. Das was also unreasonably sanguine about the economic impact of the second wave, even as he granted that "high frequency indicators are emitting mixed signals". The RBI's position that the dent to aggregate demand is likely to be only moderate is based on the fact that so far this year, the restrictions to contain the spread of the virus have been largely localised. With more and more voices from the Opposition to top industry groups urging a nationwide lockdown to break the chain of transmission, Mr. Das may need to very quickly revisit his assumptions.

Social murder and the missing state

The defence that the government is not responsible for the present crisis has consequences for India's democracy



NISSIM MANNATHUKKAREN

When people are placed under conditions which appeal to the brute only, said Friedrich Engels, what remains to them but to rebel or to succumb to utter brutality?

The scenes that are being witnessed in India now are apocalyptic in tone. When a citizen attacks hospital personnel because a life was lost due to the absence of medical care, or a citizen struggles to breathe with an oxygen cylinder on the pavement, it is a crisis at multiple levels.

Appalling discourse

But what is concerning, more than the "collapse of the system" or the failure of the state, is the shocking discourse among the supporters of the government that it is not responsible for the present crisis, arguably, India's gravest hour.

This defence has consequences for India's democracy.

Engels had argued that the English ruling class and the state had created such horrendous working and living conditions for the workers, without the "necessaries of life", that they suffer not only ill health but meet early deaths. Engels calls this social murder, the same as murder by an individual; the only difference is that this murder is "disguised", for "no man sees the murderer" and the death appears to be a "natural one".

What we are seeing around, in our inability to make the state ac-

countable, is social murder. The only difference between Engels' England in the 1840s, when it was the working class which was devastated by pandemics, and India now, is that the pandemic in this wave is not just preying on the most vulnerable populations. Therefore, it is also not invisible any longer.

The state's actions

But in the first wave of the pandemic in India, the tragic plight of millions of inter-State migrant labour walking thousands of kilometres, remained invisible. That was a classic case of social murder. And it was justified then as well in narratives which argued that, after all, it was the responsibility of the workers themselves for "voluntarily" undertaking such a journey. Just as it is the responsibility of the people themselves for causing the second wave. Yet, ironically, when the successful defeat of COVID-19 was celebrated in February by an official resolution of the Bharatiya Janata Party, it was the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi that was given credit, not the people.

When ordinary people, without access to expert advice, are asked to own up to their mistakes, powerful actors such as the Election Commission of India holding an eight-phase election in Bengal, the Uttarakhand Chief Minister justifying the Kumbh mela and the Prime Minister exulting about the size of an election rally crowd in West Bengal on a day when over 2,00,000 Indians were newly infected by the novel coronavirus, are all unassailable actions of the state.

By participating in the state's abdication of responsibility, one is



fostering conditions of social murder. The argument that cremations cannot be shown by the media because they are "sacred" to Hindus is a part of this act. Other than the obvious fallacy that Hindu cremations are not televised or recorded, here, the more critical questions such as how many deaths could have been prevented by a simple provision of oxygen, why people are forced to cremate their loved ones in parking lots or pavements, and if that is any less dignified than telling the story to the world remain unanswered.

As epidemiologists assert, obscuring the real gravity of a pandemic is the dangerous path to a bigger disaster. If the Chinese state had not hidden the pandemic in its initial stages, the world probably would have not been at this juncture. That is why there has been such a sustained focus by the world media on hotspots where death tolls mounted: Italy, Iran, the United States, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Peru, etc. But the tragedy in India is sought to be portrayed as a cultural exceptionalism that cannot be televised.

A different patrimonialism

In the last seven years, the Indian state has acquired distinct tenen-

cies of what sociologist Max Weber has called patrimonialism in which the ruler exercises traditional form of authority which rests on the "sanctity of immemorial traditions", in contrast to a rule based on a rational-legal bureaucracy or impersonal rules. But unlike in ideal typical patrimonialism, this highly personalised and centralised form of rule is not based on heredity, kinship ties or personal allegiances, rather on the ideology of religious majoritarianism as well as nationalism, and legitimised by election wins. Duty, patriotism, etc., become keywords here as was tellingly witnessed during the misery unleashed by demonetisation.

Ironically, this patrimonial government, which prided itself as a 'mai-baap sarkar', the dispenser of benevolence towards subjects, overnight transforms itself into one which asks citizens to fend for themselves, whether it is by procuring oxygen cylinders or arranging ambulances. This has resulted in a Social Darwinism in which only the most powerful have some chance of survival.

From the assertions of the Union Health Minister that there never was any shortage of oxygen, the Uttar Pradesh government charging people with First Information Reports (FIRs) for requesting oxygen, to the Haryana Chief Minister's comment that the dead cannot return and, therefore, it was pointless to discuss many unaccounted deaths, all depict a state that has shed its professed benevolence during the novel coronavirus pandemic.

As scholars identify, one of the fundamental problems in patrimonialism is ensuring accountability, something that becomes

stark during a pandemic when the patrimonial state goes missing. On the one hand, we have the belated act of sanctioning oxygen plants by the Prime Minister, which, keeping in line with governance as benevolence, is met with cabinet Ministers expressing their gratitude in unison. On the other, the Prime Minister has not addressed a single press conference on COVID-19, quite a stunning fact globally for the head of a democracy.

Become citizens, not subjects

While the Swedish Prime Minister was recently subject to questioning by a constitutional committee on COVID-19 handling, the present Indian state has no means of ensuring a critical scrutiny of the chronology of government decisions that led to the current crisis. For the moment, we will have to be content with scathing observations like those of the Allahabad High Court that deaths due to lack of oxygen are no "less than a genocide".

Engels had argued that the English ruling class' "class prejudice and preconceived opinions" had enveloped it in a "mad blindness" about the social murder that was happening in its midst, which, in any case, did not affect it. India, under the pandemic, is seeing a different kind of prejudice, pre-conceived opinions and mad blindness in sanctioning social murder. Unless people become citizens and not subjects under a patrimonial rule, the calamitous clouds of the pandemic portend a bleak future for Indian democracy as well.

Nissim Mannathukkaren is with Dalhousie University, Canada and tweets @nmannathukkaren

In Ireland's complex troubles, lessons for India

A functioning democracy must commit to addressing communal issues with vigilance, tolerance and compromise



KRISHNAN SRINIVASAN

The communal clashes of April in Northern Ireland caught the media attention of many countries, but not in India, though the events carry relevant lessons and warnings for this country. Those riots, that left 74 policemen injured, threaten to undermine the fragile peace between Protestant pro-British loyalist unionists who want to remain part of the United Kingdom forever, and Catholic pro-Irish nationalists who wish Northern Ireland to become part of the Republic of Ireland.

The riots are the culmination of a complex mix of change, resistance to change, and ingrained political and social inertia. Northern Ireland altered enormously for the better after the signing of the Anglo-Irish Good Friday Agreement in 1998, and for the accord to have received strong support across the divided island was a remarkable achievement. This Agreement began the process of dismantling border controls between the North and the Republic of Ireland, but subsequent deve-

lopments showed that social issues remained unaddressed: both religious communities experienced little or no peace dividend after the Agreement, and poverty and deprivation linked to educational under-achievement and high unemployment affects both nationalist and loyalist areas alike in Northern Ireland. There is an obvious lack of social and economic opportunities; 120,000 children are living in poverty, and more than 40,000 people remain on the social housing waiting list. Between 1998 and 2014, an abnormal number of suicides was registered, and that gloomy statistic keeps growing. The localities most deprived during the pre-Agreement communal riots remain the most deprived areas within Northern Ireland today.

Brexit, a stress test
Britain's break from the European Union (Brexit) was always going to prove a major stress test for Northern Ireland because 56% of its electorate voted to remain in the European Union. Much of the present anger relates to the specific protocol concerning Northern Ireland, which 'provided for the territory to remain in the customs union and single market of the European Union while protecting its status as part of the United Kingdom'. Nevertheless, the Irish

Protestant loyalists argue that the deal puts the union at risk. The unionist party 'campaigned for Brexit on the basis that a United Kingdom outside the European Union would make a future United Ireland much more difficult to achieve, but the opposite has actually turned out to be true, and a united Irish island is now being discussed in a way that scarcely seemed possible prior' to the Brexit referendum of 2016.

Accordingly, as a recent opinion article says, the Irish Catholic nationalists are talking up the prospects of achieving an early United Ireland and demanding a vote on it, which instils acute anxiety among the union loyalists. In short, 'Brexit has encouraged a strong revival of identity polarisation, and a possible Irish Language Act, that would give the Irish tongue equal status to English in Northern Ireland', is feared by unionists as yet another nail in the United Kingdom's coffin. Demography has changed since the Good

Friday Agreement; no longer do unionist parties have the majority, but political inertia prefers a vacuum, so progress toward an equitable and liveable peace has stalled. The article adds, 'past traumas continue to weigh heavily on current politics in Northern Ireland and that is unlikely to change as the twin challenges of managing the Protocol and preventing communal violence occupy the attention in that territory, Dublin and London in the years to come'.

Scheduled events

Elections scheduled next year to the 'Northern Ireland Assembly' will be followed in 2024 by an important vote on the Northern Ireland Protocol because under the terms of the Brexit agreement, the Assembly will have to vote on whether or not to accept the continuing operation of the Protocol.

Should unionists decide to boycott this vote, the legitimacy of the Protocol will be thrown open to question. The timing of any potential Scottish referendum on independence – also likely to be held around 2024 – may well further destabilise Northern Ireland's fragile politics', says the opinion article (<https://bit.ly/3eVY5Oo>).

All things considered, there is no person more like a Northern Irish Catholic than a Northern Irish Protestant and vice versa, alth-

ough obscurantists are loath to accept that basic reality. The fact that the people are just one, with parity in mutual fear, esteem and consent, is never addressed and artificial differences are played up by political elements wishing to stoke communal sentiments and keep both communities at the mercy of irresponsible and divisive forces. While the British, Irish and American governments have condemned the violence, there is a lack of local political leadership to stabilise this volatile situation.

Peace is an extraordinarily brittle entity, and any functioning democracy must ensure a daily commitment to addressing communal issues with vigilance, tolerance and compromise. These are lessons to be drawn in India. The recent violence in Northern Ireland shows that every country needs leadership that takes responsibility for peoples' social and economic problems and steers prejudices away from entrenched phobias. The ruling party in India needs to be aware that creating religious tensions between communities has incalculable deep-seated negative consequences that will severely damage every section of society and all our established political and national institutions.

Krishnan Srinivasan is a former Foreign Secretary

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Politics, reservation

There are important lessons to be drawn from the judgment in the Maratha reservation case. Today, there is often a complaint that there is a race for backwardness as that seems to be one way of moving forward. It may be an exaggerated statement but looking at the facts in the Maratha case, one gets the feeling that a sacred constitutional instrument has been used as a political tool. The M.G. Gaikwad Commission made its recommendations which were later reduced by the Bombay High Court. The Supreme Court struck them down by saying that the Marathas are in the mainstream of life. This speaks volumes of how the principle of reservation, though important for the evolution and egalitarianism of society, is sometimes used for political consolidation. That is not to say the 50% cap is justified or that the state should be denuded of

the power of deciding who should be a part of the backward classes as backwardness has to be decided in the context of several factors prevalent in the state which the National Commission may not properly look into. It also goes against the principles of cooperative federalism. Therefore, one is justified in drawing the conclusion that sometimes reservation is used not for the purpose of emancipation, but for self-aggrandisement using political and constitutional instruments of power. The Maratha case shows this.

Caution on scan
The writer (Editorial page, "A CT scan for COVID merits a word of caution", May 6) means well but in India, no patient in general would dare question a doctor. There are doctors who routinely prescribe various scans perhaps to absolve themselves later of blame for wrong

diagnosis. There are some practitioners who even suggest where the scan should be taken, pointing to the strong 'links' involved. With hospitals fleecing patients these days, a once-upon-a-time noble profession has become a business. At the same time, there are kind-hearted souls who practise medicine with humanism.

V.S. JAYARAMAN,
Chennai

Third wave' warning
The warning by the Government's Principal Scientific Adviser (Page 1, April 6), of an impending third COVID-19 wave, needs further evaluation. There is no third wave that has been spoken about in the media. The report must also be compared with what has been said by a leading virologist (Inside pages, "Surge may go down by end of May", May 6). I am sure that many will agree that any warning needs to be based on scientific reasoning rather than

extrapolation or a hunch. It needs to be corroborated by the medical fraternity. Such warnings, in this case, scary too, will only play on the minds of people, even demoralising frontline health workers.

A.V. RAKHARAN,
Trichy, Tamil Nadu

Anglo-Indians forgotten
The State of Tamil Nadu has been the home of the Anglo-Indian ever since the emergence of the community. It is still home to the largest concentration of Anglo-Indians in the world;

about 50,000 of them live in the city of Chennai. The victory of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam party and its allies in the recently concluded Assembly elections may possibly set right an injustice against Anglo-Indians. After the Lok Sabha election of 2019, instead of nominating two members of the Anglo-Indian community to the Lower House of Parliament, the Central government introduced Bills scrapping the Articles guaranteeing certain rights to this minuscule minority.

The then Government in Tamil Nadu followed suit and did away with the seat (Nominated) for the Anglo-Indian community in the State Legislature, with not even an attempted explanation.

BRYAN OLIVER PEPPIN,
Chennai

medium of English. People are also aware that some of the oldest schools in the country are 'Anglo-Indian', and in Tamil Nadu. While the community has had a very strong presence in the Indian Railways and in school education, it has also contributed its mite in the fields of law and order, the armed forces, the post and telegraph department, the revenue services, the IT industry, the entertainment industry, and in the sporting arena. The new government-elect, headed by the leader of the DMK legislature party, M.K. Stalin, could, through an act of magnanimity and kindness, revoke the order passed by the previous government and reintroduce an Anglo-Indian representative in the State Assembly, thereby demonstrating that everyone is included, irrespective of their numbers.



How the Left Front bucked a decades-old trend in Kerala

Welfare measures, the Pinarayi factor and good governance helped the LDF overcome allegations of corruption

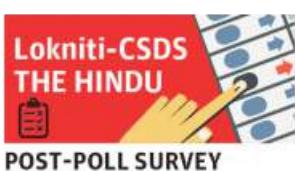
K.M. SAJAD IBRAHIM, R.
GIRISH KUMAR, VIBHA
ATTRI & SANDEEP SHASTRI

For almost four decades, power in Kerala has alternated between the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) and the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF). If this practice had continued, the UDF should have been voted to power in the just-concluded elections. But the voters gave a clear mandate for a second term to the LDF. For the LDF this was a key success in the wider context of national politics in general and the future of the Left parties in particular. For the UDF, this election has given it a second term in the Opposition and has proven to be a setback for the Congress, which was hoping to find a pathway for national recovery. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led was hoping to emerge as an important third force, but it was left without a representative in the newly elected Assembly.

The LDF won a decisive mandate, clinching 99 seats and surpassing its tally in the previous House. It also saw an increase in its vote share compared to five years ago. The UDF won only 41 seats (a decline of six seats) but managed to retain more or less the same vote share that it had secured in the last Assembly elections (Table 1). The BJP-led alliance lost the one seat it had and only saw a marginal increase in its vote share. While the BJP's vote share rose marginally, the vote share of its alliance partner, the Bharath Dhama Jana Sena, fell by 2.8%.

A second chance
In the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey, when asked whether the LDF should get another term, 51% of the respondents

categorically stated that it should, 27% were of the view that it should not, and 22% did not respond to the question. Five years ago, the Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey showed that 49% did not favour a second term for the incumbent UDF government and only 42% supported a second term for the sitting UDF.



government in 2016 (Table 2). In a separate question, voters were asked to compare the present LDF government with the previous UDF government. Close to half the respondents (45%) rated the LDF government better, whereas only three of every 10 respondents (28%) rated the UDF government as better. Two of every 10 felt that both were equally good or bad (Table 3).

The data further reveal that the respondents rated the LDF government high on most parameters (Table 4).

Pinarayi's popularity

In his five-year tenure, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had to face two floods as well as the Nipah outbreak and the COVID-19 pandemic. The welfare schemes launched by his government to give relief to the people during the national lockdown also appeared to bring the ruling alliance closer to the people. All but 6% of the respondents claimed to have benefited from the free food kits distributed by the government.

Due to his government's work, Mr. Vijayan remained extremely popular and he was the preferred chief mi-

Table 1: Performance of various alliances/ parties

Party/ Coalition	2021 Assembly elections		2016 Assembly elections	
	Seats won	Vote share (%)	Seats won	Vote share (%)
UDF	41	39.41	47	38.60
LDF	99	45.28	92	42.58
NDA	-	12.40	1	14.62
Others	-	2.91	-	4.2

Table 2: Performance of the State government

Satisfaction with the work done by the:	Fully satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Fully dissatisfied
Present LDF government	38	35	8	15
Previous UDF government	22	37	10	28

Note: Figures are percentages; the rest of the respondents did not answer the question | Source: Lokniti-CSDS post-poll surveys in Kerala during the 2021 and 2016 Assembly elections

Table 3: Advantage LDF

Which government is better? (%)	Note: Figures are percentages; the rest of the respondents did not answer the question
Present LDF government	45
Previous UDF government	28
Both are equally good	10
Both are equally bad	9

Note: Figures are percentages; the rest of the respondents did not answer the question | Source: Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey in Kerala during the 2021 Assembly elections

ministerial choice for 36% of the respondents. Former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy secured a distant second place with the support of 18%. No other leader in the State was able to secure even 5% of the total support for

the chief ministerial candidate. State Health Minister K.K. Shailaja was placed third, with 3% supporting her. The Opposition leader, Ramesh Chennithala, was the choice for 3% of the respondents. The BJP's move of

Table 4: Work done by Pinarayi government

Assessment of the work done by the Pinarayi government	Improved	Deteriorated	Remained the same	No Response
Medical facilities in government hospitals	73	17	5	5
Condition of government schools	72	17	4	7
Condition of roads	66	22	8	3
Supply of electricity	65	27	5	3
Supply of drinking water	52	32	10	7
Public bus/public transportation services	51	32	11	6
Law and order situation	39	36	19	6
Condition of farmers	30	29	29	12
Job opportunities	29	33	29	9
Condition of the fishing community	25	28	25	22

Note: Figures are percentages and may not total 100 due to rounding | Source: Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey in Kerala during the 2021 Assembly elections

Table 5: Scams

Corruption and impropriety accusations	Genuine	False	Not sure/Not heard of this/No response
Charges against KIIFB officials of violating the Foreign Exchange Act	28	22	50
Charges against Pinarayi in the gold smuggling-foreign currency case	32	27	41
Charges against LDF ministers in the gold smuggling-foreign currency case	34	24	43
Charges of kickbacks to employees of the LIFE Mission housing scheme	32	21	47
Charges of compromising COVID-19 patient's privacy in deal with U.S. firm Sprinklr	30	20	50
Charges of non-transparency in the deep sea fishing deal with a U.S. firm	29	20	51

Note: Figures are percentages and may not total 100 due to rounding | Source: Lokniti-CSDS Post Poll Survey in Kerala during the 2021 assembly elections

Votes for tackling the coronavirus



A health worker collecting the nasal swab of a man for a COVID-19 test at a mobile lab at Palakkad. ■ MUSTAFAH K.K.

Table 1: Did your household receive the free food kits distributed by the government?

Yes	94
No	3
Chose not to avail ourselves of it	3

Source: Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey in Kerala during the 2021 Assembly elections

Table 2: Did tackling the virus translate into votes?

Rate the steps taken by the State government to deal with COVID-19	Voted UDF	Voted LDF	Voted NDA	Voted others
Very good/good (72%)	33	57	8	2
Average (21%)	55	16	24	5
Very bad/bad (5%)	59	7	32	3

Satisfied with the food kits being provided

Fully/Somewhat satisfied (88%)	37	50	11	3
Fully/Somewhat dissatisfied (11%)	64	14	19	3

Note: Figures are percentages and may not total 100 due to rounding; the rest of the respondents did not answer the question. The figures in the parenthesis are the overall proportion of voters who said that

they are mostly Muslim households. However, four in every 10 of these households wanted to give the LDF another chance.

The work done by the Left government during the pandemic was remarkable not only on paper, but also in practice as a majority of the voters had availed themselves of the benefits of the government's schemes. This work surely translated into the LDF gaining people's trust. Vibha Attri is Research Associate, Lokniti-CSDS

Kerala, which has been dominated by two alliances, saw the Prime Minister call for a third alternative in the State while launching his party's campaign. However, the BJP failed to save the lone seat of Nemom it won in 2016. Despite a campaign revolving around the Sabarimala temple row, 'love jihad' and corruption cases against the Left, it did not succeed in attracting voters. It saw only a marginal increase in its vote share.

On being asked whether there is a need for a third alternative in Kerala's politics, more than half the respondents (56%) disagreed and one-third (33%) agreed. Even among those who agreed, the vote was split equally among the three alliances. Among those who did not respond to the question, LDF had a clear advantage with 46% of the votes in its favour (Table 1).

Furthermore, when people were asked whether the rise of the BJP in the State is good or bad for the social fabric, a majority said that it was bad (54%) and 17% responded in the affirmative. The remaining 29% either felt that it would make no difference or did not respond to the question. As one would expect, the NDA had a huge advantage among those who felt that the rise of the BJP is good for the social fabric of the State. The LDF was the favoured party among those who said that the BJP's presence is bad or will make no difference (Table 2).

The presence of the BJP has changed the political equation to some extent in Kerala. Yet, the State does not seem to be fully ready to experiment with a third alternative and the election results reflect this fact.

Vibha Attri is Research Associate, Lokniti-CSDS

Table 1: A political alternative needed?

There is a need for a third alternative to the UDF and LDF	Voted UDF	Voted LDF	Voted NDA	Voted others
Agree (33%)	33	32	32	3
Disagree (56%)	43	53	2	3
No response (11%)	39	46	10	5

Note: Figures are percentages and may not total 100 due to rounding; the figures in the parenthesis are the overall proportion of voters who said that | Source: Lokniti-CSDS post-poll survey in Kerala during the 2021 Assembly election

Table 2: The rise of BJP

Is the rise of the BJP in Kerala good or bad for the State's social fabric	Voted UDF	Voted LDF	Voted NDA	Voted others
Bad (54%)	43	52	2	3
Good (17%)	20	21	57	2
Won't make a difference (14%)	45	48	5	2
No response				

FROM PAGE ONE

SC wants formula on oxygen issue

It said that offering them a few 1,000 rupees for their services would not incentivise them to pitch in. The Bench suggested giving them grace marks as a reward for their services in combating the pandemic.

"Today, you have 1.5 lakh doctors who are waiting for NEET and have completed their courses. If you give them ₹5000, nobody will come serve... Likewise, 2.5 lakh nurses are trained and sitting at home," the Bench noted.

During the hearing, Justice Shah asked about the care given in rural areas of the nation.

"At the moment we are only looking at Delhi. But

what about the rural areas where most of the people are suffering? We have to consider a pan-India situation as well as the future situations," Justice Shah asked the government.

Justice Chandrachud said there was a rudimentary health infrastructure in rural areas. However, in Maharashtra, a task force of a dozen doctors was formed to communicate and advise hospitals on pandemic care in rural areas.

A High Court Bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and Talwant Singh also critiqued the Centre's PR exercise amidst the pandemic, and mooted that it was time to be more humane, while mentioning that even President Joe Biden had dropped the U.S. administration's resistance to intellectual property waivers for COVID-19 vaccines after "good sense prevailed".

The petitioner in the case, a senior citizen whose nephew had shipped him a concentrator as a gift, had challenged a May 1 notifica-



Relatives and attendants of COVID patients wait in queue for refilling oxygen in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO

tion that levied 12% GST on such imports from 28% earlier. He invoked Article 21 of the Constitution, which enshrines the fundamental right to life.

The government counsel said the Court's order had been escalated to the highest levels, but the decision was that the maximum possible relief had already been given

happening in the court. They will do more damage to your PR exercise... We are not saying that any PR exercise is required in COVID times... Let us be more humane, this is my request to you. It will win so many hearts for the government – people will feel comforted," Justice Singh said.

"Everybody doesn't have a relative abroad, no? Suppose a judge of this court wants to import, he doesn't have a relative. But he has a friend who says I will arrange it for you, but you bear the cost. Should the State, in these circumstances, be imposing a tax? How much are you gaining out of this collection?" Justice Shakdher asked the government counsel.

"I don't know why there is this resistance to this, which from every angle seems right? I can assure you that this will give us an opportunity to decide whether Article 21 is applicable and maybe it

will set a new trend," he said. "We want to keep our hands off... Good sense may prevail on them, which is what we hope, against all odds," Justice Singh noted, while Justice Shakdher observed that the U.S. administration had also acted in a similar way.

Referring to the difficulties being faced by all in similar circumstances as the petitioner, the judges mentioned the suffering of a lawyer "colleague" and remarked that the bureaucracy "just doesn't seem to be understanding this", despite losing very senior officers.

Justice Singh also said he had been searching for concentrators himself and they were not available in many countries.

Questioning the government on how much revenue it hoped to raise from such GST levies, the Court noted its law officers' fees may be more than the revenue generated.

IN BRIEF



Centre issues norms for vaccine camps at airports

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Thursday issued guidelines for setting up of vaccination camps at airports for aviation personnel. The guidelines from the Ministry of Civil Aviation require airport operators to tie up with State governments or private service providers such as hospitals for setting up COVID-19 vaccination centres.

Disability papers to be issued online from June 1

NEW DELHI

The Centre this week notified June 1 as the date from which all disability certificates would be issued online, a requirement under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016. The notification published on Wednesday made it mandatory for all States and Union Territories to issue the certificates to persons with disabilities (PwD) through the Department of Empowerment of PwD (DEPwD) portal.

Bangladesh gifts 10,000 Remdesivir vials to India

NEW DELHI

Bangladesh on Thursday handed over 10,000 vials of Remdesivir injection to an Indian government representative. The consignment of Remdesivir, which is used for treating COVID-19, was handed over by the Bangladesh Deputy High Commissioner in Kolkata at the Indian border port of Petrapole, a press release from the Government of Bangladesh said. The supply of the medicine took place days after the Ministry of External Affairs announced that India had been offered essential drugs and other necessary items by Dhaka to fight the second wave.

'Ayurvedic telemedicine for COVID-19 patients'

CHANDIGARH

Haryana Health Minister Anil Vij on Thursday said Ayurvedic medicines are very effective against COVID-19 and a facility for 'Ayurvedic Telemedicine' has been started by the government for patients. "Those interested in taking Ayurvedic Telemedicine in the State can call 1075 and consult

Ayurvedic physicians," he said in a statement. "A team of senior Ayurvedic doctors have been put on duty," he said.

PM reviews response to COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday undertook a comprehensive review of the COVID-19 situation and directed that States be given help and guidance about leading indicators to ramp up healthcare infrastructure.

"The PM noted that an advisory was sent to the States to identify districts of concern where case positivity is 10% or more and bed occupancy is more than 60% on either oxygen supported or ICU beds. PM also reviewed the availability of medicines," the release said.

EU to discuss U.S. vaccine patent plan at summit

The EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, said the 27-nation bloc was ready to talk about the U.S. proposal – but cagily remained non-committal for now. "We are ready to discuss how the U.S. proposal

for waiver could help" end the crisis, she said in a video address. "In the short run, however, we call upon all vaccine producing countries to allow exports and to avoid measures that disrupt supply chains."

Chrysostom laid to rest

STAFF REPORTER
PATHANAMTHITTA
The mortal remains of Philipose Mar Chrysostom, Metropolitan Emeritus of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, were laid to rest with State honours at the St. Thomas Mar Thoma Church courtyard in Thiruvalla on Thursday.

The final phase of the funeral service, led by Mar Theodosius Mar Thoma Metropolitan, began by 3 p.m.

All the Bishops of the

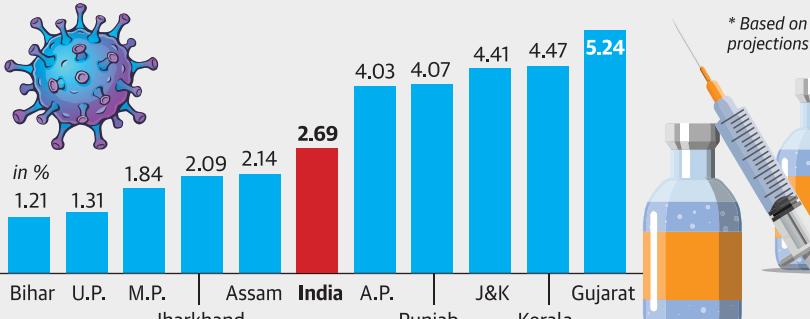
Mar Thoma Church were the co-celebrants. Heads of various other Churches and a wide array of leaders across all political parties attended the funeral service, carried out in four phases over a span of two days.

Earlier on Thursday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and Governor Arif Mohammad Khan visited the church headquarters in Thiruvalla and paid their last respects to the departed Metropolitan.

4,06,749 new cases, 3,783 fatalities

Vaccination coverage

As on May 6, Gujarat had administered at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to about 5% of its residents aged 18 to 60, the highest proportion among the major States. The lowest was in Bihar (1.21%).



About 20.19 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Thursday, about 4.5 lakh doses higher than what was recorded in the previous 24 hours. However, it is 1.74 lakh doses lower than what was recorded in the same period, a week ago. The number of daily doses has been on a declining trend since mid-April.

Sri Lanka bans travellers from India

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO
Travellers from India will not be permitted to disembark in Sri Lanka with immediate effect, Sri Lanka's Civil Aviation Authority has said.

The decision, made known on Thursday, has been taken in accordance with the instructions received from the Ministry of Health, officials said, effectively suspending a bilateral travel bubble arrangement between the two countries.

The restrictions will be reviewed "as soon as possible".

Although authorities had earlier announced that the travel bubble would be suspended due to the COVID-19 surge in India, the Ministry of Tourism subsequently said the "bubble" was in place, with strict health protocols and quarantine requirements.

'Oxygen saturation of 92 or 93 must not be considered critical'

Judicious use of oxygen the need of the hour: AIIMS Director



Randeep Guleria

ic. Misusing the same by a person with normal levels of oxygen can deprive someone whose saturation level is well below 90 or 80," he stated.

Oxygen therapy

The Ministry statement said, "Oxygen is crucial for the treatment of patients with severe COVID-19, since the disease affects lung functioning. Shortness of breath or difficulty of breathing is

one of the most common symptoms in patients with severe COVID-19. It also hampers the supply of oxygen to various parts of the body. They, hence, need oxygen therapy, to be supplied through medical oxygen."

According to a World Health Organization training manual on pulse oximetry, if the oxygen saturation is 94% or lower, the patient needs to be treated quickly. A saturation of less than 90% is a clinical emergency.

The latest clinical guidance for management of adult COVID-19 patients, issued by the Health Ministry, stated that an oxygen concentration less than or equal to 93% on room air requires hospital admission, while that below 90% is classified as a severe disease, requiring admission in the intensive care unit (ICU).

Patent waiver will help fight virus: govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India on Thursday said a temporary waiver of certain provisions of the intellectual property rights under a World Trade Organization (WTO) agreement would be an important step to enable the scaling up of manufacturing and the timely availability of affordable COVID-19 vaccines and essential medical products.

In view of COVID-19, India and South Africa had on October 2 last year proposed a relaxation in the norms of the TRIPS agreement to ensure quick and affordable access to vaccines and medicines for developing countries. India welcomed the U.S. government's support for this initiative. "We are hopeful that with a consensus-based approach, the waiver can be approved quickly at the WTO," it said.

The panelists include Vishesh Menon, CEO, Education, Skilling and Consulting Services, Ampersand Group; Richa Dwivedi Sakla-

Webinar on new age career options

It is a part of an SRM virtual conclave



ni, Founder CEO Inomi Learning LLP; and T.V. Gopal, Dean, CET, SRMIST.

Radhika Santhanam, assistant editor, The Hindu will moderate the session. To register for the free webinar visit <http://bit.ly/SRMTH3> or scan the QR Code.

SRMEE will be held in two phases. The first phase will be on May 23 and 24 and the second phase will be on July 25 and 27.

Congress Parliamentary Party to meet virtually

First meeting since Budget session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP), headed by Sonia Gandhi, will meet virtually on Friday to discuss the COVID-19 situation. But a section of the party is asking why the leadership has not conducted a post-mortem of the Assembly election results yet.

It is the first time the CPP will be meeting virtually after the Budget session of Parliament ended on March 25. While some prominent members of the G-23 like Ghulam Nabi Azad and Karpil Sibal had publicly said the debate on poll perfor-

mance can wait in the face of a public health emergency, others maintain that the pandemic should not be used to "cover up the leadership's failure to address organisational issues".

"It is almost delusional to think that it is business as usual. Responsibility should be fixed as to why we lost Kerala and Assam," an MP said on Thursday. Several party leaders have also questioned the Bengal unit's decision to "boycott" the swearing-in of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday, which put the Congress on the same page as the BJP.

In his chequered political career, Mr. Singh's political

party and his alignments went through several avatars – from heading the Lok Dal (A) and the Janata Party in 1987 and 1988, becoming the general secretary of the Janata Dal in 1989 with V.P. Singh, establishing the RLD in 1996, becoming a Minister in the Vajpayee government from 2001 to 2003 and in the Congress-led second United Progressive Alliance government till 2014.

Drew strength
All political formations he headed or was part of saw him drawing strength from the rural hinterland of western Uttar Pradesh.

He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Baghpat from 1989 to 2009, losing the seat only in the bypoll of 1998. The frequent changes in

and the general election of 2014.

Jat, Muslim support
The strong support base of the Jats and the Muslims in western Uttar Pradesh, the State that sends the largest contingent of Lok Sabha members, made him an essential part of many of the coalition governments in the 1990s and 2000s.

The communal riots in Muzaffarnagar in 2013, however, saw this support base splinter and his party suffered a major defeat in 2014 without a single seat. In the last year or so, his party vigorously campaigned against the three controversial farm

laws, an issue that is of concern to agrarian communities over and above communal considerations.

Former colleagues of Mr. Singh recalled his personal warmth towards them, whatever his political alignment happened to be at a particular time. One of the first calls that former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah made to a Union Minister in Delhi after becoming the Chief Minister was to Mr. Singh, a gesture underlining the fact that it was on a Lok Dal ticket in the 1970s that the former had fought his first election.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Mr. Singh, stating that the latter was always at the forefront of fighting for the interests of farmers.

Rashtriya Lok Dal chief Ajit Singh dies of COVID-19

In his chequered political career, his political party and alignments went through several avatars



Ajit Singh

his political alliances did not add much to his heft, but kept him relevant in the coalition era of the 1990s and the early 2000s. He was elected to the Lok Sabha from Baghpat from 1989 to 2009, losing the seat only in the bypoll of 1998. The frequent changes in

dent of the Janata Dal, had been a close associate of both Chaudhary Charan Singh and Mr. Singh.

Personal warmth'
"What stood out with Ajit Singhji was his personal warmth and courtesy to colleagues and former colleagues. I have visited his home and his attitude would be the same warm one, whether you were political fellow travellers at that point or not."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Mr. Singh, stating that the latter was always at the forefront of fighting for the interests of farmers.

In Kerala, a shift in social basis of voting

Christians, Muslims, Dalits and OBCs backed LDF in the election, contributing to its massive victory

SHREYAS SARDESAI

The traditional social basis of voting in Kerala underwent some important changes this time, contributing to the larger-than-expected victory of the LDF over the UDF. A modest but significant shift was noticed among the Muslim and Christian communities, who constitute 27% and 18% of the State's population, respectively. While the two communities have traditionally voted for the UDF and continued to do so this time as well, they also warmed up to the LDF at the expense of smaller players, giving the LDF a further edge over the UDF.

According to Lokniti-CSDS's post-poll survey data, nearly two-fifths (39%) of Muslims and Christians voted for the LDF this time, as opposed to about one-thirds (35%) in the 2016 election. The UDF, on the other hand, got the same level of support among Muslims (58%) and an increased share among Christians (57%). Support for the UDF, however, considerably declined among the two minority communities in comparison to the 2019 Lok Sabha election. Back then, at least two-thirds of Muslims and Christians had voted for it. For the LDF, the vote gains compared to the Lok Sabha poll were nine and 14 percentage points, respectively.

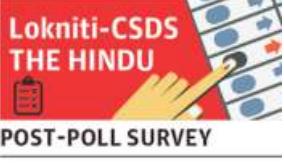
In regional terms, while Muslim support for the UDF this time continued to be quite high (at about two-thirds) in the Malabar region (an area mostly contested by the UDF constituent – the IUML), it fell drastically to

How castes and communities voted in Kerala, 2021 vs 2016								
	Voted UDF		Voted LDF		Voted NDA		Voted Others	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Hindu	26	25	48	50	22	21	4	4
Nairs	20	38	45	32	33	27	2	3
Other Upper castes	53	35	36	27	11	32	<1	6
Ezavas	28	21	49	53	18	23	5	3
Other OBCs	27	17	49	61	19	18	5	4
SCs	22	21	51	69	23	7	4	4
Muslims	58	58	35	39	3	1	4	2
Christians	51	57	35	39	10	2	4	1
Others (includes STs)	27	28	53	42	14	22	6	8

Figures are percentages and may not add up to 100 due to rounding

Poorer Muslims and Christians voted for the LDF far more compared to 2016; UDF lost support among lower and poor class Muslims

Religion by Economic Class	Voted UDF		Voted LDF		Voted NDA		Voted Others	
	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021	2016	2021
Hindu Lower and Poor	25	21	52	52	18	25	5	3
Hindu Middle and Upper	29	30	40	49	29	16	2	5
Muslim Lower and Poor	56	50	35	46	3	1	7	3
Muslim Middle and Upper	60	66	35	32	4	1	1	2
Christian Lower and Poor	51	54	36	44	6	1	6	1
Christian Middle and Upper	49	60	35	36	12	3	3	2



POST-POLL SURVEY

Compared to 2016, LDF gained among Christians in Malabar and Travancore regions and among Muslims in Cochin and Travancore regions

	Voted UDF	Voted LDF	Voted NDA	Voted Others
MALABAR				
Hindu	23 (21)	53 (62)	21 (12)	2 (5)
Muslim	63 (62)	35 (35)	1(1)	1 (2)
Christian	44 (48)	55 (48)	(-)	2 (4)
COCHINE				
Hindu	22 (25)	46 (41)	25 (32)	6 (2)
Muslim	45 (61)	49 (25)	2 (8)	3 (6)
Christian	62 (47)	33 (48)	3 (1)	2 (4)
TRAVANCORE				
Hindu	30 (30)	51 (44)	17 (22)	2 (4)
Muslim	52 (49)	45 (42)	(- 4)	4 (5)
Christian	57 (53)	40 (25)	2 (17)	1 (5)

Figures are percentages and may not add up to 100 due to rounding

less than half in the Cochin region, way below the levels recorded in 2016. It is here that the LDF scored over the UDF among Muslims.

Interestingly, all of the gain among Christians for the LDF and the UDF came at the expense of the BJP and other players. The BJP, which had secured around 10% of the votes from the Christian community in the 2016 election, managed only about 2% this time. This decline is significant given that the party had actively raised the spectre of 'love jihad' and conversions to woo Christian voters in the run-up to the election and the

fact that the BJP's top leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had held discussions with several church leaders to find a solution to the long-standing feud between Orthodox and Jacobite sects of the Malan-

kara Syrian Church. However, none of that seems to have worked.

For the shift of Christian and Muslim votes towards the LDF this time, we found that there was a clear class aspect to it. Support for the LDF among lower-class and poor Muslims increased from 35% to 46%, and among lower class and poor Christians from 36% to 44%.

As far as the majority Hindu community is concerned, its voting pattern remained more or less unchanged compared to the 2016 election, with the LDF, the UDF and the NDA drawing almost similar levels of support as they had done the last time, but for a slight uptick in support for the LDF. However, there were some significant caste-wise variations that bear mention – the most significant of them being with respect to the Scheduled Caste or Dalits. Dalit support for the LDF increased massively this time to over two thirds (69%), an 18-percentage-point rise compared to the 2016 election. The BJP got a 16 percentage point decline in Dalit support.

The other major area of gain among Hindus for the LDF came from the non-Ezava OBCs, whose support for the LDF climbed from 49% to 61%, and this was largely at the expense of the UDF. The Ezavas, who have traditionally supported the LDF, continued to do so this time as well. The BJP also made some gains among Ezavas, which seems to have come at the cost of the UDF. For the UDF, the only significant gains came from the Nair community. The front managed to net about two-fifths of their support as opposed to one-fifth in 2016. Nairs and other upper castes were, in fact, the only communities among whom the LDF did not perform well.

The author is a Research Associate at Lokniti-CSDS, Delhi

Sabarimala issue did not affect voters' preferences

But people's stand on the unresolved case has hardened

SHREYAS SARDESAI

Opposition to the Sabarimala judgment however did not affect the LDF too adversely with many who were opposed to the judgment also voting for it, much more so than they had done in 2019 ()

	Voted UDF	Voted LDF	Voted NDA	Voted Others
SC's Sabarimala judgment				
Fully support it	24 (21)	68 (70)	5 (5)	4 (4)
Somewhat support it	27 (50)	62 (44)	10 (1)	2 (6)
Somewhat oppose it	32 (60)	62 (31)	4 (1)	2 (9)
Fully oppose it	42 (47)	38 (26)	18 (25)	3 (2)
No response	49 (62)	44 (24)	3 (13)	4 (1)

nued to hold strong opinions about the issue, they do not seem to have punished the Left for it in the same way they did in 2019. Among the six of every ten (58%) people who said that they fully opposed the Sabarimala verdict, the UDF got 42% of their votes and the LDF was very close behind at 38%.

However, the survey also found that most people continue to be unhappy with the

The author is a Research Associate at Lokniti-CSDS, Delhi

People's opposition to SC's Sabarimala judgment increased compared to the 2019 Lok Sabha elections

	SC's Sabarimala judgment				
	Fully support it	Somewhat support it	Somewhat oppose it	Fully oppose it	No response
2021 All	11	6	6	58	19
2019 All	14	12	13	48	12
2021 Hindu Men	16	8	8	63	5
2019 Hindu Men	20	11	12	53	4
2021 Hindu Women	9	6	4	74	7
2019 Hindu Women	14	7	5	64	10

Most people expressed dissatisfaction with the LDF government's handling of the Sabarimala issue

	Level of satisfaction with the LDF government's handling of the Sabarimala temple entry issue				
	Fully satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Somewhat dissatisfied	Fully dissatisfied	No response
Overall	11(14)	6(18)	8(15)	54(41)	21(13)
Hindu Men	13(21)	6(16)	11(12)	64(45)	6(7)
Hindu Women	9(11)	7(13)	9(10)	67(56)	9(10)

Himachal Pradesh High Court rejects bail plea of rape accused

The word 'no' does not need any further explanation, it says

VIKAS VASUDEV

CHANDIGARH

"No means no – the simplest of sentences has become the most difficult for some men to understand," was the observation made by Himachal Pradesh High Court as it rejected a bail plea of a rape accused on Wednesday.

During the day, Union Minister Anoop Chittkara in his judgement observed:

"No means no – the simplest of sentences

In pandemic's rural sweep, death and deprivation

Families are crushed under the weight of the loss of loved ones and livelihoods, even as they struggle with the financial burden of getting treatment for COVID-19

Lack of income causing anxiety

Workers in rural Kerala are badly hit

KERALA BUREAU
KOCCHI

Shanthi M., a 53-year-old from a family dependent on dairy farming in the Rayamangalam panchayat along the eastern suburbs of Ernakulam district, has dumped down the drain nearly 17 litres of milk daily ever since two members of her family tested positive for COVID-19. There are no takers for milk from an infected household. Nor is the family at liberty to cut grass from the neighbourhood to feed the cattle.

While the second wave forces through rural Kerala, it is loss of livelihood that are worrying many. Baburaj Kothamuttath of Chenoli near Perambra in Kozhikode, who earns a living by renting out utensils and generators for public and priv-

ate events, has been in dire straits ever since the pandemic hit in March 2020. His hopes of a recovery has now been dashed by the second wave-induced cancellation or postponement of events.

P.C. Sathyam, who runs a printing press in Nochad, says the pandemic put a stop to arrival of paper from China, which led to price rise and a fall in quality. There is loss of business too, he said.

Shibu, 40, an auto-rickshaw driver who used to take tourists around Kovalam and Vizhinjam in Thiruvananthapuram, is among the many casual workers whose livelihoods have been derailed. He has been working in plantations lately. Free ration has helped his family.

(With inputs from M.P. Praveen, A.S. Jayanth and Sarah Babu George)

Bring up the bodies: a morbid tale

Hospitals in interior Telangana play fast and loose with bills after deaths

R. AVADHANI
SANGAREDDY

Families are being crippled financially in their struggle to get treatment for loved ones suffering from COVID-19.

In Telangana, the family of 65-year-old B. Yellaiah (name changed) of Pulkal have had a harrowing time. When Mr. Yellaiah developed symptoms, he was taken to the Government Hospital at Sangareddy where a test confirmed he was COVID-19 positive. The hospital started his treatment.

The family felt that Mr. Yellaiah would get better treatment in a private hospital and shifted him to one. Mr. Yellaiah battled for his life for nearly a week and died on Wednesday due to COVID-related complications. The kin were present with a bill for ₹13 lakh.

"Soon after the death, we were told to arrange for ₹13 lakh towards a final settle-



Sorrowful time: A body of a COVID-19 victim being taken from a hospital for the last rites in Sangareddy. ■ MOHD ARIF

ment. We pleaded that we could not pay that much. They refused to hand over the body. Finally, a district-level officer intervened to give the body for the last rites," a relative, preferring not to be named, told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

The family was told to sign an agreement with a person

treatment. Some private hospitals did not agree to admit him stating that the government servants insist on comprehensive bills for reimbursement, which these hospitals were not ready to give. Mr. Kumar had to bring his plight to the notice of senior government officials who spoke to a private hospital, where he got admission.

But, after seven days of treatment, Mr. Kumar passed away. After a great amount of pressure was exerted on the hospital by officials, the family of Mr. Kumar got bills for the ₹8 lakh they had paid towards the treatment.

"None of the hospitals are collecting the charges as prescribed by the government. There is no one acting tough against the private hospitals looting patients. We are collapsing financially," said the son of a man who recently passed away after contracting COVID-19.

For Anamalai tribes, it's still an urban blight

WILSON THOMAS
COIMBATORE

Residents of two tribal settlements within the limits of the Anamalai Tiger Reserve (ATR), around 100 km from Coimbatore city, were gearing up for the annual festival of their local deity, Vairappattan, on Thursday.



A view of the Kattupatti tribal settlement.

pregnant women and newborns.

"We were told that the PHC would enroll us for a new *thaduppoosi* (vaccine). But we do not know much about it," added another resident.

Very few people from these settlements have had school education like Ms. Selvi's second son Murali, who completed his SSLC and an ITI course.

"First of all, residents of remote tribal settlements lack awareness about COVID-19. The Health Department should take efforts to have a dialogue with them to create awareness about the pandemic," said S. Thanraj from the Ektta Parishad, Tamil Nadu, which recently distributed cotton washable masks to tribal families in the ATR.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department arranged for the vaccination of 300 men from different tribal communities who work as frontline staff, according to Arockiaraj Xavier, Deputy Field Director of ATR. "Efforts are being made to take the initiative in all settlements in the Pollachi Division of the ATR," he added.

Punjab hit by confusion over vaccine doses

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Serious supply constraints in COVID-19 vaccine doses have forced the Punjab government to limit vaccination for the 18-44 years age group to major urban centres. The vaccine shortage has even hit the ongoing vaccination programme for people above 45 years in the State.

In Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar district, Rishi Raina, 48, who works in a private firm, is anxious as the date for the second dose of vaccination inches closer.

"The rising cases and deaths in rural areas have alarmed Mr. Pokharkar.

City folk walk away with Narayangaon's precious doses

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE



Senior citizens at a vaccination hub in rural Pune.

ban areas are coming here to take their jabs...this must stop," he says.

Each day, he enquires at the vaccination centre in Narayangaon in Junnar taluk, only to be disappointed.

An acute crunch in the urban pockets of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad has prompted a scramble among residents there, some of whom travel hundreds of kilometres to get their doses from rural areas. This has stirred anger among rural folk who find it tough to access vaccines.

Pune Zilla Parishad member Ashatai Buchke has warned that she will not allow any urban residents to come and get doses which "rightfully belonged" to the rural residents. "Given that vaccines are in short supply, we will not allow any more cars from Pune or Pimpri-Chinchwad," she said.

When he too tested positive, Mr. Kumar said, "I thought my days were numbered. I wept like a child. My wife and children were sha-

Stress, fear and the healing touch

K. UMASHANKER
CHITTOR

After some Class X students tested COVID-19 positive on April 29, Ravi Kumar (41), a biology teacher at the municipal high school at Nagari was gripped with fear.

Mr. Kumar, who has a physical challenge from polio, had travelled 20 km from home to the school several days last month. The fact that three of his colleagues had succumbed to COVID had whipped up his worst fears.

When he too tested positive, Mr. Kumar said, "I thought my days were numbered. I wept like a child. My wife and children were sha-

ken." In the next two days, all the family members tested positive. But timely help came from the field staff at a primary health centre.

"We were taken to the triage Centre at Nagari. We were advised home isolation and given medicine kits. Till last night, it was hell for my father with body pains and severe headache," Mr. Kumar's 17-year-old daughter Geetha said.

Deputy District Medical and Health Officer and District Nodal Officer (Triage Centres) P. Ravi Raju said:

"We urge the COVID field staff to instil confidence among the patients and help them shed the fears."

Few face problems in getting jabs in Assam

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Few in Assam have faced problems in getting COVID-19 vaccine jabs. Some like J. Choudhury of Doojooma in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district faced some anxious moments when he and his wife, both past 50 years, went to the government hospital on April 14 to get their second doses. The hospital turned them away because of a shortage of vaccines but they got vaccinated five days later.

Health and Family Welfare (HFW) officials said there had been some "rationalisation" of vaccines but "there is an instruction

from the highest level that the second dose should not be stopped while the first dose should also be administered."

The HFW officials, however, have taken note of some private hospitals having administered both doses to people below 45 years in March-April. This came to light after a 39-year-old swimmer and his wife posted the news of their vaccination on social media.

"It seems the hospital authorities have violated guidelines and age bar restrictions. We are looking into the matter with utmost priority," Director of Health Services (Family Welfare) Munindra Nath Ngatey said.

Poor vaccine coverage in Karnataka's villages

Most people have to travel to nearby towns to meet their medical needs

KUMAR BURADIKATTI
R. KRISHNA KUMAR
KALABURAGI/MYSURU

Bandarwad gram panchayat in the Kalaburagi district in north Karantaka has so far reported 56 COVID-19 cases, all of them in the second wave. Four persons have succumbed to the virus so far.

However, of the population of approximately 7,800 in the villages of Sirasagi, Om Prakash, a retired government employee, said that while he had taken two doses of the vaccine, with the second dose administered on April 28, he had received a message on May 5 stating that his vaccination was still due.

"I am so puzzled after reading the message. I got vaccinated at Mohali's Civil Hospital. Now, if I have to go to the hospital again for checking on the message discrepancy, it would mean exposing myself to the virus," he said.



The lone health centre in Bandarwad.

private hospital in Kalaburagi. This has led to fear of vaccination and of potential expenses," said Rajendra Sardar, an advocate from the village.

On Wednesday, there was no stock of vaccines in the lone Primary Health Centre (PHC) in Bandarwad village. The PHC has a staff nurse and the doctor comes only occasionally from Gabbur, a neighbouring village. Most people travel to the district headquarters of Kalaburagi, 40 km away, for their medical needs.

The situation is not very different in Chamrajnagar district in south Karnataka, which was in the limelight recently, with 24 people dy-

ing in a span of 24 hours, allegedly due to the lack of oxygen.

Dr. N.S. Prashanth of the Institute of Public Health, Bengaluru, who has worked extensively in Chamarajanagar, said there were issues related to testing, tracking and isolating patients in a village setting.

Citing one example, he said there were no toilet facilities, leave alone a separate toilet for patients, as a result of which there could be community transmission.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13240

H	C	C	M	H				
P	E	A	F	O	S	H	K	
A	L	H	O	T	L	E		
S	W	E	D	S	H	T	L	I
E	S	W	E	R	T	L	I	S
T	R	E	N	R	O	A		
E	A	S	T	E	N	R		
L	P	E	P	S	R	D		
P	R	E	P	R	S	D		

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

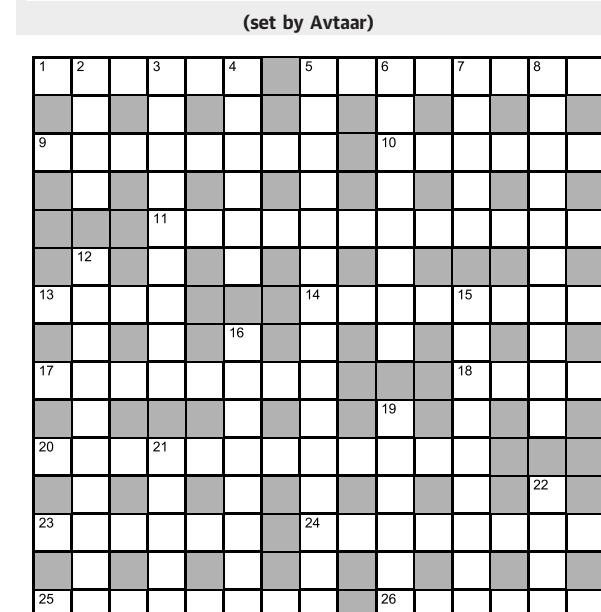
FAITH

Repository of mercy

Koortazhvan, in his Varadaraja Stavam refers to Lord Varadaraja of Kanchi as Srinidhim and also Dayanidhim. The description of the Lord as Srinidhim reminds us of the role of Goddess Mahalakshmi in bringing us close to the Lord, and thereby paving the way for our eventual liberation. He is also Dayanidhim – He is the repository of daya (mercy). His mercy is not finite. It is a wealth of mercy, which is what saves His devotees. Koortazhvan also uses the description "sarva bhoota suhrdam" for Lord Varadaraja. That means He has no enemies. But if that were so, then why did He kill during His avatars? Those He killed were inimical to His devotees, and this earned His wrath. They were punished for the sin of tormenting His devotees, elaborated P.B. Rajahamsam in a discourse.

Once during one of Parasara Bhatta's discourses, a sishya told him that he wanted to see Lord Narasimha and offer prayers. Parasara Bhatta told him that he could pray to Lord Ranganatha, with a request for His appearance in the form of Narasimha. The Lord would oblige, provided, of course, that there was a Prahlada among the people there. Could anyone consider himself the equal of Prahlada? He came as Narasimha, because of the unshakeable bhakti of Prahlada, in the face of torture and attempts to kill him. Anyone else would have given up his devotion and fallen in line with Hiranyakasipu's orders. But the child remained steadfast. That kind of devotion, naturally, was rewarded by the Lord.

One way to know the Supreme One is through a study of the Vedas. This lustrous One made Hastigiri His abode. Even the Vedas are unable to fully reveal His glory. But Hastigiri, the hill one which He stays in Kanchipuram, shows all His luminousness to the world.



ACROSS

-

In Kerala, one can't get enough of pathiris during the month of Ramzan. The popular dish changes its form, shape and flavour every few miles



Pathiris ON MY PLATE

ATHIRA M

It is the month of Ramzan and in Kerala, pathiris – gluten-free flatbread made with roasted rice flour – are everywhere, especially in the northern districts of Kozhikode, Kannur and Malappuram.

Even traditional pathiris vary from place to place, within this region. The finest version called *neriya* pathiri or *nice* pathiri in Kozhikode becomes a slightly thicker *orotti* or *kai* pathiri in Vadakara, Thalassery and Mahe. *Tyre* pathiri, the plumpest of the lot, resembling a bun, is popular in Wayanad. Ranging from the basic flatbread to layered and deep-fried varieties, one is spoilt for choice.

Rice pathiris are usually rolled out by hand or with the help of a mechanical press. Then there are the ones made of refined flour (*maida*) or wheat flour, that can be prepared in a variety of ways.

Madakkai pathiri or *kannu vacha* pathiri (square-shaped fried bread made with wheat flour), *thenga* (coconut) pathiri, silky pathiri, mixed rice pathiri, *kinna* pathiri, and *arachu chutta*

pathiri are a few other variations. *Ney* pathiri or *ney pathal* is deep-fried with shallots, grated coconut and cumin in it.

Abida Rasheed, doyenne of Moplah cuisine, says: "I make all the different kinds of pathiris during Ramzan, since my mother and husband are from different parts of Kannur, and my father from Kozhikode."

Dough it right

The three basic ingredients of rice pathiri are roasted raw rice flour, water and salt. The dough is made by cooking flour in boiling water. Kneading the dough itself is an art, and has to be done while the dough is still warm.

The bread has to be dusted generously with rice flour (that is why they are called *podi* pathiris as well). "The flour should be of good quality. Besides this, the proportion of the flour to water will have to be correct to get the right consistency. It is not an easy process, but even now I make my own pathiris at home," adds Ummi Abdulla, an 86-year-old expert of Moplah cooking.

Although pathiri or orotti flour is available in the market,

many still use freshly milled flour. Rafiya CK, a home-chef from Kozhikode, says that at least five kilograms of rice flour, roasted and plain, are stocked in most households during the month of Ramzan to make pathiris alone. "While I use a press, at my in-laws' place they make

heaps of it using a rolling pin. And all of them look identical," she says.

"Pathiris taste better if you cook them on a banana leaf instead of directly placing them on the pan," says Abida.

Tyre pathiri, a hand-pressed variety made of boiled rice, is placed between banana leaves and cooked in clay pots. Then it is held

upright using two spatulas and wheeled around in the pot to cook its edges. It tastes best when soaked in coconut milk, says Rafiya.

The trickiest to make is the super-light *nura* (foam) pathiri. A batter of rice flour and eggs is beaten vigorously, and the foam that rises to the top is poured on a hot pan. Although coconut

Take your pick (Clockwise from bottom) Spicy, layered and chicken-filled athishaya pathiri; simple rice-based pathiri; meat-stuffed irachi pathiri and stacks of orottis ■ NABILA SHANAVAS AND SREEJITH R KUMAR

pathiri or a spicy-sweet deep-fried dumpling is another popular snack. *Kunji* pathiri (*kakkorotti* or *kunji pathal*) or steamed coin-shaped pathiris mixed in a meat gravy is also prepared in many households.

Thiruvananthapuram-based Nabila Shanavas, a home chef and restaurateur, prepares both the traditional and layered varieties, at home and to be sold as iftar snacks at her restaurant. "Thanks to my sister-in-law who is from Kozhikode, we have a scrumptious spread of pathiris at home. Some of the dishes – *muttapathiri* or *ottada*, for example – come from my mother's side who is from Thiruvamcode in Kanyakumari district. While we prepare it with rice flour and egg, in Malabar region they use *maida*. We have a special clay pot to cook this pathiri and it goes well with coconut milk or ghee, and sugar. *Chakkoli* is our version of *kakkorotti*. Then there is *omana* pathiri, which is basically *maida* dosa with a sweet filling," Nabeela says.

The list just goes on, as experienced hands across the State experiment with taste, technique and ingredients in their kitchens in this holy month of fasting and feasting.



Aval isthiri (poha, sev and banana)

Satheeshan PV's tea stall at Kannapuram in Kannur does not have a name. But everyone in the locality and across Kerala knows his shop for its *aval isthiri* (which loosely translates to ironed flattened rice). Satheeshan is not sure how the dish got its name, but he has been serving it since the 1970s. His father came up with the dish, which is something like a Malayali *bhel puri* – made of *aval*, sugar, Robusta banana and *sev* (*omapodi*).

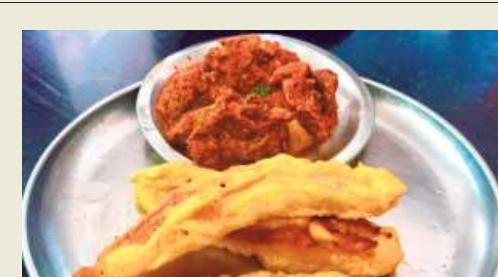
"The magic is in the mixing of ingredients," says Satheeshan, whose has seen his father make it back in the day. "It is a hot favourite here; simple, healthy and filling," he adds. People from across Kerala have travelled to Kannur to try the dish, says Satheeshan. "If you examine it, it is rather simple. But I am not sure what inspired my father to come up with such an unusual dish," adds Satheeshan, who says he has not changed the original recipe.

Meat with banana fritters

One of the oldest among Kerala's odd couplings is the *pazhampori* (banana fritters) and beef roast. Sree Muruga Cafe in Tripunithura, Kochi, popularised this rather wacky combination, which is a popular snack today. Started in 1943, the tea shop has always sold *pazhampori* and beef roast, but it became famous much later, says Sathyam KB, the owner of Sree Muruga.

"Around 1994, when Malayalam actor Jayasurya was shooting for a television show, he and the crew happened to see someone relishing *pazhampori* with beef. Word spread quickly and the media made the dish popular," he adds. The combo is one of the best selling at Sree Muruga today.

TV personality



and chef Raj Kalesh says the pairing owes its origin to North Indian lorry drivers, who ordered the sweet *pazhampori* to balance the spice of the famed Kerala roast meat.

"It gradually became a thing to order *pazhampori* with it," he says. The fritters too are crispy, fried in rice batter instead of *maida*, adds Kalesh.

Savalavada (onion pakora) with squid or chicken roast

Any fried snack works well with any non-vegetarian gravy, says Ashvin George, a traveller and food enthusiast. Salwa, an eatery in Thoppumpady, Kochi, usually does brisk business around 5am based on just this principle. Its best-selling dish is *savalavada* (onion pakora) served with squid roast. "It is just *savalavada* usually, but once in a while, there is *pazhampori* as well."

Every morning, they fry up these delicious snacks by 2am or 3am for the men who go out to sea. The *savalavada* is often had with chicken or beef roast as well," adds Ashvin.

He also suggests you try the meat with *neyyappam* (a traditional sweet made of jaggery and rice flour).

He tasted this combo at a small hotel in Wayanad, whose owner (whom he refers to as Majeedka), grinds the rice for the *neyyappam* in the afternoon and makes them in the evening. The beef, prepped as early as 10am, is cooked slowly through the day, and makes for a soul satisfying match with *neyyappam*. "These are not conventional combinations. It is up to each person, really."

Whatever floats your boat," says Ashvin, whose personal idea of an ultimate breakfast is a much more conventional combination of *poori* with fried eggs.

HORS D'OEUVRÉS



Tea travels

Karma Kettle has introduced six new teas, inspired by Indian destinations. Since travel is currently off the cards, the brand hopes to bring voyages to the palette instead, with products reminiscent of different parts of India, from the hill station of Gulmarg to the colourful ghats along the Ganges, all the way to the lush tea estates of Darjeeling and the scenic mountain vistas of Sikkim. Gulmarg is a *kahwa* chai. Benares is a blend of Assam black tea with spices such as cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, clove, fennel, mace, nutmeg, and bay leaf. Batasia brews into a bright yellow cup with flavour hints of cantaloupe and honeydew. Darjeeling first flush is a black tea that boasts a muscatel flavour and floral bouquet. Darjeeling second flush is a black tea that also features tones of Muscat grape, along with citrusy, earthy notes. Nathula, a herbal, floral loose leaf tisane featuring Himalayan rhododendron, tulsi, clove, basil, marigold, and calendula, is reminiscent of the scenic vistas of Gangtok. The brand also has a range of iced teas in their Zen collection. Prices range from ₹200 to ₹400.



Green shoots of awareness

Eleven Madison Park, the Manhattan restaurant that has been called the best in the world, has announced that it would serve a plant-based menu as it reopens after lockdown. This is a big change for the restaurant, led by chef Daniel Humm (in picture), that is known for its signature dishes featuring sucking pig, sea urchin and lavender-glazed duck. Significantly, the restaurant's menu will keep its pre-pandemic price of \$335, including tip. Humm said the decision is the result of a year-long re-evaluation about where his career was headed. "It became very clear to me that our idea of what luxury has had to change. We couldn't go back to doing what we did before," Humm was quoted as saying. The restaurant will also help sustain Eleven Madison Truck, a mobile commissary kitchen Humm launched last spring, in partnership with Rethink Food, to address rising hunger needs in New York during the pandemic. Every meal purchased at Eleven Madison Park provides five meals for that effort.

WHAT ARE THE ODDS?

Meat fry with banana fritters, or with sweet *neyyappam*? In Kerala's street food hubs and cafes, age-old food pairings are being replaced with quirky combinations that demand a leap of faith

ANASUYA MENON

Puttu with parippu

Nair's *Puttukada* (*puttu*) shop has a very direct title. But if you go in expecting the usual, cylindrical rice cake *puttu* to be served along with a plate of *kadalai* (black chick peas) curry, *pappadom* and a banana, as is the unquestionable tradition in Kerala, you would be surprised. At Nair's, the *puttu* is served along with dry *parippu* (lentil), a strange duck-egg roast is also part of the package. Mohanan P Nair, the owner of the 56-year-old tea shop in Chathanad, about eight kilometres from North Paravur in Ernakulam, says he thought up the combo and started serving it over 17 years ago. "I wasn't sure. But it clicked," he says, over phone from his home. Now, he has people from faraway places seeking out the dish. The tea shop that usually opens at 4.30 pm is now closed owing to the COVID-19 situation.

We are not entirely new to bizarre food pairings. 2020 saw a few of those go viral on social media. Blame it on COVID-19, for nothing else can logically explain chocolate Manchurian, Nutella biryani or chicken *tikka chai*. Dishes such as the one at Nair's, however, are unusual yet extremely palatable. "It seems very peculiar at first. But the combination grows on you," says businessman and vlogger Balram Menon, who used to frequent Nair's shop. "The dry lentil brings in the perfect balance between the spice in the duck egg roast and the *puttu*," he adds.





A blend of DIY crafts and recycling creates wonder out of empty liquor bottles

Spirited works



Of colours and lights

Aarthi Sivaramakrishnan's hobby was painting on glass bottles. When her bottle art found takers on Facebook, she began creating utilitarian objects out of them. "I realised lampshades were a good idea as one could create them without changing the bottle's structure. It gave me a wide range of things to play around with and the novelty factor too helped me," she recalls.

Once the bottle is cleaned and a primer sprayed on, Aarthi paints it with acrylic colours; lights are created either by dropping string lights inside it or by drilling a hole at its base through which the wire goes up and a lampshade fitted on top. She also does decoupage on wine bottles.

Her Chennai-based online venture 'The Colour Company' (@thecolourcompanyin), set up



three years ago showcased lampshades created out of wine bottles and mini lampshades with smaller pint beer bottles. The range is diverse, including small perfume and medicine bottles. Most of the bottles are sourced from friends and relatives. "Over two years I built a reputation in my locality such that any unique used bottle was passed on to me; Every Monday, a bag of bottles used to lie outside my house," she recalls with a laugh.

Aarthi now operates from Bengaluru, after shifting there in 2019. Her Chennai home studio still has a huge collection of used bottles. She coordinates with her team of two artists online.

Price range: ₹1,200 onwards

of art and light

NEERAJA MURTHY

Whether they serve as a gift for someone special or elevate the mood and space, lamp shades can do wonders to the decor. While most are store bought, a few artists and hobby enthusiasts have been creating lampshades out of used liquor bottles.



Eclectic designs

On a lazy afternoon in Chennai, when Vidya Bhat (@chittaaraarts) reconnected to her favourite childhood memory of drawing, she began painting two milkshake bottles. "I had moved to Chennai after marriage and was bored," recalls the former assistant lecturer of Canara Engineering College in Mangaluru.

Vidya enjoyed the process and continued it on liquor bottles given by her friends. "I began sourcing most of the bottles from scrap dealers," she says. The self-taught artist uses only transparent glass colours as 'they stand out more than acrylics'. From traditional folk art to geometric designs, she has depicted multiple themes through her painting.

Encouraged by her friends and the demand

for her designs, she set up Chittaara Arts (not registered) three years ago. "Chittaara means to draw and our venture 'Chittaara' shows our love for Chittara, a folk art form of Karnataka," she adds.

Vidya's creations are of three varieties. One with a bottle and removable LED string, another where the bottle is inverted and comes with a stand, and a third uses lanterns with fixed LED lights.

Price range:

₹500 onwards

Alight with art (Above)
Creations by Kavi - The Poetry Art Project, by The Colour Company
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Customised message

Liquor bottle lampshades are one of the many products that Kavi – The Poetry Art Project creates as part of its sustainable lifestyle brand. come with a picture/poem on them. "Glass recycling was a new word when we launched the collective in 2012," says co-founder Madhuri Balodi. (The other founders are: Amit Singh and Sowmya Mukerji. The team initially worked at home but now operates in a 300 square foot workshop in Noida.

Kavi (@kavipoetryart) sources liquor bottles from ragpickers and scrap dealers. Once the bottles are cleaned, their rough edges are cut with a machine. Initially, the bottles used to be handpainted but now the team uses a machine. Artists and artisans work with them on a freelance basis but due to the pandemic, they have been on their own with help from an in-house team of eight members.

An in-lit lamp created out of a vodka or wine bottle with a customised message has been one of their popular products. "Multinational companies also support these sustainable initiatives. Reliance had asked us to make 6,000 lampshades from wine bottles as a Diwali gift for its employees," says Madhuri.

Price range:
₹349 onwards



Spinach in your rainbow cake

Puree, juice or powder... ingredients in your fridge and kitchen shelves can be turned into fun edible dyes

SHILPA NAIR ANAND

One of 'Nature colour artist' Manya Cherabuddi's students used edible dye extracted from red cabbage to 'colour' a batch of white chocolate, "No! the chocolates did not taste of cabbage," she says, dispelling a common misconception about food dyes made from vegetables and fruits.

"Usually the seasoning and sweetener overpowers the taste of the vegetable or fruit used to extract colour. For instance, if you use beetroot for colour in your pasta, it wouldn't be very strong as there is the pasta sauce. It does not take away anything from the dish, especially if you consider its nutritional value," says Hyderabad-based Manya (@manycherabuddi on Instagram).

A rainbow cake made using synthetic colours for a child in the family made her wonder about the impact on their health and a dermatologist friend telling her about food allergies and rashes that artificial colours cause in children got her thinking of edible, natural food colours. Especially since she had the experience of making colours out of things she found in nature – flowers, plants, leaves and fruits.

Her sources for the natural food colouring are vegetables and fruits like spinach, tomatoes, beetroot, turmeric, berries.

These can be used in cakes, cookies, desserts, idli, dosa and any other dish. She puts to good use kitchen waste too – vegetable peels, tea leaves, coffee powder and even vegetables gone bad – as water-colour 'paints' and dye for fabric/paper.

The process of extraction depends on the use, "If it is for a cake, the colour can be more liquid; the juice becomes the colouring agent. If the recipe is not semi-liquid, then a puree and if the ingredients are dry then sun-dried and powdered colour. Imported edible, natural colour brands use the freeze-drying technique but that equipment would not be available at home. However, dehydration can be done at home using an oven or an OTG (oven-toast-grill) on low heat. These are age-old methods, of drying in the sun, powdering and preserving," she says. The liquid colours or pulp can be frozen and used when needed.

Compared to the neon brightness of synthetic colours in food, these might appear dull. She says, "If fresh ingredients are used it would have 'more colour'. These may not



Colour your idlis and dosas

- Add a pinch of turmeric powder to the batter for yellow
- Add carrot puree for orange
- Add beetroot puree for pink
- Add spinach puree for green

The vegetable puree can constitute approximately 40-50% of the batter, it adds nutrition and colour. Keep the consistency of the idli/dosa batter as close to the one you regularly use.

be bright but they are soothing and nutritive. Freeze-dried colours retain vibrancy." Sometimes an ingredient, like pistachio, can be the colour in pistachio ice cream without other additives. Paan-flavoured ice cream however would need extra colour as paan leaves give a pale shade; spinach puree can be used to enhance it, she says.

Two years ago Manya, who quit a job at a design firm, 'stumbled onto' the world of natural dyes. She applied the knowledge she gained to create natural fabric dyes at home, which she used for babies and toddlers in her circle. She also began conducting natural fabric and paper dye-making workshops, and making art supplies like water colour paints and crayons from foraged flowers and leaves. She now makes paint pigments from charcoal and earth. Then she started exploring natural, edible colours.

"There is a huge demand for them because people now are more conscious about what they use, and its impact on the environment," she says.



Colour me natural Manya Cherabuddi's multi-coloured idli batter, cookies with natural colours ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The label matters

Major TS Wohra recalls the start of his hobby during the lockdown of 2020. "I saw a Single Malt lying at home and casually began to create a table lamp out of it," says the former Army officer who runs a security firm in Bengaluru. The USP of his BoozyLamps, named by his son is to retain the label of the bottle. "People associate themselves with a particular drink and the label also rekindles memories; a bottle of champagne is popped on special occasions and the label instantly reminds us of it," says Wohra who assembles everything himself at home.

He admits it was a huge challenge to source the bottles during lockdown. "I would ask my friends to not throw away their used liquor bottles and give it to me. There was a joke going around that time that if people called friends to ask for alcohol, I would call to ask for empties (empty bottles)." The lampshade pictures on social media also has a small write-up with anecdotes by Wohra on the liquor brand to create interest. So far, he has sold more than 530 of them.

Prince range: ₹1,200 onwards



Eclectic designs

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Price range:

₹500 onwards

POOCHE CAFE



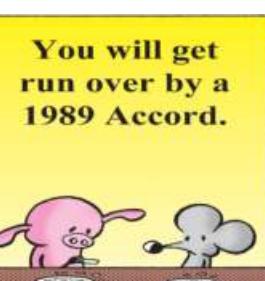
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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



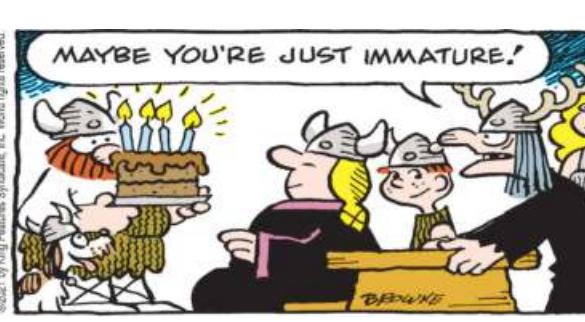
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HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



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PEANUTS



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TIGER



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CALVIN AND HOBBES



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Year-long detention of lawyer, poet sparks concern in Sri Lanka

Spotlight on minority rights, and 'draconian' anti-terrorism law modelled on South Africa's Apartheid-era legislation

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Daily-wage agricultural labourer Abdul Ghafoor Muhammad Jazeem, in Sri Lanka's northern Mannar district, had one life goal. To ensure his children have a good education. Despite toiling for years to realise the dream, he could not be more dejected today.

On May 16, 2020, the police arrested his eldest son, Ahnaf Jazeem, a 26-year-old teacher and Tamil poet, based on allegations that his poetry collection, promoting "religious extremism", was circulated among his students in Puttalam in the North Western Province, where he was employed.

Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem was arrested under the controversial Prevention of Terrorism Act (PTA) – that rights groups deem draconian and want replaced – and has been in custody for a year now. His case, like that of

prominent Muslim lawyer Hejaaz Hizbullah – also in detention for a year – has brought to focus growing fears over minority rights in Sri Lanka, and old concerns about the 40-year-old anti-terrorism law.

A reading of 'Navarasam', published in 2017, makes it evident that far from sympathising with radical Islamist ideas, Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem unambiguously condemns religious extremism, specifically the "ISIS's cruelty" in the collection that touches upon themes ranging from war and peace, to women's attire and patience.

It took 10 months and multiple letters to authorities before Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem obtained access to lawyers. "Not only did we struggle to obtain access to our client, he was not produced in court for months together; no case was proceeding against him. This is all so an-

ti-democratic," says Sanjaya Wilson Jayasekara, an attorney appearing for the poet, whom he sees as "another victim of the anti-Muslim campaign" of the government.

National security

The Rajapaksa came to power in November 2019, months after the Easter Sunday serial blasts, promising to bring perpetrators to justice, and strengthen national security.

For Sri Lanka's Muslim community – constituting about 10 % of the country's 22 million population – the blasts, carried out by a network of Islamist radicals, was a huge blow. It escalated the discrimination and violence they had faced in the post-war decade.

Religious discrimination is only one of the concerns being raised in regard to the case. The dreaded PTA's history in Sri Lanka tells nume-



Ahnaf Jazeem and Hejaaz Hizbullah. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rous stories of prolonged detention without indictment, and torture.

Similar detention

Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem's case is not very different from that of Mr. Hizbullah, who was arrested on April 14, 2020 under the PTA. While the police earlier said the lawyer was arrested for alleged links to the Easter attacks, he was subsequently accused of promoting racial hatred, an offence under Sri Lanka's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) Act. He had spent 10 months in custody

before being charged.

No court of law has ruled that the lawyer is guilty of any of the charges. He has been produced in court only once so far, in February this year. Like many others in Sri Lanka's congested prisons, he contracted COVID-19. "The biggest challenge in this case has been how the media has repeatedly vilified our client," says a lawyer appearing for Mr. Hizbullah.

"What we are fighting keeps changing every day. First, they accused him of having links with Easter bombers, then they said he

is spreading racial hatred," says Mr. Hizbullah's wife, who is still in disbelief. Fearing "more social media attacks", the family requested their names be withheld.

Mr. Hizbullah's five-month-old baby has seen her father only through prison bars.

'Repeal PTA'

Observing that the guilt or the lack of guilt of the arrested individuals can only be determined before a court of law, Colombo-based law academic Dinesha Samararatne says: "Law enforcement authorities should be held accountable for prolonged and unreasonable detention as it does not advance the cause of victims of crime, of the accused or the objectives of a criminal justice system as a whole. This is why the PTA has to be repealed without further delay."

The PTA, modelled on South Africa's Apartheid-era legislation and the British laws used against Irish militancy, was enacted in 1979, under President J.R. Jayawardene. His government passed it chiefly to curtail Tamil youth's nascent armed struggle protesting against the State's discrimination using the law.

Meanwhile, the police maintain that the arrests made in connection with the Easter bombings, including those of Mr. Hizbullah and Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem, are based on evidence emerging from their probe.

To questions about due process in the arrests of the poet and lawyer, Mr. Rohana says: "Due process is certainly being followed in these cases. If the concerned parties of their families feel otherwise, or want to challenge our discretion, Sri Lankan law gives them the option of going to court and seeking a remedy."

Both Mr. Ahnaf Jazeem and Mr. Hizbullah's lawyers have filed Fundamental Rights petitions in the Supreme Court challenging their "arbitrary" arrests and "unlawful" detention, and are hoping their cases will be heard soon.

through. In March this year, the Rajapaksa government gave itself sweeping powers to detain suspects for up to two years for "deradicalisation" using the law.

It became a permanent law in 1982, and has not spared other ethnic groups. In the late 1980s, the state used the law in the island's Sinhala-majority, to detain insurgent JVP youth.

Following the Easter Sunday tragedy, scores of suspects, mostly Muslims, have been detained under the PTA. According to police spokesman DIG Ajith Rohana, as many as 202 are currently in remand custody, while 83 have been detained for interrogation. "Most of them were arrested under the PTA," he says. A total of 700 persons have been arrested since the attacks, but none has been charged to date.

Amid persisting calls to repeal the law, the former Sirisena-Wickremesinghe administration tried drafting a new counter-terrorism law, but failed to see it

China halts economic dialogue with Australia

Beijing blames Cold War mindset, ideological discrimination

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

China on Thursday cut off a channel for diplomatic and trade talks with Australia in a largely symbolic act of fury, following clashes over a wide range of issues, including human rights, espionage and the origins of COVID-19.

Tensions between the two sides have soared since Canberra called last year for an independent probe into the origins of the pandemic and banned telecom giant Huawei from building Australia's 5G network.

China – Australia's biggest trading partner – has already imposed tariffs or disrupted more than dozen key industries, including wine, barley and coal, decimating exports.

In the latest volley, the China-Australia Strategic Economic Dialogue was pulled "based on the current attitude" of the Australian government, China's National Development and Reform Commission said in a statement.



Souring ties: The Australian Embassy in Beijing. Tensions between the two sides have been rising since last year. ■ AP

ment on Thursday, blaming some officials of a "Cold War mindset" and "ideological discrimination".

Beijing will "indefinitely suspend all activities under the framework" of the agreement, the statement added.

Disappointing move

Australia called the decision "disappointing", with Trade Minister Dan Tehan saying the dialogue had provided an important forum for the two countries – though he added that no such talks had taken place since 2017.

It was not immediately clear if the row would impact on a free-trade agreement between the two that came into effect in 2015.

Canberra has previously described the avenue for talks – designed to boost trade between both sides and introduce large Chinese investors – as one of the "premier bilateral economic meetings with China".

It called the first meeting in 2014 a chance for "closer economic ties" but relations between the two have since sunk into deep freeze.

What's Facebook's Oversight Board

It upheld the network's decision to ban Donald Trump from the platform

SIRIRAM SRINIVASAN

Facebook's Oversight Board on Wednesday upheld the social media network's decision on January 7 to block the then-U.S. President Donald Trump from its platform. Facebook had decided to indefinitely block Mr. Trump for using the platform to, as its CEO Mark Zuckerberg put it then, "incite violent insurrection against a democratically elected government".

On January 21, Facebook referred the case to its Oversight Board. Here's more about the board:

Independent body

The Oversight Board has been set up as an independent body that will help Facebook figure out what content can be allowed on the platform and what ought to be removed. Mr. Zuckerberg first wrote about the idea in 2018, saying in a note that "I've increasingly come to believe that Facebook should not make so many important decisions about free expression and safety on our own."



members, including the former editor-in-chief of *The Guardian* newspaper Alan Rusbridger, Vice Chancellor of the National Law School of India University Sudhir Krishnaswamy, and former Prime Minister of Denmark

EXPLAINER

Helle Thorning-Schmidt, Facebook as well as its users were later found to be okay. Sometimes, Facebook allows violating content to be on its platform if it considers it to be newsworthy and in public interest. The Board revealed Facebook asserted that it "has never applied the newsworthiness allowance to content posted by the Trump Facebook page or Instagram account".

Key recommendations

The Board wants Facebook to act quickly when it comes to content of a political nature coming from influential users. Its idea is to escalate such content to specialised staff as also assess potential harms from such accounts. It also wants Facebook to be more transparent about its policies regarding assistance to investigations as well as its platform's penalty rules.

+ It also wants Facebook to comprehensively review its "potential contribution to the narrative of electoral fraud and the exacerbated tensions that culminated in the violence in the United States on January 6. This should be an open reflection on the design and policy choices that Facebook has made that may allow its platform to be abused."

The investigation showed that prior to the January 6 Capitol riots by Trump supporters, five of Mr. Trump's posts had been found violating Facebook's community standards. They were, therefore, removed. One of these posts, in August 2020, violated Facebook's Covid-19 misinformation policy. Mr. Trump's Facebook page received a 'strike' for this (a Facebook page is removed after a certain number of strikes). The Board said Facebook didn't explain "why other violating content it had removed did not result in strikes".

Twenty other pieces of Mr. Trump's content were marked as potential violations by the review system

Russia approves one-dose 'Sputnik Light'

N. RAVI KUMAR
HYDERABAD

Russia has authorised Sputnik Light, a single dose vaccine against COVID-19, for use. Sovereign wealth fund Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) on Thursday said the move will pave way for immunisation of a larger number of people

in a shorter timeframe. Sputnik Light is the first component – recombinant human adenovirus serotype number 26 (rAd26) – of Sputnik V vaccine that has been approved by over 60 countries, including India.

CEO Kirill Dmitriev said Sputnik Light will be "exported to our interna-

tional partners to help increase the rate of vaccinations in the face of ongoing fight with the pandemic and new strains of coronavirus". At less than \$10, the vaccine will also be affordable, he said.

There is a big interest already in Sputnik Light and it is likely to be regis-

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STATEMENT OF AUDITED (STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED) FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2021

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated	
		Quarter ended 31.03.2021	Year ended 31.03.2020	Quarter ended 31.03.2021	Year ended 31.03.2020
1	Total Income from Operations	1,079.25	719.60	3,065.03	1,273.10
2	Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	172.86	74.52	438.11	188.94
3	Net Profit for the period (before tax after exceptional items)	172.86	63.22	438.11	188.94
4	Net Profit for the period (after tax)	130.02	46.80	328.14	140.80
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	127.29	34.07	343.42	137.24
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Re 1/- each fully paid up)	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01
7	Earnings Per Share (EPS) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (Face value of Re 1/- each) (not annualised) (in Rs.) (a) Basic (b) Diluted	6.19 6.19	2.23 2.23	15.62 * 15.62 *	6.71 6.71

* Annualised

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of the standalone and consolidated financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites, www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com and on the Company's website www.sundram.com.
- The Statutory Auditors have carried out an audit for the year ended March 31, 2021 and have issued an unqualified report thereon.
- The Board at its meeting held today, declared an interim dividend of Rs. 3.40 per share (340 %) for the financial year 2020-21 and the same will be paid to the members / beneficial owners, whose name appear in the register of members / register of beneficial owners maintained by the Depositories as on the record date i.e. May 19, 2021.

For Sundram Fasteners Limited
Sd/-
Chairman

Taliban captures key dam in Afghanistan

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KANDAHAR

The Taliban has captured Afghanistan's second-biggest dam after months of fierce fighting in its former bastion of Kandahar, the insurgents and officials said on Thursday.

Dahla Dam, which provides irrigation to farmers via a network of canals as well as drinking water for the provincial capital, is now under Taliban control, local officials said.

"We have seized the Dahla Dam in Arghandab," Taliban spokesman Qari Yousaf Ahmadi said.

The dam's capture comes after clashes erupted in neighbouring Helmand province this week, just days after the U.S. military formally began withdrawing its remaining troops from Afghanistan.

Journalist shot dead

In a related development, a high-profile Afghan television journalist was shot dead in Kandahar on Thursday, officials said, a day after the Taliban warned against "biased reporting" by the media.

Nemat Rawan was "assassinated by unknown gunmen", Kandahar city police spokesman Jamal Nasir Barekzai said.

CM YK

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	48,950	0.56
US Dollar	73.78	0.18
Gold	46,680	0.64
Brent oil	68.57	-1.32

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	740.80	2.70
Asian Paints	2549.05	-18.60
Axist Bank	715.75	-1.45
Bajaj Auto	3941.20	97.40
Bajaj Finserv	11027.95	-86.50
Bajaj Finance	5528.80	13.65
Bharti Airtel	558.75	-1.20
BPCL	434.00	9.20
Britannia Ind	3452.05	0.45
Cipla	884.30	-4.35
Coal India	134.60	1.45
Divis Lab	4063.05	27.60
D Dr Reddys Lab	1615.45	7.50
Eicher Motors	2443.25	70.85
Grasim Ind	1447.90	27.00
HCL Tech.	916.00	6.60
HDPC	2430.10	52.50
HFDC Bank	1400.90	-1.70
HDFC Life	671.80	-2.60
Hero MotoCorp	2913.30	125.10
Hindalco	385.90	18.85
Hind Unilever	2390.00	-4.65
ICICI Bank	608.20	5.40
IndusInd Bank	924.95	-6.20
Infosys	1361.60	20.10
Indian Oil Corp	92.60	0.40
ITC	202.75	1.35
JSW Steel	729.80	12.10
Kotak Bank	1788.25	17.50
L&T	1339.90	-1.25
M&M	747.40	-0.15
Maruti Suzuki	6666.65	76.55
Nestle India Ltd.	16717.60	168.35
NTPC	103.05	-0.85
ONGC	110.25	-0.85
PowerGrid Corp	215.40	-2.80
Reliance Ind	1931.00	10.90
SBI Life	969.40	-3.70
State Bank	355.55	0.15
Shree Cement	27736.20	-108.00
Sun Pharma	679.40	-4.00
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	653.10	4.05
Tata Motors	301.25	9.75
Tata Steel	1100.90	30.75
TCS	3111.45	15.75
Tech Mahindra	977.95	17.55
Titan	1444.40	16.00
UltraTech Cement	6405.45	25.10
UPL	633.00	-7.70
Wipro	512.30	21.70

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY		TT SELL	
	73.56	73.88	88.56	88.95
US Dollar	73.56	73.88	88.56	88.95
Euro	102.09	102.55	107.39	107.69
British Pound	11.36	11.41	12.80	12.26
Chinese Yuan	8.90	8.95	9.08	9.12
Singapore Dollar	55.08	55.33	56.06	56.32
Canadian Dollar	60.06	60.32	61.84	61.93
Malaysian Ringgit	17.84	17.93	18.00	18.08

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Chinese airline to restart cargo service to India

HYDERABAD In some relief for the Indian pharmaceuticals industry and towards ensuring continuity in key raw material supplies from China, Sichuan Airlines is resuming cargo services to India. Chengdu-Bengaluru service will start on May 9 and Chengdu to Chennai, from May 12, Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India director general Ravi Udaya Bhaskar said.

LIC to follow 5-day work week beginning May 10

NEW DELHI LIC will have five working days a week starting from May 10 since Saturdays have been declared as a holiday for the insurer. Pursuant to a notification, wherein the Centre has declared every Saturday as a public holiday for the Life Insurance Corporation of India, policyholders are informed that w.e.f May 10, all offices will work from Monday to Friday, it said in a notice. PTI

‘HCL Tech plans to recruit more freshers than lateral hires’

Company is looking for people with new-age skills: Apparao

Drugmakers say Biden misguided over patent waiver

U.S. President supports waiving intellectual property rights for COVID vaccines

REUTERS
GENEVA/FRANKFURT

Drugmakers on Thursday said U.S. President Joe Biden's support for waiving patents of COVID-19 vaccines could disrupt a fragile supply chain and that rich countries should instead share more generously with the developing world.

Mr. Biden on Wednesday threw his support behind waiving intellectual property rights for COVID-19 vaccines, angering research-based pharmaceutical companies.

If adopted by the WTO, the proposal would invite new manufacturers that lack essential know-how and oversight from the inventors to crowd out established contractors, the Internation-



At risk: Waiving vaccine patents could disrupt a fragile supply chain, say drugmakers. ■ REUTERS

al Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA) said.

“I have heard many (vaccine makers) talking about ‘our resources are stretched, our technicians are stretched,’” IFPMA Director General Thomas Cueni told

Reuters. He warned of a possible free for all if “sort of rogue companies” were allowed to become involved.

Vaccine developers echoed his comments that waiving intellectual property rights was not a solution. Germany’s CureVac,

which hopes to release trial results on its messenger ribonucleic acid (mRNA) vaccine as early as this month, said patents were not to blame for bottlenecks.

‘Unfathomable amounts’

“Since mRNA technology has emerged as the key technology in the fight against COVID-19, the world now needs the same raw materials in unfathomable amounts. The biggest problem is how to coordinate this,” a spokeswoman said.

In contrast, the GAVI vaccine alliance, which co-leads the COVAX dose-sharing programme with the WHO and faces major supply constraints, welcomed Mr. Biden’s support for waiving intellectual property rights.

RBI move to help firms with weaker credit profiles: Crisil

‘Measures will offer interim liquidity relief to companies’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Half of Crisil-rated mid-sized companies will be eligible for the restructuring window offered under the Resolution Framework 2.0 announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the rating agency said on Thursday.

Companies with relatively weaker credit profiles, and part of low-resilience sectors, are expected to benefit more from the scheme, it added. The RBI had on Wednesday announced a slew of measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on businesses and individuals, including a restructuring window for small businesses. Disruptions caused by

the second wave of the pandemic may hit smaller businesses and the restructuring would entail rescheduling of their financial obligations, thus easing liquidity pressure.

“Crisil rates about 6,800 mid-sized companies (excluding financial sector entities). Of these, 3,500 are small and medium enter-

prises, having bank loan exposure of up to ₹25 crore. About 3,400 of them are standard accounts, which makes them eligible to avail of the restructuring,” it said.

Subodh Rai, Chief Ratings Officer, said, “RBI’s intervention is timely and companies with weaker credit profiles will benefit more from the restructuring scheme. Four out of five companies eligible for restructuring have sub-investment category ratings, indicating their relatively weak ability to manage liquidity shocks.”

“Restructuring 2.0 could provide interim liquidity relief to these companies to cope with near-term cash-flow mismatches,” he said.

The 17 States include Andhra Pradesh, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Govt. releases ₹9,871 cr. grant to 17 States

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Thursday released the second monthly instalment of revenue deficit grant of ₹9,871 crore to 17 States.

With this total amount of ₹19,742 crore has been released in the first two months of the current financial year as Post Devolution Revenue Deficit Grant to the States, the ministry said in a statement.

The grants are released as per the recommendations of the Finance Commission in monthly instalments to meet the gap in revenue accounts of the States post-devolution.

“We successfully executed our strategy of embracing digital, investing in international expansion and repositioning the Cognizant brand,” CEO Brian Humphries said. Cognizant said it expected June-quarter revenue to grow 10.5-11.5%.

“Our first-quarter performance reflects solid revenue growth in our digital

‘COVID wave may hit energy demand in first quarter’

Low-base effect may lead to y-o-y growth: Ind-Ra report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Restrictions following the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic could impact recovery in the growth in energy demand in the first quarter of this financial year, India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said.



April-June 2022. However, all-India energy demand is expected to be higher year-on-year due to the low base effect as the country was under a stricter lockdown during the same period in 2020.

‘Price per unit rises’

The short-term power price at the Indian Energy Exchange continued its improving trend ₹4.07 per unit compared with ₹2.46 a year earlier, with average month-

ly price in April 2021 at ₹3.7. Electricity generation rose 23.5% on a yearly basis to 118.6 billion units in March 2021, supported by 29.2% growth in thermal generation, although hydro generation fell 7.8%. Generation from renewable sources climbed 10.1% to 11.9 billion units in March 2021, with solar generation rising 21%.

The improvement in energy demand has helped the thermal plant load factor (PLF) increase to 66.5% in March 2021, from 51.5% a year earlier and 63.3% in February, it said.

Despite the onset of summer, stricter lockdowns in major manufacturing States could impact demand from the industrial segment, in turn affecting thermal PLFs, the agency said.

Hero Moto Q4 net rises 44% to ₹885.28 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp on Thursday said it posted a 44.2% rise in consolidated net profit to ₹885.28 crore for the quarter ended March 31.

Compared with the immediately previous quarter, however, net profit declined almost 14%. Total income rose to ₹8,758 crore from ₹6,490.92 crore a year earlier, but lower than the ₹8,032.61 crore recorded in October-December 2020. For the full year, consolidated net profit fell 20% to ₹2,936.05 crore, while total income rose 5% to ₹31,517.09 crore.

The company has proposed a final dividend of ₹25 per share and special dividend of ₹10 per share.

Cognizant Q1 net climbs 37.6% on digital growth

‘Revenue to grow 7-9% in 2021’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

IT company Cognizant reported a 37.6% rise in March quarter net income to \$505 million, and said it expects revenue to grow 7-9% in the year ending December.



Brian Humphries

services,” said CFO Jan Siegmund.

“Shifting to a quarterly promotion cycle for billable associates... further salary increases and promotions for high-demand skills and making 28,000-plus offers to new graduates in India, a new record... up from 17,000 hired in 2020,” Mr. Humphries said.

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

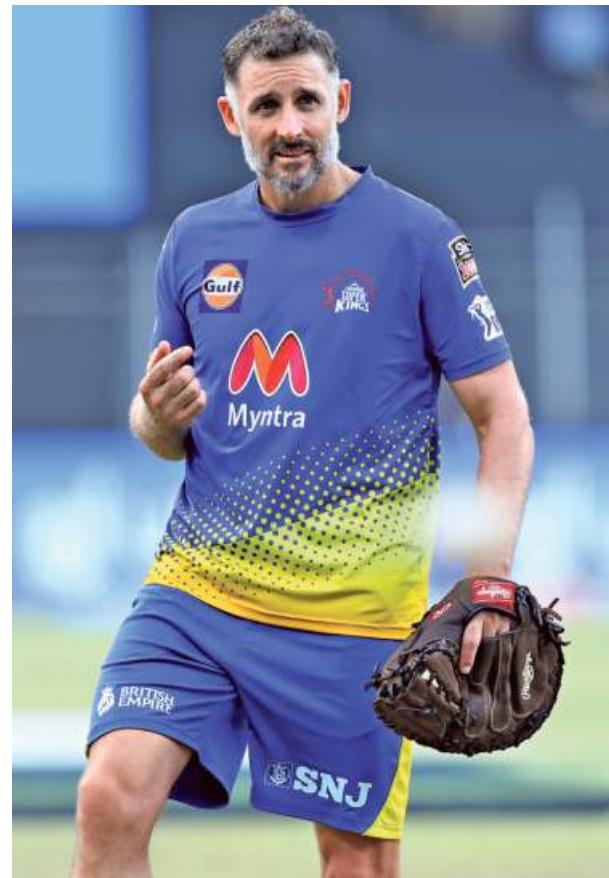
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Kanchi Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383
website : www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-E-Service/1644/2021-22 Date:06.05.2021

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Chennai Super Kings airlifts Balaji and Hussey

West Indies cricketers will leave today morning and Kiwis in the evening, says franchise official



Good news: Michael Hussey's second RT-PCR report came negative. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

IPL 2021

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings has been a franchise that has always cared for its cricketers.

It, thus, came as no surprise that the two members of its coaching staff who tested positive for COVID-19 were both flown by air taxis by CSK, from New Delhi to Chennai, on Thursday afternoon.

A CSK source told *The Hindu*, "Both L. Balaji and Michael Hussey came in separate air taxis as per the protocol."

He added, "The best part was when Hussey was still in flight, his second RT-PCR report came negative. However, Balaji's fresh test confirmed COVID."

The CSK source said, "Hussey and Balaji will be taken care of by Apollo Hospital. We have a tie-up with them. Both are without any symptoms and should come through fine. They will undergo one more test after four days."



L. Balaji. ■ FILE PHOTO

And CSK has arranged a chartered flight for a single cricketer, Imran Tahir, to Dubai. "Although a South African player, Tahir now lives in Dubai with his family," the source said.

CSK is a side with cricketers from several countries – England, Australia, New Zealand, West Indies and South Africa – and it was a logistical challenge to fly all of them home after the IPL had to be suspended.

The CSK source said, "The franchises pooled together chartered flights where cricketers from various teams travelling to the same

country will be in one flight."

He revealed, "Cricketers travelling to the West Indies will leave tomorrow [Friday] morning and those going to New Zealand will depart in the evening."

Two weeks in Maldives

He added, "All the Australian cricketers will spend two weeks in Maldives before travelling back to their home. The English and South African cricketers have already left."

While different franchises have come together to fly out cricketers to their respective countries, a franchise assumes the lead role for a particular destination.

Lead role

The source said, "For instance, CSK is playing the lead role for the chartered flight to the West Indies. Similarly for New Zealand, Kolkata Knight Riders has taken the responsibility. And for flying out Australian cricketers to Maldives, Royal Challengers Bangalore has come forward."

Talking about the bursting of IPL bio-bubble, he said, "It was a disaster waiting to happen. New Delhi, in particular, is in very bad shape."

He said India Cements and CSK boss N. Srinivasan took the IPL suspension and the COVID-striking CSK, practically. "He is a very realistic but positive person. And he cares for the cricketers. He often says, 'Without the players, we cannot have a team.'

The source spoke about India Cements maintaining teams, providing jobs to cricketers and the fact that when Srinivasan was at the helm in BCCI, a sizeable one-time payment was made to former cricketers.

CSK, indeed, is a franchise with a difference.

PTI reports

Bangladesh internationals Shakib Al Hasan and Mustafizur Rahaman on Thursday afternoon returned safely to Dhaka on a chartered flight arranged by Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders.

After a short break further white-ball tours are planned to Sri Lanka and India, leading into the World Cup.

Smith acknowledged that the tour of India in September could clash with a possible resumption of the Indian Premier League (IPL) which was paused in mid-tournament on Tuesday after outbreaks of COVID-19 in three of the franchise camps.

Free agents likely

Smith said he wanted South Africa to field its best possible team at the World Cup. That could include A.B. de Villiers, if he comes out of international retirement, and free agents such as Imran Tahir and Chris Morris, who are no longer contracted to be available for South Africa.

Smith praised the Indian board for its handling of the COVID-19 outbreak. "The duty of care they have shown in getting everyone home has been exemplary," he said.

Holder urges Indians to battle COVID together

ANI

NEW DELHI
Sunrisers Hyderabad all-rounder Jason Holder has expressed disappointment after the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 was postponed.

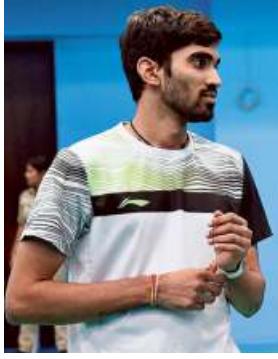
Holder also urged the Indian fans to keep fighting the COVID-19 battle as the West Indies all-rounder bid adieu to the 2021 season. "Sad that the tournament had to be postponed but always great playing in the @ipl20. To the people of India I urge you to keep fighting this battle together and I wish you all the very best. #sunrisershdy until we meet again," Holder captioned the post on Instagram.

India takes the diplomatic route

Sports ministry requests Malaysian Govt. to allow Indian players' participation

BADMINTON

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD



India approached the Malaysian Government on Wednesday with a request to allow the national badminton team to travel for the Malaysian Open badminton championships scheduled to start on May 25.

According to a communication from the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the Sports Ministry, through the Ministry of External Affairs, has made the approach.

"This is in light of a temporary travel ban that has

been imposed by Malaysia owing to the rising COVID-19 cases in India," the statement said.

"After the initial request made earlier this week, the Indian High Commission in Malaysia has received information from the Malaysian Government that the travel of the team may not be possible immediately.

"However, with 19 days

left for the competition to begin, the possibility of travel cannot be ruled out completely."

Lot at stake

The Malaysian Open and the Singapore Open (from June 1) are the last two qualifying tournaments for the Tokyo Olympics.

Some of the big names looking to compete in the two tournaments and log ranking points to make the cut are Saina Nehwal, K. Srikanth and the doubles duo of Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy.

The others who are also lined up to play in the tournaments include P.V. Sindhu and B. Sai Praneeth and the men's doubles pair of R. Satwiksairaj Reddy and Chirag Shetty, who are assured of a slot in the Olympics by virtue of their current world rankings.

Kaushik critical, hope rests on life-saving drug

With his body not responding to medication, doctors decide to try out the option

HOCKEY

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI



M.K. Kaushik. ■ FILE PHOTO

Former Indian hockey coach and Dronacharya awardee Maharaj Kishen Kaushik's condition has deteriorated and is now critical. He has been kept under observation at a hospital here but doctors are not too hopeful.

Kaushik had been admitted with pneumonia-infected lungs after developing COVID-like symptoms but testing negative for the same on April 17. His blood Oxygen level kept fluctuating, going down to as much as 50 at night.

However, with his body not responding to any medication, doctors at the multi-speciality hospital decided to give him a life-saving drug

which was expected to show results within 24 hours.

"That period got over this afternoon but there has been no change in the situation. However, other doctors in our acquaintance have said that it can sometimes also take up to three days to start showing results. That is our big hope at the moment," his son Eshan said.

The 66-year old Kaushik has been one of the most decorated hockey coaches in the country for both the national men's and women's

teams. A member of the 1980 Olympics winning team, he coached the men to gold at the 1998 Asian Games after a gap of 32 years and the women to bronze at the Doha Asian Games in 2006. He was given the Arjuna Award in 1998 and the Dronacharya in 2002. He had recently retired from Khelo India.

Ravinder Pal struggling

Meanwhile, his 1980 Olympics teammate Ravinder Pal Singh too remains critical in a Lucknow hospital.

Ravinder Pal has been in ICU with severe COVID symptoms since April 24 and his family has been struggling with ballooning expenses.

Earlier in the day, Hockey India had approved ₹5 lakh each for both players as support.

Sumit Malik storms into 125kg freestyle semifinals

Amit Dhankar (74kg) and Satyawart Kadian (97kg) have a disappointing day

WRESTLING

SPORTS BUREAU
SOFIA (BULGARIA)

Sumit Malik gave a series of fine performances to reach the semifinals of the 125kg freestyle category on the opening day of the World Olympic Games wrestling qualifier in Sofia, Bulgaria, on Thursday.

Two other experienced Indians in fray, Asian medalist Amit Dhankar (74kg) and Commonwealth Games medalist Satyawart Kadian (97kg), had disappointment



In store.

Fightback

The stocky 28-year-old Malik, a Commonwealth Games champion and an Asian championships silver medalist, fought back to beat Aiaal Lazarev of Kyrgyzstan and Alexandr Romanov of Moldova by an identical 2-2 margin, via criteria, and make it to the quarterfinals.

He again rallied to defeat Rustam Iskandari of Tajikistan 10-5 to reach the semifinals.

In the last four, Malik

round and subsequently went out of the medal race when the Moldovan faced defeat in the next round.

Kadian beat Evan Ramos of Puerto Rico 5-2, but lost to Ahmed Bataev of Bulgaria 5-5, via criteria, in the quarterfinals.

Ravi Kumar Dahiya (57kg), Bajrang Punia (65kg) and Deepak Punia (86kg) in men's freestyle and Vinesh Phogat (53kg), Anshu Malik (57kg) and Sonam Malik (62kg) in women's weights have qualified for the Olympics.

AAI withdraws team from WC Stage-2

Visa issue and some other factors result in the decision

ARCHERY

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

The Archery Association of India (AAI) has withdrawn the National team from World Cup Stage-2 in Lausanne due to a visa issue and some other factors.

The second stage is scheduled from May 17 to 23.

Secretary Pramod Chandorkar said AAI pulled out the team after the Swiss Government denied short-term visas to the archers due to the present COVID-19

situation. "We need short-term visas for the competition."

"They did not give us short-term visas, but offered long-term visas," Chandorkar told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

"Besides, the archers did not have enough practice as they quarantined following their return from World Cup Stage-1 in Guatemala last month."

They had to wait for a day in Guatemala and spend about 23 hours in Paris to catch an India-bound flight.

The Indians will now participate in World Cup

Stage-3, preceded by the final Olympic qualifying event, in Paris. It will take place from June 19 to 21 followed by the third stage of the World Cup from June 22 to 27.

The qualifying event will give the Indian women recurve archers a chance to earn a team quota place in the Tokyo Games.

So far, the Indian men's team has secured a quota place and Deepika Kumari has bagged an individual slot in the women's section in the Olympics.

'Nip and tuck' battle continues in Spain

Hamilton has to fight past Verstappen for his 100th pole

FORMULA ONE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BARCELONA

The Formula One circus pitches up in Barcelona this weekend for the Spanish Grand Prix with Red Bull's tantalising tilt at prising the spotlight away from show-stoppers Mercedes topping the bill.

Three races in and against pre-season predictions, it is Lewis Hamilton who leads Max Verstappen by eight points arriving at the fourth leg of the championship.

Wins last Sunday in Portugal and in the opener in Bahrain leave the seven-time champion in his customary habitat at the top of the F1 drivers' tree.

Barcelona is a track the teams know intimately as the usual venue for pre-season testing, and with its reputation as a circuit where overtaking opportunities are



few and far between, the onus will be on Saturday's qualifying to command a prime front row seat on Sunday's grid.

Hamilton is seeking his fifth consecutive win in Catalonia, with three of his last four victories delivered from Sunday.

Should he top the time sheets on Saturday, he will celebrate his 100th pole position, after being denied that honour by his teammate Valterri Bottas last weekend in Portimao.

Verstappen and Red Bull's emergence as serious title contenders not only has F1 fans gripping their sofas' arm rests or smart phones – Mercedes chief Toto Wolff says he's enjoying the same sensation he felt at the first signs Mercedes could muscle in on the then Red Bull roadshow seven years ago.

While the 2021 Hamilton continues to display all the hallmarks that have turned him into a serial champion – often flawless race craft, consummate professionalism and steely focus, Verstappen this season has changed.

The Dutch driver seems to have his eye on the bigger picture, as F1's managing director Ross Brawn pointed out.

"It's clear that Max Verstappen is approaching this championship in a different way because he finally has a title-winning car," said Brawn.

Nadal and Thiem make the last eight; Medvedev exits

Ashleigh Barty avenges Charleston loss to Paula Badosa to reach yet another final

MADRID OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Rafael Nadal swept into the Madrid Open quarterfinals on Thursday with a 6-3, 6-3 victory over Alexei Popyrin, while Ashleigh Barty booked her spot in the women's final by ending the run of wild-card Paula Badosa.

Nadal, a five-time champion in the Spanish capital, saved five of six break points in a challenging opening set as he faced the 76th-ranked Popyrin for the first time.

A lone break of the Australian's serve in the second was enough for the 20-time Grand Slam winner to seal the match.

Young and energetic
"I knew he was coming with confidence, he has this energy that the young players have," Nadal, 13 years older,

said of Popyrin.

"From what I could do, it was a good match, and I'm happy to make it to the quarterfinals again here."

US Open champion Dominic Thiem, the Madrid runner-up in 2017 and 2018, also reached the last eight af-

ter beating Alex de Minaur 7-6(7), 6-4.

World No. 3 Daniil Medvedev exited in the last 16 following a 6-4, 6-7(2), 6-1 defeat by 16th seed Cristian Garin of Chile.

Medvedev, a two-time Grand Slam runner-up heads

to Rome next. He has never

TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday).

IN BRIEF



All-round Holiday stars in Bucks' win

MILWAUKEE
Jrue Holiday recorded 29 points, six assists and five rebounds to help Milwaukee Bucks post a 135-134 victory over the visiting Washington Wizards on Wednesday night. **The results:** Boston 132 bt Orlando 96; Portland 141 bt Cleveland 105; Atlanta 135 bt Phoenix 103; Philadelphia 135 bt Houston 115; Sacramento 104 bt Indiana 93; Memphis 139 bt Minnesota 135; Milwaukee 135 bt Washington 134; Utah 126 bt San Antonio 94; Denver 113 bt New York 97. REUTERS

Man. United-Liverpool match on May 13

MANCHESTER
Manchester United's postponed home Premier League match against Liverpool has been rearranged for May 13, the league said on Wednesday. REUTERS

Sumit Nagal enters quarterfinals

PRAGUE
Eight seed Sumit Nagal beat qualifier Sergiy Stakhovsky of Ukraine 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 in the second round of the €44,820 Challenger, Biella, Italy: **Quarterfinals:** Andre Goransson (Swe) & Nathaniel Lammons (USA) 6-4, 3-6, [10-8]. **\$25,000 ITF women, Prague, Czech Republic: Second round:** Cagla Buyukakcay (Tur) bt Karman Kaur Thandi 7-5, 6-1.

Pfizer, BioNTech to donate vaccines for Olympic athletes

LAUSANNE
Vaccine developers Pfizer and BioNTech will donate doses to inoculate athletes and officials preparing for the Tokyo Olympics, the IOC said on Thursday. AP

Cricket statistician Dinar Gupte no more

VADODARA
Well-known cricket statistician Dinar Gupte passes away on Thursday after battling COVID-19, Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) said in a release. He was 76. He was the official statistician of BCCI for more than 15 years and also had rendered his valued services as official scorer since 1970 to BCCI. Gupte was with Team India as the official scorer during the 1999 World Cup. PTI

Former Rajasthan player Vivek Yadav passes away

JAIPUR
Vivek Yadav, a former Rajasthan leg-spinner and a member of its Ranji Trophy-winning squad, died of coronavirus-related complications on Wednesday. He was 36 and is survived by wife and a daughter. Vivek, who played 18 First Class matches and picked up 57 wickets, featured in the 2010-11 Ranji Trophy final, his finest hour in a brief domestic career. PTI

Bossing the midfield | Chelsea's win over Real Madrid was characterised by its midfield domination. Ngolo Kante won 100% of his aerial duels, had four interceptions, won four duels and created three chances (the most). Jorginho made more interceptions than any other player (six). He also made the joint most ball recoveries (eight)



Both Chelsea and City have conceded just four goals in reaching the final. In 2005-06, finalists Arsenal and Barcelona had let in two and four respectively

Thomas Tuchel is the only manager to have faced Zinedine Zidane five plus times with three different clubs and avoided defeat

1 Tuchel is also the first manager in Champions League and European Cup history to reach the final in consecutive seasons with different clubs

1 Chelsea is the first in history to reach the men's and women's final in the same season

3 Manchester City vs Chelsea will be the third all-English UCL final after 2008 (Chelsea vs Man. Utd.) and 2019 (Liverpool vs Spurs). Only Spain has had as many same-nationality finals (2000, 2014 & 2016)

Classy Chelsea makes the summit clash

Greater strength and speed of Tuchel's men prove too much for Zidane's Real Madrid

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LONDON

Chelsea set up an all-English Champions League final against Manchester City at Istanbul as goals from Timo Werner and Mason Mount beat Real Madrid 2-0 in a dominant display on Wednesday to seal a 3-1 aggregate victory at Stamford Bridge.

If anything, the scoreline flattered Madrid as the 13-time European champions had no response to Chelsea's greater strength and speed.

The Blues should have run out far more convincing winners as they toyed with the tired visitors in the second half.

However, Werner's cushioned header into an empty net on 28 minutes after Kai Havertz's initial effort came back off the crossbar and Mount's tap-in five minutes from time were enough to seal a place in Istanbul on May 29.



Cashing in: Timo Werner heads in Chelsea's first goal after Kai Havertz's initial effort came back off the crossbar. ■ AFP

sacked Frank Lampard in January.

"We never lost the hunger, the desire to defend," added Tuchel. "In the second half we had even better structure to defend and it was a fantastic performance."

Madrid boss Zinedine Zi-

Benzema to provide a goal threat was exposed.

Gracious in defeat

"We needed to be better going forward," said Zidane. "We didn't have any clear chances. They made a number of them and that's football. We fought and tried but they deserved to win and go through."

Chelsea has now kept 18 clean sheets in 24 games since the appointment of Tuchel turned its season around.

Fired by Paris Saint-Germain on Christmas Eve after leading the French champion to its first ever final in this competition last season, Tuchel is headed back to the showpiece match for a second consecutive season, unlike his former club, which was beaten by City in the other semifinal.

The result: Semifinals (second leg): Chelsea 2 (Werner 28, Mount 85) bt Real Madrid 0. Chelsea wins 3-1 on aggregate.

Villa joins Odisha FC's football committee

ISL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA



David Villa. ■ FILE PHOTO

Spain's World Cup-winning forward David Villa has joined the football committee of Indian Super League outfit Odisha FC, the club announced on Thursday.

The former FC Barcelona striker will work as a technical advisor and head the global football operations of the club.

Joining Villa in the football committee are former head coach Josep Gombau and Victor Onate, who form a part of the DV7 group founded by the former star-striker.

Their role includes advising the coaching staff, improving the Indian and youth players and providing general support to the on-

Adhiban heads the field for Indian Challenge

CHESS

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

B. Adhiban heads the 16-player field in the four-day Indian Challenge rapid online chess tournament, a qualifying event for the two spots available in the cash-rich Meltwater Champions Chess Tour.

Beginning on Friday, the event follows the same format of the Tour, but the duration is limited to one day for each round.

First-round pairings: B. Adhiban-Aronyak Ghosh; M. Karthikeyan-R. Praggnanandhaa; Aravindh Chithambaram-D. Harika; Surya Shekhar Ganguly-N.R. Vaisakh; Nihal Sarin-Arjun Erigasi; Harsha Bhattacharjee-S.P. Sethuraman; Abhijeet Gupta-D. Gukesh; K. Sasikiran-Mitrabha Guha.

field activities of Odisha FC.

"I will try to bring my experience. Obviously, I didn't play in India but I played soccer for 20 years as a professional and before that in the academy."

"And in all of the projects that we [my team] are involved in, I try to give all of my experience that I have gained in soccer," Villa said after formalising the agreement with Odisha FC.



Battling the virus: Apurvi Chandela, who tested positive, trains in her new kit at home in Jaipur. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

NRAI optimistic of Apurvi joining squad

Camp planned in Zagreb for Olympic-bound shooters

KAMESH SRINIVASAN NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) was optimistic of Apurvi Chandela joining the Olympic shooting team for the trip to Zagreb, despite testing positive for COVID-19.

"Apurvi had got her vaccination done on April 28. Her father has said that she would seek an RT-PCR test on May 8 and join the team," said NRAI secretary Rajeev Bhatia.

"I am trying to recover as fast as possible," said Apurvi from her home in Jaipur.

Apurvi's coach Rakesh Manpat said that he had recovered from the virus in Bengaluru and was ready to join Apurvi for the training-cum-competition trip to Europe once she returned a negative test.

"Our passports have been submitted for the visa," clar-

ified Rakesh.

Considering the unstable situation due to escalation of the pandemic in India, the NRAI has planned to have a training camp in Zagreb, Croatia, for the Olympic-bound shooters.

The Indian team will compete in the European championships from May 20. Thereafter, the shooters will be based in Croatia for further

training, before they fly to Tokyo for the Olympics.

As part of the plan, the NRAI has also arranged for a chartered flight to carry the team, along with the coaches and support staff, to circumvent the problem of commercial flights not being allowed to carry Indian passengers owing to travel restrictions proposed by a few countries.

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