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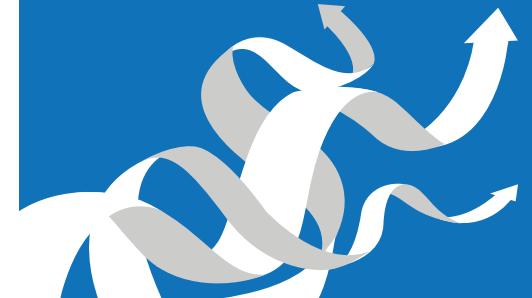
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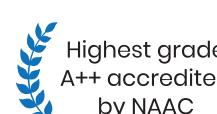
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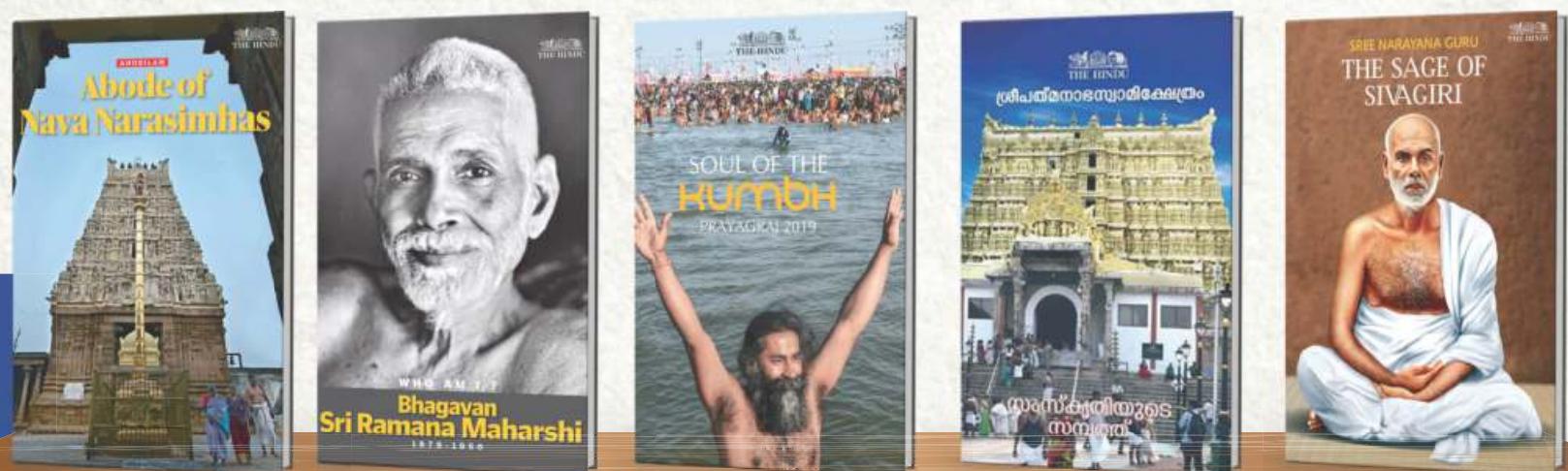


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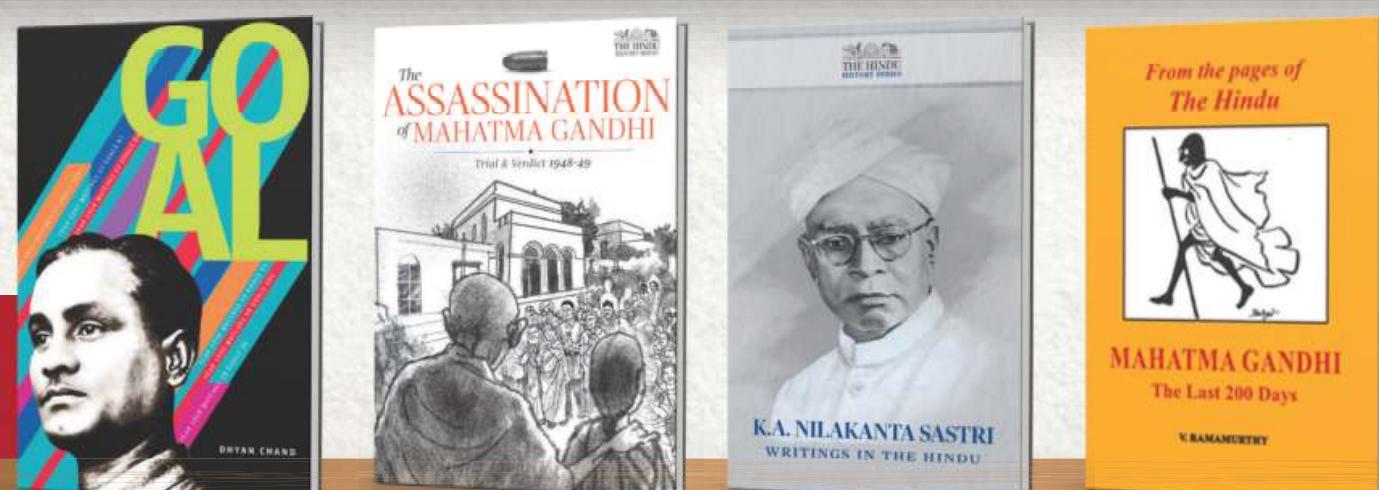
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SC asks U.P. govt.
to submit medical
records of Kappan
page 9



Armed forces should
help mitigate COVID-19
crisis: Gen. Bipin Rawat
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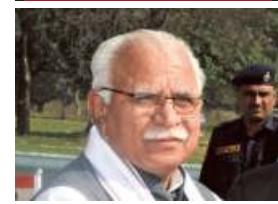


Sri Lanka Cabinet
clears proposal for
ban on burkha
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De Villiers, Harshal and
Siraj help RCB script
one-run win against DC
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NEARBY



Focus must be on giving
relief, says Haryana CM

CHANDIGARH
Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Tuesday said it was pointless to argue over the number of COVID-19 deaths and instead the focus should be on helping those suffering from the disease. He was replying to a question over alleged discrepancy in official data.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Relatives attack hospital workers after patient dies

NEW DELHI
Around 7-8 hospital workers, including doctors, of Apollo Hospital in Sarita Vihar were injured on Tuesday after being attacked allegedly by relatives of a COVID-19 patient who succumbed to the virus. "The patient needed ICU, but we didn't have ICU beds. We gave her oxygen, but she passed away," a hospital spokesperson said.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 3

After HC rap, ECI bans victory processions on counting day

Only two persons can accompany winning candidate for receiving certificate

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India on Tuesday banned victory processions after the declaration of Assembly election results in Assam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, West Bengal and Kerala on May 2 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The decision came a day after the Madras High Court expressed its displeasure with the Commission for failing to enforce COVID-19 protocols during campaigning. The court blamed the Commission for the second wave of the pandemic in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry.

"In view of the surge in COVID-19 cases throughout the country, the Commission has decided to make more stringent provision to be followed during the process of counting, in addition to existing broad guidelines dated 21st August, 2020," the Commission said in a letter to the



Election fever: A crowd builds up during an election campaign in West Bengal, violating COVID-19 safety norms. ■ PTI

Chief Electoral Officers of all States.

It said no victory processions would be allowed after the counting of votes and only a maximum of two people would be allowed to accompany the winning candidate or their authorised representative to receive the certificate of election from the Returning Officer.

The Commission had issued guidelines for elections

in August last year and then reiterated them during the latest Assembly elections.

After finding that political parties had been flouting the guidelines, the Commission issued warnings, before banning campaigning from 7 p.m. to 10 a.m. and extending the silence period before polling from 48 hours to 72 hours, on April 16.

However, by the time the announcement came, poll-

ing was over in Kerala, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry and only three of the eight phases remained in West Bengal.

High Court order

On Monday, the Madras High Court held that though polling was by and large peaceful in Tamil Nadu, the Election Commission could not ensure the political parties adhered to the COVID-19 protocol at the time of election campaigns and rallies. The court observed that in light of the ongoing surge in cases, the counting of votes on May 2 should not result in a further spike.

"Public health is of paramount importance and it is distressing that Constitutional authorities have to be reminded in such regard," the court said in its order.

ENFORCING RULES IS STATE
RESPONSIBILITY: ECI ▶ PAGE 8

India may get major share of U.S. vaccine exports

'60 mn doses of AstraZeneca vaccine to be sent globally'

REUTERS

India expects to secure the biggest chunk of the 60 million AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine doses that the U.S. will share globally, two Indian government sources said, as New Delhi battles a devastating surge in infections.

On Monday, the White House said 10 million doses could be cleared for export "in coming weeks" and the rest by June. It has not revealed potential beneficiaries, but the sources said India could gain the most.



Vital supply: The White House said 10 million doses could be cleared for export in coming weeks and the rest by June. ■ AP

India did not request vaccines'

The Biden administration has said the Government of India did not request it ready-to-use vaccines, as pressure has been mounting

on the U.S. to give out vaccines to India. A senior official said no specific request for vaccines was made by India. ▶ PAGE 9

India after initial reluctance, he added. "We are not sure how many we will receive. All I can say here is, our bowl is the largest and deepest."

Speaking after a telephone conversation bet-

ween Mr. Modi and President Joe Biden, the second official said India was lobbying hard to get more than 35% of the doses.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

The system has failed: Delhi HC

Bench asks Kejriwal government to put its house in order

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday cautioned the city government to put its "house in order" over its failure to check black marketing of oxygen cylinders and chaos in oxygen supply to hospitals reeling under heavy patient load.

"If you can't manage it, tell us. Then we will ask the Centre to take over. We can't let people die," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said, adding: "The system has failed."

The Delhi government has to pull up its socks on distribution of liquid oxygen to larger hospitals, but also supply of oxygen cylinders in nursing homes and smaller hospitals," it said.

During the hearing, Batra Hospital told the court that 21 COVID-19 patients died



Bodies lined up for cremation at the Subhash Nagar Crematorium in Delhi on Tuesday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

because it ran out of oxygen.

The High Court has directed the Delhi government to collect data from all nursing homes and hospitals regarding deaths due to shortage of oxygen, and submit a status report within four days. "We have to

compensate these patients who are dying due to lack of oxygen. It is the responsibility of the State," the HC said.

Contempt notices

The court also questioned the Delhi government on how an oxygen refiller firm, with around 20 metric tonnes of oxygen available with it, was not included in the list of oxygen suppliers for hospitals.

The HC has issued contempt notices to the Delhi government on the issue.

"The manner in which black marketing has been dealt with... our confidence is shaken. Are you aware of black marketing? It is not the time to become vulnerable," said the Bench.

It also ordered the government to submit an affidavit by Wednesday on oxygen stock with the gas refilers and suppliers.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday took strong exception to media reports that on its request, the Delhi government ordered 100 rooms at the five-star Ashoka Hotel be set aside for a COVID-19 health centre for judges, judicial officers, and their family members.

"This is very misleading. The High Court has not made any such request for allocation of any beds in any five-star hotel. There was absolutely no communication in this regard," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said.

Manish Sisodia, the Nodal Minister for COVID management in Delhi, said he had issued directions to withdraw the order.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9

PM briefed on COVID-19 situation, oxygen express trains

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired a meeting on Tuesday with top officials to review the COVID-19 situation in the country. The empowered group charged

with increasing oxygen supply said the production of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) in the country had increased from 5,700 tonnes a day in August 2020 to 8,922 tonnes now. The domestic production of LMO is expected to

cross 9,250 tonnes a day by the end of April.

A Press Information Bureau statement said Mr. Modi instructed officials to work closely with the State governments to start the PSA oxygen plants at the earliest.

The PM was briefed about the Oxygen Express trains as well as the domestic and international sorties carried out by the Air Force to transport oxygen tankers.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SC refuses to interfere in work of HCs

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court cannot remain a "mute spectator" in the face of a national calamity. However, the top court will not interfere in the work done by the various High Courts to monitor life-saving COVID-19 management amid a second wave of the pandemic, a Special Bench, led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, made it clear on Tuesday.

The Bench sat for almost the whole day, grilling the Centre, the States and the authorities on the various aspects of COVID management in a suo motu hearing called, "In re distribution of essential supplies and services during COVID-19".

"During a national crisis, the Supreme Court cannot be a mute spectator. The role of the SC is complementary in nature. The court will examine issues which travel beyond the boundaries of States and have national repercussions," the Bench assuaged apprehensions that the top court would derail the ongoing work of various HCs.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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Timings

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RISE 20:28 SET 06:35
THURSDAY, APR. 29
RISE 05:43 SET 18:56
RISE 21:40 SET 07:22
FRIDAY, APR. 30
RISE 05:42 SET 18:56
RISE 22:49 SET 08:15

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Safdarjung 41 20
Palam 41 23

Delhi Palam Today
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THE HINDU

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Relatives attack hospital staffers after patient dies

As there were no ICU beds, she was given oxygen: hospital

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

About seven to eight hospital employees, including doctors, of Apollo Hospital in Sarita Vihar were injured after being allegedly attacked by relatives of a COVID-19 patient, following a patient's death, the hospital said.

"The patient was brought to the hospital and needed ICU, but we didn't have ICU beds and we informed them that. We gave the patient oxygen and emergency care, but the patient passed away. The relatives then started attacking the staffers," a spokesperson of Apollo Hospital said.

No serious injuries
None of the hospital staffers is seriously injured or admitted at the hospital.

The hospital received the woman in a critical condition at the emergency in the early hours of Tuesday. "Im-



Apollo Hospital staffers being attacked by relatives of a COVID-19 patient on Tuesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mediate medical attention appropriate to her condition was given. Given the paucity of beds, the family was advised to shift the patient to another facility with available beds. Unfortunately, the patient died at around 8 a.m., post which the patient's family members resorted to vandalism, destruction of hospital property and assault on our doctors and staffers," the hospital said in a statement.

The hospital has not filed a police complaint till Tuesday evening. "In the situation was brought under control by hospital security staffers and the police. "While the hospital deeply condoles the death of the patient, it is deeply shocked at the behaviour of the patient's family against doctors and healthcare workers who are providing untiring services amidst the pandemic," the statement said.

"We are trying our level best to increase the amount of oxygen available in Delhi. It has been noted that the oxygen allotted to us by the Centre is also not reaching us in its entirety. A major issue facing us today in the supply of oxygen is the shortage in the number of tankers," he told a digital briefing.

"Even when we find oxygen, transporting it to Delhi becomes a problem because

of shortage of tankers. The Delhi government has decided to import 18 tankers from Bangkok, which will start reaching Delhi starting Wednesday. For this, we have requested the Centre to lend us air force planes," the Chief Minister also said.



Arvind Kejriwal ■

of shortage of tankers. The Delhi government has decided to import 18 tankers from Bangkok, which will start reaching Delhi starting Wednesday. For this, we have requested the Centre to lend us air force planes," the Chief Minister also said.

Steady supply

The 18 tankers from Thailand, he said, will aid the transportation of oxygen and ensure that the amount of oxygen allotted to the city reaches it. Additionally, he said, the Delhi government is importing 21 ready-to-use oxygen plants from France. These will be installed in dif-

ferent hospitals in Delhi ensuring a steady supply at least in those hospitals.

Last week, he said, he had written letters and reached out to many Chief Ministers and industrialists in the country asking for aid and had received a positive response from many of them. Most of them, he said, wished to remain anonymous.

"This is an example of their nobility, to give with no ulterior aim of seeking the public's affection. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to all the people and organisations that are helping us tide over these tough times," the CM said.

"Today, I visited the Ramleela Maidan in front of GTB Hospital. We are trying to convert that into an ICU bed centre with a capacity of 500 beds. Around 200 ICU beds are being readied at Radha Soami Satsang Beas," he said. "A total of 1,200 ICU beds will be ready by May 10, I believe they will relieve the load from the hospitals and aid the people of Delhi," he also said.

381 virus deaths reported in city

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 381 COVID-19 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 15,009, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday. Also, 24,149 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 10,72,065.

A total of 73,811 tests was done in a day, the bulletin said. The positivity of new cases was 32.72% while 9,58,792 people have recovered, leaving the active case count at 98,264.

Around 149 patients were admitted at Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre at Chattarpur till Tuesday evening, said the ITBP.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government on Tuesday allowed hospitals to engage retired nursing and para-medical staffers to handle the COVID-19 situation.

The government also ordered to restart four facilities for treatment of CO-

VID-19 positive officers of Delhi government, autonomous bodies, corporations and local bodies and their family members.

Also, a special task force of north west district along with area magistrates apprehended a man who was selling Remdesivir injection at ₹60,000 each. "A nurse of Agarsain Hospital in Rohini was also charged with selling the vials for ₹38,000 to the prime accused," a statement read.

While one nurse was tested positive and was under home isolation, the other nurse had "COVID-19 like symptoms" and had been admitted at a private hospital.

Two nurses working at Lok Nayak Hospital, the largest Delhi government hospital, died on Tuesday, according to Delhi State Hospitals Nurses Union.

While one nurse was tested positive and was under home isolation, the other nurse had "COVID-19 like symptoms" and had been admitted at a private hospital.

The association demanded compensation for family members of both the nurses, considering them as "COVID warriors".

The second nurse, Elizabeth Joseph, 45, is from Kerala and is survived by her husband and two children. She was working in the pediatric department of the hospital,

which was a non-COVID treatment facility.

"Though it was a non-COVID facility, she also had high chances of getting virus from there as there are a lot of bystanders and attendants who come in there and are not tested for COVID-19. Also, she did not wear PPE kit to work as it was a non-COVID ward," Mr. Ali said.

"She had fever from April 15 but was tested negative.

Her condition worsened and since she was negative and our hospital was a COVID facility, she was admitted at a private hospital. Scans had shown white patches in her lungs, which is a COVID-19 symptom. Her condition worsened and she passed away on Tuesday," he said.

Elizabeth had SLE disease and doctors had advised her not to take the vaccine, the association said.

Help desk at Miranda House college proving handy for those in need

Students say they are flooded with calls

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ
NEW DELHI

"Hello! Do you want to find out where you can get an RT-PCR test done?" asks Vaishnavi Nandkumar, answering the Miranda House COVID help desk, cutting straight to the point.

The help desk that started out as an initiative to help the Miranda House community on April 22 has over the past three days started getting calls from complete strangers calling to seek help with finding hospital beds, oxygen, RT-PCR tests, doctors, plasma, ambulance services, food for patients and psychologists. The task at hand for the students is to verify every lead that they get and update a resource document so that those calling in for help can be directed to a credible source that can help them.

Srishti Sensarma, who is heading the operation, says her college principal Bijayalaxmi Nanda came up with the idea and a few students started it to help the college community. But soon, their phone numbers spread like wildfire and phones have been ringing ever since.

"On my first day after our numbers got shared outside the college community, I got a call from someone at 6 a.m. who gave me the vital statistics of their 30-year-old son who needed immediate hospitalisation. In these times, it is almost a miracle to find a bed but I made calls to multiple hospitals and finally pleaded with the emergency staffers at GTB Hospital and then directed her to take him there," she narrated.

The mother reached the hospital and got an emergency treatment that saved his life, said Ms. Srishti. "While we can't arrange beds, we can help point people who are helpless in the right direction," said the 20-year old student.

A clinical psychologist who helped out offered his services pro-bono and some of us have reached out to him to avail his services

Ms. Srishti adds that most people call in a state of panic and are unable to process what needs to be done. This is where her team that has grown to over 500 volunteers out of which 50-100 are actively involved step in. The team verifies leads and that come constantly and makes calls to find out if a resource is credible. "If we verify 500 leads from social media, about 5% turn out to be genuine," she adds.

Help in return

The students who have helped out people in crisis have also received help in return. "A clinical psychologist who helped out offered his services pro-bono and some of us have reached out to him to avail his services

to help those in need," said Ms. Srishti.

Ms. Nandkumar says that the members of her team are mostly college students and are not trained to handle such calls. But they are doing their best to guide people who call crying for help.

Commenting on the work of her students, Ms. Nanda said that they were showing tremendous organisational skills and putting all their effort into arranging help. "Only 25% of our students are from Delhi-NCR and we are trying to tie up doctors from across the country to help our students if they need help. We have even contacted our alumni and corporates to help out at this time," she said.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

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1.	Ordinary repair to Paonta Rajban Shillai Meenus Hatkol road NH 72B(New NH 707) Km 0/00 to 10/500 (SH- Construction of PCC R/wall at RD 101/802 to 101/820)	Rs. 10,77,587/- only	21,552/- only	500/-	Class "C" & "D"	2 Months

1. The Executive Engineer HPPWD NH Division Nahan Distt. Sirmour(H.P) on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned works from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with PWD Department.

2. **Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission:** The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. **Key Dates:**

1. Date of Online Publication	30.04.2021 at 1600 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	30.04.2021 at 1630 HRS to 10.05.2021 up to 1100 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	30.04.2021 at 1630 HRS to 10.05.2021 up to 1100 HRS
4. Date of Technical Bid opening.	11.05.2021 up to 1100 HRS

4. **TENDER DETAILS:** The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:

Cover 1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/ Eligibility Information".

Cover 2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. **BID OPENING DETAILS:** The bids shall be opened on 11.05.2021 at 1100 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer HPPWD NH Division Nahan H.P. by the authorised officers. In their interest the tenderer are advised to present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

6. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

7. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

8. All rates quoted by contractors shall be inclusive of all modes of leads, lifts & heights and also taxes/levies unless specified to the contrary including service tax as applicable w.e.f. 1st April, 2015 as per Government of India, Ministry of Finance (Department of Revenue) Notification No. 6/2015-Servce Tax dated 1st March, 2015. All the excavated/surplus earth/dismantle material/waste etc. shall be dumped at the site to be arranged by the contractor unless otherwise specified to the contrary and to the satisfaction of Engineer-in-Charge.

9. The provisions of notification issued vide Add. Chief Secretary (PW) to the Govt. of HP, Shimla Notification No. PBW(B)22-1/2002 dated 26.05.2015 shall also be applicable.

10. The provision of notification issued vide Add. Chief Secretary (PW) to the Govt. of HP, Shimla Notification No. PBW(B)17/2012 dated 07.08.2018 also be applicable.

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विज्ञापन सं. / Advt. No.: IITM/R/1/2021 दिनांक / Dated: 28.04.2021

भारतीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान नम्राता, विज्ञापन विभाग में निम्नलिखित अध्ययन पर के लिए <https://facapp.iitm.ac.in> वर्षे।

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(देवानगरी लिखा है)

(देवानगरी लिखा है)

4. ऑनलाइन जांच परीक्षा 2 May @ 10 AM

(अनिवार्य प्रक्रिया है रजिस्ट्रेशन के अंतिम तिथि 1 मई)

निम्नलिखित आवश्यक प्रमाण पर साक्षात्कार के समय अपेक्षित हैं।

1. चार पायांपाट माइक फोटो, 2. शैक्षणिक प्रमाण पत्र (नामक), 3. जनि प्रमाण पत्र (SC/OBC), 4. अप्य प्रगति पत्र-हसीलदार या उससे ऊपर के अधिकारों के द्वारा निर्भाव हो (सभी छात्रों से पूरे परिवार की वारिक अथवा 8 लाख या उससे कम), 5. पर्चान पत्र- अधिकार कार्ड, 6. बैंक खाता संख्या।

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APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male was found in unconscious condition in the area of Police Station South Campus, Delhi and admitted to Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi on 19.04.2021. Doctors Declared him brought dead vide MLC No. MRN21-00127274. In this regard DD No. 13A Dated 19.04.2021 has been lodged at P.S. South Campus, South West District, New Delhi. The dead boy of the deceased has been preserved in mortuary of Safdarjung Hospital Delhi for 72 hrs for identification.

The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 45 years Approx., Height: About 5'8" Feet, Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Wearing: Light Yellow Shirt, Blue Jeans and black belt. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
P.S. South Campus, South West District, Delhi
DP/639/SW/2021 Ph.: 91-11-26177179, 26177178**ENTERPRISE CONNECT****Sh .SS Rao elected as Chairman PRSI ,Delhi**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) by The Public Relations Society of India ,Delhi Chapter was scheduled on Saturday, 24th April, 2021 in compliance with provisions of by-laws of the Society and Societies Registration Act, 1860. The Secretary read the detailed Governing Body report which was part of the annual report. In the governing body report whole year activities, various programmes, meetings, governing mechanism, updated amendment process status and efforts by Governing Body to ensure timely adoption of the same as per the provisions of Societies Registration Act, 1860, were shared. Mr. SS Rao , chief General Manager , PR ,Power finance corporation has been unanimously elected as Chairman ,Public relations Society for the period of 2021-2023. The Election results were announced by the election officer,Dinesh Kumar,former executive director ,AAI at the AGM in the virtual mode . Kumar also announced the result of other members ,Vivek Chandra Shukla -Joint Secretary who is the founder of PSU Watch . Rama Vijay-as Treasurer , she is former DGM (PR)REC. The House also showered their appreciation and congratulated the newly elected members. Secretary announced the handing over ceremony in front of the house. Chairman, Mr. Naresh Kumar read out the handing over charge document and passed on the baton on behalf of the present governing body to the newly elected governing body, through codal procedure bearing signatures of the present governing body.

BHEL starts supply of oxygen to hospitals

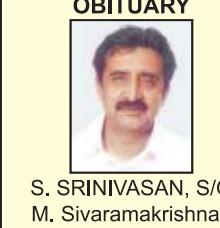
In the midst of national crisis due to the second wave of Covid-19, Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has risen to the occasion to meet the rising demand of medical oxygen in the country. BHEL's manufacturing plants located at Bhopal and Haridwar have started supply of oxygen to hospitals in their vicinity, for meeting the surge in demand due to the prevailing crisis situation. Catering to the daily increasing demand of oxygen, BHEL's Bhopal plant is supplying more than 6,000 cubic meters of oxygen gas daily to hospitals in the Bhopal area. The unit supplied a record 975 cylinders on 23rd April 2021. The Hardiwar plant is upgrading its infrastructure to be able to supply about 16,000 Cubic Meters of oxygen per day for medical use. It will, shortly, be able to supply about 2,200 cylinders per day as against the capacity of 700 cylinders per day at present. This oxygen is supplied from captive oxygen plants, which have been installed to meet production requirements, in these two units. Further efforts are in progress for creating oxygen production capacity in other units of the company also. This

MP demands imposition of curfew in GurugramSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Union Minister of State for Statistics and Gurugram Lok Sabha MP Rao Inderjit Singh on Tuesday demanded imposition of curfew in Gurugram in view of surge in COVID-19

cases.

Mr. Singh spoke to Chief Minister Manohar Lal over phone during the day to apprise him of the situation in the district because of rising cases and demanded that curfew be imposed.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE**DEATH**Smt. JAY VENKATESHWARI (87)
Wife of Shri. S. Venkateswari
(Gmt. Govt. New Delhi),
passed away on 25th April '21
at Chennai after a brief illness.
Mourned by Family & Friends
9962820262 / 9980144665**DEATH**S. SRINIVASAN, S/O
M. Sivaramakrishnan
(Retd. Principal DTEA
School), partner
Rajan, Chakravarthy &
Associates, Chartered
Accountants passed away
on 26th April 2021.
Srikanth Chakravarthy
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initiative by BHEL aims at supporting the nation in fighting the battle against Covid-19.

PNB commemorates 127 years of service ,Launches PNB@Ease outlet

Celebrating its illustrious legacy of 127 years of service to the nation, Punjab National Bank launched a unique pilot project PNB@Ease outlet. The model offers "Banking-on-the-Go" service where every transaction undertaken by a bank branch will be initiated and authorized by the customers themselves. The service can range from savings accounts opening to availing various loans and more, without visiting a branch or help from the bank employees. Going forward, the Bank would roll out PNB@Ease across 165 identified locations across India. With an option to get assisted by bank staff, PNB @Ease outlets will be loaded with five Kiosks i.e. ATM, Bunch Note Acceptor, Account Opening Kiosk, Card Issuance Kiosk and internet-enabled Kiosk. This facility will enable the customers to avail all banking services under one roof. Additionally, PNB@Ease outlets would boost the Bank's distribution capability and lower the cost of customer acquisition. First such multi-functional outlet was inaugurated by Sh. Debasish Panda, IAS, Secretary and Sh. Pankaj Jain, IAS, Additional Secretary, Department of Financial Services at the Central Secretariat Metro Station, New Delhi on Monday, its 127th foundation day. PNB announced various digital initiatives such as instant opening of online saving account via video-KYC, insta pre-approved loan, insta demat account and insurance facility through internet and mobile banking services.

Thanking customers, employees and other stakeholders for their selfless contribution and support during the challenging times, Shri CH. S. S. Mallikarjuna Rao - MD and CEO of PNB, said, "127th Foundation day of PNB is a momentous occasion for us in line with our legacy. Despite the challenges put forward by the pandemic, we have seamlessly amalgamated two banks with us. The integration of technology, people and business, was completed in record time enabling us to tap the growth opportunities. Customer service is paramount to us and to continue to serve the customers better, we have taken a few initiatives in the area of digitalization. These include PNB@ease outlet, Online Savings account opening with Video KYC, online Pre-approved personal loan, Online Insta-Demat account and more." Congratulating PNB on becoming one of the largest public sector bank post amalgamation and wishing it achieve greater heights, Chief Guest of the ceremony Sh. Debasish Panda, IAS, Secretary - Department of Financial Services, said, "Today's launch demonstrates PNB's ability to adopt

the latest technology to stay ahead of the curve. Instead of developing the technology in-house, banks can collaborate with fintech and startups for digital transformation while staying focused on its larger role of credit growth and financial inclusion for the country."

Mankind Pharma pays tribute to families of Frontline martyred warriors with Rs.100cr contribution during Covid

As the country continues to grapple with the second wave of coronavirus pandemic, healthcare and frontline workers are racing against time to contain its spread. Many dedicated Heroes have lost their lives in the process. As a responsible organization, Mankind Pharma is standing alongside the families of these heroes and will donate Rs 100 crores to support them. Mankind Pharma has been involved in the country's fight against the pandemic since the beginning. In 2020 Mankind Pharma donated around INR 130 crore to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, CM Care Fund, and to martyred healthcare workers and police personnel involved in fighting the pandemic. The company has donated ventilators, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and medicines to the nation. Being a leading pharma company, Mankind Pharma has always aspired to be recognized as a top brand both in revenue and serving mankind through its CSR activities. Mr. Rajeev Juneja, Managing Director & Vice Chairman, Mankind Pharma, said, "Our fearless Heroes are doing their best to help people who are infected by Covid-19 or are suffering due to economic or social reasons brought about by the second wave of the pandemic. Being the first line of defense they are highly exposed to this deadly disease. Many have lost their lives fighting the pandemic and protecting us. Their invaluable service to the nation and humanity will not be forgotten. As a homage to them, we have pledged a fund of Rs 100 crore to support and care for the families of these lost warriors. This is not our duty, but a debt we owe them. Because they are truly our hope." Mr. Juneja added:

"They have already fought many battles for us. It's time, we fight for them. Let's protect ourselves from the clutches of the coronavirus and, in turn, protect them. Let us all promise to wear a mask whenever we step outside, maintain a distance of 6 feet at all times, and wash our hands regularly. Mankind Pharma will never forget the loss borne by the families of the deceased frontline warriors. The company knows we can never do enough to replace their void but we can at least try to help them ride through these trying times." Mankind Pharma pledge to donate a sum to PNB 100 cr for the families of deceased doctors, police officers, pharmacists, and other healthcare workers.

Passing orders not end of duty, HC tells Delhi govt.

Hospitals oppose directive to attend to patients within 10 mins.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Several city hospitals on Tuesday objected before the Delhi High Court a recent circular of the Delhi government directing that all patients reaching healthcare facilities be attended to within 10 minutes and taken to the triage area.



A Bench of Justices Vinod Sanghi and Rekha Palli told the Delhi government that it was unnecessarily complicating the issue. "You think you have discharged your duty with this order? This is nothing more than a paper exercise and satisfying your own conscience," the Bench remarked.

The counsel for Maharaja Agrasen Hospital said hospitals are already full and the order will lead to more legal

medical issues later.

don't see the other side. Your own hospitals are not achieving this. Are any of them able to do this?"

Oxygen shortage

Several hospitals also raised issue of oxygen shortage. Shanti Mukund Hospital complained that their allocation of oxygen has been reduced. The hospital said its allocation was 3.2 metric tonnes but the demand was 4 MT.

Now the allocation has been reduced to 2.69 MT, the hospital claimed.

Venkateswar Hospital's counsel told the court the hospital was running short of oxygen and the Delhi government's efforts for procuring oxygen have "not been up to the mark" at a time when other States and Union Territories have been making earnest and professional efforts on the matter.

Govt. rapped over oxygen logistical problems

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Centre has rapped the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government for its alleged failure to arrange tankers for transportation of oxygen for the city's hospitals and said proactive actions by it could have "avoided tragic incidents".

In a hard-hitting letter to Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Dev, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla also claimed that the Delhi government's efforts to resolve logistical issues for procuring oxygen have "not been up to the mark" at a time when other States and Union Territories have been making earnest and professional efforts on the matter.

Mr. Bhalla wrote the letter on April 25. "This is a constant complain. Which means there is truth in it," the HC noted.

Man arrested for killing pregnant wifeSTAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 29-year-old woman, who was eight-month pregnant, was allegedly shot dead by her husband in Hazrat Nizamuddin on Tuesday. The accused has been arrested, the

police said. The woman's employee was also shot at and is battling for life.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) R.P. Meena said that the victim has been identified as Saina, who was released on bail on

Saturday in a narcotics case, and the accused has been identified as her husband Waseem.

When Saina was in jail, the accused developed relationship with Saina's sister which she objected to.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**See Section 82 Cr.P.C.**Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Ravi Kumar, S/o Ram Mehar, R/o: Village Gogipuri, PS Madhuban, Dist. Karnal, Haryana, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 494/2019 U/s 33/58 Delhi Excise Act, registered at P.S. Bawana, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Ravi Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Ravi Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Ravi Kumar** accused of in case FIR No. 494/2019 U/s 33/58 Delhi Excise Act, P.S. Bawana, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 10.06.2021.By Order
Sh. Vaibhav Mehta
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate-05 (North),
Room No. 116, 1st Floor
Rohini Courts, Delhi
DP/975/ON/2021**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED****TANISHA**General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely: Tanisha, D/o: Chotte Lal Bhuia, R/o: Near 4 no Chanak, Jaipurampur, Koliyari, Jagugra**

IN BRIEF



Solar case: Saritha Nair sentenced to 6 years' RI

The Kozhikode Judicial First Class Magistrate's Court on Tuesday sentenced Saritha S. Nair to six-year rigorous imprisonment (RI) and slapped a fine of ₹40,000 in connection with a solar cheating case. Magistrate K.K. Nimm found Saritha guilty of duping Abdul Majeed, owner of Associated Steels Yard.

Senior Congress leader MSR passes away

HYDERABAD
Former Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) president and senior Congress leader M. Satyanarayana Rao passed away here on Tuesday due to age-related issues. He had been ailing for some time. The 88-year-old former parliamentarian, popularly known as MSR, is survived by wife, two daughters and two sons.

Kerala Congress factions formalise merger

KOTTAYAM
Amidst voices of dissent raised by Francis George, the Kerala Congress led by P.J. Joseph has formalised its merger with the Kerala Congress led by P.C. Thomas. A meeting convened online by the party leadership in Thodupuzha on Tuesday appointed Mr. Joseph as party chairman and Mr. Thomas as working chairman.

Riots case: Court rejects bail plea of 18 accused

BENGALURU
A special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court here has rejected the bail applications of the 18 accused in the D.J. Halli riots case, filed in two separate petitions. All 18 accused had been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Case surge continues in southern States

Both Karnataka, Kerala report over 30,000 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA

Southern States continue to report a surge in fresh cases of COVID-19.

Andhra Pradesh reported 64 deaths and 11,434 new infections in the 24 hours ending Tuesday. The cumulative tally crossed 10.5 lakh cases and stood at 10,54,875. The death toll jumped to 7,800 while the mortality rate remains at 0.74%.

During the 24 hours, 7,055 patients, the highest in months, have recovered and the number of recoveries touched 9,47,629. The State's active case tally reached close to one lakh. There were 99,446 patients under treatment as of Tuesday morning and the recovery rate further dropped to 89.83%.

For the first time, Guntur reported more than 2,000 new infections in a day. It re-

Arduous journey | With a sharp increase in COVID-19 cases, Karnataka has announced a stringent two-week lockdown across the State. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



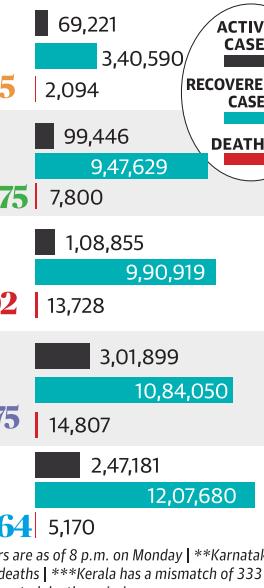
Getting home: People reaching Hassan in Karnataka by train on Tuesday, hours before the lockdown came into effect. ■ PRAKASH HASSAN

ported 2,028 new infections and close to it was Chittoor with 1,982 new cases. Srikantham reported 1,322, Nellore reported 1,237 and Visakhapatnam reported 1,076 new infections.

Meanwhile, Karnataka re-

torted 2,028 new infections and close to it was Chittoor with 1,982 new cases. Srikantham reported 1,322, Nellore reported 1,237 and Visakhapatnam reported 1,076 new infections.

With 180 deaths, the total toll rose to 14,807. As many as 10,793 persons were discharged on Tuesday, taking the total recoveries to



*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Monday | **Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths | ***Kerala has a mismatch of 333 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons

taking the total to 14,00,775. Of these, 17,550 cases are from Bengaluru Urban alone.

With 180 deaths, the total toll rose to 14,807. As many as 10,793 persons were discharged on Tuesday, taking the total recoveries to

10,84,050. Of the remaining 3,01,899 active patients, 2,063 are being monitored in ICUs. While the positivity rate for the day stood at 18.71%, the Case Fatality Rate (CFR) touched 0.56%.

Kerala reported over 32,000 new cases on Tues-

day. After the analysis of 1,41,199 samples in the past 24 hours, the State added 32,819 new cases to its tally.

The average test positivity rate in the State rose to 23.24%. The active cases stood at 2,47,181. The cumulative case burden of the State ever since the pandemic began, now stands at 14,60,364 cases.

In a massive surge, Telangana recorded 10,122 new cases and 52 fatalities in a single day. These are the highest numbers recorded in a day. Till Monday, the maximum cases were 8,126, recorded on April 24.

Tamil Nadu's tally of COVID-19 cases crossed 11 lakh on Tuesday, with 15,830 more persons testing positive. So far, 11,13,502 persons have been infected, and the State has 1,08,55 active cases. It recorded 77 deaths, taking the toll to 13,728.

(With inputs from Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, Hyderabad and Chennai bureaus)

Eight, including actor, arrested for murder

Victim was the brother of the actor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HUBBALLI

Eight persons, including a budding actor, have been arrested by the Hubballi Rural police here in connection with the actor's brother's brutal murder.

The arrests have been made in the murder of Rakesh Katwe, whose severed head was found in Devaragudih forest area in Dharwad district last week.

The victim is the brother of budding actor Sonia, alias Shanya Katwe, who has acted in a yet-to-be released film *Chota Bombay*, shot in

north Karnataka and produced by a Hubballi-based producer.

Sonia was reportedly in love with Niyaz Ahmed Katiyar, 21, the main accused, and the victim was reportedly opposed to it.

According to Superintendent of Police P. Krishnakant, the actor had initially feigned ignorance, but subsequent investigation revealed her involvement in the case. The accused allegedly killed Rakesh, severed his head and tried to set it on fire in the Devaragudih forest.

The arrests have been made in the murder of Rakesh Katwe, whose severed head was found in Devaragudih forest area in Dharwad district last week.

The victim is the brother of budding actor Sonia, alias Shanya Katwe, who has acted in a yet-to-be released film *Chota Bombay*, shot in

Denied an ambulance, man carries mother's body on bike

As she tested positive, hospital refused vehicle for her

STAFF REPORTER
SRIKAKULAM

A youth, with the help of his friend, carried the body of his mother, who reportedly tested positive for COVID-19, on a bike from a private hospital at Palasa-Kasibugga town to his native village, Killey, on Monday, as ambulance drivers allegedly refused to shift the body.

The woman was brought to the hospital from Killey, 20 km away from Palasa-Ka-

sibugga town. She reportedly died even before the treatment began. As she tested positive for COVID-19, the hospital allegedly refused to arrange for an ambulance to shift the body to her village. Left with no other option, the son, along with his friend, carried the body on a bike.

Red Cross's offer
Meanwhile, the Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS) has urged those in distress to

contact its volunteers for assistance in shifting bodies for cremation.

Special teams

IRCS Chairman P. Jagannamohan Rao said they had formed special teams to help the persons who were unable to arrange vehicles and ambulances for shifting patients to hospitals and bodies to crematorium.

He requested all hospitals to give the phone numbers of volunteers to those in need of ambulance services.

Across India, a desperate hunt for COVID-19 care

Overwhelmed hospitals refuse admission as patients gasp for breath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

As COVID-19 positive cases keep rising steeply across the country, in many States, patients and their relatives are put through the wringer literally, as they hunt for oxygen, beds, ventilators and ICUs. Hospitals which have mild and moderate COVID-19 patients but no ventilators or ICU services, are also in a fix if the health condition of a patient deteriorates.

Delhi, the national capital region and most parts of northern India continued to reel under acute shortage of beds, oxygen and essential drugs on Tuesday.

At Apollo Hospital in Delhi, angry relatives attacked hospital staff, after a patient died while waiting for an ICU bed. People could be seen attacking hospital security guards with sticks.

At least 45 people are known to have died in two hospitals on account of oxygen-supply linked issues.

In Bihar, a woman was seen on camera outside a private hospital in Patna pleading with a mediaperson to arrange an oxygen cylinder. The hospital had earlier discharged her husband due to lack of oxygen supply in the hospital but when she did not get a bed in the other COVID-19 designated private hospitals in the city, she was forced to return to the same hospital. The district administration has designated 90 registered private hospitals in Patna for treatment of COVID-19 patients but most of them were forced to turn away patients on Tuesday due to lack of oxygen or beds.

Futile wait in U.P.
In Uttar Pradesh, which recorded 265 new deaths and 32,993 new cases according to the State Health Department, the desperate hunt for beds



Big rush: Kin of patients waiting to refill empty oxygen cylinders in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

and oxygen continued. In Agra, Priya Singh could not find a bed for her father, 57, whose oxygen level was falling. "We desperately need a hospital. He is unable to even move. We are returning home now as his condition is getting worse standing on the road," Ms. Singh said.

In Kanpur, the second worst-affected district, Amit Tiwari has been waiting for more than a day to get his mother admitted to a private hospital with ventilator facilities due to a delayed COVID-19 test result. In Gorakhpur, Sanjeev Singh's family was also desperately seeking help to admit him to an ICU bed since Sunday. As an urgent measure, he was admitted to a government hospital but his oxygen levels continued to drop as it was not equipped with the necessary facilities.

The situation was similar in Gujarat. Faced with acute shortage of oxygen, hospitals in Surat have threatened to stop new admissions if the supply is not restored.

The two main government hospitals in the city refused to admit new patients. On Monday, representatives of the Indian Medical Association, Surat, urged Chief Minister Vijay Rupani to immediately increase the supply of oxygen to save 4,000 patients in various hospitals. More than 50 patients have reportedly died in Navsari, Surat, Banaskantha and Rajkot due to shortage of oxygen in the past 10 days.

Overwhelmed in Pune
In Maharashtra, Pune has nearly one lakh active cases and has reported more than 12,500 deaths while witnessing an average daily spike of more than 10,000 fresh cases for over three weeks now. The district's overburdened health infrastructure is cracking un-

tiers strongly contested that. According to the website, out of 9,428 ICU or ventilators beds in the hospitals, 3,526 were vacant on Tuesday evening. However, patients and relatives claim that the real situation is far removed from this, and took to Twitter to post bed/ventilator requirements.

Unaffordable in A.P.
Though the Andhra Pradesh government has permitted more private hospitals to treat COVID patients and increased bed capacity in Government hospitals, getting admitted to one was still a tough task. While most government facilities are full, treatment at private hospitals has been unaffordable for a majority.

With the daily case load having crossed 30,000 in Karnataka, the desperate search for drugs, beds and oxygen remains unabated, while the government has imposed a lockdown to stem the spread of the virus.

Finding an ICU and ventilator beds in Hyderabad has turned into anguish for family members. While the State Health department claimed that the website health.telangana.gov.in displays real time status of beds availability, pa-

woman who tested positive is being treated in a government hospital for nearly 10 days. While they will continue to keep her, they have told her son that she needs high pressure oxygen flow that is available only in an intensive care unit, which they are currently unable to offer.

Jaheer Hussain of TOSH Hospital, explained: "We are a mid-range orthopaedic hospital converted to a COVID centre, and can admit patients with mild to moderate complications, with SpO2 up to 85. If their oxygen saturation falls below this range we have to refer them to bigger hospitals," he said.

In Odisha, again, people say the situation is worse than government claims of available beds. All major private hospitals in the capital Bhubaneswar are turning patients away citing unavailability of beds.

In Jammu and Kashmir, there is rare good news, as leading government-run hospitals in Srinagar and Jammu have a bed occupancy rate between 70 to 90%, officials said. According to data from districts, bed occupancy is still around 50%.

Kerala had doubled the number of ventilators (3,776 both public and private) and ICU beds (9,735 both public and private) in the State; and increased the oxygen production. Hospital bed and ICU bed capacity was enhanced over two times in many government medical colleges, while all private medical colleges have been asked to give up 75% of the beds for COVID patients.

"But every surge capacity has a limit. If the case graph continues to rise the way it has been this past week, our system too may not hold up," says Mohammed Asheel, Executive Director, Kerala State Security Mission.

(With inputs from reporters in New Delhi, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Srinagar)

IN BRIEF

Won't tolerate indiscipline in party, says Punjab CM lashing out at Sidhu

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday said indiscipline in the party would not be tolerated at any cost. He said if former Cabinet Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu wants to contest against him then he is free to do so but that would only lead to the latter losing his security deposit.

GMR
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Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society
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Panchayati Raj and Drinking Water Department
Government of Odisha
BHUABANESWAR

Notice No.: 1251 MKT/285/2020-21

Date : 23.04.2021

TENDER CALL NOTICE

ORMAS invites tender from interested reputed printing firms / Packaging Development Institute / Agency to print & supply flexible laminates packaging material (Food Grade flexible laminates) for package of food grade consumer products produced by the SHGs/PGs. The details of the terms and conditions of the above work can be downloaded from www.ormas.org. The agencies will submit sealed proposals superscribing "Tender call notice for Printing & Supply of Flexible Laminates (Food Grade) for Tamarind Cake" to the office of the Chief Executive Officer, Odisha Rural Development & Marketing Society (ORMAS), SIRD & PR Campus, Unit-VIII, Bhubaneswar-751012 by 17.05.2021 (03:30 P.M.). The tender shall be opened on the same date at 4 P.M. in ORMAS Conference Hall. In case of any Addendum/ Clarification/ Corrigendum/Extension regarding this tender call notice, the same will be published in the above website. Authority reserves the right to accept or reject any tender, and to cancel the procurement process at any time prior to the award of contract without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer

OPIR-19004/11/



Right priorities

Even as it waits for help from the U.S., India must accelerate its vaccination programme

In a phone call with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, U.S. President Joe Biden said that his government would quickly deploy a number of COVID-19-related supplies to help India battle its current crisis with the pandemic. The move comes after what many saw as a delay in the U.S.'s response to the situation. After a few days, where the Biden administration seemed to dither, making the point that protecting Americans first was in the world's interest, it appears to have amended its stand, in some part due to pressure from U.S. Congressmen, business chambers and academics. Over the weekend, senior U.S. officials reached out to India and made public comments expressing concern and sympathy for the people affected as India sees over 3 lakh new cases a day and a record number of deaths. In the short term, what India needs from abroad is two-fold: medicines and oxygen-management devices, including containers, concentrators and generators. It is heartening that more than a dozen countries, including the U.S., have promised to supply these within a week, and some of those supplies have already begun to arrive. In addition to the U.S. government's supplies, the U.S. private sector has also mobilised aid for various COVID-19 resources in India. In the longer term, New Delhi wants Washington to consider a shift in its long-held state policies for the duration of the pandemic, which may be a more difficult proposition as it includes setting aside patent rights for pharmaceuticals produced in the U.S. and supporting the India-South Africa petition at the World Trade Organization for waiving all TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) so vaccines can be manufactured generically for the next few years. The U.S. should consider its assistance to India both in light of their relationship and of the fact that as a key global supplier of pharmaceuticals and vaccines, India's faltering steps in the fight against COVID-19 will impact the world.

There is no denying that the perceived delay in the U.S.'s response to the crisis in India, which is not just a bilateral strategic partner but key to the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific strategy as a member of the Quad, has caused some disappointment in South Block. However, it is unlikely that this will seriously impact the partnership, nor should such matters affect the broader relationship. There is also a kernel of truth in the U.S.'s earlier assertion that the American government has a "special responsibility" to American citizens first and addressing their COVID-19 needs was also in the world's interests. Instead of chiding the U.S. for its delay, New Delhi would do well to learn from this prioritisation, and complete its vaccination programme for all Indians, even as it uses all its resources and those received from the U.S. and other countries to rescue the nation from the current ravages of the pandemic.

True name

Turkey should not live in denial of the atrocities committed against Armenians

U.S. President Joe Biden has fulfilled a long-pending American promise by recognising the mass killings of Armenians by the Ottoman Turks in 1915-16 as "an act of genocide", but the move has clearly infuriated Turkey, a NATO ally. In 2019, both Houses of the U.S. Congress passed resolutions calling the slaughter by its true name, but former President Donald Trump, like his predecessors, stopped short of a formal recognition of the genocide, mainly because of Turkish opposition. Ankara has challenged the "scholarly and legal" basis of Mr. Biden's announcement and warned that it will "open a deep wound". Up to 1.5 million Armenians were estimated to have been killed during the course of the First World War by the Ottoman Turks. When the Ottoman Empire suffered a humiliating defeat in the Caucasus in 1915 at the hands of the Russians, the Turks blamed the Armenians living on the fringes of the crumbling empire for the setback. Accusing them of treachery, the Ottoman government unleashed militias on Armenian villages. Armenian soldiers, public intellectuals and writers were executed and hundreds of thousands of Armenians, including children, were forcibly moved from their houses in eastern Anatolia (modern-day Turkey) to the Syrian desert. Many died during this exodus and many others, after reaching the concentration camps in the deserts. Turkey has acknowledged that atrocities were committed against Armenians, but is opposed to calling it a genocide, which it considers as an attempt to insult the Turks.

Mr. Biden's move comes at a time when the relationship between the U.S. and Turkey has been in steady decline. In 2016, Ankara accused the U.S.-based Turkish Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen of being the mastermind of a failed coup, and asked the U.S. government to extradite him, a demand Washington paid no attention to. Turkey's decision to buy the S-400 missile defence system from Russia, despite strong opposition from the U.S., prompted American leaders to oust Turkey from the F-35 fighter jet training programme and impose sanctions on their ally. When Mr. Biden assumed office, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan had sent feelers for a reset, saying Turkey needed help from the West to resolve the Syrian crisis. But Mr. Biden's move on the Armenian killings appears to have widened the cracks. For Turkey, this overreaction to anyone calling the Armenian massacre a genocide is not doing any good in foreign policy. Instead of being defensive about the crimes of the Ottoman empire, the modern Turkish republic should demonstrate the moral courage to disown the atrocities. It shouldn't allow the past to ruin its present interests.

A patently wrong regime

Over the last few decades, intellectual property rules have served as a lethal barrier to the right to access healthcare



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

Even an unprecedented pandemic can do little, it appears, to upset the existing global regime governing monopoly rights over the production and distribution of life-saving drugs. If anything, since the onset of COVID-19, we've only seen a reaffirmation of intellectual property rules that have served as a lethal barrier to the right to access healthcare over the last few decades. The neo-liberal order, under which these laws exist, is so intractable today that a matter as seemingly simple as a request for a waiver on patent protections is seen as a claim unworthy of exception.

Request for waiver

On October 2 last year, India and South Africa submitted a joint petition to the World Trade Organization (WTO), requesting a temporary suspension of rules under the 1995 Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). A waiver was sought to the extent that the protections offered by TRIPS impinged on the containment and treatment of COVID-19. As we now know, quick and efficient vaccination is the surest route to achieving global herd immunity against the virus. Should the appeal for waiver be allowed, countries will be in a position, among other things, to facilitate a free exchange of know-how and technology surrounding the production of vaccines.

The request for waiver has, since, found support from more

than 100 nations. But a small group of states – the U.S., the European Union, the U.K. and Canada among them – continues to block the move. Their reluctance comes despite these countries having already secured the majority of available vaccines, with the stocks that they hold far exceeding the amounts necessary to inoculate the whole of their populations. Their decision is all the more galling when one considers the fact that for the rest of the world mass immunisation is a distant dream. Reports suggest that for most poor countries it would take until at least 2024 before widespread vaccination is achieved.

A patent is a conferal by the state of an exclusive right to make, use and sell an inventive product or process. Patent laws are usually justified on three distinct grounds: on the idea that people have something of a natural and moral right to claim control over their inventions; on the utilitarian premise that exclusive licenses promote invention and therefore benefit society as a whole; and on the belief that individuals must be allowed to benefit from the fruits of their labour and merit, that when a person toils to produce an object, the toil and the object become inseparable. Each of these justifications has long been a matter of contest, especially in the application of claims of monopoly over pharmaceutical drugs and technologies.

A new world order

In India, the question of marrying the idea of promoting invention and offering exclusive rights over medicines on the one hand with the state's obligation of ensuring that every person has equal access to basic healthcare on the other has been a source of constant tension. The colonial-era laws that the



country inherited expressly allowed for pharmaceutical patents. But in 1959, a committee chaired by Justice N. Rajagopal Ayyangar objected to this on ethical grounds. It noted that access to drugs at affordable prices suffered severely on account of the existing regime. The committee found that foreign corporations used patents, and injunctions secured from courts, to suppress competition from Indian entities, and thus, medicines were priced at exorbitant rates. To counter this trend, the committee suggested, and Parliament put this into law through the Patents Act, 1970, that monopolies over pharmaceutical drugs be altogether removed, with protections offered only over claims to processes.

This change in rule allowed generic manufacturers in India to grow. As a result, life-saving drugs were made available to people at more affordable prices. The ink had barely dried on the new law, though, when negotiations had begun to create a WTO that would write into its constitution a binding set of rules governing intellectual property. In the proposal's vision, countries which fail to subscribe to the common laws prescribed by the WTO would be barred from entry into the global trading circuit. It was believed that a threat of sanctions, to be enforced through a dispute resolution mechanism, would dissuade states from renegeing on their promises. With the advent in 1995 of

the TRIPS agreement this belief proved true.

As the Yale Law School professor Amy Kapczynski has written, compelling signatories to introduce intellectual property laws like those in the global north was nothing short of a scandal. The follies in this new world order became quickly apparent when drugs that reduced AIDS deaths in developed nations were placed out of reach for the rest of the world. It was only when Indian companies began to manufacture generic versions of these medicines, which was made possible because obligations under TRIPS hadn't yet kicked in against India, that the prices came down. But lessons from that debacle remain unlearned.

Refuting objections

Instead, two common arguments are made in response to objections against the prevailing patent regime. One, that unless corporations are rewarded for their inventions, they would be unable to recoup amounts invested by them in research and development.

Two, that without the right to monopolise production there will be no incentive to innovate. Both of these claims have been refuted time and again.

Most recently, it has been reported that the technology involved in producing the Moderna vaccine in the U.S. emanated out of basic research conducted by the National Institutes of Health, a federal government agency, and other publicly funded universities and organisations. Similarly, public money accounted for more than 97% of the funding towards the development of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. Big pharma has never been forthright about the quantum of monies funnelled by it into research and develop-

ment. It's also been clear for some time now that its research is usually driven towards diseases that afflict people in the developed world. Therefore, the claim that a removal of patents would somehow invade on a company's ability to recoup costs is simply untrue.

The second objection – the idea that patents are the only means available to promote innovation – has become something of a dogma. But other appealing alternatives have been mooted. The economist Joseph Stiglitz is one of many who has proposed a prize fund for medical research in place of patents. Under the current system, "those unfortunate enough to have the disease are forced to pay the price... and that means the very poor in the developing world are condemned to death," he wrote. A system that replaces patents with prizes will be "more efficient and more equitable", in that incentives for research will flow from public funds while ensuring that the biases associated with monopolies are removed.

The unequal vaccine policy put in place by the Indian state is indefensible. But at the same time, we cannot overlook the need for global collective action. If nation states are to act as a force of good, they must each attend to the demands of global justice. The pandemic has demonstrated to us just how inequitable the existing world order is. We cannot continue to persist with rules granting monopolies which place the right to access basic healthcare in a position of constant peril. In its present form, the TRIPS regime, to borrow the law professor Katharina Pistor's words, represents nothing but a new form of "feudal calculus".

Suhrith Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

Marking the beginning of a green era

To combat climate change, Saudi Arabia has launched the Saudi Green Initiative and Middle East Green Initiative



SAUD MOHAMMED AL-SATI

One of the lessons learned from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is the need for collective action among members of the international community to effectively address global challenges such as pandemics and climate change. The pandemic has created an unprecedented crisis that demands an exceptional global response. Even as countries rightly continue to focus on tackling the immediate health emergency, the need is to have a long-term vision to build a climate-resilient global economy for the future.

Progress towards goals

Ambition alone cannot attain goals. Good results depend on our ability to act. That is precisely what defines the two recent initiatives launched by Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to combat the threat of climate change – the 'Saudi Green Initiative' and the 'Middle East Green Initiative'.

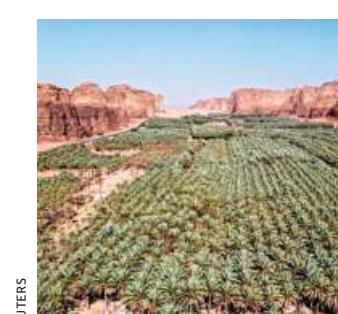
In fact, one of the main pillars of the Saudi G20 presidency was to "safeguard the planet". The Saudi leadership of the summit highlighted how climate change had negatively impacted the pla-

net, people's lives and their well-being. The G20 introduced initiatives like establishing a Global Coral Reef Research and Development Accelerator Platform to accelerate scientific knowledge and technology development in support of coral reef survival, conservation, resilience, adaptation and restoration. G20 leaders also acknowledged the Circular Carbon Economy (CCE) Platform as a tool towards affordable, reliable, and secure energy and economic growth.

Saudi Arabia is committed to lead regional efforts to address climate change and has been making steady progress in this direction.

The Saudi Green Initiative aims to raise the vegetation cover, reduce carbon emissions, combat pollution and land degradation, and preserve marine life. As part of the initiative, 10 billion trees will be planted in the Kingdom. It aims to reduce carbon emissions by more than 4% of global contributions, through a renewable energy programme that will generate 50% of Saudi's energy from renewables by 2030. With the understanding that the need of the hour is to do more than enough, Saudi Arabia is working towards raising the percentage of its protected areas to more than 30% of its total land area, representing roughly 6,00,000 sq km, exceeding the global target of 17%.

As part of the Middle East Green initiative, Saudi Arabia will work with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries and regional partners to



plant an additional 40 billion trees in the West Asian region. It represents 5% of the global target of planting one trillion trees and reducing 2.5% of global carbon levels. Saudi Arabia has been sharing its expertise and know-how with its neighbouring countries to reduce carbon emissions resulting from hydrocarbon production in the region by 60% and globally by 10%.

Saudi Arabia currently operates the largest carbon capture and utilisation plant in the world, turning half a million tonnes of CO₂ annually into products such as fertilizers and methanol. It also operates one of the region's most advanced CO₂-enhanced oil recovery plants that captures and stores 8,00,000 tonnes of CO₂ annually. Plans are afoot to deploy additional carbon capture, utilisation and storage infrastructure. Saudi Arabia believes that nature-based solutions will play an important role in removing carbon as part of the CCE. We have already joined hands in February 2019 with India when Saudi Arabia joined the In-

ternational Solar Alliance during the Crown Prince's state visit to the country, hence promoting cooperation in the renewable energy sector. Later that year, when the Indian Prime Minister visited Saudi Arabia, several MoUs and agreements in key sectors including renewable energy were signed.

To ensure momentum and continuity, Saudi Arabia will convene an annual summit called the Middle East Green Initiative which will host leaders from the government, scientists and environmentalists to discuss the details of implementation. The aim is start implementing the plan in the fourth quarter of this year and continue for the next two decades. Saudi Arabia also recognises the scarcity of financial resources to irrigate the terrain. Therefore, in partnership with participating countries, innovative methods will be researched to irrigate from treated water, cloud seeding and other purpose-driven solutions such as planting native trees which requires support for three years to grow and will then be able to survive on their own with natural irrigation.

Working towards Vision 2030

In 2016, the Crown Prince unveiled Vision 2030, a comprehensive road map to improve the quality of life of the citizens of the country. As part of this, Saudi Arabia carried out a comprehensive restructuring of the environmental sector and established the Environmental Special Forces in 2019.

With NEOM and The Line, Saudi Arabia has already redefined the idea of sustainable habitats. NEOM's location also gives Saudi Arabia many advantages in the field of hydrogen production. According to the World Bank, for every dollar invested in resilient infrastructure, \$4 in benefits are generated. With the Public Investment Fund recently pumping in \$15 billion in the NEOM project and another \$10 billion in renewable and solar energy projects, it is clear that the pandemic has only strengthened Saudi Arabia's resolve to realise the goals of Vision 2030 and become one of the major producers of renewable energy with a capacity of 9.5 GW by 2023.

Our close friend and strategic partner India has also made remarkable commitments to tackle climate change and is on track to achieve its Paris Agreement targets. India's renewable energy capacity is the fourth largest in the world. India has an ambitious target of achieving 450 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030. We admire India's endeavour to build a safe and clean environment for future generations.

Saudi Arabia hopes that the launch of the Saudi Green Initiative and the Middle East Green Initiative marks the beginning of a green era and that these initiatives provide momentum to other countries to unify their efforts to save our planet.

Saud Mohammed Al-Sati is Saudi Arabia's Ambassador to India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Role of EC
It's regrettable that the Madras High Court was so harsh to the Election Commission for failing to ensure that COVID-19 protocols were adhered to during elections ("ECI failed in making parties adhere to norms", April 27). The anguish of the court is understandable, but singling out the EC is a case of missing the woods for the trees. The court has taken the EC head-on but has said nothing about politicians who threw all caution to the winds. The Prime Minister himself boasted in West Bengal when cases were soaring that he had never seen such

a large crowd. Such scathing criticism should have been directed against politicians when they were campaigning. They should have been warned that they would be disqualified if they didn't stick to COVID-19 protocols.
V. SUBRAMANIAN,
Chennai

The EC has finally decided to take some action, by issuing an order informing parties that they cannot hold any victory rallies after the Assembly election results are announced ("EC bans victory processions on or after counting day amid COVID-19 surge", April 28, web). But what happens if

the EC's orders are not followed? It is crucial to know this as we will witness a further surge in cases and deaths otherwise.
HEMACHANDRA BASAPPA,
Bengaluru

It was unfortunate to see the EC being a silent spectator during the rallies when all COVID-19 protocols were violated by parties and the people. The EC should have pulled up leaders and parties for their irresponsible behaviour.
D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

Vaccine inequity
The Central government has unfairly put the burden

of vaccinating people in the age group of 18-45 on the State governments which already have empty coffers due to the pandemic and non-receipt of GST dues from the Centre ("Unfair and dangerous", April 27). And what makes it worse is that it is allowing for differential pricing. The political establishment has demonstrated its insensitivity to the sufferings of the marginalised sections in many ways in recent times: by imposing a sudden lockdown which threw many out of jobs, leaving migrant workers in the lurch, framing new labour laws to deprive workers of

their rights, and allowing companies to profit during a pandemic. It is sad that policies are not driven by concepts of social justice and inclusive growth.
N. RAVEENDRA BABU,
Hyderabad

India couldn't ensure fewer exports and ramp up production of vaccines for our own. Now our leaders have suddenly woken up and are trying to give manufacturers a free hand to make huge profits. The COVID-19 vaccine is a necessity for all of us. If now too we resort to vaccine inequity, we are sure to lose a portion of our population as they won't be able to afford the vaccines.
MADHUSREE GUHA,
Kolkata

Special treatment
That the Delhi government has acted on the High Court's request is unfortunate ("Ashoka Hotel to be used as COVID-19 facility for judges", April 27). It is giving judges special treatment as a privileged class. When Dr. Manmohan Singh is in AIIMS, why such privileges for judges?
A.V. NARAYANAN,
Tiruchi

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A pragmatic approach for COVID-19

Managing mild symptoms at home is vital to reduce the burden on an already stretched system



PRIYA SAMPATHKUMAR

The second wave of COVID-19 infections in India has turned into a public health emergency, and it has become difficult for most people to even access the healthcare system. Finding a hospital bed has turned almost impossible in many parts of the country, and if one does manage hospital admission, critical supplies like medical oxygen are hard to come by. Healthcare personnel have been trying to do their best under these trying circumstances, but they are now stretched to the breaking point. Amid this, a plethora of guidelines and lack of concordance across recommendations put forward by different States add to the confusion.

Various drug cocktails with unproven or marginal benefits are being used widely. To address the confusion, the India COVID SOS team (www.indiacovidssos.org), a group of volunteers from across the world, including India, has developed clear guidance in various Indian languages to help in home-management of patients. This is not intended to be a substitute for medical care but rather a way to assist people with mild to moderate symptoms safely at home.

Moderate illness

Starting with the basics, if one develops symptoms of COVID-19, like fever, sore throat, dry cough, headache, body aches, and loss of smell or taste, they should try to get tested. Given the high number of cases in India, if a person has one or more of these symptoms and lives in a highly affected area, they are very likely to have the infection. However, if testing is unavailable, they must assume that they have COVID-19 and should stay home, keep the windows open for ventilation, and follow other tips. Most importantly, avoid panic. It is important to remember that over 90% of people with COVID-19 recover fully without needing hospital care. A pulse oximeter must be used to check oxygen saturation levels three to four times a day, or more often if there is difficulty in breathing.



Ambulances with COVID-19 patients waiting outside a government hospital in Ahmedabad on April 22. ■ AP

There is some evidence that a steroid inhaler may be helpful for people over the age of 50 years. If available, an inhaled steroid (budesonide) may be used twice a day for five to seven days. If oxygen levels are at or above 92%, hospitalisation, blood tests or a CT scan are not needed. Further, oral steroids, intravenous Remdesivir, or plasma may not be beneficial for such patients. In fact, taking oral steroids at this stage could actually be harmful.

In case the oxygen levels are less than 92%, one must reach out to a doctor and follow their recommendations. Our suggestions at this stage apply only if an individual cannot reach a doctor or find a hospital bed.

The most important treatments at this point are oxygen and oral steroids. Dexamethasone is the most commonly used steroid medication, usually given at a dose of 6 mg per day for five days. In case dexamethasone is not available, there are several alternatives.

If a patient has diabetes, it's important to monitor their blood sugar while on steroids, and if it is higher than normal, the doctor must be informed. They should also stay in touch with a doctor and seek urgent help if oxygen needs increase to more than four litres a minute.

Unproven methods

Most other treatments that have been tried for COVID-19 have shown no benefit. This includes widely prescribed treatments such as ivermectin,

hydroxychloroquine, vitamin supplements, antivirals, and antibiotics. Convalescent plasma has not lived up to its initial promise and several trials have failed to demonstrate significant benefit with routine use. Collecting, testing, and administering plasma adds more strain to an already overburdened healthcare system and uses up valuable resources. Similarly, recent data indicate that Remdesivir has a limited role in COVID-19 treatment, and patients should not seek admission to hospitals solely to receive this drug.

Most people will recover completely at home. Staying home if the symptoms are mild will help save hospital beds, oxygen, and other supplies for seriously ill patients. This also means that doctors, nurses, and other medical staff can do a better job of taking care of critical patients. However, worsening symptoms must not be ignored and a patient should not delay going to the hospital if needed.

What else can individuals do? Wearing a mask, avoiding crowds, and washing hands are some ways through which people can prevent the spread. Getting vaccinated is the most important step. COVID-19 vaccines are safe and highly effective at preventing severe illness and death from the infection. One can still get COVID-19 after vaccination, but typically, the illness will be mild.

The grave humanitarian crisis sweeping through India can be controlled only by large-scale public

health measures. Curfews and lockdowns will work if implemented carefully. Mass gatherings should be prohibited. Large-scale vaccination drives are essential. Celebrities from the film industry, social media influencers and sports stars should promote vaccination, the use of masks, and physical distancing. Testing needs to be scaled up and test results should be reported in a timely manner. Medical supplies, including oxygen, should be made available, not just in healthcare settings but also to persons at home. Tools for triage of patients and accessible dashboards listing available resources are the need of the hour. At this point, many of these things are being cobbled together by volunteers. But an organised response would be much more effective.

Acknowledging the crisis

Finally, much of the reporting of cases and deaths has been coming from media rather than government sources. Indeed, since the beginning of the pandemic, responsible science reporters have been the best sources of information, not just in India but around the world. We need robust data. In order to deal with the problem, it is important to acknowledge the enormity of it.

India is facing an unprecedented public health crisis. The number of new cases being reported each day is higher than it has ever been in any country. As bad as the situation is currently, it could get much worse. We have seen that deaths from COVID-19 increase when the healthcare system is overwhelmed. But the damage can be greatly minimised by the measures described above: a combination of prevention and appropriate management.

The massive spread can be arrested by following safety protocols and through rapid vaccination. If the vast majority of patients who can be treated safely at home stay home, so that hospital resources can be directed to critically ill patients who truly need them, we will be able to manage the crisis better. All eyes are on India and the actions we take now can help us turn the corner in the next few weeks.

The author is an Infectious Disease physician and Chair of Infection Prevention and Control, Mayo Clinic, Minnesota, U.S.

The Left's big battle in Bengal

Changing sociopolitical dynamics offer a key insight into the front's shrinking vote share over the last decade



ATANU BISWAS

As West Bengal gears up for the final round of polling for the high-stakes Assembly election, a steady drop in Left votes in the State during the last decade calls for a careful analysis. While the Left's electoral rule for over three decades in the State is a huge feat, it is difficult to understand how the front, which, despite losing, bagged nearly 41% vote share in the 2011 Assembly election, could manage only around 7% support in the State in the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

It is often argued that a major part in the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) rise in West Bengal has been at the expense of traditional Left votes. The Left Front's poll prospects in 2021 may be assessed through the sociopolitical dynamics in the past and also the changing scenario in the State at present.

While many political experts explained the Left's astonishing success story in West Bengal by its organisational coherence, analysts such as Partha Chatterjee and Dwaiyan Bhattacharyya attributed it to the structure of the State's society, which is visibly different from many other parts of the country. Dr. Chatterjee observed a "political society" in the State formed by a party's mediation between the government and the population as the magic formula for the Left's success; Dr. Bhattacharyya argued that the rural situation in the State is "ontologically different from the urban political society", and "party-society" is "the modular form of political society in West Bengal's countryside", whose roots can be traced to the violent class-based movements of poor peasants against the domination of landlords. The "party-society" acted as accepted moral guardians in the public life of the society and the private lives of families, and panchayats intertwined with political parties in their functioning. The dynamics in rural and urban Bengal are different, but rural voters certainly hold the key to political power.

The collapse of the Left Front's long-standing control over Bengal's party-society, triggered by a pervasive distrust of the moral authority of the mediators, is often presented as an important reason for the electoral debacle in 2011. Though it may now be in decline, the decades-old party-society format could be traced in the Trinamool Congress regime as well, perhaps with a changed style of functioning in the absence of inclusive

politics. And that is an added difficulty for the Left's attempts at resurgence.

In sharp contrast to other parts of the country, West Bengal's politics was built on social justice, and caste played a marginal role. In 1980, Jyoti Basu, the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, said, "Caste is a legacy of the feudal system and viewing the social scene from the casteist angle is no longer relevant for West Bengal."

However, Basu could not foresee Bengal four decades on. It is clear that caste-based identities had just been in a "recessive" state, and have now become a "dominant" feature of the State's electoral politics. The redefined political arena goes against the Left's age-old ideology, where it publicly regarded caste as an irrelevant category, and hence, today, the front is bound to find this new domain a difficult turf to play in.

A two-party system

The Left's decline over the years can also be partly explained by 'Duverger's law', which says that a first-past-the-post electoral system tends to favour a two-party system. Traditionally, in West Bengal, the two main parties or alliances often get nearly 80% to 90% of the vote share among them. With the emergence of the Trinamool and the BJP as the two major political forces in the State in the current election, the Left would have to portray itself as a key player for its revival.

It is widely believed that a section of Left voters "tactically" supported the BJP in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. A post-poll survey by Lokniti, however, showed that about 39% and 31% of the traditional Left voters voted for the BJP and the Trinamool, respectively.

A study published in the journal *Political Behavior* in 2013, by Jørgen Bølstad, Elias Dinas and Pedro Riera, used data from before and after the 2001 and the 2005 U.K. elections. It was observed that voting for a party can increase its preference score to the voter, potentially changing the order of preferences over time. Thus, voting, in general, may be more of a matter of habit than ideology. A large percentage of voters of a party are usually 'floating voters', who may at most be soft supporters of that party. If the pattern stands similar everywhere, some traditional Left voters in West Bengal who voted "tactically" in 2019 might have already changed their preferences.

Still, as a legacy of its 34-year rule, the Left has a strong position in West Bengal. The State's politics would be shaped by how the alliance's support base evolves and impacts the Trinamool Congress and the BJP.

The author is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

A ceaseless plight

Hundreds of fishermen have been languishing in Pakistan's prisons for years with no end in sight

JATIN DESAI

Ramesh Taba Sosa, an Indian fisherman, is the latest victim of an inhuman and skewed system involving India and Pakistan, in which mortal remains of prisoners are not repatriated for months. Sosa died in a prison hospital in Malir Jail, Karachi, Pakistan, on March 26, 2021, but there is no guarantee when his family in Nanavada, near Kodinar in Gujarat, will be able to conduct his last rites.

Sosa was arrested in May 2019 when the fishing boat he was in allegedly entered Pakistani waters. His sentence in the Pakistani prison ended on July 3, 2019. However, not only was he not repatriated, but he was also not given consular access till his death. Sosa's case is one more statistic in a long story of insensitivity between the two governments that do not implement agreements. More than anything else, it is an issue of basic human rights.

India and Pakistan signed the Agreement on Consular Access in 2008. Though the deal has a few lacunae, it was significant. Section 4 of the agreement said, "Each government shall provide consular access within three months to nationals of one country, under arrest, detention or imprisonment in the other country." Further, Section 5 of the agreement stated, "Both governments agree to release and repatriate persons within one month of confirmation of their national status and completion of sentences."

A long wait

More than 300 Indian fishermen remain in Pakistan's custody in Malir jail. Consular access is an exception. Without it, the nationality of the person is not confirmed and the repatriation process cannot begin. Though the agreement does not state a time limit, there are numerous instances in which both countries have not confirmed nationality for as long as 18 months, during which the arrested men languish in jails.

Sosa's case has many precedents. A shocking case is of Vaaga Chauhan, an Indian fisherman, who died in custody in December 2015. His mortal remains reached his village in Guj-

arat only in April 2016. Chauhan's family went through unimaginable trauma and reached out to every resource for help.

Then, there is Latif Qasim Sama's case. Hailing from a village in Kutch near the International Border, he inadvertently crossed over to Pakistan in 2018. He was arrested and his sentence ended in April 2019. Latif still does not have consular access. His relative, Ismail Sama, returned from a Pakistani jail in January this year, though his sentence ended in 2016. Sama and Latif are not fishermen, they live near the International Border and inadvertently crossed it. Ismail returned home after 13 years. Worse, his family was informed a decade after his arrest.

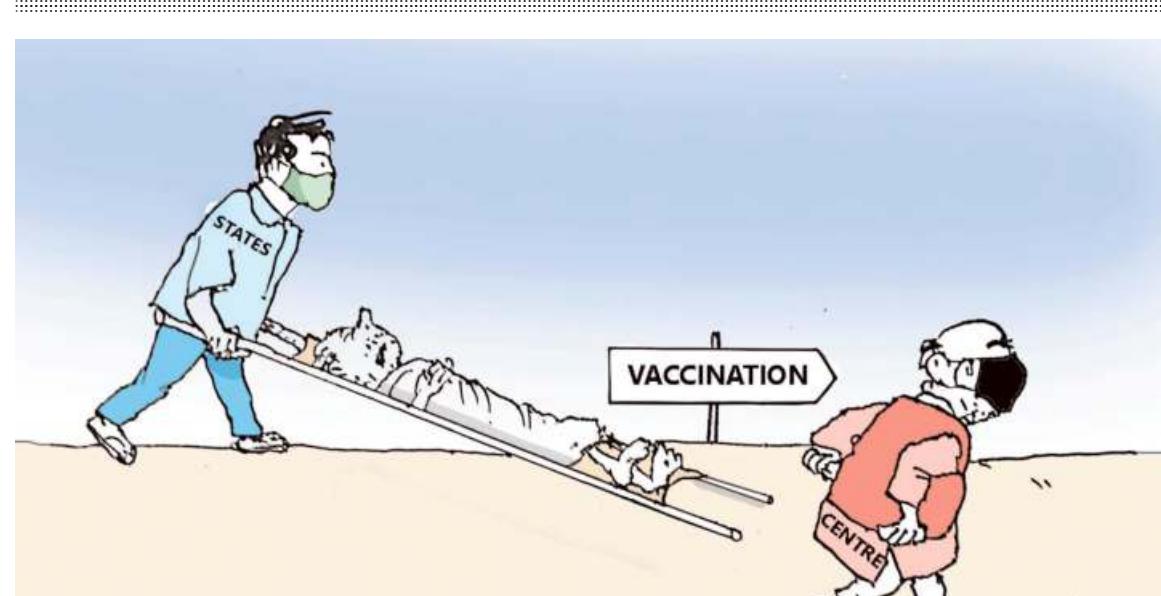
Fishermen from the Saurashtra region of Gujarat often get arrested when they unintentionally cross over into Pakistani waters. They suffer, and so do their families, who are now even more worried because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sluggish mechanisms

Ideally, prisoners should be released and repatriated the day they complete their prison sentence. But this has happened in just one case, with Hamid Ansari, the only person who was released and repatriated on the day of completion of their sentence. Dharam Singh from Kashmir, who had unknowingly crossed over in 2003, spent 18 years in a Pakistani prison. He was eventually sentenced to 14 years' imprisonment, which ended in December last year. But he reached home only this month.

In 2007, India and Pakistan set up a joint judicial committee on prisoners comprising four retired judges from each side. The committee used to convene twice a year to meet prisoners. It made unanimous recommendations, including on the release and repatriation of fishermen and women prisoners. Its last meeting was held in 2013, after which it was discontinued. In 2018, efforts were made to revive it, but Pakistan is yet to nominate judges or call for a meeting. The delay is costing lives.

Jatin Desai is with the Pakistan-India Peoples' Forum for Peace and Democracy

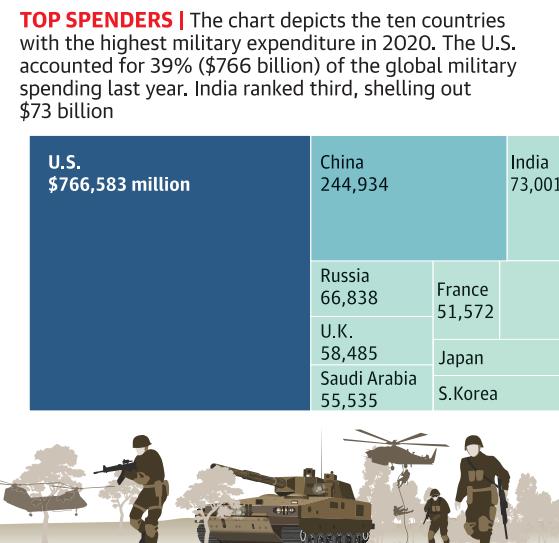


DATA POINT

Inflated war chest

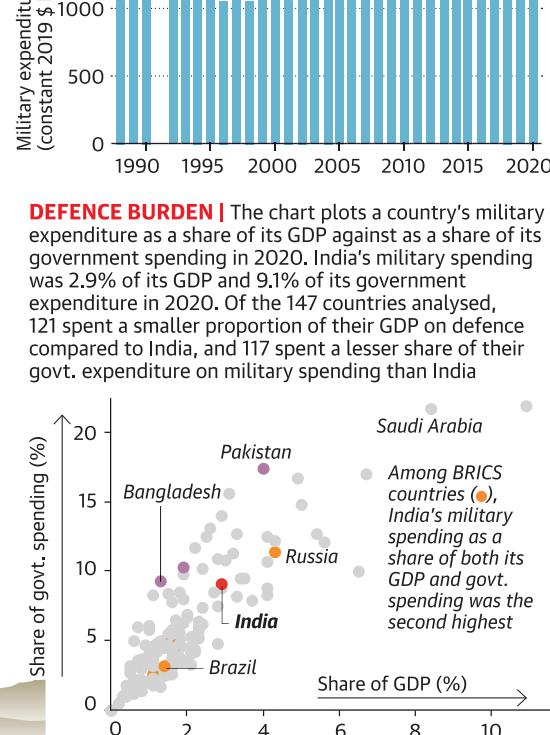
Despite the huge financial burden incurred by most countries due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, global military spending in 2020 was the highest in at least 22 years, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. The world's military expenditure stood at \$1,981 billion in 2020. The five biggest spenders, which accounted for 62% of global military expenditure in 2020, were the U.S., China, India, Russia, and the U.K. India's military expenditure as a share of the GDP and total government spending among comparable economies was second only to that of Russia.

By The Hindu Data Team



EXPENDITURE PEAKS | Global military expenditure in 2020 was \$1,981 billion, the highest since 1998, which is the earliest year since data are available. It was 2.6% higher than the spending in 2019

DEFENCE BURDEN | The chart plots a country's military expenditure as a share of its GDP against a share of its government spending in 2020. India's military spending was 2.9% of its GDP and 9.1% of its government expenditure in 2020. Of the 147 countries analysed, 121 spent a smaller proportion of their GDP on defence compared to India, and 117 spent a lesser share of their govt. expenditure on military spending than India



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 28, 1971

Cover up for crimes
(From an Editorial)

Pakistan's ruling clique seems to be desperately trying to provoke India into doing something in regard to Bangla Desh which it could exploit to achieve its sinister ends. It is not possible to draw any other conclusion from the series of outrageous accusations and provocations against India that Islamabad has been mounting ever since the enormity of its heinous crime against the people of East Bengal became known to the whole world. The latest in the series is its holding the staff of the Indian Deputy High Commission in Dacca and their dependants as hostages ... Islamabad is taking the stand that it will let the Indians at Dacca go only if the Government of India sends back all the personnel who were on the staff of its Calcutta mission at the time it unleashed its military terror in East Bengal. Outraged by the Pakistani army's brutalities, many members of that staff, including the former Deputy High Commissioner, Mr. M. Hossain Ali, severed connection with the Islamabad regime and have decided not to return to West Pakistan. What Islamabad is demanding is that they should all be compulsorily repatriated, a proposition no Government can accept.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 28, 1921

An object-lesson in non-violence

A striking commentary on the wisdom or necessity for Mr. Thomas's action against Non-Co-operation leaders in Malabar is furnished by the events which transpired on Tuesday at Ottapalam when serious bloodshed was barely avoided owing to the enjoining of strict non-violence by the leaders and the splendid self-restraint which their followers showed in spite of the gravest provocation. We commend to the attention of our readers the account published elsewhere, which is given not by a friend but by so determined an opponent of the Non-Co-operator and all his works as a correspondent of the *Madras Mail* must in reason be ... The correspondent naturally tries to trace the sequence of incidents to the arrogant behaviour of the volunteers but people who know the delicate gradations that exist between proper and provocative behaviour can easily understand the possibility that in this case the greatest provocation on the part of volunteers was in their daring to breathe the same air as a reserve policeman in all his glory.

FROM PAGE ONE

India may get major share of U.S. vaccine exports

"Our Prime Minister has been assured that India will be given priority; the ratio of Indian share is being worked out," said the official, who is involved in the negotiations with the U.S. authorities.

"We are also assuring them that once COVID cases decline, we will manufacture and distribute vaccines to other nations," the source added, in line with a pact among the Quad group of

nations comprising the U.S., India, Japan and Australia.

Both officials declined to be named ahead of a formal announcement of beneficiaries by the United States.

The Prime Minister's Office and India's Ministry of External Affairs did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The first source also said the government would help Indian States import vaccines.

Prime Minister briefed on COVID-19 situation

The Empowered Group working on Medical Infrastructure and COVID management informed the Prime Minister on efforts being undertaken to ramp up availability of beds and ICUs. Mr. Modi stressed on the need to ensure that specific guidelines and strategies for COVID management need to be implemented by the relevant agencies

in the States. Other members present at the meeting included the Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary, Secretary Road Transport and Highways, Secretary Information & Broadcasting, Secretary Pharmaceuticals, Member NITI Aayog, Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research; Secretary, Department of Biotechnology.

'Won't interfere in HC work on COVID-19 crisis'

Over 11 High Courts are hearing COVID-19 related cases and passing orders on a daily basis.

"High Courts are best suited to make an assessment of ground realities in each State and find flexible solutions for problems faced by citizens. No need to interfere in the work of the High Courts," the Bench observed.

Vaccine pricing
The Bench questioned the Centre about its vaccine pricing policy. It asked why different manufacturers were rating their vaccines differently. Justice Bhat asked whether the Centre should not invoke a statutory regime and introduce

uniform rates. The Bench asked how vaccines sold in private hospitals turn out more expensive.

"What is the rationale or basis for different manufacturers coming out with different prices. What is the Centre doing about it? Control the prices and bring them under a statutory regime under the Drugs Control Act or the Patents Act," the Bench addressed Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre.

The court directed the government to file an affidavit by April 30. It also appointed senior advocate Jaideep Gupta and Meenakshi Arora as *amicus curiae* in the case.

Kashmir doctors say many young adults are dying of COVID-19

'Admission delay could be a reason'

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR
J&K recorded more than five COVID-19 deaths in the age group of 20 to 49 in the past two days, triggering an alarm among experts on the virus taking a toll on the younger population.

The Srinagar administration imposed Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in Srinagar on Tuesday, as J&K recorded the highest 3,164 cases pushing the active cases to 22,283. Srinagar recorded the highest 1,144 in the Union Territory (UT) in the past 24 hours.

The Doctors Association Kashmir (DAK) fears that delayed admission of patients could be the reason for the spike in the deaths.

"Coronavirus patients arrive at hospitals only when their condition worsens. We receive patients with critically low oxygen saturation levels – as low as 50-60%. The delay is proving fatal and is contributing to the high mortality," said DAK president and influenza expert Dr. Nisarul Hassan.

He said silent hypoxia, where patients with extremely low blood oxygen levels show no signs of difficulty in breathing, is a worrying trend.

"In the time such patients feel trouble breathing, they are already dangerously sick and need to be put on ventilators. Most of them die," he said.

Dr. Shams Ifran, a physician working at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Memorial hospital

U.S. disagrees with social media policy

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

The Biden administration has said the Modi government's orders to remove social media content critical of New Delhi's handling of the COVID-19 outbreak is not in sync with the U.S. views on freedom of speech.

"Well, that certainly wouldn't be aligned with our view of freedom of speech around the world," White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said.

Twitter had removed over 50 posts at the behest of the government in recent days. Most of these were critical of the Centre – including its decision to allow mass gatherings like the Kumbh Mela, shortage of beds and medicines, and so forth.

Enforcing COVID-19 rules is State responsibility, says ECI

Madras HC blamed panel for second wave of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India said on Tuesday that the enforcement of COVID-19 protocols under the Disaster Management Act, 2005 was the responsibility of the State authorities, a day after the Madras High Court said the ECI was unable to ensure political parties followed the rules while campaigning for the Assembly election.

In its oral observations, the Madras High Court blamed the ECI for the second wave of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, where polling was held on April 6 and counting of votes is scheduled for May 2.

 The campaign for the Tamil Nadu polls ended on April 4 and fortunately, the second wave of COVID-19 was yet to be visible fully by that time
ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA



In a statement, the ECI said on Tuesday that "the statements being attributed to the Hon'ble High Court in certain sections of media do not find mention in the order finally passed".

The ECI said it would comply with the directions of the court and apprise it of the steps taken to ensure safe elections.

"The enforcement under the 2005 Act has to be ensured by the SDMA [State Disaster Management Authority] concerned and notified authorities under the Act. The Commission has always emphasised in its 21.8.2020 and all subsequent instructions that the State

Farmers to provide food to hospitals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The farmers agitating against the three agricultural laws by holding sit-ins at several borders of Delhi now plan to distribute food packets and other essential items to the hospitals in Delhi.

The farmers' unions, however, reiterated their demand for the repeal of the three farm laws, legal guarantee of Minimum Support Price and vowed to continue their fight.

Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a coalition of several hundred farmer unions, said in a press statement that its constituents would work in coordination to help the patients in Delhi hospitals. The packing process to distribute food commenced at Singhu border on Tuesday.

Once an abode of peace, now hub of political row

High stakes in Birbhum as a resurgent BJP challenges the Trinamool Congress in one of its strongholds

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
BOLPUR

On April 5, hundreds of Trinamool Congress activists gathered at the sub-divisional office in Bolpur, Birbhum. They brought along with them brass bands and vehicles decked with balloons as State Minister Chandranath Sinha filed his nomination for Bolpur.

All COVID-19 safety norms were cast aside even as scores of police personnel stood outside the SDO office.

The pomp and show at the nomination centre, where a few hours later the BJP candidate also arrived, was in sharp contrast to the rural elections held three years ago when no candidate of the Opposition was able to file nomination papers in the area.

What prevented the candidates of the Opposition to file nomination papers in 2018 was *unnayan* [development by the Trinamool government] in the words of Trinamool district president and strongman Anubrata Mondal.

Almost 48 hours before the 11 seats of the district are going to the polls on April 29, the Election Commission ordered a strict surveillance of Mr. Mondal by the executive magistrate and the Central forces. He will be videographed, the EC said. Mr. Mondal, known to speak in political innuendos, said "such surveillance will not hamper his game". It was Mr. Mondal who first raised the slogan "Khela Hobe" (game on) that was adopted by the ruling party.

What makes Birbhum one of the sensitive areas is the regular incidence of political violence. On April 6, one person was found dead in Dubrajpur area of Birbhum and local people clashed with the police when the forces tried to take the body for the medico-legal processes. On April 10, a huge cache of crude bombs was recovered and defused in the Naoroj area. Several incidents of violence have been reported in the district, where in 2018 the State's ruling party had won the highest number of panchayat seats without any contest as the Opposition was not allowed to field any candidate.

In the 2016 Assembly election, the Trinamool won nine of the 11 seats in Birbhum – the remaining two went to the Congress and the Left; but by the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the scenario changed, and the BJP was seen leading in five Assembly segments, while the Trinamool was ahead in six. The district which borders Murshidabad has about 37% minority population and along with the surge of the BJP, the Trinamool has to deal with infighting.

Bolpur in Birbhum, where Rabindranath Tagore set up the Visva-Bharati University, provides a sharp contrast to the culture of political violence. Santiniketan, which means abode of peace, can also be described as being



Pomp and gaiety: Chandranath Sinha along with other Trinamool Congress leaders at a rally file nomination at Bolpur in Birbhum district on April 5. • PTI

Leaders call for House panels' meet

Permission for virtual meet declined citing the confidentiality clause

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Jairam Ramesh, Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, and IT committee head Shashi Tharoor appealed to Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla asking them to allow virtual meetings of the parliamentary panels.

With the country in midst of a virulent second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, there has been no meeting of the standing committees for more than a month now.

Important issues
"I am requesting this once again for the umpteenth time ... please allow virtual meetings of Standing Committees. There are so many issues of utmost public importance that need to be discussed urgently

JAIRAM RAMESH,
CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE



I am requesting this once again for the umpteenth time ... please allow virtual meetings of Standing Committees. There are so many issues of utmost public importance that need to be discussed urgently

JAIRAM RAMESH,
CHAIRMAN OF PARLIAMENTARY STANDING COMMITTEE

called on April 16 had to be cancelled for lack of quorum. "I agree strongly. @Jairam_Ramesh and I had made the same request last year. We are stymied because virtual participation is not allowed and physical meetings are impossible in the present circumstances," Mr. Tharoor tweeted.

The critical parliamentary panels such as that of Health last met on March 17, when the Budget session of Parliament was still on.

The session also had to be curtailed due to the growing number of COVID-19 cases and ended on March 25 instead of going on till April 8 as per the schedule.

The standing committee meetings are often referred to as a mini-Parliament, holding the government accountable on micro-issues.

Eight chargesheeted for terror killing in Punjab

Sandhu, a Shaurya Chakra winner, was shot dead in Tarn Taran last October

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MOHALI

The NIA on Tuesday filed a chargesheet against eight members of the outlawed Khalistan Liberation Force (KLF) for their alleged involvement in the killing of Balwinder Singh Sandhu at the direction of their Pakistani-based handlers, an official said.

Sandhu, who fought terrorism in Punjab, was shot dead in Tarn Taran last October.

The chargesheet, according to which Sandhu was killed by KLF terrorists, was filed before a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Mohali under relevant Sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Arms Act and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

Inderjit Singh of Tarn Taran; Sukhraj Singh, Sukhdeep Singh, Gurjeet Singh and Sukhmeet Pal Singh of Gurdaspur; and Ravinder Singh, Akashdeep Arora and Jagroop Singh of Ludhiana have been named in the chargesheet, the NIA official said. The case relates to the killing of Sandhu at his residence-cum-school in Tarn Taran by two unidentified people.

Further, a well-oiled terrorist-narcotics-criminal nexus, wherein narcotic drugs along with weapons were smuggled by Pakistan-based entities from across the international border into Punjab for generation of funds for executing terrorist acts, has also been unearthed, the official said. The NIA earlier investigated eight similar incidents of targeted killings and attempted killings by the KLF between January 2016 and October 2017, wherein seven people were killed, the official said.

Government hits out at Australian paper

Article portrayed Modi in poor light

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Facing a barrage of criticism from a number of international newspapers for its handling of the coronavirus crisis, the government hit out at *The Australian* newspaper for reproducing an article that portrayed Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a poor light, accusing him of "leading India" into a "viral apocalypse".

In a letter addressed to the Editor of the Australian newspaper Christian Dore, the Indian High Commission in Canberra said that the article sought to "undermine" the Modi government for its approach to the pandemic, which the government said had been "universally acclaimed".

"It is astonishing to see that your respected publication has chosen to reproduce a baseless malicious and slanderous article without bothering to check the facts of the case with any authorities in the Government of India," said the rejoinder, signed by India's Deputy High Commissioner, who claimed that last year's lockdown, the ongoing vaccination drive, an upgradation in diagnostics and treatment facilities, as well as India's "Vaccine Maitri" initiative, where it exported 66 million vaccines to 80 countries (now 95 countries), were counters to the article's assertions.

The High Commission also said that it was unfair to blame the current coronavirus surge, that has seen new cases in India rise to record levels, on what it called a

"restricted" election campaign by Mr. Modi, and "one religious gathering", referring to the organisation of the Kumbh Mela at Haridwar in April that saw millions of devotees gather over the past month at the Ganga.

It is unclear why the government chose to respond to the article in Canberra, given that it had been reproduced from the original article in *The Sunday Times*, in the U.K. previously, and is one of the several scathing columns written internationally about the government's response. On Monday, *The Sydney Morning Herald* also published a piece, written by the former High Commissioner to India and board member of the Australia India Institute John McCarthy that said that Mr. Modi's government "has not distinguished itself" by allowing the Kumbh Mela and going ahead with massive rallies as the coronavirus pandemic spread.

Demonstrating both the government's desperation and its regrettable inclination towards autocracy, over the weekend it banned on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, social media posts critical of its handling of the pandemic," he added, referring to the Ministry of Information Technology's reported requests for social media posts to be taken down.

Other major dailies including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Economist*, and *Financial Times* have also carried similar pieces.

'Modi, Shah working on augmenting oxygen supply'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union government has informed the Supreme Court that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah are "directly involved" in augmenting the oxygen supply on a "war-footing".

An affidavit spanning over 200 pages said the Centre, with "the active and constant supervision and direct involvement of the Honourable Prime Minister and the Honourable Home Minister, is augmenting the oxygen supply on a war footing evolving and implementing innovative measures".

"Resultantly, more and more medical oxygen is generated and is being made available every day, keeping not just existing requirements but potential future requirements," the Centre said.

The affidavit also said that efforts were being made to import oxygen not only through diplomatic channels but also "personal intervention of political executive".

The affidavit listed several steps to increase oxygen production, which includes issuing licences to industrial gas manufacturers to manufacture medical oxygen; enhancing production in steel plants and other initiatives through Ministry of Steel; enhancing production of medical oxygen from other manufacturers; restricting industrial use of oxygen; augmentation in availability of tankers; and commissioning of pressure swing adsorption plants.

States have 1 crore doses: Centre

Health Ministry says another 80 lakh shots will be supplied in the next three days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A day ahead of opening vaccine registration for all over 18 in the country, Health Ministry figures show that relative to stocks, Tamil Nadu reported a high percentage of vaccine wastage at nearly 8.83%.

Only Lakshadweep had a higher wastage ratio of 9.76%. Assam, Manipur and Haryana ranked after Tamil Nadu in wastage of vaccines at 7.7%, 7.4% and 5.2%, respectively.

Over 1 crore vaccine doses remain in stock with the States.

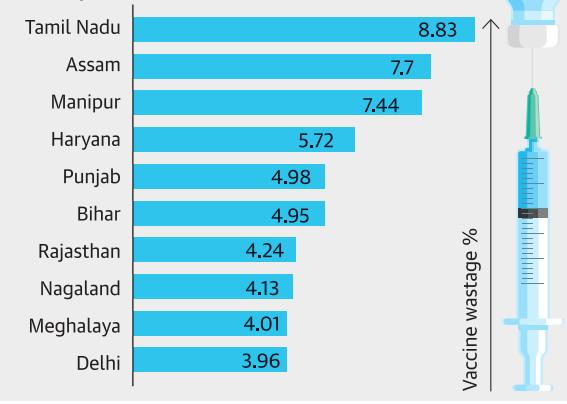
An additional 80 lakh will be made available to them in the next three days, the Ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.

U.P. on top

Uttar Pradesh had the most available doses, about 1 million, followed by Maharashtra

Unused stock

Among States, Tamil Nadu reported the highest share of COVID-19 vaccine wastage in the country



with nine lakh and Bihar which has 7.5 lakh.

Maharashtra led the table of vaccines administered with 1.4 crore doses followed by Rajasthan (1.3 crore), Uttar Pradesh (1.23 crore) and Gujarat (1.21 crore).

These were also the States that had so far received the most number of doses, again in that order.

The Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Mizoram, Odisha reported no vaccine

shortage.

The cumulative number of doses administered in the country touched 14.5 crore on Tuesday.

The beneficiaries

These include 93,24,770 healthcare workers who have taken the first dose and 60,60,718 in that category who have taken the second dose; 1,21,10,258 (first dose) and 64,25,992 (second dose) frontline workers; 5,05,77,743 first dose and 87,31,091 second dose beneficiaries aged over 60; and 4,93,48,238 first dose and 26,92,376 second dose beneficiaries aged 45 to 60.

As many as 3.1 million vaccine doses were given in the past 24 hours. As many as 19,73,778 beneficiaries were vaccinated across 22,797 sessions for the first dose, and 12,00,910 beneficiaries received the second dose of the vaccine.

from the hospital, alleging that he was being "chained like an animal in a cot".

Raihanath Kappan said in the letter to the CJI that her husband received injuries on April 20 after falling in the jail bathroom and on April 21, he tested positive for COVID-19.

She said he was shifted to KM Medical College, Matru, on April 21, where he is at present "chained like an animal in a cot of the hospital", without mobility, and he could neither take food nor go to the toilet, and was in a very critical condition.

Maharashtra unsure about jabs for those below 45

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government is unsure about being able to start COVID-19 vaccination for everyone above 18 years of age from May 1 following the uncertainty over availability of vaccine.

"We cannot say whether the State can begin the vaccination of those above 18 years of age. This is because there is a question mark on availability of vaccine. We have written letters [to companies] and are continuously in talks. We have been told by the Serum Institute of India that all vaccines till May 20 have been booked by the Central government. We have received no word from Bharat Biotech," State Public Health Minister Rakesh Tope said.

Indian govt. did not request ready-to-use vaccines, says U.S.

'AstraZeneca doses unavailable now'



Jen Psaki

son & Johnson. Indian is facing a shortage of vaccines.

The Hindu has reached out to the Indian Embassy for comment on why ready-to-use vaccines were not on the list of requests for U.S. assistance.

A U.S. official said among India's requests however were oxygen and related supplies, with COVID-19 patients dying due to a lack of oxygen, as per reports in the media. The official said the Department of Defense (DoD) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) were working on getting oxygen generation systems to India, including by re-routing shipments. The DoD is also looking at field oxygen generation systems, which could support 50-100 beds.

In addition, the U.S. is planning to facilitate training in India and technical discussions are under way around whether these devices can be connected to Indian systems. A "strike team" is also being deployed to the U.S. Embassy in India, to work with Indian experts including in laboratory-related services.

CII task force on oxygen supply chains

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Tuesday said it had formed a task force on 'oxygen supply chain' to work with the Central and State governments to augment supply amid severe shortage of medical oxygen.

The task force would work towards domestic capacity enhancement and imports; logistical issues between States, including transportation and non-availability of cylinders.

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL, GOVT. DOON MEDICAL COLLEGE, PATEL NAGAR, DEHRADUN-248001 UTTARAKHAND, TEL: 0135-2726020-2726021 Email: doonmedicalcollege@gmail.com, Website : www.doonmedical.org

E-Tender Notice

Online Bids are invited through E-tendering system from Original Manufacturer under two bid systems for financial year 2021-22 & 2022-23 by Principal, Govt. Doon Medical College, Dehrakhas, Patel Nagar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand for procurement of Surgical Items & Medicine under Rate contract. Reference Detailed Information Specifications & Tender/bid Documents are Available on website <http://uktenders.gov.in> form 28.04.2021, 12:00 pm onwards.

Principal
Govt. Doon Medical College, Dehradun.

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD - 500 007, (A Central University)

EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION NO. I/2021 (BACKLOG VACANCIES FOR FACULTY POSITIONS)

The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad invites applications for backlog vacancies from the eligible candidates for Professor, SC-02, ST-1 and OBC-02;

Associate Professor: SC-02, ST-04 and OBC-02; and Assistant Professor: OBC-01 in different departments at the University Campus, Hyderabad and its Regional Campuses at Shillong and Lucknow. The application can be downloaded from the University website www.efluniversity.ac.in.

The details of the Notification, eligibility criteria and guidelines for filling the Application form are placed on the University website for information.

The last date for receiving applications is 18.05.2021. Sd/-
REGISTRAR I/c Date: 26.04.2021

THE ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES UNIVERSITY HYDERABAD - 500 007, (A Central University)

EMPLOYMENT NOTIFICATION FOR TEACHING RECRUITMENT NO. II/2021

The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad invites applications from the eligible candidates for appointment to various faculty positions (Professor: UR-04, OBC-03, ST-01 and EWS-01; Associate Professor: UR-02, OBC-06, PWD-01 and EWS-01) at the University Campus, Hyderabad and its Regional Campuses at Shillong and Lucknow. The application can be downloaded from the University website www.efluniversity.ac.in.

The details of the Notification, eligibility criteria and guidelines for filling the Application form are placed on the University website for information.

The last date for receiving applications is 18.05.2021. Sd/-
REGISTRAR I/c Date: 26.04.2021

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 01/2021-22/SR/NTU, 02/2021-22/SR/NTU, 03/2021-22/SR/NTU, JMM - 2021-22 - Setting up/ up gradation / Operation of Laboratories for WQM&S - Procurement of 36 nos. Digital Nephelo Turbidity meter, 31 nos Conductivity / TDS meter and 38 nos. Bench top pH meter for various Quality Control District and Sub-District Laboratories of Kerala Water Authority. EMD : Rs. 10800/-, 13650/-, 18400/- Respectively. Tender fee: Rs. 1,440/-, 1,820/-, 2,500. Last Date for submitting Tender : 19-05-2021 03:00pm. Phone : 0484-2702278. Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, Superintending Engineer SRI Circle, Nettoor

RAJASTHAN COUNCIL OF SCHOOL EDUCATION S. Radha Krishn Shiksh Sankul, 5th Block, Jaipur

E-Mail : rjsa_acct@yahoo.co.in

No. F. 7 (RCEcES/Jai/Outdoor-play/3-5/2020-21/101 Date:- 23.04.2021 Corrigendum/Addendum (NIB: 24/2020-21)

In reference to Bid no. RCEcES/Jai/Pre.Primary/Outdoor play/2020-21 Dated 23.03.2021 UBN Number RSE2021GLOB0390, by which bids was invited up to date 26.04.2021, amended and invited as follows :-

Time Extension

Last date and time to download and submissions of Bid

Last date and time for receipt of Hardcopy of DD/BC & Bid Security declaration

Date and time of bid opening (Technical bid)

11.05.2021 upto 5:00PM 11.05.2021 upto 6:00PM 12.05.2021 at 3:00PM

Raj.Samwad/C/826/2021-2022

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, (PROJECT) PHEC CHURU (RAJ.) Tel: 0162-251415, e-mail : aepchedchur@gmail.com S.No. 242-283 Date: 20-04-2021

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR WORKS

Online Bids are hereby invited on behalf of the Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan for the following works from eligible enlisted Contractor/ Firm as per Rules. Details of this tender notification and pre-qualification criteria can also be seen on NIT enabled web site www.diprojektauction.gov.in and <http://eproc.rajarastan.gov.in>. Tenders are to be submitted online and the forms on website <http://eproc.rajarastan.gov.in> and www.mscs.rajarastan.gov.in may be downloaded from there.

RAJASTHAN MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Rajasthan Undertaking)

Gandhi Block, Swasthya Bhawan, Tilak Marg, Jaipur - 302005, India

Phone No.: 0141-222806, 2228064 Website: www.mscs.health.rajasthan.gov.in

CIN : U2432RJ2015NG03067 Ref. No.: F02/312/RMSCL/ED (P)EM PANEL/TDL/NB-03/2021/1617 Dated: 23.04.2021

Notice Inviting E-Bids

E-bids are invited up to 6.00 PM of 17.05.2021 from approved Drugs Testing Laboratories situated in India for analysis of Drugs. (Ending on 30.06.2023) Details may be seen in the Bidding Documents at our office or at the website of State Public procurement Portal <http://sppp.rajknic.in>, [www.diprojektauction.gov.in](http://diprojektauction.gov.in), <http://eproc.rajarastan.gov.in> and www.mscs.rajarastan.gov.in and may be downloaded from there.

Executive Director (Procurement) RMSCL

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, (PROJECT) PHEC CHURU (RAJ.)

TENDER NOTIFICATION FOR WORKS

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Work Description

Estimated Cost

Rs. 215,08 Lacs

Rs. 330,13 Lacs

Rs. 414,55 Lacs

SAVE WATER - SAVE LIFE (Ashok Kumar Gupta)

Additional Chief Engineer (Project), PHEC, Churu

SANJAY GANDHI INSTITUTE OF TRAUMA AND ORTHOPAEDICS (Government of Karnataka Autonomous Institute)

Byrasandra, Jayanagar East, Bengaluru - 560 011 Ph: 080-26564516, 26562500 Grams. SITO: Fax: 26565222 E-mail: sitodector@gmail.com

No. SGITOE-Tender/ME/27/2021-22 Date: 27.04.2021

TENDER NOTIFICATION (e- Procurement)

Sanjay Gandhi Institute of Trauma & Orthopaedics, Byrasandra, Jayanagar East, Bangalore - 11 invites tender from the eligible tenderers through the e-procurement portal of GOK for the following Medical Equipments.

(1) Advanced Spine Partial Table - 1 No. (2) O.T Ceiling Light (Imported) - 1 No. (3) O.T. Table - 1 No. (4) Electrosurgical Diathermy Unit - 2 Nos. (5) Arthroscopy 4k System includes (Monitor, Camera Control Unit, Light Source, Recorder, Shaver System with Drill System and Coblation System) - 1 Set. (6) Arthroscopy Set-30 degrees with Obturator and Sheath - 2 Nos. (7) Ultra High Definition Medical

IN BRIEF



Priyanka flags slow pace of vaccination in U.P.

NEW DELHI Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday wrote a letter to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressing concern over the low rate of testing and slow pace of vaccination despite COVID-19 cases going up in the State. Ms. Vadra also offered suggestions to the State government to help people during the pandemic by offering cash support for the poor and roping in anganwadi workers to distribute medical supplies in villages.

Bombay HC denies plea from Sunrise Hospital

MUMBAI The Bombay High Court on Tuesday refused to pass an order allowing Sunrise Hospital in Bhandup, where 11 people were killed in a fire on March 25, to function again. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing a petition filed by Privilege Healthcare Services Private Limited, which owns the hospital. The plea had sought permission to start the hospital again. On March 25, 11 patients lost their lives after a fire broke out at the hospital in Dreams Mall, Bhandup.

Sydney flight returns without passengers

NEW DELHI An Air India flight was forced to leave Sydney without passengers after one of the crew members tested positive for COVID-19. "All crew members rostered to operate the flight took an RT-PCR test before departure from Delhi. They were permitted to operate the flight only after a negative test report. On arriving at Sydney, crew members had to undergo the test again and one member tested positive, who is under quarantine in Sydney," an airline source said. Australian authorities barred the flight from carrying passengers and it had to return with only cargo and the remaining crew.

Dog gnaws at body of COVID victim

SAURABH TRIVEDI
GAZIABAD Adding to the misery of a family of a 51-year-old man – who died due to COVID-19 – his body kept in a queue at the Hindon crematorium was gnawed at by a stray dog. The man, who was employed as an orderly in the district judge's court of Ghaziabad, had tested positive on Thursday. He was admitted to the civil hospital. Triloki Singh, a colleague, said the patient was under treatment but his condition deteriorat-

Aid pours in from the world

Many countries are sending emergency use equipment to India to fight COVID-19

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Nearly 15 countries, including the U.S., Russia, France and the U.K., are rushing critical emergency use equipment to help India counter the COVID-19 second wave. A compilation from the External Affairs Ministry showed that countries are sending hundreds of oxygen concentrators, respirators and large quantities of liquid oxygen to help ease the situation.

Out of the promised international assistance, a large chunk is expected from the U.S., following President Joe Biden's telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 26.

An important part of support from the United States will include raw materials required for production of the vaccines here.

Vaccine manufacturer

Under the Quad Vaccine Initiative, the U.S. Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is funding a substantial expansion of manufacturing capability for BioE, a vaccine manufacturer in India.

It is expected that BioE



Critical supplies: A C-17 plane of the Indian Air Force that brought six cryogenic oxygen containers from Dubai is seen at the Panagarh air base in West Bengal. ■ ANI

may produce 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines by 2022.

Assistance from the leading economies of the world is expected to reach in multiple phases with France this week sending eight large oxygen generating plants and items such as respirators and electric syringe pushers. The French government is on track to send five liquid oxygen containers next week. Germany will make an oxygen production plant available for three months along with 120 ventilators and protective gear such as KN95 masks.

Australia announced on Tuesday that it will send 500 ventilators, 1 million surgical masks, 50,000 P2 and N95 masks, and other protective items for frontline health workers. The Hindu had earlier reported citing official sources that Delhi is looking for oxygen-related items. Accordingly, four cryogenic oxygen containers were sourced from Singapore. Saudi Arabia has sent 80 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen which is currently en route via sea. Thailand and the United Arab Emirates have sent four and six cryogenic oxygen tanks respectively.

As many as 800 oxygen concentrators were sent by Hong Kong. Ireland is on track to send 70 of this equipment.

The international campaign to support India appeared to intensify with more countries joining the effort by late Tuesday. External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has also received calls from Canadian Foreign Minister Marc Garneau and Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Ahmed Nasser Mohammed Al Sabah offering support.

Both countries discussed ways to strengthen efforts to deal with the second wave.

As of Monday, India surpassed Brazil's average number of new deaths to become the country with the most daily fatalities.

As many as 3,62,723 new cases were also recorded in the country on Tuesday, taking the total infections to 1,79,88,603.

Maharashtra reported 66,358 infections on Tuesday, followed by Uttar Pradesh (32,993) and Kerala (32,819). Maharashtra also recorded 895 new casualties, followed by Delhi (381) and Uttar Pradesh (265).

As many as 2,59,542 new recoveries were recorded on

COVID-19 death toll crosses 2 lakh; case tally almost 1.8 cr.

Daily fatalities go over the 3,000 mark for the first time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

With 3,306 new deaths registered until 11 p.m. on Tuesday, India's recorded COVID-19 death tally crossed the 2-lakh mark. It was also the first instance when the daily deaths crossed the 3,000 mark since the beginning of the pandemic. The country's cumulative fatalities stood at 2,01,186. Only the U.S. (5.7 lakh), Brazil (3.9 lakh) and Mexico (2.15 lakh) have registered a higher toll.

As of Monday, India surpassed Brazil's average number of new deaths to become the country with the most daily fatalities.

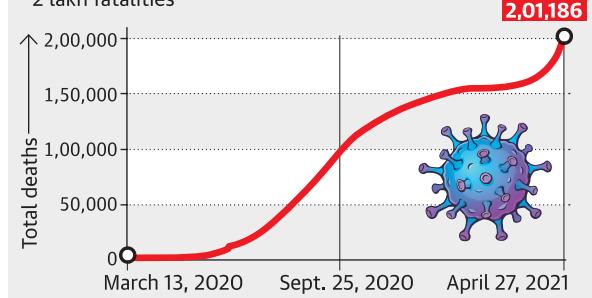
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The number of tests conducted daily to find a positive case has reduced sharply.

Grim picture

Until 11 p.m. on Tuesday, India's cumulative COVID-19 death toll stood at 2,01,186. Only three other countries, the U.S., Brazil and Mexico, have registered more than 2 lakh fatalities



Tuesday, taking the total to 1,48,05,207. The figures do not include cases and deaths from Ladakh. The data are sourced from covid19india.org, an independent aggregator of daily figures.

As many as 16,58,700 samples were tested on Monday (results of which were made available on Tuesday) in India, 2.56 lakh more than what was tested on Sunday.

The number of tests conducted daily to find a positive case has reduced sharply.

U.S. pharma firm to donate remdesivir

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON D.C.

Gilead Sciences, the U.S. manufacturers of anti-viral drug remdesivir, used in the treatment of COVID-19, has announced that it will donate at least 4,50,000 vials of the drug, under the brand name Veklury, to the government of India.

Russia had planned to supply up to 4,00,000 doses of the anti-viral drug but those plans had run into trouble over intellectual

+ property rights. The Indian government was trying to procure them directly from the U.S. as a consequence, The Hindu had reported.

Gilead said on Monday it will provide technical assistance to its seven Indian licensees so they can expand production capacity and donate active pharmaceutical ingredients (API). Last week, the Centre had announced that India's monthly production capacity was being increased from 38 lakh vials to 74 lakh vials.

Gilead is also committed to providing support to voluntary licensees based outside of India to increase their production capacity.

Gilead's planned support will include the donation of API to licensees with a view to accelerate production," the company said in a statement.

Vedanta can produce O2 at its Tamil Nadu plant

Order passed in national need, doesn't create equity in favour of firm, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday allowed Vedanta to operate its oxygen production unit at the Sterlite copper plant in Thoothukudi, Tamil Nadu, as an extraordinary measure to tide over the national shortage of oxygen amid the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The nation must stand together in this moment," a Special Bench, led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, noted.

'No political bickering'
The top court made it clear that it would not supplant the role of the High Courts in monitoring the crisis.

The court said the Tamil Nadu government had met



stakeholders extensively, both at the executive and political levels, and decided to let Vedanta operate the plant, which would be able to produce up to 200 MT of liquid oxygen within 10 days.

With this, the State overcame its initial objections to the reopening of the Vedanta premises, which were closed in 2018 due to environmental problems.

"We are inclined to allow Vedanta's prayer to operate the oxygen plant as a standalone unit. The order is passed only in view of the national need for oxygen.

The court said the Tamil Nadu government had met

Shun 'my way or no way' attitude: Allahabad HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

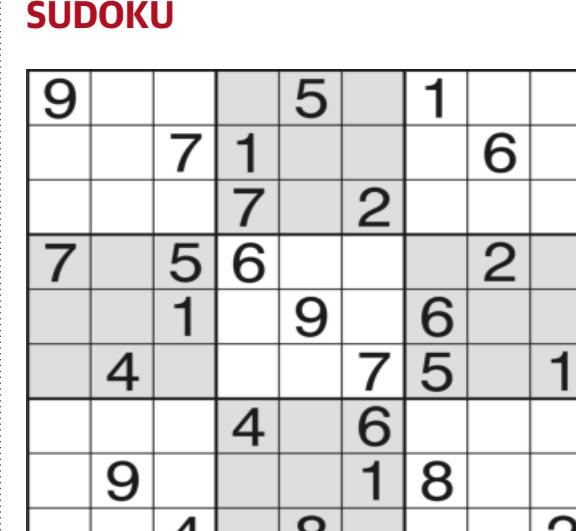
The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday said those in power in Uttar Pradesh "must shun the attitude of 'my way or no way' and welcome suggestions from all the quarters" while dealing with the pandemic.

A Division Bench of Justices Ajit Kumar and Siddhartha Varma took judi-

cial notice of a report which said that 135 teachers, Shiksha Mitras and investigators, who were assigned election duty in the panchayat polls had turned positive and died.

The court said the government must ensure that every death in COVID-19 hospitals is reported to a judicial officer to be appointed by the district judge.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13232

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

FAITH

Draupadi's surrender

Faith in the supremacy of the omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent God is of utmost significance in each one's life. This is nowhere so explicitly manifest than in Draupadi's fervent appeal with tremendous faith in Krishna, pointed out Sri B. Damodhara Dikshitar in a discourse. Her plight is unique for though she is in the presence of the Pandavas and the worthy elders such as Bhishma, Drona and others to whom she appeals for justice, they are only silent spectators and unable to help.

In this state of mind she cries out to the Lord. She is aware that when in times of great danger, nothing except complete surrender to the Lord can help us. She thus concentrates on the Lord and forgets all else. She gives up all attempts to protect her from humiliation. With folded palms and eyes closed she utters her prayer to the Lord. She makes it clear to the Lord that He alone is the sole refuge for all those who are helpless. He alone is the soul of the universe. Then a miracle happens to affirm the truth of divine grace, 'the illustrious dharma that prevails while yet remaining unseen.' She is covered with robes of various hues and the vastra flows as continuous as the waves in the ocean.

The whole assembly is struck at this marvel and the people feel reassured of God's presence and protection. They realise that when the Lord chooses to help, it can come in countless ways. No one can ever fathom about how and in what manner help will reach the seeker.

In fact at a later occasion, Krishna confesses that He had not helped Draupadi at the time of her distress. It was Govinda Nama that Draupadi had chanted with faith that had taken care of the situation and protected her. Hence, the Lord feels He is ever indebted to her.

TH CROSSWORD + 13233
(set by KrisKross)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14	15						
16							
17	18						
19			20	21			
22							
23							



Fans of the TVS Apache RTR 160 4V can now enjoy greater fuel efficiency and a plush ride, among other improvements

Small, sprightly and significant

VISHAL VENUGOPAL

It is almost as if TVS does not rest when it comes to rolling out little updates for its motorcycles, the Apache line-up in particular. In late 2019, the manufacturer introduced the facelifted iterations of the popular Apache RTR 160 4V and the RTR 200 4V. A few months ago, the latter got another, rather substantial, improvement; and now, it is the smaller 160's turn.

At the midst of it all

For starters, there is the updated engine. TVS has managed to churn out an additional 1.61 hp making it the most powerful engine in its class. Peak torque is impressive as well with 14.73 Nm produced at 7,250 rpm. Our performance tests showed that the Apache is also one of the quickest bikes in its segment.

It is outpaced to 60kph (by just 0.05sec) by its rival from Bajaj, but it is the quickest motorcycle to 100kph, getting there in 15.93sec. These numbers, combined with a smooth and free-revving engine, result in a rather sprightly motorcycle. It is only towards the very upper limit of the rev band that you can feel, and hear, vibrations from the foot pegs and the front end. The throttle response is crisp, too, and that improves the overall riding experience.

As was the case with the 2020 model, the 160 4V features TVS' Glide Through Technology, or GTT, making it a very easy motorcycle to ride in slow moving traffic. The GTT, essentially, works



2021 TVS APACHE RTR 160 4V SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE 159.7cc, single cylinder, fuel injected

MAX POWER (HP @ RPM) 17.63hp at 9200rpm

MAX TORQUE (NM @ RPM) 14.73Nm at 7250rpm

TRANSMISSION Petrol

NO OF GEARS 5

SUSPENSION Petrol

FRONT SUSPENSION Telescopic fork

REAR SUSPENSION Monoshock

WHEELS AND TYRES Petrol

FRONT TYRE 90/90-17

REAR TYRE 130/70-17

like the creep function in an automatic transmission equipped car, allowing the rider to keep moving without the need to feed any throt-

tle. It is a natural feeling system that works in the first three gears, with each subsequent gear offering a slightly higher 'cruising' speed.

Speaking of cruising, the 160 4V will sit comfortably between 90-95 kph all day long, and while it can stay at a constant 115kph, it does feel a little stressed at those speeds. If you are a stickler for good fuel efficiency, this Apache will not disappoint. In our tests, the bike returned 43.24 kpl in the city and 50.76 kpl on the highway.

On its toes

The RTR 160 4V has always been a capable and easy bike to ride fast. The bike us-



Happy cruisin' The TVS 160 4V is easy to ride in slow moving traffic
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



es a conventional telescopic fork and monoshock that offer a plush ride. This setup is also quite adept at going around corners very well, in a manner that feels intuitive. With the 2021 model, TVS also managed to shave off two kgs. While it is not a difference you will immediately notice, it does play a part.

The only downside to the comfort is the ergonomics. The Apache has a predominantly relaxed riding position, but the foot pegs are a little rear-set and sit high up. It is not something that will bother you over short distances, but if you are over 5ft 10in, this does feel a little cramped over longer stints.

The Apache RTR 160 4V is one of TVS' most popular motorcycles, and there is good reason to see why. It offers impressive performance, everyday practicality, and with prices starting at ₹1.08 lakh, it is also great value for money.

Despite being part of a heavily competitive segment, the RTR 160 4V remains one of the top contenders. Is it at the very top though? That is a question we hope to answer soon.

AUTO SNIPPETS



Bajaj launches new Pulsar NS125

Bajaj has launched the new Pulsar NS125 at ₹93,690. The NS125 looks identical to its larger siblings with the same smooth-flowing naked bike lines and it most likely shares some body panels with the larger models. The fuel tank appears to be the same unit and the spec sheet reveals that it has an identical capacity of 12 litres. The NS125 also features the same split seat. Power comes from a 124.4cc, air-cooled, two-valve unit that makes 12hp and 11Nm of torque. The NS125 uses a perimeter frame that uses a telescopic fork and monoshock for suspension. It also uses a 80/100-17 at the front and 100/90-17 tyre at the rear. Braking is carried out by a 240mm disc up front and 130mm drum at the rear.



Volkswagen ID.4 is the 2021 World Car of the Year

Volkswagen's all-electric ID.4 SUV has been adjudged the 2021 World Car of the Year by a jury of 93 distinguished international journalists from 28 countries. The VW ID.4 clinched the title from the other two cars in the running – the Honda-e and the Toyota Yaris (for international markets). This is the fifth time a Volkswagen has won this award since 2009. In individual categories, the Honda-e EV received the 2021 World Urban Car award, beating the Honda Jazz/Fit and the Toyota Yaris, while the 2021 Performance Car award was taken by the 992-gen Porsche 911 Turbo, edging out the Audi RS Q8 and the Toyota GR Yaris.



Skoda Octavia launch postponed

Skoda has pushed back the launch of the fourth-gen Octavia due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Zac Hollis, brand director (Sales, Service and Marketing), Skoda Auto India, made the announcement via Twitter. Skoda commenced production of its executive sedan in India with the model expected to launch later this month. For the Indian market, the Octavia will be available with a single petrol engine option – a 190hp, 2.0-litre TSI turbo-petrol engine that is mated to a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox as standard. However, unlike its predecessor, the new Octavia will skip a diesel engine option.

Q & A WITH HORMAZD



Style and substance

I am planning to buy the Royal Enfield Classic 350 Chestnut red. Is it worth buying or should I go for the Benelli Imperial 400? My priorities are low running costs and resale value.
Vinu, Bengaluru

• The Benelli is a better choice than the current Classic 350. However, we would recommend that you wait a little more for the next-gen Classic 350. Its launch is due soon and it is based on the Meteor 350 platform, which is a huge improvement over the current Classic 350. The new platform has proven to be quite reliable so far, so running costs should be kept under check. The Classic 350 also commands decent resale value, so that should hold true for the next gen bike as well.

Tall order

I want to purchase a bike that can deliver high performance, good efficiency, offers a comfortable highway performance and serves as a good city commuter. I have shortlisted the Royal Enfield Meteor 350, Honda CB 350 RS and BMW G 310 R, but I am not sure which to go for. Budget is not a concern.
Hitesh Kulkarni, Ahmedabad

• It's going to be very hard to find a bike that meets all those criteria – if you want high performance, you have to give up some efficiency. The Meteor and CB are both quite refined, but they are not exactly 'high performance'. Of the two, the CB is more efficient.

The Interceptor is a great choice, but it is a heavy bike. Expect no more than 25kpl on city commutes with the RE. The BMW is another good all-rounder, but it doesn't have the smoothest motor out there and service costs are high. We would recommend you also consider the KTM 390 Duke and 390 Adventure. They have the best performance here, but expect no more than 25-28kpl in real world riding.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

Wanderlust on wheels

Mercedes' AMG A35 offers sharper handling, a richer cabin and more kit, plus better performance

SHAPUR KOTWAL

The A35 sedan packs a whopping 306 hp turbo-petrol engine, all-wheel drive and a number of suspension and chassis upgrades over the regular A-Class Limo to make it sportier. So, what is it like?

Starting with the engine, this 2.0-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine is a development of Merc's M260 unit, and it uses a twin-scroll turbocharger to boost torque at low speeds. Power is sent to all four wheels via Merc's own 7-speed dual-clutch automatic, and the four-wheel-drive system allows up to 50% of the power to be sent to the rear.

The A35 even gets uprated suspension components to help deal with the power better. Up front, it now gets the addition of a lower wishbone along with a custom strut brace used to enhance stiffness, and the shell of the car even gets underfloor stiffening. At the rear, AMG uses a new subframe to stiffen up the rear suspension mounting points.

All these upgrades certainly make a massive difference to the driving experience. The steering feels beautifully weighted, very direct and delivers a fair amount of connect. There is plenty of grip, the nose is keen to change direction and with the four tyres turning and clawing in, it even inspires confidence over wet patches.

You cannot really tell when the rear axle chips in, or if it does at all, but it does manage to feel neutral and ba-

lanced. The body control is very good, with the A35 feeling well poised even when you hurl it around.

Plenty of energy

Prod the throttle and responses are immediate, sharp and wonderfully addictive; keep your foot in and the tacho needle climbs with plenty of energy. In fact, flatten the accelerator in second or third, with the engine spinning at around 3,000 rpm, and the A35 will leave you grinning.

Throttle responses aren't as feral as the full blown V8, but this is still deeply addictive. Even flat-out performance is strong; we managed to record 0-100 kph in 5.6 sec without the use of launch control. The A35 is also a great tool for fast highway commutes; the stability is great, the brakes have a good amount of bite, and the twin-clutch gearbox works well.

In fact, the gearbox works



particularly well when you are 'on it' – it shifts up crisply and it allows downshifts even when you are high up in the powerband. The gearbox, however, does pause and feel grabby at low speeds.

The A35's adaptive AMG suspension also rounds off bumps on the road nicely, although larger bumps do catch it out occasionally; the short-travel suspension is not ideal.

Coming to the styling, Mercedes has given the A35 sedan

MERCEDES-AMG A35 SEDAN SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE 1991cc, 4 cyls, turbocharged

MAX POWER (HP @ RPM) 306hp at 5800rpm

MAX TORQUE (NM @ RPM) 400Nm at 3000-4000rpm

GEARBOX 7-speed dual-clutch automatic

LENGTH 4559mm

WIDTH 1796mm

HEIGHT 1411mm

WHEELBASE 2729mm

lour-matching ambient lighting in yellow.

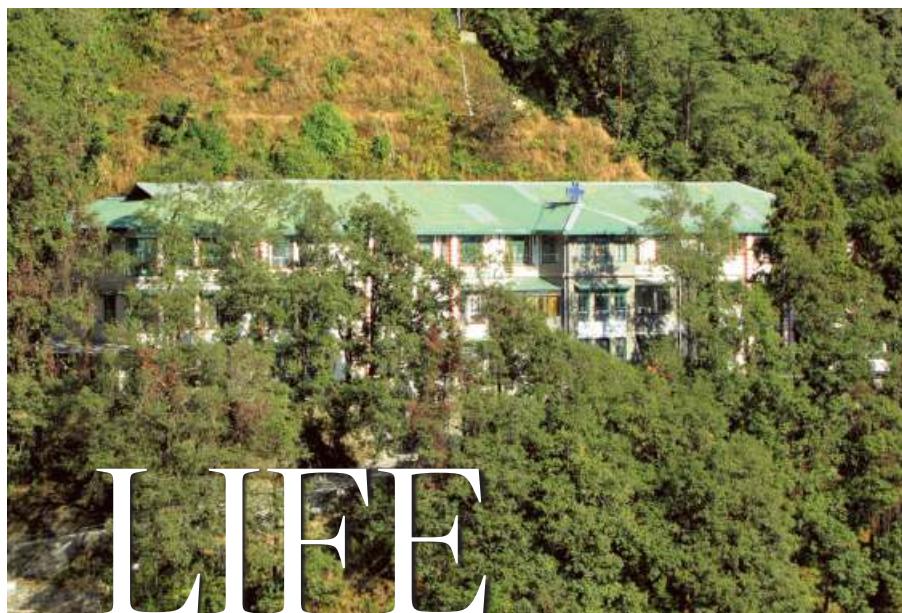
Rear passengers also get a lot more space and comfort than the earlier CLA. Legroom is much improved, headroom is good for regular-sized passengers, and though you are seated a bit low, the rear seat isn't uncomfortable for two, even over long-ish journeys. The boot isn't too large at 420 litres, but it will carry a weekend's worth of bags quite easily or swallow three large suitcases.

Launched at ₹56.24 lakh (ex-showroom, India), the locally assembled AMG A35 is clearly more expensive than the stock models, but then it delivers much more car as well. A lot more performance, sharper handling, a richer cabin, more kit and, not to be dismissed, the look of a higher-end AMG performance car.

The A35 isn't as exciting as a C63 and it won't be as practical on an everyday basis as something like a C-Class. Still, if you want the best of both worlds, the charming and fun-to-drive A35 certainly hits the spot.



flowing lines and spot-on proportions. On the inside, the A35 gets plenty of typical AMG touches – very supportive sports seats, a flat-bottomed steering wheel, aluminium sport pedals, and AMG-specific graphics for the digital instrument panel. What lifts the ambience considerably is the co-



LIFE savers

SUNALINI MATHEW

Five days ago, Priya Kapoor, the editorial director of Roli Books, tweeted out to say that the Landour Community Hospital (LCH), an 80-year-old institution, was fundraising for a ventilator. She appealed especially to those who had "visited and loved Landour", saying, "Every bit counts." Landour is a cantonment town near Dehradun in Uttarakhand.

Every bit did count, because donations ranged from ₹95 to ₹1 lakh, to meet the initial target of ₹1 lakh. This was then extended to ₹20 lakh, and then to ₹30 lakh, almost met by 417 supporters.

Bini Thomas had set up the Milaap.org funding campaign for a ventilator at the hospital where her husband, Dr George Clarence works as the head. "It had been on my mind for some time, and then when COVID happened I felt we should have this equipment for our community so no one has to travel to Dehradun," she says, of the 35-kilometre distance



from the hills that can mean an hour's drive away. "My bhaiyya here, who is from Mussoorie, played a vital role in motivating me to do this."

A psychologist who teaches PSHE (personal, social, emotional health education) in Woodstock School, Bini and her husband came here six years ago from Canada, where they had moved to after stints in a few other places in India. "It's a small community here," she says, adding that once she set up the campaign she was not sure what would come of it.

"A friend of mine shared it on the residents' group and then it began to get amplified." Priya, who went to the 165-year-old Woodstock School, and whose family owns a house in Landour, says, "Today I consider Landour home more than any other place. It's a small hillside, and everybody knows everybody. For me, it's many layers of connection, because my mother, brother, his wife, our cousins, all went to Woodstock, and the hospital was always our port of call,

whether we were getting a jab or had a leg broken."

She and her family spent most of the lockdown in Landour. Last year, when her father needed hospitalisation, she says LCH was a very pleasant experience. "It's not a fancy hospital, even though they did have a facelift a few years ago, but it's very clean and it's run by a staff of dedicated doctors and staff members."

On the Milaap website, people have left comments to say, "LCH is literally saving lives. Older residents of the cantonment area who wish to spend more time in the hills need it the most...", and "I have experienced how hard-working and devoted doctors and nurses and staff are at Landour Community Hospital... my

gratitude for selfless work by all of them."

The response to the fund-raiser has "humbled" Dr Clarence and his team in the 35-bedded hospital. "We will try harder now," he says. "Resources have been a challenge, though the Government has been supportive. A lot of well-wishers who walk in encourage us, but COVID has been tough on us because of both structural and functional modifications we have had to make, and to adjust the manpower so we sustain our services." The lockdown has meant that the number of people coming in has dropped drastically which has had a direct impact on finances.

"A ventilator in the hospital would mean that we don't

have to send patients down to Dehradun when we feel the patient may need ventilation," he says, because the facility does have an experienced surgeon on board, besides a general physician, and his own orthopaedic expertise.

It is a hospital that serves all: villagers, the business community in and around Landour, those who have summer homes there, and the school. Dr Clarence says he has gone as far as the Har ki Dun Valley, 170 kilometres away, where people still refer to it as American hospital, after the missionaries, led by Dr EJ Robinson, who set it up.

When Munna Singh Panwar, who is from Garhwal and the caretaker of the Kapoor residence in Landour was told about the fund-raiser, he decided to contribute too. "Logon ko phir Dun nahin jana padega. Thoda bahut agar sahyog kar sake tho kyun nahin? (People won't have to go to Dehradun then, if I can help a little, why not?)"

As Dr Clarence says, "People walked in and said they felt the calm and peace, that the staff was caring and concerned, even though they may have come in for a small thing. This is the way we talk to patients. The work stands as testament."



Local is key (Above) Avinash and Aravinda Diwakar; the poster for the tribute to Naramsimharaju • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



vion and no one outside Karnataka is interested in promoting them online. We will put up their films on Katte, so that they will be virtually available and accessible to all," says Avinash, who is the Chief Operating Officer.

Besides films and web series, bedtime stories, grandfather's tales, reality shows for children, music, Kannada stand up comedy, will all form a part of the repertoire. For instance, there is *Kate Gulli Cricket* planned on the lines of IPL, but to promote local rappers and musicians, where six players from different districts will contest in gully cricket. "We have also started four centres across the State for actors and content creators to connect with us and work locally too. This way they need not travel all the way to Bengaluru," reveals Avinash.

As a tribute to their grandfather, the duo has planned a series of comedy shows. Next year they also hope to organise a comedy festival as a tribute.

Kannada over the top

An OTT platform that promotes Kannada cinema, music, theatre and games hopes to draw focus to all dialects of Karnataka

SHILPA ANANDRAJ

Do we need yet another OTT platform? Yes, say the Jugaari Brothers – actors Arvinda and Avinash Diwakar. The duo, grandchildren of the late Kannada actor, Naramsimharaju, has launched Katte, an OTT platform. "This will promote all the dialects of Karnataka, besides, theatre, cinema, music, games and quizzes," explains Avinash, who is also a successful producer-director-singer-composer.

"The bigger players in OTT

do not understand the culture of Karnataka," says Avinash. "When we did our research, we realised that we had enough content to put out there. Besides Kannada, there will also be content in Tulu, Konkani, Havyaka, Uttara Kannada, and old Mysore region dialects."

Another problem they saw was of most content being urban. "The districts, taluks, and villages are ignored. People end up watching dubbed shows and shows that are not in sync with local sentiments

and culture. Katte will bridge that gap, as we will have many in-house productions that will highlight local stories."

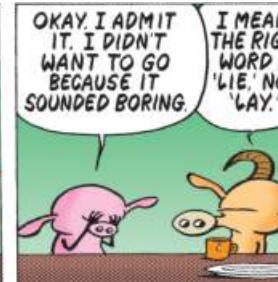
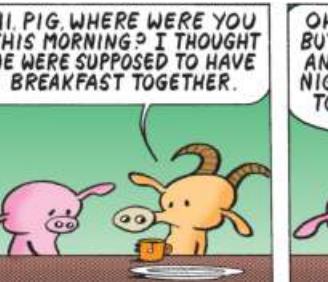
Katte means platform; the 'ka' stands for *kath*, meaning story, and *Kannada*. To be launched in May, the app will be available on any device that can connect to the Internet.

The platform hopes to be a resource for little-seen actors and for directors too. "If a film fails to attract footfalls in the theatre, then it sinks into obli-

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



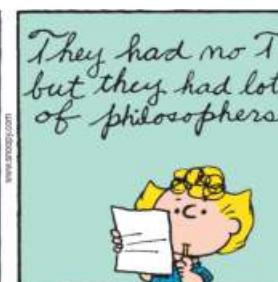
POOCH CAFE



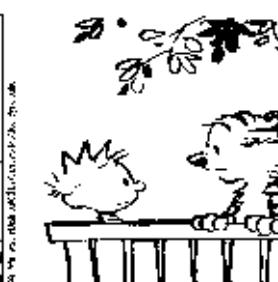
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



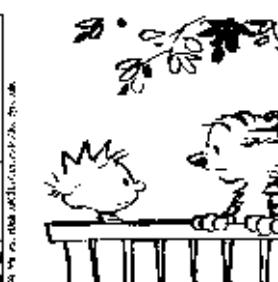
PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



Convenient in colour
A dress from JHOP, (below) Anisha Gopinath and Anupama • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



In deep pockets

Friends and mompreneurs Anisha Gopinath and Anupama Srinivasan hope their JHOP line will make women go hands-free

NEERAJA MURTHY

Friends and mompreneurs Anisha Gopinath and Anupama Srinivasan have launched a fashion line called JHOP (@JHOP_INDIA on Instagram), derived from the Tamil reference to pockets. JHOP works towards fashion equality.

"You don't have to look far to find Twitter-rants, memes, articles and videos in which women either complain about not having pockets or rejoice over a dress with pockets. We want to bridge this gap," says Anisha a former communications professional now living in Belgium.

Anupama, from the banking sector, lives in Chennai. The friends connect over video calls to manage the manufacturing business set up in Coimbatore. "It took a pandemic for us to realise that distance doesn't matter, as long as there is passion," adds Anupama. Their decade-long friendship, during which period the friends even had their first children around the same time, helps to identify strengths and allocate tasks while juggling operations, marketing, and finance.

The duo began working on the idea in March 2020. Four years ago, at lunch, they realised that they had to find a place for their belongings, even in public restrooms. "We understood why moms waited for dads to wash their hands and come back to guard their handbags," recollects Anisha. While this was the inspiration, the duo also wanted to show their daughters that "if we need something, we have to work on solutions ourselves."

Months of research led to the brand that uses cotton and rayon sourced from Ahmedabad, Mumbai and Erode; they simply share the idea online with tailors. "The pandemic has enabled our tailors to work effectively over video calls," shares Anisha.

JHOP's designs reflect their personal styles: breezy and comfortable. The western

and traditional outfits comprising dresses, kurta sets, jumpsuits and shirts, all have functional pockets. "We want to bridge the existing gap between men's and women's pockets. Research confirms that women's clothes have significantly smaller pockets than men's and that pockets in women's jeans were 48% smaller and 6.5% narrower than those in men's jeans."

JHOP's pockets are deep and can hold all essentials – mobile phone, keys, lip balm, sanitary napkin, a small wallet and sanitiser, mask, eyeliner and even a small chocolate bar! Its models are bankers, lecturers and artists. "We wanted models who represent all of us – inspirational women, real people and relatable body types," adds Anupama.

The focus now is to stay afloat and find ways to work in the new normal. With the costs of raw materials and textile prices shooting up in the pandemic, the duo compensates it with travel costs. "We invested all our savings in JHOP. While a few people thought that was irresponsible to do during a pandemic, especially now that we are new parents, we truly believed in our idea."

The brand adopts earth-friendly measures like using cloth bags and recycled covers for shipment. They also reduce waste by making scrunchies, coin purses, and masks with leftover fabric.



MAYBE WE COULD START THIS CONVERSATION OVER.

I, personally, would not want to sit all evening watching a philosopher.

They had no TV, but they had lots of philosophers.

Ancient Greece was ahead of its time, and before our time.

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

OH, I WANTED TO, BUT I DIDN'T GET ANY SLEEP LAST NIGHT, SO I HAD TO LAY DOWN.

LIE.

OKAY, I ADMIT IT. I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BECAUSE IT SOUNDED BORING.

I MEANT THE RIGHT WORD IS 'LIE', NOT 'LAY'.

MAYBE WE COULD START THIS CONVERSATION OVER.

POOCH CAFE

PONCHO, YOU'VE BEEN SPRAYED BY A SKUNK! YOU HAVE TO HAVE A BATH!

NOOOOO!

THERE'S A PORK CHOP IN THE TUB.

DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! HE'S OBVIOUSLY LYING! BUT THEN... WHAT IF THERE IS A PORK CHOP? CAN I TAKE THAT CHANCE? I HAVE TO LOOK!

EVEN FOR A DOG I'M AN IDIOT.

OH, I WANTED TO, BUT I DIDN'T GET ANY SLEEP LAST NIGHT, SO I HAD TO LAY DOWN.

LIE.

OKAY, I ADMIT IT. I DIDN'T WANT TO GO BECAUSE IT SOUNDED BORING.

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China 'ready to support' India, offers vaccines to South Asia

Beijing proposes an emergency reserve for supplies to countries in the region

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi on Tuesday offered Chinese vaccines to countries in South Asia to ensure "a more diversified and stable" regional supply and said Beijing was also "ready to provide support and assistance" to India.

Mr. Wang was speaking at the fourth multilateral dialogue involving countries in South Asia on coordinating their COVID-19 responses and economic recoveries. The virtual dialogue involving the Foreign Ministers of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka marked China's stepped up engagement in the region following the pandemic, and was the latest in a series of meetings involving all countries in South Asia barring India, Bhutan and the Maldives. China previously held a meeting of Foreign Ministers with Afghan-



New equations: China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi at an event in Beijing, in this file photo. • AFP

istan, Nepal, and Pakistan, a dialogue with Vice-Foreign Ministers involving Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as well as a meeting at the Director General level of the six countries that again met on Tuesday.

Assistance to India
Mr. Wang said at the meet that China had "extended an invitation to India" and also expressed its sympathy and condolences amid the current COVID-19 surge. He said

China is "ready to provide support and assistance to the Indian people at any time according to the needs of India".

The Chinese Foreign Minister called on the six countries to work together in fighting against COVID-19 and said China was prepared to offer its vaccines through flexible arrangements to ensure "more diversified and stable" vaccine supplies for countries in South Asia. China has also raised a proposal

of establishing an emergency reserve for supplies for South Asian countries.

Mr. Wang called on the countries, all of which are involved in China's Belt and Road Initiative, to explore "fast channels" to enable exchanges of people and commodities and said China would establish a poverty reduction development cooperation centre for South Asia to share its experiences.

Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali in a statement said the country supported the need for "an enhanced level of regional and international cooperation for COVID-19 response and economic recovery".

Nepal's Foreign Ministry said China had agreed to provide Nepal "with an additional grant of medical equipment and materials equivalent to 5 million RMB [around Rs 5.7 crore] to complement national efforts in fighting against COVID-19."

HRW: Israel is committing 'apartheid'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JERUSALEM

Human Rights Watch said on Tuesday that Israel is committing the crime of "apartheid" by seeking to maintain Jewish "domination" over Palestinians and its own Arab population.

Currently under investigation by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes, Israel blasted HRW's accusations as "preposterous and false", accusing it of having "a long-standing anti-Israeli agenda".

Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayeh welcomed the "remarkable" HRW report, which finds that the Israeli government is the "single authority" with control "over the area between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea".

The rights group pointed to measures, including movement restrictions, land confiscation, forcible population transfer, denial of residency rights and suspension of civil rights.

Sri Lanka Cabinet clears proposal for burkha ban

Draft law will be tabled in Parliament, says spokesman

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's Cabinet on Tuesday cleared a proposal to ban all forms of face veils in public places "due to national security concerns".

"The Cabinet has approved the proposal... it will now go to the legal draftsmen and then be brought to parliament," Cabinet spokesman Keheliya Rambukwella told the weekly media conference.



A burkha-clad Sri Lankan woman crossing a street in Colombo on Tuesday. • AFP

However, the government then clarified that it was only a proposal and there was no move to implement it in a hurry – a position that was widely seen as Colombo's bid to garner support of Muslim countries that had a vote at the council.

The proposal to ban the burkha was announced in March by Minister of Public Security Sarath Weerasekara, weeks before the UN Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on Sri Lanka.

domestically and among international actors. The Pakistani envoy in Colombo in a tweet then said the likely ban "will only serve as injury to the feelings of ordinary Sri Lankan Muslims and Muslims across the globe".

Following the Easter Sunday terror attacks in 2019, that killed nearly 280 people in coordinated serial blasts, Sri Lanka used emergency regulations to temporarily ban the burkha.

ELSEWHERE



CDC relaxes mask advice for vaccinated Americans
NEW YORK
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) eased its guidelines on Tuesday on the wearing of masks outdoors, saying fully vaccinated Americans don't need to cover their faces anymore unless they are in a big crowd of strangers. They can also go maskless in small outdoor gatherings with fully vaccinated people. Decision was driven by rising vaccination numbers and dip in COVID-19 cases, it said. AP

USTR discusses COVID-19 relief with vaccine makers

Katherine Tai committed to working with WTO members on global response to the pandemic, bridging vaccination gaps

SIRIM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

United States Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai met with the heads of vaccine manufacturers, Pfizer and AstraZeneca, on Tuesday and discussed the role of developing countries in addressing global gaps in vaccine production and distribution.

There was a specific discussion around the COVID-19 wave currently under way in India during Ms. Tai's meetings (which appeared to be separate) with Pfizer chairman and CEO Albert Bourla, and AstraZeneca U.S. head Ruud Dobber. U.S. government assistance to India and



Katherine Tai

the messaging around it kicked into high gear over the weekend, after about a week of mostly silence, for which the Biden administra-

tion has been widely criticised. The White House announced on Monday that it would make some 60 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine available to other countries over the next few months. The vaccine has not been approved for use in the U.S.

Deep sympathy for India
During her meeting with Mr. Dobber, Ms. Tai "highlighted the announcement that the U.S. was examining options to share AstraZeneca vaccine doses with other countries as they become available," her office said.

"The Ambassador [Ms. Tai] expressed her deep sympathy for the people of India and reiterated that the Biden-Harris Administration's top priority is saving lives and ending the pandemic in the United States and around the world," one of the meeting readouts from USTR said.

A group of ten Senators, including some high profile names like Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, had written to Mr. Biden earlier in April, asking him to support a waiver of Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) at the WTO. A senior administration of-

icial confirmed to *The Hindu* on Monday that the topic came up "briefly" when Mr. Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a phone call earlier that day. However, beyond saying that the administration was looking at ways to bolster the production of vaccines, including mRNA vaccines (such as those from Pfizer and Moderna), officials did not confirm Mr. Biden's position on the TRIPS issue. Monday's USTR statements, however, suggest conversations are underway and a U.S. position on the initiative at the WTO is evolving.

Myanmar's junta said on Tuesday it would heed regional pleas to stop violence only when the country "returns to stability", as fresh fighting erupted with a major ethnic rebel group along its eastern border.

On Tuesday, Myanmar's State Administrative Council – as the junta calls itself – said it would consider the "constructive suggestions made by Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) leaders when the situation returns to stability in the country".

Biden to sign minimum wage order for federal govt. workers

Contractors are required to pay them at least \$15 per hour

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden will sign an executive order on Tuesday raising the hourly wages of federal government contract workers to \$15, a step towards fulfilling his campaign pledge to raise the minimum wage to the same level for all employees.

The new order will require "federal contractors to pay a \$15 minimum wage to hundreds of thousands of workers who are working on federal contracts," the White House said.

The current minimum wage is \$10.95 an hour for these workers, who are not civil servants but work for the federal government through contracting firms.

"These workers are critical to the functioning of the federal government: from cleaning professionals and maintenance workers... to nursing assistants who care for the nation's veterans, to cafeteria and other food ser-



Joe Biden

vice workers who ensure military members have healthy and nutritious food to eat, to labourers who build and repair federal infrastructure," the White House said.

However, they will still have to wait a short while, since the measure will apply only from March 30, 2022 to all new contracts and then gradually to each contract renewal.

Inflation linked
Hourly wages will then be increased each year based

on inflation. The executive order also harmonises the minimum wage for all federal contract workers, removing lower wages for workers who receive tips that bring their salaries up to the minimum wage level, currently at \$7.25 per hour.

The White House insisted that the wage hike will not be accompanied by increased cost to the taxpayer, and even said the move will improve productivity and reduce turnover as well as related costs.

And it said the move will ensure that "hundreds of thousands of workers no longer have to work full time and still live in poverty."

The measure is designed to encourage employers to follow suit.

Raising the minimum wage for all workers in the country to \$15 by 2025 from the current \$7.25 an hour was one of Mr. Biden's key campaign pledges.

Iran, U.S. warships engage in a tense encounter

The 'incident' in the Gulf is the first in about a year

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI

American and Iranian warships had a tense encounter in the Gulf earlier this month, the first such incident in about a year amid wider turmoil in the region over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal, the U.S. Navy said on Tuesday.

The Guard also did the same with another Coast Guard vessel, the *USCGC Wrangell*, said Commodore Rebecca Rebarich, a spokeswoman for the Navy's 5th Fleet.

Footage released by the Navy showed a ship commanded by Iran's Revolution-

ary Guard cut in front of the *USCGC Monomoy*, causing the Coast Guard vessel to come to an abrupt stop with its engine smoking on April 2.

The Guard also did the same with another Coast Guard vessel, the *USCGC Wrangell*, said Commodore Rebecca Rebarich, a spokeswoman for the Navy's 5th Fleet.

Iran did not immediately

acknowledge the incident. The interaction marked the first "unsafe and unprofessional" incident involving the Iranians since April 15, 2020, she said.

However, Iran had largely stopped such incidents in 2018 and nearly in the entirety of 2019, she said.

In 2017, the Navy recorded 14 instances of what it describes as "unsafe" interactions with Iranians.



Close call: A Revolutionary Guard vessel manoeuvres in front of the U.S. Coast Guard ship in the Persian Gulf on April 2. • AP

TVS MOTOR COMPANY LIMITED

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CIN: L35921TN1992PLC022845

STATEMENT OF STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2021

(Rs. in Crores)

S. No	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated	
		Quarter ended	Year ended	Quarter ended	Year ended
		31.03.2021	31.03.2020	31.03.2021	31.03.2020
1	Total income	5,328.87	3,506.53	16,783.51	6,140.54
2	Net Profit (before Tax, Exceptional items)	386.92	122.16	826.24	419.92
3	Net Profit before tax (after Exceptional items)	386.92	89.83	826.24	413.72
4	Net Profit after tax (after Exceptional items)	289.24	73.87	612.04	319.19
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	312.30	1.84	719.13	356.37
6	Equity share capital (Face value of Re. 1/- each)	47.51	47.51	47.51	47.51
7	Other Equity	-	-	4,123.44	-
8	Earnings Per Share (Face value of Re. 1/- each) (not annualised) (i) Basic (in Rs.) (ii) Diluted (in Rs.)	6.09 6.09	1.55 1.55	12.88 12.88	6.53 6.53
				1.56	1.56
				12.51	12.51

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of 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 above financial results are available on the Stock exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on company's website (www.tvsmotor.com).
- The board at its meeting held on 24th March 2021, declared a Second interim dividend of Rs. 1.40/- per share (140%) absorbing a sum of Rs. 66.51 Cr for the year 2020-21 and the same was paid on 9th April 2021 to those shareholders who hold shares in physical or in electronic form and whose names appear in the Register of Members and / or Depositories respectively, as at the close of working hours on 2nd April 2021 (Record Date). The Directors do not recommend any further Dividend for the year 2020-21.

For TVS Motor Company Limited
Sd/-
Chairman

Government of Odisha	
"e" procurement Notice No-01	
PH. No. 0674-2540603,	
E-mail Id: senhcnorth_bbsr@rediffmail.com	
Identification No. SE-NH-N-01-2021-22	
Sl. No.	Name of the Work
01	SR to NH-57 from Km.283/0 to 285/900Km, (Baghamari) for the year 2020-21.
Value of Work (₹)	Period of completion (in calendar months)
1,17,71,276.00	03 (Three)
Last date/ Time for receipt of bids	Date of opening of tender
14.05.2021 upto 17.30 hours.	AT 11.00 A.M.
Name and address of the officer inviting tender	
Superint	

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	48,944	-1.15
US Dollar	74.66	0.09
Gold	46,906	-0.14
Brent oil	65.84	-0.07

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	749.15	18.40
Asian Paints	2574.35	16.45
Axis Bank	699.55	-0.90
Bajaj Auto	3785.50	46.65
Bajaj Finserv	10091.35	89.60
Bajaj Finance	4965.05	128.50
Bharti Airtel	534.30	6.75
BPCL	420.35	1.45
Britannia Ind	3541.20	2.00
Cipla	912.40	7.00
Coal India	127.50	0.55
Divis Lab	3908.95	124.60
Dr Reddys Lab	5075.25	-9.45
Eicher Motors	2400.10	30.25
Grasim Ind	1331.20	18.85
HCL Tech	928.85	0.05
HDFC	2518.40	8.60
HDFC Bank	1438.70	33.90
HDFC Life	678.75	-25.70
Hero MotoCorp	2905.50	40.95
Hindustan	366.25	17.90
Hind Unilever	2379.85	19.20
ICICI Bank	598.75	7.65
IndusInd Bank	882.45	22.90
Infosys	1348.50	4.95
Indian Oil Corp	88.85	0.65
ITC	205.40	0.10
JSW Steel	665.90	10.10
Kotak Bank	1750.30	-9.35
L&T	1380.65	44.75
M&M	778.40	-2.10
Maruti Suzuki	6568.75	-70.15
Nestle India Ltd.	16779.00	-91.60
NTPC	102.05	-0.35
ONGC	103.20	0.40
PowerGrid Corp	216.65	0.85
Reliance Ind	1988.65	50.80
SBI Life	928.75	-13.75
State Bank	353.05	8.75
Shree Cement	28098.55	35.95
Sun Pharma	639.25	4.55
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	673.70	3.50
Tata Motors	301.50	6.10
Tata Steel	977.75	37.00
TCS	3132.00	31.20
Tech Mahindra	969.25	7.05
Titan	1495.10	15.25
UltraTech Cement	6326.80	50.90
UPL	597.45	6.80
Wipro	485.05	4.75

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 27

CURRENCY TT BUY TT SELL

US Dollar 74.45 74.77

Euro 89.89 90.29

British Pound 103.54 104.00

Japanese Yen (100) 68.73 69.03

Chinese Yuan 11.48 11.53

Swiss Franc 81.45 81.82

Singapore Dollar 56.16 56.40

Canadian Dollar 60.03 60.29

Malaysian Ringgit 18.15 18.25

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



TMB aims to raise up to ₹1,300 cr. via IPO, OFS

CHENNAI

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Limited (TMB) is planning to raise ₹1,000 crore-₹1,300 crore before November to meet branch expansion and other expenditure via an initial public offering (IPO) and offer for sale (OFS). "We will be filing the papers with SEBI," said K.V. Rama Moorthy, MD & CEO.

Firms can verify GSTR via EVC till May 31

NEW DELHI

The government has allowed businesses to verify through electronic verification code monthly GST returns. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said any registered person, from April 21, 2021, to May 31, 2021, will be allowed to furnish the return in Form GSTR-3B and details of outward supplies in Form GSTR-1 verified through electronic verification code (EVC). PTI

Stellantis India names Bouchara as CEO & MD

CHENNAI

Automaker Stellantis announced key leadership appointments for its operations in India and the Asia Pacific region. Roland Bouchara has been appointed as CEO & MD for Stellantis in India, it said. Partha Datta would assume responsibility for engineering, design, R&D operations across India and Asia Pacific. Since 2019, Mr. Datta had led FCA India as president and MD.

Mankind Pharma to aid frontline workers' kin

NEW DELHI

Mankind Pharma will be donating ₹100 crore to support the families of frontline workers, including doctors, who lost their lives on account of the pandemic. "Many have lost their lives fighting the pandemic and protecting us," said Rajeev Juneja, MD and vice-chairman, Mankind. "As a homage to them, we have pledged a fund of ₹100 crore to support the families of these lost warriors."

CM

ADB sees India grow by 11%, adds caveat

Lender sees 'considerable downside risk' from latest COVID wave, says may revise forecast in July

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank has raised its forecast for India's growth in 2021-22 to 11%, from 8% earlier, even as it warned that failure to control the resurgence of COVID-19 cases including April's exponential jump poses a "considerable downside risk" to the recovery.

'Targeted containment'
In its assessment based on end-March data, the ADB cited this year's 'more targeted' containment measures compared with last year's 'large-scale' national lockdown and said these would prove 'less costly' to the economy, which had seen a strong rebound in recent months' economic indicators after last year's 'big recession'.
"A stimulus-fuelled surge

Clouds loom: Risks to outlook tilt to the downside, says ADB, cites vaccine roll-out, financial conditions. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

in the U.S., India's largest export market, will support the revival, but a severe second COVID-19 wave is threatening the recovery," the lender said in its Asian Development Outlook report, pro-

jecting growth to moderate to 7% in 2022-23, after a 11% expansion this year. Government capex and accommodative financial policies, along with the vaccine roll-out programme this year,

TVS Motor Q4 net jumps fourfold on higher sales

It sells 1 lakh units overseas in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

TVS Motor Company Ltd. reported standalone net profit for the quarter ended March jumped almost fourfold to ₹289 crore, helped by higher sales volume.

Revenue from operations grew 53% to ₹5,322 crore.

Two-wheeler sales grew 41% in the domestic market and by 74% in the international market, surpassing the industry growth of 24% and 33% respectively, TVS Motor said in a statement on Tuesday.

During March, the company said it achieved a new milestone by selling more than 1 lakh units in the international market.

Focused working capital



RBI sets norms for appointing bank auditors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Tuesday issued guidelines for appointment of statutory central auditors (SCAs) and statutory auditors (SAs) of commercial banks (excluding regional rural banks), urban co-operative banks and non-banking financial companies with a view to improve the quality of financial reporting and to harmonise guidelines on appointment of SAs.

These guidelines provide instructions for appointment of SCAs/SAs, the number of auditors, eligibility criteria, tenure and rotation, while ensuring the independence of auditors," the RBI said.

Axis Bank posts Q4 profit of ₹2,677 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Axis Bank on Tuesday reported a standalone net profit of ₹2,677 crore for the fourth quarter ended March as provisioning for bad loans eased.

The lender had reported a loss of ₹1,387.78 crore a year earlier.

Total income during the latest quarter was ₹20,213.46 crore compared with ₹20,219.57 crore in the year-earlier period, Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Provisions for bad loans and contingencies declined significantly to ₹3,294.98 crore compared with ₹7,730.02 crore.

During the quarter, the net interest income grew 11% to ₹7,555 crore. Net interest margin rose to 3.56% from 3.55%.

Under the framework, all provisional ratings ('long term' or 'short term') for debt instruments need to be prefixed as 'provisional' before the rating symbol in all communications – rating letter, press release and rating rationale, SEBI said.

Further, a rating will be considered provisional in cases where certain compliances that are crucial to the assignment of credit rating are yet to be complied with or certain documentation remain to be executed at the time of rating.

"In no case shall a rating,

including provisional rating, be assigned by a credit rating agency for an issuer or client evaluating strategic decisions such as funding mix for a project, acquisition, debt restructuring, scenario-analysis in loan refinancing," SEBI said.

On validity period, SEBI said provisional rating will be converted into a final rating within 90 days from the date of issuance of the instrument.

SEBI tightens rules for provisional debt rating

CRA to check pendency of compliance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Markets regulator SEBI came out with a new framework to strengthen policies on provisional rating by credit rating agencies (CRAs) for debt instruments.

wards our vision to reduce debt substantially and create a robust balance sheet for our investors and stakeholders," said V.R. Sharma, MD, JSPL.

JSPL to sell Jindal Power stake for ₹3,015 crore
Transaction will help firm to cut debt

"It is yet another step to

"Looking to the future, JSPL will be a key growth driver in the Indian steel industry and will now focus on undertaking expansion of its Angul steel plant from 6 MTPA to 12 MTPA," added Mr. Sharma.

"It is yet another step to

would also help, it added.

"Risks to the outlook tilt to the downside. The second wave of COVID-19 cases is worrying, especially if vaccine roll-out falters or fails to contain it. Another risk is a further tightening of global financial conditions, which would apply pressure on India's market interest rates and therefore affect economic normalisation," the ADB noted, adding that gasoline taxes had spurred fuel inflation last year even though oil prices had been low.

"The projections are based on data and information up to March 31, so we were already aware... of the rise in cases," said Abdul Abiad, ADB's director for macroeconomic research. "Obviously, throughout the month of April, cases have risen exponentially and that really poses a downside risk. We need to monitor the situation closely; depending on how that evolves and the policies implemented to respond to that, we may have to revise our forecast in July."

The lender sees India's average inflation rate slowing to 5.2% this year from 6.2% last fiscal, and reverting to 4.8% (recorded in 2019-20), over the succeeding 12 months. "Inflation is projected to moderate as good har-

vests and supply chain recovery contain domestic food inflation even as global food prices rise, though oil prices... may exert some inflationary pressure," the ADB

noted, adding that gasoline taxes had spurred fuel inflation last year even though oil prices had been low.

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Maruti Q4 net falls 6.14%; 'COVID has not hit sales'

Supply a worry, not demand: chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Maruti Suzuki India Ltd. posted a 6.14% decline in consolidated net profit to ₹1,241.1 crore in the quarter ended March, from a year earlier. On Tuesday, the company also said its sales and production had so far not been impacted by the resurgence of COVID-19.

Chairman R.C. Bhargava said it was difficult to provide a sales outlook due to uncertainties related to COVID-19 as well as production constraints. The problem was not of demand, but of shortage of vehicles, he said, adding that the firm currently had pending customer bookings of more than two lakh vehicles.

The country's largest carmaker was also 'keeping a close watch' on the impact of rising steel prices and government orders limiting the use of oxygen by industries, as well as the continuing shortage of semiconductors, Mr. Bhargava said during a press conference. "We are producing at full capacity... Demand for personal mobility will strengthen further due to the second COVID wave; [demand] is not going to weaken," he said.

Mr. Bhargava said of the about 30,000 employees of the firm, 1,280 were currently infected with COVID-19. However, this has not affected the availability of people working on the lines, he said.

'MTM loss dents profit'
For the fourth quarter, Maruti Suzuki India's revenue from sale of products rose 33.6% to ₹22,959.8 crore. In a statement, the company said its profit for the quarter was impacted by lower non-operating income owing to mark-to-market (MTM) loss

on invested surplus.

Maruti sold

Sublime de Villiers the difference for RCB in one-run thriller

His magical 42-ball 75 n.o. on a two-paced surface helps set 172-run target, which proves just out of the reach of Hetmyer- and Pant-powered Delhi Capitals

IPL 2021

ASHWIN ACHAL

Royal Challengers Bangalore edged out Delhi Capitals by one run at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad to move to the top of the IPL points table on Tuesday.

The match went down to the wire, with DC needing 14 runs from the last over bowled by Mohammed Siraj. The pacer kept his cool, even as Rishabh Pant (58 n.o., 48b, 6x4) and Shimron Hetmyer (53 n.o., 25b, 2x4, 4x6) fancied their chances. DC required six off the last ball, but Pant could only manage a four to deep point.

Tricky target

Set a tricky target of 172, DC pinned its hopes on skipper Pant and Hetmyer. It was Hetmyer who pulled DC into contention, blasting Kyle Jamieson for three big sixes in the 18th over. The West Indian made the most of a life gifted by Devdutt Padikkal, who dropped a simple chance when the batsman was on 15.

Harshal Patel – the highest wicket-taker of the tournament – picked up the two vital scalps of Prithvi Shaw and Marcus Stoinis.

After being put in, RCB relied on AB de Villiers (75 n.o., 42b, 3x4, 5x6) to push the side to a good total.

De Villiers came to the crease with RCB having lost the key wickets of Virat Kohli, Padikkal and Glenn Maxwell.

Kohli jabbed at a ball from pacer Avesh Khan which was too close to cut, while Padikkal was foxed by a gem from Ishant Sharma. Having predominantly ta-



Explosive: de Villiers was in his element, smashing the DC bowlers all around, before Hetmyer's knock almost took Pant's men home. •SPORTZPICS/IPL

Innings scan		POINTS TABLE	
RCB	DC	M	W
36	Dots	35	
9	Fours	16	
9	Sixes	4	
36/2	PP	43/2	
8.55	RR	8.50	

POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers	6	5	1	10	0.089
Chennai Super Kings	5	4	1	8	1.612
Delhi Capitals	6	4	2	8	0.269
Mumbai Indians	5	2	3	4	-0.032
Kolkata Knight Riders	6	2	4	4	-0.305
Punjab Kings	6	2	4	4	-0.608
Rajasthan Royals	5	2	3	4	-0.681
Sunrisers Hyderabad	5	1	4	2	-0.180

After the DC-RCB match on April 27

ken the ball away from the in-form Padikkal, Ishant – playing his first match of the tournament – brought one into the left-hander to dislodge the stumps.

Maxwell looked good in his 20-ball 25 until a failed attempt to slog leggie Amit Mishra proved his undoing. De Villiers and Rajat Patidar (31, 22b, 2x6) steadied the ship with a 54-run fourth-wicket stand.

De Villiers was in full flow in the last over bowled by

Stoinis, tonking the medium-pacer for three sixes. It was an impossible situation for Stoinis, who was called in to bowl his first and only over of the day against a well-set de Villiers at the death. The risky move by DC skipper Pant proved costly, as Stoinis conceded 23 runs.

During the course of his knock, de Villiers became the sixth batsman to cross 5,000 runs in the IPL.



SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Virat Kohli b Avesh 12 (11b, 2x4), Devdutt Padikkal b Ishant 17 (14b, 3x4), Rajat Patidar c Smith b Axar 31 (22b, 2x6), Glenn Maxwell c Smith b Mishra 25 (20b, 1x4, 2x6), AB de Villiers (not out) 75 (42b, 3x4, 5x6), Washington c & b Rabada 6 (9b), Daniel Sams (not out) 3 (2b); Extras (w-2): 2; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 170.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-23 (Dhawan, 2.3), 2-28 (Smith, 3.3), 3-47 (Shaw, 7.2), 4-92 (Stoinis, 12.4).

RCB BOWLING

Sams 2-0-15-0, Siraj 4-0-44-1, Jamieson 4-0-28-1, Washington 4-0-37-2, Chahal 2-0-10-0.

Toss: Delhi Capitals.

Man-of-the-Match: AB de Villiers.

Royal Challengers Bangalore won by one run.

Keeping fresh is key to success, says de Villiers

SPORTS REPORTER

Despite having retired from international cricket in 2018, AB de Villiers has continued to find the big runs when he turns up at the IPL.

This trend continued on Tuesday, when his unbeaten 42-ball 75 laid the platform for Royal Challengers Bangalore's one-run win over Delhi Capitals.

in my room. I've done the work, and now it's about being as fresh as I can when I go out to bat," de Villiers said in the post-match television presentation.

De Villiers cited a stunning flat six over mid-wicket, off a fast, short ball from fellow South African Kagiso Rabada, as his favourite hit.

Pat for Siraj

RCB skipper Virat Kohli praised fast bowler Mohammed Siraj for keeping his cool in the final over of the match. "At one stage, I felt that the match was getting away from us. But the way Siraj started the last over gave us confidence. He finished clinically in the end," Kohli said.



AB's milestone

De Villiers, during the course of his unbeaten 75 against DC on Tuesday, became the sixth batsman to score 5000 runs in the IPL

Virat Kohli	6041 (190 inns)
Suresh Raina	5472 (193 inns)
Shikhar Dhawan	5462 (181 inns)
Rohit Sharma	5431 (200 inns)
David Warner	5390 (147 inns)
AB de Villiers	5053 (161 inns)

Purring CSK up against out-of-sorts SRH

Dhoni's side looks in fine order; Warner's team has won just once in five games

S. DINAKAR

After creaking last season, the rejuvenated Chennai Super Kings is motoring along like a well-oiled machine this season.

Its different wheels are moving in cohesion. While the team is consistent, it is also throwing up match-winners such as 'Hurricane' Ravindra Jadeja.

Versatile outfit

CSK has four wins in five games and is looking versatile.

Hyderabad, in contrast, has been struggling. It is unable to cross the finish line in close games; SRH has four defeats in five games.

The side, undone by injury to yorker specialist T. Natarajan, has been adversely impacted by the lack of meaningful contributions from its Indian cricketers.

But then, SRH, which lost a Super Over to Delhi Capitals, has the opportunity to find some form and momentum



Top guns: Super Kings and Sunrisers will bank on Jadeja's mojo and Bairstow's belligerence respectively. •SPORTZPICS/IPL



TODAY'S MATCH

DELHI, 7.30 P.M.

Played: 14

CSK 10 | SRH 4

In 2020

Played 2 | CSK 1 | SRH 1

STAR SPORTS 1 & STAR SELECT 1 (SD & HD)

when it meets CSK in New Delhi's Feroze Shah Kotla ground on Wednesday.

All eyes will be on the pitch. If the past is any indication, the surface should encourage the spinners and pacemen who can send down effective cutters. Dew will be a factor.

CSK is the favourite but then you can never tell in cricket.

dangerous. Openers Faf du Plessis and Ruturaj Gaikwad are among the runs and the side, with game-changing batsmen, bats deep.

Then there is Jadeja. The left-hander is striking the ball like a dream and bowling with control and skill.

Among the Indians, Vijay Shankar has bowled capably and shown flashes of batting form but has to finish games.

CSK is the favourite but then you can never tell in cricket.

CSK's team has a probing attack. Deepak Chahar can seam the new ball to deadly effect. And Sam Curran, apart from batting with gusto, can bowl his left-arm seamers zestfully.

SRH is too dependent on its four overseas cricketers, skipper David Warner, Jonny Bairstow and Kane Williamson with the bat, and Rashid Khan with the ball.

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CSK's team has a probing attack. Deepak Chahar

QUICK SINGLES



Brett Lee donates ₹40 lakh for COVID fight

NEW DELHI

Former Australian pacer Brett Lee on Tuesday decided to donate one bitcoin (approximately ₹40 lakh) to help India in its fight against COVID-19. PTI

Natarajan undergoes knee surgery

NEW DELHI

T. Natarajan on Tuesday underwent a surgery to treat a knee injury that had ruled him out of IPL-14. The SRH pacer was ruled out of the tournament due to the injury that he originally picked up during the tour of Australia earlier this year. PTI

Kuggeleijn to replace Richardson in RCB

AHMEDABAD

Kiwi pacer Scott Kuggeleijn, who has been part of the IPL bubble as a reserve for Mumbai Indians, moved to RCB as a replacement for Kane Richardson. PTI

Two-day gap for tests

The additional measures include barring food delivery at team hotels and increased testing – a two-day gap between tests instead of the earlier five.

"In order to allay any apprehensions and concerns, we are further strengthening our biosecure environments to keep everyone involved in the tournament safe and healthy."

Two-day gap for tests

The additional measures include barring food delivery at team hotels and increased testing – a two-day gap between tests instead of the earlier five.

Amin's email underlines that the BCCI is determined to continue staging the tour

Making An Impression

TV PICKS

IPL: Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.

Champions League: Sony Ten 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

IN BRIEF



World Athletics rejects Leeper's bid

MONACO American runner Blake Leeper has been prevented from competing at the Tokyo Olympics because his two prosthetic legs have been ruled as giving him an unfair advantage. Leeper is "running unnaturally tall" with his prosthetic legs, the World Athletics mechanical aids review panel determined on Monday. AP

Divij knocked out in first round

MUNICH Divij Sharan and Jonathan Erlich of Israel lost 6-3, 6-2 to third seeds Sander Gillé and Joran Vliegen of Belgium in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the €481,270 ATP tennis tournament here on Tuesday.



'Shooter Dadi' Chandro tests COVID-19 positive

NEW DELHI Octogenarian Chandro Tomar, nicknamed "Shooter Dadi", has tested positive for COVID-19 and admitted to a hospital due to difficulty in breathing. The Twitter page of the 89-year-old legendary shooter, hailing from Baghpat village in Uttar Pradesh, posted the development. Chandro was above 60 when she picked up the gun for the first time but went on to win many National competitions. PTI

Hockey umpire's manager Virendra passes away

NEW DELHI The Indian hockey umpire's manager Virendra Singh passed away due to COVID-19 related complications at Meerut on Monday. He was 47. Virendra had officiated in a number of all-India tournaments and National Championships and as an umpire's manager, his role included electing the best possible officials for matches. PTI



Nagelsmann to take over from Flick at Bayern

MUNICH Bayern Munich hired Leipzig coach Julian Nagelsmann on Tuesday to replace the departing Hansi Flick starting next season. The 33-year-old Nagelsmann will move to Bayern on July 1. AP

Leicester pulls seven ahead

Lazio win opens up Champions League spot race in Serie A

EURO LEAGUES

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LEICESTER

Kelechi Iheanacho extended his career-best scoring form with a blistering winning goal as Leicester rallied to beat Crystal Palace 2-1 in the English Premier League and establish a seven-point cushion in the top four on Monday.

The Nigeria striker made it 14 goals in his last 14 games in all competitions and brought Champions League qualification one step closer for Leicester.

Iheanacho's hot streak could push Leicester over the line in the race for Champions League qualification, too.

The win cemented third place for Brendan Rodgers' team, which is four points ahead of Chelsea in fourth and seven clear of West Ham in fifth. Liverpool is a point further behind, with all four teams having five games to play.

Joaquin Correa scored twice as Lazio beat AC Milan 3-0 in Serie A to boost its chances of qualifying for the Champions League.

Correa scored his first after just 77 seconds and doubled his tally in the 51st minute. Ciro Immobile completed the scoring three



Sublime strike: Kelechi Iheanacho controls the ball in the build-up to scoring Leicester's second against Crystal Palace. • AFP

minutes from time. Lazio closed to within five points of fourth place and the final Champions League berth, having played a match less than the teams above it.

The results: Premier League: Leicester 2 (Castagne 50, Iheanacho 80) bt Crystal Palace (Zaha 12). Serie A: Torino 0 lost to Napoli 2 (Bakayoko 11, Osimhen 13); Lazio 3 (Correa 2, 51, Immobile 87) bt AC Milan 0.

La Liga: Eibar 0 lost to Real Sociedad 1 (Isak 26).

FC Goa squanders golden opportunity

ISL side out of reckoning for knockouts

AFC CL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MARGAO

FC Goa conceded an 89th minute goal to squander the chance to become the first Indian club to win a match in the prestigious AFC Champions League (ACL) as it played out a 1-1 draw with Al Rayyan of Qatar here on Monday. Jorge Ortiz gave FC

Goa the lead in the third minute of the Group E match but Ali Ferydoon equalised with just a minute left in the regulation time.

The Indian Super League side went out of reckoning for a knockout berth after Al

Rayyan (Ortiz 3) drew with Al Rayyan 1 (Ferrydoon 89)

Praggnanandhaa falls short; Carlsen tops league

The Indian's impressive debut ends with three successive draws

NEW IN CHESS CLASSIC

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Prodigious R. Praggnanandhaa's impressive debut ended with successive draws against Magnus Carlsen, Hikaru Nakamura and Alireza Firouzja but fell short of earning him a place among the quarterfinalists of the 16-man New in Chess Classic rapid online tournament on Tuesday.

For the fifth straight time, Carlsen (10.5 points) led the

quarterfinalists in his search for a title on the \$1.5 million Champions Tour.

Praggnanandhaa (7) tied for the 10th spot with teammate Vidit Gujrathi and Norwegian Aryan Tari.

On the last day of the preliminary league, the 15-year-old Indian started with a defeat against Levon Aronian but quickly made amends by beating another debutant Norway's Johan-Sebastian Christiansen before holding three illustrious qualifiers.

Vidit, who ended the second day with two losses, started the final day with as many defeats after running into Sergey Karjakin and Liem Quang Le.

He snapped the losing streak with a draw against

Gulf-money fuelled teams clash

PSG and City boosted by Mbappe and de Bruyne's fitness

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

The Champions League semifinal first leg encounter between Manchester City and Paris Saint-Germain on Wednesday is a meeting of two clubs desperate to win the European Cup for the first time after lavish Gulf investment in the teams.

Qatar-funded PSG did reach last season's final, only to lose to Bayern Munich. Abu Dhabi-backed City has only ever made it to the semifinals once, losing in 2016 to Real Madrid before Pep Guardiola replaced Manuel Pellegrini.

Winning domestic trophies isn't a problem for City, which arrives in Paris fresh from winning a fourth straight League Cup win and sixth in eight years.

Resumes training

PSG is close to full strength, with central defender Marquinhos resuming training at the end of last week after recovering from an adductor injury and midfield schemer



Kevin De Bruyne. • AFP



Kylian Mbappe. • REUTERS

Marco Verratti playing the full 90 minutes at the weekend.

PSG coach Mauricio Pochettino may consider attack the best form of defence and unleash top scorer Kylian Mbappe – who was declared fit for the match after a minor thigh injury scare – in a pure centre forward role, with Neymar and Angel Di Maria probing from the flanks.

Mbappe has netted 37 goals in all competitions so far this season, two less than his career best from two seasons ago and looks certain to hit the 40 mark.

"This is the second time we have got to the semifinals, so there is not much history for our club here," Guardiola said.

Tonight's match: PSG vs Manchester City, 12.30 a.m. (Thursday).

A cricket match that survived WWs halted by COVID-19

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

A new coronavirus wave hitting Sri Lanka has halted a cricket match between two of the country's top schools that has been played for 141 years, continuing even through world wars.

"What would have been the 142nd Royal-Thomian big-match is not likely to be held this year because of the latest Covid wave," the official said. Even the first and second World Wars failed to halt the annual game, that is often compared to the English public school encounter between Eton and Harrow, played since 1805.

Lanka's longest-running sporting event was to have been played over three days without spectators.

"The annual Royal vs St. Thomas's encounter, originally scheduled for next month, has been indefinitely put off after four players tested positive for Covid-19, a school organiser said.

The latest edition of Sri

Spurs outlast Wizards in wild game

Russell leads Minnesota to a win over Utah

NBA

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

DeMar DeRozan scored 37 points and Dejounte Murray added 25 points and a career-high 17 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs outlasted the host Washington Wizards 146-143 in overtime in a wild game on Monday.

The loss snapped Washington's eight-game winning streak, its longest since December 2001. The game went back and forth over the last five minutes of regulation and went to overtime on a layup by Washington's Bradley Beal with 15.8 seconds left that tied things at 133. DeRozan 18-foot turnaround fadeaway shot at the buzzer went in and out.

Chris Paul scored seven points in a 70-second span late in the fourth quarter on Monday night to ice a come-



Star turn: Spurs forward DeMar DeRozan, centre, in action against Wizards. • AP

back win as Phoenix ended host New York's nine-game winning streak.

D'Angelo Russell scored a game-winning layup in the final seconds and finished with 27 points off the bench to lead Minnesota to its second win in three games against Utah.

The results: Detroit 100 bt At-

lanta 86; Philadelphia 121 bt Oklahoma City 90; L.A. Lakers 114 bt Orlando 103; Toronto 112 bt Cleveland 96; San Antonio 146 bt Washington 143 (OT); Phoenix 118 bt New York 110; New Orleans 120 bt L.A. Clippers 103; Chicago 110 bt Miami 102; Minnesota 105 bt Utah 104; Denver 120 bt Memphis 96; Sacramento 113 bt Dallas 106.

F-1: 'Sprint' qualifying for three GPs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Formula One has unanimously approved the adoption of 'sprint' qualifying at three Grands Prix this season, the organisers announced on Monday.

The sprint qualifying over a distance of 100 kilometres will determine the GP grid and give the top three finishers championship points, F1 said in a statement.

It said the sprint sessions, which are "designed to increase the on-track action", would take place at two European races and at one race outside Europe.

Race weekends featuring the sprint qualifiers will have a tweaked format, with a regular qualifying session based on the fastest single lap after the first free practice on the Friday.

Arif continues doing what he loves

Renowned coach is staying put at Jwala's academy

BADMINTON

V.V. SUBRAMANYAM
HYDERABAD

At 77, Dronacharya and renowned badminton coach S.M. Arif is defying age and the second wave of the pandemic to do what he loves the most – coach young badminton talent.

Arif makes it a point daily to be with the 50-odd inmates in different age groups from all over India at the Jwala Gutta Academy of Excellence, set up by the former World champion doubles bronze medalist G. Jwala in Moinabad near here.

"It was difficult to move away from my 'second home' Fateh Maidan Indoor Stadium where I coached for more than four decades. But, I just couldn't say no to Jwala. I just can't stay away from the badminton court. It

gives me so much joy to be with these kids. Honestly, I enjoy every moment out there," he said.

Since November last year when the Academy was functional, Arif has been staying in the hostel itself to avoid commuting 60kms daily.

"Obviously, we are following all COVID-19 protocols and not allowing anyone

from the Academy to go out or let anyone come inside too," he said. "We stopped training the 20-odd local talents two weeks ago as a precautionary measure," he added.

"The well-planned residential facility with a bio-bubble in place has ensured the kids enjoy the three training sessions daily," he said.

BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

How many of us can watch the IPL without revulsion and guilt? Revulsion, at the insensitivity of continuing with a tournament amidst the pain and suffering in the country. And guilt at contributing, in whatever measure, to its profits by watching it on television.

It is easy to confuse IPL with sports, but it is in fact a highly leveraged television serial ideal for selling products where people happen to play a version of a popular game. And television is unlikely to put its golden goose to

sleep. There is another month to go – a month when there will be more cases, more deaths and greater anxiety, all matched by the triumphalism and crassness of the tournament being played in a bubble – in more senses than one. What price the 78-metre six or the fast yorker that hits middle stump when around you people are dying in horrific ways and hope is being sucked out of so many lives?

Meaningless activity

Sport is essentially a meaningless activity which we infuse with significance in normal times. Its artificiality allows us to pour into it the highest qualities we aspire to as human beings: compassion, honesty, fair-mindedness, kindness, respect, empathy, charity, everything that elevates us. But when it displays instead selfishness, indifference, and a lack of concern for the suffering of others, then it

is no longer sport, but something that diminishes us.

Public celebration (admittedly in near-empty stadiums), pointless statistics and excited commentary make it all so surreal. Even the 'official' figures of the dead and suffering in India are frightening. Over a million people are affected every three days. These are now widely believed to be grossly under-counted. To adapt what Bob Dylan said all those years ago: How many deaths will it take till they know that too many people have died?

Hospitals are overcrowded, crematoriums too; there is a national medical emergency, yet 'maximums' are being hit on the cricket fields. There is something repugnant about this.

Teams have arrived in the Capital – surely someone noticed during the drive from the airport that things aren't normal? That the smoke rising in the distance is not announcing the

election of a new pontiff, but the desperation of citizens?

Distraction

The yeo-sayers will insist the IPL is a distraction in troubled times. Yes it is a distraction – from the ineptitude of the authorities who hope that if they close their eyes long enough, the situation will get better. In any case, neither the three-and-a-half lakh people who contract the virus daily nor their struggling families are likely to be interested how many deliveries Virat Kohli took for his latest fifty. Football, said the coach Bill Shankly, is not a matter of life and death, it is more serious. The IPL sees itself as more serious too.

A friend sent me this prediction recently: "After playing on and being absolutely silent through the suffering, once the IPL is done, the players and managements will talk of how their heart bleeds and how they will now

generously open their purses, via a collective cheque handed over to PM and his fund by Ganguly (since Jay Shah will be too obvious), the pictures being discussed for hours on end in sections of the media, followed by tweets from Sachin, Virat, et al."