



High voter turnout in sixth phase of West Bengal Assembly poll

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Vaccine policy has failed the youth, says Sonia in letter to PM

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U.S. will cut greenhouse emissions by half by 2030, says Joe Biden

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Padikkal and Kohli power RCB to the top of the table

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NEARBY
Delhi reports 26,169 cases, 306 deaths

NEW DELHI
Delhi reported 306 COVID-19-related deaths over 24 hours – the highest since the beginning of the pandemic – taking the toll to 13,193. Also, 26,169 new cases were reported, pushing the total cases to 9,56,348. The positivity rate of new cases jumped to 36.24% – the highest till now.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Sitaram Yechury's son Ashish passes away

NEW DELHI
CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's eldest son Ashish Yechury, 35, passed away early on Thursday morning from complications related to COVID-19. Ashish had been in the ICU since April 12, after the infection spread to his lungs.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Plea seeking handcuffs for Khalid, Saifi rejected

NEW DELHI
A court here on Thursday dismissed an application seeking to produce former JNU student Umar Khalid and activist Khalid Saifi, arrested in connection with the Delhi riots, before it in "handcuffs" and sought an explanation from the DCPs concerned for moving such a plea.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

We expect national plan from Centre on oxygen, drugs: SC

Bench takes note of 'grim' situation due to pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Taking note of the 'grim' situation created by the massive surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths, the Supreme Court on Thursday said it expected the Centre to come out with a 'national plan' to deal with proper distribution of oxygen and essential drugs for patients.

Observing that oxygen to patients infected with the virus was said to be an "essential part" of treatment, the court said it seemed that a certain amount of "panic" had been generated, due to which people had approached several High Courts seeking relief related to the prevailing situation.

A Bench, headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, which took *suo motu* cognisance on the issue of distribution of essential supplies and services during the pandemic, said *prima facie* it was of the view that the distribution must be done in an "even handed manner" according to the advice of the health authorities.

"In these circumstances, we direct that notices be issued to the Union government, the State governments /Union Territories and the

Rising toll | As many as 2,247 new COVID-19 deaths were recorded in India as of 11.30 p.m. on Thursday



Torn apart: A woman mourning the death of her husband due to COVID-19 in Ahmedabad on Thursday. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

New cases cross 3.32 lakh; 2,247 more deaths

India accounts for 1 in 3 cases globally

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

With 3,32,348 new COVID-19 cases as of 11.30 p.m. on Thursday, India reported

more than three lakh new infections for the second consecutive day. As many as 2,247 new deaths were also recorded. The country has so far reported a total of 1,62,57,337 cases and 1,86,919 deaths.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Ladakh. The data are sourced from covid19india.org, an independent aggregator of daily figures.

India continues to lead the world in terms of average daily cases and now accounts for one in three cases reported every day.

Over 16.51 lakh tests were conducted on Wednesday (results of which were made available on Thursday), the highest-ever number of tests conducted in a single day. For two consecutive days, the daily tests have crossed the 16-lakh mark.

Maharashtra reported 67,013 infections – 20% of all new cases.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

No restrictions shall be imposed on oxygen manufacturers and suppliers to limit supplies only to the hospitals of the State/UT in which they are located."

The order added that there shall be free movement of oxygen carrying vehicles through the district or areas for making supplies specific to any particular district(s) or area".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

All adults can sign up for jab from April 28

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Everyone above 18 can register for a COVID-19 vaccine from Wednesday, April 28, the Press Information Bureau tweeted on Thursday. However, appointments are likely only after hospitals publish their schedules on CoWIN, the nodal site for coordinating the vaccine drive.

A Central government information portal, MyGov.in, added that there would be no walk-in registrations for the 18-45 age group and only "self registrations" would be entertained. Current trends from CoWIN, on those above 45 with co-morbidities, show that walk-ins far outweigh online pre-registrations, with 8 crore walk-ins compared to 1.3 crore online registrations.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
UNCERTAINTY LOOMS ▶ PAGE 10

Sisodia seeks Centre's help as Capital chokes

Kejriwal calls on counterparts in other States for united fight against the pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM

At least half a dozen hospitals ran out of oxygen in Delhi even as others struggled with depleting supply across the National Capital Region (NCR) on Thursday.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal called on his counterparts in other States for a united front against the pandemic and pledged to share resources at every possible opportunity to do so.

Mr. Kejriwal's deputy and nodal Minister for COVID management in the city Manish Sisodia asked the Centre to intervene and deploy para-military personnel at borders if need be to ensure that the Capital gets its quota of oxygen from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, accusing their governments of interfering in supply.

He wrote a letter to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan stating that six private hospitals had exhausted their stock of oxygen, urging him



Relatives carrying oxygen cylinders themselves to tend to COVID-19 patients, at Mayapuri in Delhi on Thursday. ■ PTI

to intervene to save the lives of people of Delhi and make sure that the city gets its quota of oxygen from other States.

Officials appointed
Fortis Hospital in Haryana's Gurugram, in a series of distress messages on Thursday evening, said it was left with only 45 minutes of oxygen supply. In Delhi, two IAS officers were appointed to ensure smooth procurement of

oxygen tanks from neighbouring States and the police tasked with facilitating movement to medical establishments. Around 1 p.m., Rathi Hospital in Delhi, which has 78 COVID-19 patients, said it had oxygen only for half an hour. Shanti Mukund Hospital pasted a poster on its gate that it is stopping admissions. Another private hospital said around 5 p.m. that it had oxygen only for 90 minutes and had 233 COVID patients.

According to Delhi government estimates, Mr. Kejriwal said, the city required a daily supply of 700 tonnes of oxygen and the Centre had on Wednesday decided to increase the initial quota of 378 tonnes to 480 tonnes.

In his letter to Dr. Vardhan, Mr. Sisodia stated that only one of the seven major government hospitals under the Delhi government had oxygen supply for 24 hours while six of the 15 major private hospitals in the city had exhausted theirs. Others were struggling with little to dangerously low supply of oxygen. The Delhi government, he said, was also mulling air-lifting oxygen from Odisha.

The pandemic, Mr. Kejriwal said, was a collective crisis and everyone needed to come together to confront and defeat it. It was time, he said, that governments rose above State divisions and became "Indians".

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2 & 4

Helping hands



Safety first: Mohanan carrying his mother-in-law, Radha, 78, after her vaccination at the General Hospital in Ernakulam on Thursday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT (RELATED REPORT ON PAGE 5)

EC puts curbs on roadshows in West Bengal

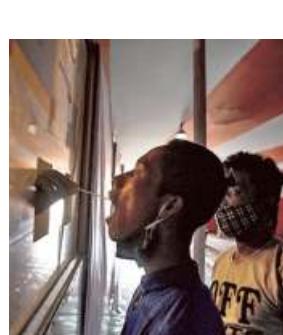
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India on Thursday banned roadshows and vehicle rallies as well as public meetings with over 500 people for the remaining phases of the West Bengal poll after finding that parties and candidates were flouting COVID-19 norms.

The ECI said in an order it noted with anguish that many political parties/candidates are still not adhering to the prescribed safety norms during the public gatherings and this is making difficult for the State/district election machinery to enforce the aforesaid directions fully.

300 flyers skip COVID test at Assam airport

Officials said they declined tests at nearby hospital and left; search on to trace them



A health worker taking a nasal swab sample of a passenger at a railway station in Guwahati. ■ FILE PHOTO

On Wednesday, some passengers travelling to other States in the Northeast were exempted from testing.

"Six of the 189 passengers who underwent RAT and RT-PCR tested positive," Cachar

district's Additional Deputy Commissioner Sumit Sattawan said, adding that 300 passengers trooped out of the hospital without testing.

All incoming passengers at Kumbhigram are given the option to go to the hospital in buses provided by the local administration or take their own vehicles by giving an undertaking and sharing the details of the vehicle and the driver.

Inadequate security
One of the reasons the air passengers defied the hospital authorities is said to be the inadequate security on the premises. There were only four police personnel at the hospital on Wednesday.

"The list of all the 300 passengers who skipped the

testing is being prepared. We will trace them and take necessary legal action," Mr. Sattawan said.

Bhanwar Lal Meena, Cachar's Superintendent of Police, said it would not be difficult to trace the passengers from Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts.

"Air passengers are expected to be responsible citizens. We hope none of these 300 people test positive, but in case some of them do, they have already endangered the lives of their near and dear ones," he told *The Hindu*.

Assam's COVID-19 positive count increased by 1,665 on Wednesday. Of the five COVID-related deaths recorded, one was from Cachar district.

Create special corridor for oxygen supply to Delhi, HC directs Centre

We all know that this country is being run by god, says Bench

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Centre to immediately create a special corridor for safe and swift passage of oxygen tankers from neighbouring States such as Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to the Capital.

Delhi has been allocated 480 metric tonnes of medical oxygen by the Centre to tide over the unprecedented rise in COVID-19 cases. The Delhi government, however, stated that 140 metric tonnes of medical oxygen scheduled to come from Panipat in Haryana were not being allowed to be picked up by the local authorities there.

"The situation in Delhi has rather turned precarious, with several hospitals complaining of complete exhaustion of oxygen or depletion to the level that it may not last after the next few hours," a Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli remarked, adding, "We all know that this country is being run by god."

"We make it clear that non-compliance of the said order [of April 21] and our order passed today will be viewed seriously since their non-compliance is likely to result in great loss to lives."

The High Court also directed the Central government to ensure that adequate security is provided to the

trucks transporting the oxygen. "A special corridor may be created for immediate transportation of the oxygen," the Bench ordered.

Bed availability
Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, said since there is a four-fold spike in COVID-19 cases in the Capital, the Centre could consider augmenting 80% of the beds in AIIMS Jhajjar, AIIMS Trauma Centre, Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, Safdarjung and Lady Hardinge hospital to make available around 8,000 more beds. "We expect the Centre to look into the requirement," the Bench said.

Join hands to defeat virus defying State borders, appeals Kejriwal

CM says week-long lockdown being utilised to ramp up medical infrastructure

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



I want to assure you that I will share my resources with other States as and when these are in a position of being shared

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister

Kejriwal said.

Oxygen need

"According to Delhi government estimates, the city requires a daily supply of 700 tonnes of oxygen. The Centre had allocated a quota of 378 tonnes of oxygen to Delhi initially, but has increased that to 480 tonnes on Wednesday for which we are very, very thankful.

Though it is lower than what is required, we are thankful," he also said.

The Centre, Mr. Kejriwal said, also decides which

company supplies oxygen to States and cities such as Delhi, where oxygen is not manufactured. Oxygen manufactured by companies in other States is allocated to others according to the Centre's directions, he said.

Some State governments, Mr. Kejriwal alleged, where such manufacturing units were located, had stopped the transportation of oxygen allocated to Delhi and used it themselves, given the circumstances and paucity of oxygen.

"I want to thank the

Centre and the Delhi High Court for helping us with this issue. I, Delhi's Ministers and officers have not slept for several nights and were in constant touch with the Centre over the issue of oxygen supply," he said.

"But the increased supply will take some time and we are mulling airlifting oxygen from Odisha. In the meantime, I am personally ensuring that every truck with oxygen reaches its destination. Like I had promised, these six days are being utilised to ramp up our medical infrastructure as much as possible, round the clock," he also said.

The pandemic, Mr. Kejriwal said, was "a very big emergency" and everyone needed to come together to confront and defeat it.

"I want to assure you that I will share my resources with other States as soon as possible," he also said.

"I want to thank the

have become so crowded that it becomes impossible to stay there."

Sanjay Kumar, who hails from U.P.'s Sitapur district, rued about lack of work in the run-up to the lockdown, which left them without any means to return to their villages. "We have not been able to earn much in the last few months. So how can we even think of buying tickets and returning?" he said.

With most of them aware of COVID-19 protocols, the workers complained that no provisions were made to distribute masks.



Migrant workers have made the banks of Yamuna river their home during the week-long lockdown. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the lockdown began was from a gurdwara in the vicinity that provided cooked meals twice a day.

Ashok Kumar, who hails from Aligarh, said: "There is

no provision of food or shelter for us from the government. We have been surviving on cooked meals provided by volunteers from the gurdwara. The shelters

'6 hospitals ran out of oxygen'

U.P. and Haryana governments trying to hoard oxygen: Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



going on with this makeshift arrangement. It is my request to the Central government that even if you have to deploy paramilitary forces to ensure trucks from all States are replenishing oxygen without any hindrances from officials from other State governments, please do so. The way U.P. and Haryana governments are trying to monopolise and hoard oxygen, they have created a *jungle raj*, which is very dangerous for everyone," Mr. Sisodia said.

Many hospitals said that they arranged oxygen cylinders to manage the shortage, while some had to ask patients to shift to somewhere else.

Oxygen supply to hospitals in Delhi has been a problem for the past five days and the Delhi government has been blaming U.P. and Haryana governments for disrupting supply from private companies to Delhi.

The quota of oxygen for each State is decided by the Centre and in case of Delhi, it comes mostly from private oxygen plants in other States.

On Wednesday as well, several hospitals complained of dangerously low stocks of oxygen.

Manish Sisodia wrote to Union Minister Harsh Vardhan seeking intervention. ■ PTI

On Thursday, accusing the Haryana and U.P. governments of stalling the supply of oxygen to the Capital, Mr. Sisodia asked the Centre to deploy paramilitary personnel.

He said that Delhi was not getting the full quota of oxygen from a plant in Haryana as district officials were stopping trucks coming from Delhi for liquid medical oxygen.

Jungle raj

"In some time, without adequate oxygen supply, it may become difficult for Delhi hospitals to save lives of patients. We cannot keep on

City reports
26,169 cases,
306 deaths

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 306 COVID-19-related deaths in 24 hours - the highest since the beginning of the pandemic - taking the total number of deaths to 13,193, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Also, 26,169 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 9,56,348. The positivity of new cases jumped to 36.24% - the highest till now. This means more than 36 out of 100 people taking the test are now testing positive.

A total of 72,208 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 8,51,537 people have recovered and there are 91,618 active cases.

53,673 vaccinated

Meanwhile, a total of 53,673 beneficiaries took COVID-19 vaccination in the city in 24 hours, as per the bulletin.

Out of the total 20,431 beds for COVID-19 treatment here, only 10.4% were vacant at 11 p.m. Also, only 15 ICU beds were vacant.

Many hospitals, including Lok Nayak Hospital, Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital and Burari Hospital, did not have a single vacant COVID-19 bed.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said that once the oxygen crisis is resolved, the government will increase the number of beds. "We have demanded 7,000 beds for two weeks from the Centre. So far, 2,000 beds have been given. Beds for COVID-19 patients will be increased once the oxygen crisis ends," he said.

The Minister said that hospitals faced a shortage of oxygen the entire night.

Stranded labourers on Yamuna banks bank on hope

With no money or means to go back to their villages, they hope the lockdown is not extended this time

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

For hundreds of migrant workers who continue to reside on the banks of the Yamuna, the week-long lockdown imposed by the Delhi government to curb the surge in COVID-19 cases has been all too similar to conditions that prevailed exactly a year back when they were stranded at the same place without work.

Less than five km away from Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence, the daily wagers said that the only aid they have received since



Please follow all safety measures to prevent Corona

Plea seeking handcuffs for Khalid, Saifi dismissed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A court here on Thursday dismissed the applications seeking to produce former JNU student Umar Khalid and activist Khalid Saifi, arrested in connection with the last year's north-east Delhi riots, before it in "handcuffs" and sought explanation from the DCPs concerned for moving such plea.

The workers are just hoping that this lockdown is not extended like earlier. Hari Mohan, from Odisha's Mayubhanj, said: "The government said that things will open up in a week. That is our only hope at the moment. We hope that the lockdown is not extended."

ior police officers of Delhi Police to move such applications before the Court".

The applications, which came up for hearing before Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav, sought to produce both the accused in "handcuffs in both hands from back side", contending that they are "high-risk prisoners".

During the hearing, Special Public Prosecutor Manoj Chaudhary was asked about the meaning of "high-risk prisoner". He, however, submitted that he was not aware of the instant applications.

Get vaccinated to protect yourself from Corona
Stay Safe

Once again Corona figures in Delhi are increasing rapidly, so if you're eligible please visit your nearest health center and get yourself vaccinated. Come, let us together defeat this pandemic.



Wash Your Hands Frequently with Soap and Water



Follow Social Distancing 6 Feet



Continue to Wear Masks





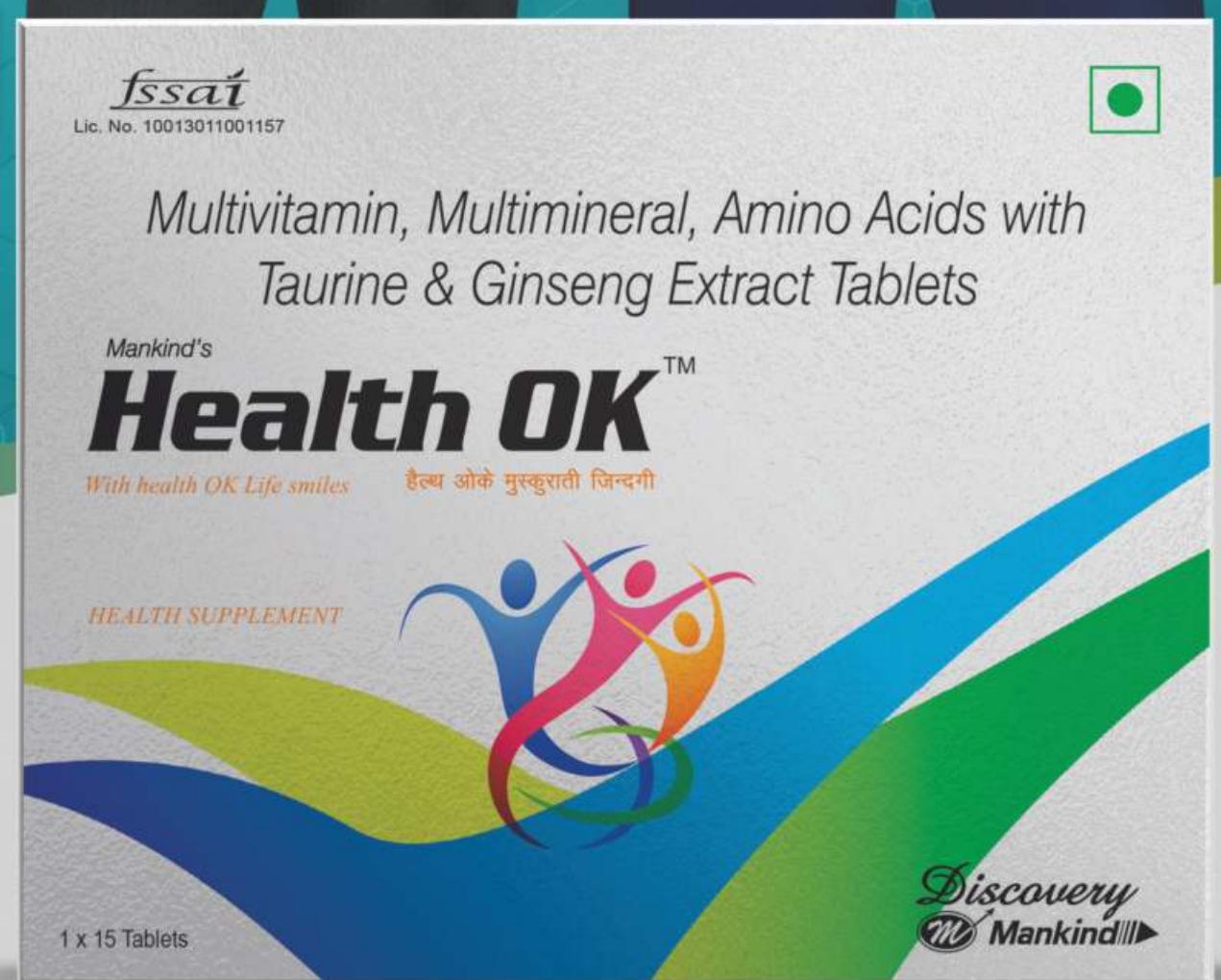
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OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SAD DEMISEYou will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. I Peter 5:4
Believing that he is in the presence of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, we announce the home call of

ABRAHAM NAVAMANI GNANADAS (ANG) DAVID
(RDSO - Lucknow, 1954-1984)
DOB-7.10.1926 DOD-21.04.2021
A Beloved Husband / Father /
Father-in-law / Grandfather
We miss you but know it is not for long
Grieving Wife, Children,
In-laws and Grandchildren
Due to government restrictions we had a small private funeral on 22.04.2021

DEATH



Smt. Indirani Srinivasan
Age: 79 years
(W/o Shri late R Srinivasan) (Retd, AG's Office, GOI) attained Sivalokha prapthi on 22nd April 2021 at 4.35 am
Deeply mourned by: Family, Relatives and friends
Sons: +91 80561 71184, +91 78936 67472

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GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PUBLIC WORKS DIVISION, BEED
E-TENDER NOTICE NO.BEED/02 OF 2021-22

E-Tenders for (01) Works in B-1 form is invited by the Executive Engineer, Public Works Division, Beed (Phone Nb. 02442-222474) from the registered Contractors in appropriate class of Public Works Department of Govt. of Maharashtra for the improvement roads/repair of buildings/construction of new buildings in Tal. Beed/Georai/Wadwani Dist. Beed.

The details can be viewed and downloaded from following website.
www.mahapwd.com.

<https://mahatenders.gov.in>

sd/-
Executive Engineer
Public Works Division BeedHimachal Pradesh
Jal Shakti Vibhag

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division Keylong (H.P) invites tender on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following works through Online Process:-

Job No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time of completion
1.	Augmentation of WSS Keylong Town (Providing 24x7 Anti Freeze Water Supply to Keylong Town) in GP Keylong Distt. L&S (H.P).Sub Head- Engagement of Consultant for Vetting of DPR, Preparation of Detailed Design and Estimate, Technical Assistance in Getting Approvals, Preparation of Bid Documents after detailed market sounding for Augmentation of Water Supply Scheme Keylong Town in District Lahaul and Spiti in Himachal Pradesh.	20,00,000/-	37,500/-	Three Months

Date of submission of e-tender From 21/04/2021 at 10:00 AM to 27/04/2021 at 5:00 PM

Physical submission of tender documents & fee Upto 11.00 A.M 28/04/2021 as applicable

Date of opening of Eligibility Criteria 28/04/2021 at 11:30 AM

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the portal <http://htenders.gov.in> upto 5.00 PM 27.04.2021.

Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Division, Keylong

HP / 0392/21-22 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JANSAMPARK Keylong

PUBLIC WORK DEPARTMENT
(BUILDING AND ROADS BRANCH)
HISAR CIRCLE

NOTIFICATION

The number 2418 dated 20.4.2021 as the Governor of Haryana is pleased that in reference to the following land, for which proper compensation and transparency rights Act 2013 in the Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 notification of Section 11(1) in the Gazette of the Government of Haryana Published on 15 December 2020, the land is required to be taken by the government for public purpose namely Mangali by-pass road in Village Mangali Mohabbat Tehsil and District, Hisar.

This is hereby declared that out of the following khasra numbers, land is required to be taken for the above purpose. In this context, the order of the Hon'ble Court C.J.M., Hisar has been passed on 12.06.2008 to acquire the land.

This declaration is for all those persons who are related to it, for the purpose of land acquisition rehabilitation and resettlement has been made under the provisions of Section 19 of the Fair Compensation and Transparency Rights Act 2013 under which land is required to be acquired immediately.

Under the provisions of the above Act, Land Acquisition Collector Public Works Department (Building and Road) Hisar is hereby ordered to acquire the above land. Inspection of maps of the land, can be done on any working day in the office of Land Acquisition Collector, PWD B&R, Hisar or Executive Engineer, Provincial Division No.I, PWD B&R Br, Hisar.

SPECIFICATION

Distt.	Tehsil	Locality/Village & H.B. No.	Area in Acres	Rectangle No./Kila No.	Area in Kanal-Marla
Hisar	Hisar	Mangali Mohabbat 158	0.65	27/5 Min	0-13
			27/6 Min	1-8	
			27/14 Min	1-11	
			27/17 Min	0-8	
			28/1 Min	1-4	
		Total	5-4 (0.65 Acre)		

Superintending Engineer
Hisar Circle PWD B & Br.
Hisar

PRDH-1081/11/12/2022/2680/199/7

Timings
DELHI

RISE	05:48	SET 18:52
RISE	14:49	SET 03:24
SATURDAY, APR. 24		
RISE	05:47	SET 18:53
RISE	15:54	SET 04:01
SUNDAY, APR. 25		
RISE	05:46	SET 18:53
RISE	16:59	SET 04:37

Deli Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	21
Safdarjung	34	21
Palam	34	20

Delhi Palam Today
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Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Drop in morning temperature likely. Mainly sunny sky and very warm day with light winds likely.

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THE HINDU

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IN BRIEF

AAD writes to DU V-C on in-house care centre
NEW DELHI

The Academics for Action and Development on Thursday wrote to Delhi University V-C P.C. Joshi demanding an in-house COVID Care Centre in view of the surging cases. "Presently, the situation has become very difficult and in-house facility can provide some cushion," it read.

EASTERN RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: EL/HWH/25/21 (Notice)429, Date: 20.04.21. Divisional Railway Manager, Eastern Railway, Howrah invites tenders for the under-mentioned electrical work/s:- Tender No.: EL/HWH/25/21/3122. Name of work : Supply and fitment of Isolating Contactor in HOG modified Power Cars in connection with "Isolating contactor in HOG modified in 500 Power Cars @ Rs. 3.5 Lakh." Tender Value: Rs. 47,79,550/-Closing date and time of tender : 17.05.2021 at 15:00 hrs. The details of tender are available at website: www.reps.gov.in Tenderers are requested to submit their offer online on the above website. HWH-14/2021-22 Tender Notices are also available at Website www.er.indianrailways.gov.in/www.reps.gov.in

EASTERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING QUOTATION NO.: COM/DEV/CYL/APP Cab/Quotation, Date: 21.04.2021. Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Eastern Railway, Howrah invites sealed Quotation in single packet for the following work: **Name of work and its location:** Contract for running of App based Cab measuring 307 Sq. mtr. area opposite of Rail Yatri Niwas near Howrah Railway Station for 3 months. Details are available in Quotation Document and Notice Board at the office of Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Eastern Railway, Howrah, Rail Yatri Niwas (4th floor), Howrah-711101. **Approximate Cost (Reserve Price):** Reserve Price for three months: Rs. 53,84,535/- **Period of work (Contract):** 03 (three) months. Quotation form & documents is available in the office of Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Eastern Railway, Howrah, Rail Yatri Niwas (4th floor), Howrah-711101 on any working day from 22.04.2021 to 28.04.2021 (11.00 hrs. to 17.00 hrs.) and 29.04.2021 (from 11.00 hrs. to 12.00 hrs.). **Date and time for submission of Quotation:** Upto 13.00 hrs. on 29.04.2021. **Opening of Quotation:** 29.04.2021 at 14.00 hrs. Complete details of Quotation can be seen in the Notice Board at the office of Divisional Railway Manager (Commercial), Eastern Railway, Howrah, Rail Yatri Niwas (4th floor), Howrah-711101. HWH-19/2021-22

SEARCH FOR MISSING
JAVED

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Named: Javed, S/o: Nooruddin, R/o: H.No. L-14, DDA Flat, Turkman Gate, Delhi, Age: 51 Years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Face: Oval, Teeth: Broken, Wearing: Cream Colour Kurta Payjama and Kathai Colours Jacket and Black Colour Chappal in feet has been missing since 26.03.2014 from his house. In this regard DD No. 26 PPT, Dated 28.03.2014 has been lodged at PS. Chandni Mahal, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing person please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in> **E-Mail ID:** cic@cbi.gov.in **Fax:** 011-24368638,24368641 **DP/759/CD/2021**

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that a girl named **Madhu, D/o Ram Prasad, R/o WZ-86, Todapur, Dargahara, Delhi, Age: 22 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Built: Normal, Face: Round, Wearing: Red Colour Suit & Red Colour Salwar and Maroon Colour Sleeper in her feet has been missing from the area of P.S. Rajender Nagar, Delhi since 02.04.2021. In this regard a DD No. 60A, dated 02.04.2021. has been registered at P.S. Rajender Nagar, Delhi.**

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

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in **Ph.:** 011-24368638,24368641 **SHO PS Rajender Nagar, Delhi** **DP/753/CD/2021**

e-Procurement Cell

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

Corrigendum

Letter No:-17 Date: 22.04.2021 Due to Closure of the office in the back drop of the lockdown from 22/04/2021 to 29/04/2021, the last date of submission of Hard Copies/Tender Fee/Cost of BOQ and Earnest Money for the work "Renovation work of Sadar Hospital Garhwa, Jharkhand" published vide Tender Reference No.: BCD/CE/02/Garhwa/2021-22 and PR No 244962 dated 01.04.2021 is extended. Up to 30.04.2021 till 11:30 AM . Accordingly the bid shall be opened on next working day. The rest condition shall remain as before.

PR No 244962

Nodal Officer, e-Procurement Cell, Office of the chief engineer Combined office Building Construction Department, Line Tank Road ,Ranchi

PR 245894 (Building) 21-22 (D)

Delhi police on their feet to keep the Capital breathing

Braving adverse situations, they are working to help hospitals and patients out

IN BRIEF



Do not sell Remdesivir in black market: Minister

Karnataka Minister for Health and Medical Education K. Sudhakar on Thursday warned that action would be taken against officers of the Office of Drug Controller here if Remdesivir injections were found to be sold in the black market. The Minister told the officers to take stringent measures against black marketing of the drug.

Karnataka to purchase 1 crore doses of Covishield

BENGALURU
The Karnataka government on Thursday approved purchase of one core doses of Covishield vaccine in the first phase at a cost of ₹400 crore. Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa tweeted that this would facilitate inoculation of those in 18 to 44 age group from May 1.

Kerala slams Centre on vaccine shortage

Telangana questions dual pricing policy of vaccination; no shortage of oxygen, says A.P. Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The shortage of COVID-19 vaccines has triggered a political blame game in Kerala. It has stoked public anger and caused the Centre and the State to wrangle over the pricing and sourcing of the drug.

For once, the ruling LDF and the opposition UDF were on the same page. Both said the onus was on the Centre to provide the vaccine free of cost to States to halt an aggressive second wave of infections.

On Thursday, Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala appeared to back Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's demand that the Centre should ensure adequate supply of vaccine doses to retard the pandemic, prevent further loss of life and save States from economic devastation.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Chennithala echoed Mr. Vijayan's sentiment that the State could ill afford to supply vaccines free to its residents.

Dual pricing

In Telangana, Municipal Minister K.T. Rama Rao lashed out at the dual pricing policy of vaccination of the Central government saying: "One Nation - Two different Vaccine Prices?"

In a tweet with hashtag #SabkaSaathSabkoVaccine, he said "We agreed for One Nation - One Tax (GST) and why is it that there are two prices for the vaccine in the country. Why should the vaccine be supplied at ₹150 for Government of India and at ₹400 for State governments," he asked.

Why can't the Centre subsume the additional cost from PM CARES and help rapid vaccination across India, he asked.



Huge demand: COVID-19 patients thronging the Government General Hospital in Ongole on Thursday. ■ KOMMURI SRINIVAS

from PM CARES and help rapid vaccination across India, he asked.

The dual price policy announced by the Centre received sharp criticism with the netizens lashing out at the Prime Minister saying he is insensitive to people's issues.

According to NGOs and private hospitals, the prices of oxygen have increased by at least 500%–600%.

Before the second wave of the pandemic, a bulk cylinder used to cost ₹300–₹400. Now, it is being sold for ₹3,000 in Warangal. Yet, finding it has become a pro-

blem because of scarcity. While the demand is high, supply is less.

Telangana Health Minister Eatala Rajender said that some people were creating artificial scarcity and selling it in the black market, but government officials have kept a vigil on it.

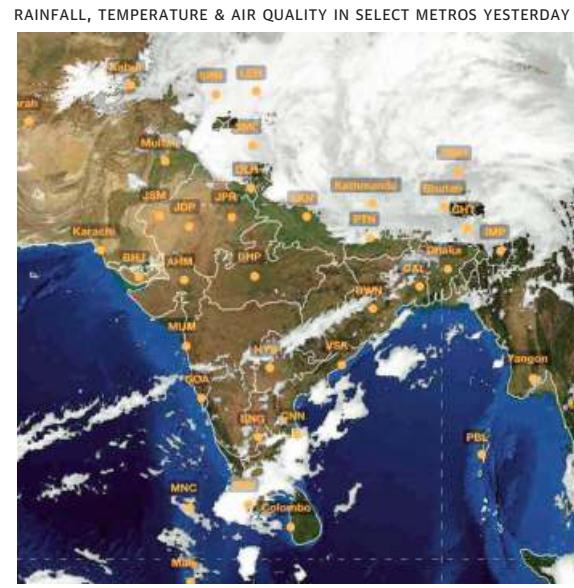
A.P. reviews situation

In Mangalagiri, Andhra Pradesh Health Minister Alla Kalli Krishna Srinivas said they had discussed the steps needed to bring down the number of cases and maintain adequate supply of oxygen, and vaccination.

On the oxygen supply, the Minister said it was in line with the current requirement of 360 tonnes, and that there was no problem for government hospitals.

(With inputs from Hyderabad and Vijayawada bureaus)

WEATHER WATCH



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

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, Gangetic West Bengal, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Kerala

CITY	RAIN	MAX	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 34.5...	23.4	Kozhikode	... 34.3...	25.2	
Ahmedabad	40.4...	24.7	Kurnool	2.7...	38.4...	27.3
Aizawl	31.2...	16.8	Lucknow	25.8...	34.0...	16.7
Althababad	37.0...	22.9	Madurai	... 38.4...	26.1	
Bengaluru	9.4...	32.2...	Mangaluru	... 34.9...	25.9	
Bhopal	0.5...	27.4	Mysuru	... 33.7...	21.2	
Bhubaneswar	34.0...	24.9	New Delhi	... 34.0...	18.7	
Chandigarh	31.3...	19.3	Port Blair	... 32.7...	24.4	
Chennai	35.8...	27.8	Puducherry	... 34.0...	26.4	
Coimbatore	36.0...	24.9	Pune	... 39.2...	21.9	
Dehradun	13.7...	15.4	Raipur	... 39.0...	24.0	
Gangtok	20.0...	14.6	Ranchi	0.5...	33.5...	21.0
Goa	33.8...	25.7	Shillong	0.8...	26.2...	14.9
Guwahati	35.0...	22.0	Shimla	82.6...	15.2...	4.0
Hubballi	36.0...	22.0	Srinagar	27...	93.3...	5.9
Hyderabad	36.8...	24.9	Thiruvananthapuram	... 33.6...	25.5	
Imphal	32.4...	17.5	Tiruchi	... 39.9...	26.8	
Jaipur	36.4...	19.7	Vijayawada	... 38.2...	28.4	
Kochi	34.2...	23.6	Visakhapatnam	... 33.0...	28.0	
Kohima	27.0...	15.6				
Kolkata	0.6...	31...				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	52	58	36	112	133	■■■■■
Bengaluru	4	34	59	94	83	■■■■■
Chennai	1	16	59	36	... 100	■■■■■
Delhi	23	24	26	175	154	■■■■■
Hyderabad	4	58	40	83	107	■■■■■
Kolkata	18	20	107	115	105	■■■■■
Lucknow	8	37	54	128	102	■■■■■
Mumbai	6	21	—	88	106	■■■■■
Pune	—	53	53	152	106	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	17	41	16	41	78	■■■■■

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

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

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Yesterday

In observation made at 4:00 pm, Bhilai, Raipur recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 275 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Ernakulam, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 41

प्रियों का ध्वनि से बचाएं। / Save Electricity in the interest of Nation (Toll Free No. 1800-419-0405)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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प्रियों का ध्वनि से बचाएं। / Save Electricity in the interest of Nation (Toll Free No. 1800-419-0405)

एतद्वारा इस खण्ड से प्रकाशित निवादा सं 03/2021-22, 04/2021-22, 05/2021-22, 06/2021-22, 07/2021-22 जिसमें विक्रय की दिनांक 12-05-2021 एवं समय 17:00 बजे अंकित है, के स्थान पर दिनांक 10-05-2021 एवं समय 14:00 बजे पढ़ा जाये। अन्य नियम व सार्वत्र पूर्ववत् रहेगी। (अधिकारी अभियन्ता)

राष्ट्रीय में विज्ञान वर्गां / Save Electricity in the interest of Nation (Toll Free No. 1800-419-0405)

NORTH & EAST

'Reserve 50% beds for COVID patients'

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUABANESWAR
The Odisha government on Thursday directed all private hospitals to reserve 50% of their beds for COVID-19 patients and charge reasonable cost.

The government has fixed treatment cost to be charged by private hospitals. The 50% reservation will also be applicable to ICU and high-

density unit beds. This was done to decongest government health facilities.

The government found

that private hospitals were also not admitting COVID patients with a plea that they did not have beds.

Arrangements in place for uninterrupted oxygen supply: Lal



"CM Arvind Kejriwal had expressed satisfaction for the supply of oxygen," said Mr. Lal.

He added that the Panipat plant has a capacity of producing 260 MT of oxygen per day, of which 140 is supplied to Delhi, 80 to Haryana and 20 to Punjab. He said Haryana also supplied 20 MT of oxygen from Bhiwadi plant in Rajasthan.

On the current status of availability of beds with ventilators for COVID-19 patients in the hospitals, the Chief Minister said that the facility of availability of beds has been made online in Gurugram and Faridabad districts.

Mr. Lal said 1,000 Remdesivir injections were supplied in government hospitals till April 21 and the supply will be further increased.

The Chief Minister said 170 MT of oxygen was supplied to Delhi from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. on Thursday (April 22) from the Panipat plant.

FIR against private hospital in Kanpur

No doctor to treat COVID-positive judge

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

An FIR was lodged against a private hospital in Kanpur for mismanagement and it was also charged with being negligent in treating a district judge.

District judge R. P. Singh tested positive on April 18. On Wednesday morning when the judge went to the hospital for admission at around 11 along with the chief medical officer of Kanpur, they were shocked at the mismanagement.

The FIR, based on the complaint of CMO Anil Mishra stated that when they were going up in a lift at the hospital, it malfunctioned and got stuck. They managed to get out of the lift but found that there was no doctor available, the FIR said.

The FIR was lodged at Panki police station Kanpur under IPC Sections 166b, 188, 269, 270 and 596 and Section 3(2)(I) of the Epidemic Diseases Act.

For this purpose bids are invited from interested firms who have prior experience in planning and designing integrated area development / tourism destination projects or other similar projects (of a matching scale) in India or abroad.

The Terms of References may be collected from the Department of Tourism, Government of Odisha, Paryatan Bhawan, Bhubaneswar or may be downloaded from our website www.odishatourism.gov.in. The proposal of the bidders as



Judges pro tem

Roping in retired HC judges to clear backlog should not be at cost of regular appointments

The Supreme Court's decision to invoke a "dormant provision" in the Constitution to clear the way for appointment of retired judges as *ad hoc* judges to clear the mounting arrears in the various High Courts is an indictment of the extraordinary delay in filling up judicial vacancies. Whether the fault lies with the Collegium system or the Centre's tardiness, there is little doubt that the unacceptable delay in the appointment process in recent times has caused huge vacancies in the High Courts. Therefore, it is definitely not welcome that the Court has chosen to activate Article 224A of the Constitution, which provides for appointment of *ad hoc* judges in the High Courts based on their consent. A Bench headed by CJI S.A. Bobde has made it clear that "the challenge of mounting arrears and existing vacancies requires recourse to Article 224A". The numbers both in respect of pendency of cases and vacancies in the High Courts are quite concerning – a backlog of over 57 lakh cases, and a vacancy level of 40%. Five High Courts account for 54% of these cases. Interestingly, official data suggest that there need not be a correlation between the number of vacancies and the large backlog. The Madras High Court has 5.8 lakh cases against a relatively low level of vacancy at 7%. As many as 44% of the posts in the Calcutta High Court are vacant, but the cases in arrears stand at 2.7 lakh.

As the provision has been utilised only sparingly in the past, and for the limited purpose of disposing of particular kinds of cases, the endeavour to appoint *ad hoc* judges will have to come with some guidelines. The Court has made a beginning by directing that the trigger point for such an appointment will be when the vacancies go beyond 20% of the sanctioned strength, or when more than 10% of the backlog of pending cases are over five years old; when cases in a particular category are pending for over five years, or when the rate of disposal is slower than the rate of institution of fresh cases. The Bench has ruled that the current Memorandum of Procedure be also followed for appointing *ad hoc* judges, a process initiated by the Chief Justice of a High Court, with a suggested tenure of two to three years. The Court has clarified that this is a "transitory methodology" and does not constrain the regular appointment process. The government, which did not oppose the proposal, but wanted the vacancies to be filled up first, would do well to expedite the regular appointment process from its end, and give up its propensity to hold back some recommendations selectively. As for the judiciary, it should ensure that only retired judges with experience and expertise are offered the temporary positions, and there is no hint of favouritism.

Green and raw

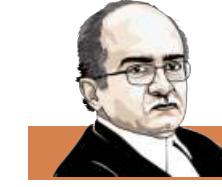
Centre should clarify how far experience can be treated as expertise for tribunal posts

The establishment of tribunals as adjudicatory bodies in specific fields is based on the idea that specialisation and expertise are required to decide complex cases of a technical nature. The 'tribunalisation' of justice is driven by the recognition that it would be cost-effective, accessible and give scope for utilising expertise in the respective fields. Central to this scheme is the principle that the 'experts' appointed to these tribunals should bring in special knowledge and experience. These criteria came under focus recently when the appointment of former IAS officer, Girija Vaidyanathan, as Expert Member in the Southern Bench of the NGT, was challenged in the Madras High Court. Even though the court initially granted an interim stay on her appointment, it ruled that she was not ineligible, going by the criteria in the NGT Act. She was found to have fulfilled the eligibility requirements by virtue of her administrative experience of nearly five years in "dealing with environmental matters". The Act spells out two kinds of criteria – one based on qualifications and practical experience, and another on administrative experience in the field – and a candidate has to fulfil only one of them. For the first, a masters' or a doctorate in science, engineering or technology, with 15 years' experience in the relevant field, including five in environment and forests in a national level institution, is needed. The fields include pollution control, hazardous substance management and forest conservation.

On the other hand, the administrative experience criterion is shorn of detail, and merely stipulates 15 years' experience, of which five should have been in "dealing with environmental matters" in either the Centre or the State or any reputed institution. Even though Ms. Vaidyanathan's stint as Secretary, Environment and Forests, Tamil Nadu, and Chairperson of the State Pollution Control Board together amounted to only 28 months, the court accepted the contention that her tenure as Health Secretary should also be considered. The court also observed wryly that it is an entirely different matter whether administrative experience in the second criterion should be regarded as equivalent to "the real expertise" indicated in the clause on qualifications. The court rightly declined to interfere with the appointment, as the equivalence found in the rules falls under the domain of Parliament. At a time when the need, relevance and composition of tribunals are under judicial scrutiny, and the Centre itself has abolished some of them, it would be salutary if the government spelt out with clarity, as the court has suggested, the extent to which a bureaucrat's involvement in environmental matters could be regarded as equivalent to expertise. It should also show greater urgency in implementing earlier Supreme Court directions to constitute a National Tribunals Commission to supervise the appointment and functioning of tribunals.

The chequered legacy of a Chief Justice of India

As the Supreme Court turns the page on the tenure of the outgoing CJI, it needs to reclaim its role as a judicial beacon



PRASHANT BHUSHAN

The Supreme Court of India in the last five years during the tenure of the last four Chief Justices of India (CJIs), has seen an unprecedented fall – from being an independent custodian of justice, to becoming an instrumentality of the government. After the tenure of former CJI Ranjan Gogoi, who oversaw the Ayodhya and Rafale verdicts, before retiring to join the Rajya Sabha, we thought the worst was behind us. We hoped that his successor, CJI S.A. Bobde would lift the Court out of this abyss and at least restore its independence from the executive. But, the nearly 18 months of his tenure has exposed a deep malaise in every aspect of dispensation of justice; from the administration of the Court; in the allocation of cases and benches; to presiding over matters related to the protection of civil liberties, securing the rights and the livelihood of the poor and marginalised; or in ensuring that the unconstitutional actions and policies of the executive are kept in check.

Momentous months

His tenure began in November 2019 with many important cases before him. There were over 100 petitions challenging the dilution of Article 370 and the reorganisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into Union Territories. Soon after he assumed office, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was passed, which led to another spate of petitions challenging its constitutionality. The CAA sparked widespread protests. We witnessed police confrontation at the Jamia University campus and the entry of gangs into Jawaharlal

Nehru University who beat up students and teachers under the full gaze of the police. Thereafter, the city of Delhi witnessed engineered riots and the subsequent hounding of young students and other activists in the guise of an investigation by the Delhi Police. There were also other important cases pending before the Supreme Court, including the validity of electoral bonds, and the protection of Rohingya refugees. Then, early in 2020, COVID-19 overtook the country, and with it began the lockdown of the Supreme Court and thereafter other courts, and then the entire country – which led to the largest exodus of migrant labour from the large cities in India.

A powerful constitutional court like the Supreme Court of India must rise to these challenges, and it is in such challenging times that its mettle and independence is tested. It is here that the role of the Chief Justice of India – he is the master of the roster deciding the priority accorded to the hearing of cases, their allocation to Benches and setting the tone for the Court by his leadership – becomes critical.

The cases challenging the cataclysmic changes to the status of J&K remained unheard during his entire tenure as did the cases challenging the CAA. The main challenge to the electoral bonds and other changes to electoral funding, which have a fundamental bearing on our democracy, remained unheard. Applications for the stay of bonds being issued before every election, were never listed for hearing, and were eventually dismissed on the ground that the bonds had been around for several years; therefore, there was no need to stay them. Similarly, the main petition regarding the status of the Rohingya refugees and the protection to be accorded to them, remained unheard. An application to prevent their detention and deportation, was disposed of by Chief Justice Bobde, in



S. SUBRAMANIAM

complete disregard of constitutional and international law norms, on the basis that their fleeing genocide in Myanmar did not concern the Court.

The Supreme Court, under his stewardship, remained shut for physical hearing much of the time, resulting in fewer than 25% cases being heard in a Court, already reeling under a backlog and pendency of cases. Many *habeas corpus* petitions of people in detention were not heard for months, and thereafter summarily disposed of without deciding the main issue by relegating the petitioners to the High Courts.

Migrant labour exodus

During the nationwide lockdown last year, the country witnessed unprecedented suffering by migrant labour; there was a mass exodus of them from the big cities, and they suffered a huge loss of livelihood and income. Without any public transport, they were forced to walk hundreds of miles to reach their villages. Their case for relief in terms of food, wages and transport was initially heard by the CJ's Bench. Unfortunately, the pleas on behalf of the migrant workers did not result in any relief to them with the Court saying it could not "supplant" the government's wisdom on providing relief to the lakhs of migrant labourers across the country. The CJI remarked infamously during one of the hearings, "If they are being provided meals, then why do they need money?" It would be no exaggeration to say that the Court's

inhumanity and apathy towards the distress of the poor and marginalised reached its nadir during this time.

Far from being a custodian of citizens' rights, CJI Bobde, while hearing the Kerala journalist Sidique Kappan's *habeas corpus* petition (arrested while covering the infamous Hathras rape and murder case in Uttar Pradesh), noted that the Court had been discouraging people from approaching it under Article 32 (<https://bit.ly/3n9Ym1>). Mr. Kappan's petition remained pending with repeated adjournments.

In the farmers' protest case, the CJI appointed a committee of people, whose political neutrality was suspect, to examine the issues and commence negotiations with the farmers. These committee members had publicly supported the farm laws in the past.

Administrative role

Apart from his role as the master of the roster, the CJI also plays a pivotal role in judicial appointments. Unfortunately, here too, he failed to carry the collegium with him, leading to no appointments to the Supreme Court during his tenure, and very few appointments even to the High Courts. He did not even order the government to issue notifications for the appointment of judges where the collegium had unanimously reiterated its recommendations, despite the government procrastinating over them for long. The law laid down by the Court says that these are binding on the government.

The Chief Justice of India also plays a critical role in dealing with complaints against judges. During his tenure, the CJI received a serious complaint made by a Chief Minister of a State against one of the Court judges, with considerable documentary evidence of questionable land purchases. For over six months, the people in the country were not informed how the complaint had been dealt with, and whether any in-house

committee (as per the law) has been appointed to, who the members of the committee were, and what their report was.

The same lack of transparency was visible in another case, where he was chairman of a committee examining allegations of harassment made by a woman staffer of the Court against his predecessor. His report, purporting to give a clean chit to his predecessor, was never allowed to see the light of day and not even provided to the complainant.

Green cause

I have tried to search for the redeeming features in the CJI's tenure. But to my dismay, the only positive intervention by CJI Bobde that I have been able to discover was his order in the West Bengal trees case (<https://bit.ly/3na6752>), where he appointed an expert committee to examine the value of trees which are to be felled for any public project. In all other issues, the CJI has only caused disappointment with his silence, letting the executive have its way and even making strong remarks on sensitive issues and subjects. He has kept important matters pending, and has hardly intervened to provide any relief to the most marginalised or the weak in India.

As we bid farewell to Chief Justice of India Bobde, the Supreme Court must examine what has happened to what had once been called the most powerful court in the world and a beacon for many other courts across the world. As the Supreme Court turns the page on his tenure, let us hope that in the coming years, it can rebuild its legacy by asserting its judicial independence from the government and once again reclaiming its constitutional role as a citadel that establishes India's constitutional values, guards its democracy, and protects human rights and dignity.

Prashant Bhushan is a senior public interest advocate practising at the Supreme Court of India

A descent into disillusionment and chaos

In the second wave, administrative indolence, chaotic public communication and counter-intuitive policy stand out



SOHAM D. BHADURI

The Prime Minister's address to the nation on April 20, though fairly motivational, confounded the expectations of much of the nation's commonality. Apart from a coherent plea to States to avoid total lockdowns and a romantic COVID-19 situational briefing of sorts, much of it was optimistic yet stultifying rhetoric that could hardly have any influence on mass behaviour towards COVID-19. Nonetheless, while much of the visual aspect of the Prime Minister's address was similar to the ones held last year, one conspicuous element was missing – that of a symbolic mask. While a number of alibis for the same are possible, it is an insignia that speaks volumes about our approach toward the second wave of COVID-19.

Administrative fatigue

Medicine and social science are two essential pillars of public health. However, medical interventions have historically been the ones to usurp the public health

space. Much to the detriment of public health, this has time and again resulted in a subconscious dismissal of social science-based approaches that hold the keys to the public health castle. The situation with the second wave is hardly different. In our besottedness with strategies such as mass vaccination, which although of unrivaled significance have considerable near-term limitations, the simplest yet most crucial behavioural interventions have been given a criminally light touch at a time when they were supposed to be accentuated.

And this goes beyond the abomination of political rallies potentially spreading infection, or public representatives failing at crucial public messaging by not wearing masks themselves. Take the instance of a mofussil town that no longer sees honking vehicles traverse the streets every morning, airing social distancing and masking messages, unlike during the first wave. Or the near-disappearance after the first wave of rings drawn outside of a shopping store to encourage social distancing. Surmount these with counter-intuitive public policies at the grass-roots level, and you have a perfect recipe for a flaring pandemic.

For example, even before an official order was promulgated in



Maharashtra, local police forced shops to remain open for only four hours during the day in certain localities, creating panic among customers and shopkeepers. The idea of limiting open-hours derives from the theoretical precept of rationing services to discourage over-consumption, much like waiting times. But the same fosters over-crowding, non-compliance with COVID-19-appropriate behaviour by both shopkeepers and customers, and is practically counterproductive when an infectious pandemic is in question.

Similarly, it is possible to locate beneficiaries lined up outside some vaccination centres from midnight till noon for physical tokens, while the politically well-connected get their way within minutes. All of these indicate that much like pandemic fatigue among the public, administrative and governance fatigue is real, and that the crucial lessons from the early days of the pandemic have

been squandered rather than strengthened.

Poor messaging

Another example of administrative fatigue, resulting from a subconscious dismissal of behavioural approaches, is the poor risk communication and public messaging that has accompanied the second wave. Health behaviours, once firmly embedded, are expected to be swiftly elicited on subsequent occasions. The concept is much like immunological memory where the body exerts a stronger response to a disease agent upon the second or third infection. Such embedded health behaviours in some East Asian countries have resulted in prompt and widespread public adoption of measures such as masking on the whiff of an infectious outbreak. The same cannot be expected for India given our lesser exposure to infectious pandemics. Nonetheless, a strong and subtle nudge was imperative during the second wave to quickly bring back COVID-19-appropriate behaviours with renewed vigour.

This has failed, and that too during more pressing times than before. As is often humorously exclaimed, the worst way to calm someone down is by telling them to calm down. Reducing the risk communication strategy to simple messages such as "please wear

masks" is unlikely to work particularly in a setting of widespread pandemic fatigue, and where mixed signals are continuously disseminated by political representatives. Altering health behaviour, in addition to altering physical and social contexts, involves skilful and emphatic messaging that incentivises adoption of the right behaviours. Unfortunately, the public health messaging strategy during the second wave has been more generic, muffled, and far more equivocal than the first wave.

A perspective

An over-medicalised public health emergency is a disaster superimposed on another. Multiple fundamental aspects of COVID-19 vaccines and the protection afforded by them still remain fuzzy. Further, there are non-negotiable aspects such as the lag between vaccination and protection, and the gargantuan challenge of vaccinating a large population as ours. Overcoming our preoccupation with medical solutions and looking at behavioural approaches as more than mere rituals will be imperative to combat this second wave.

Dr. Soham D. Bhaduri is a physician, public health policy researcher and commentator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

State of care

India is never known to have a robust medical care system – there is negligence, shortages and defective planning at almost every stage; in these turbulent days, the frontline warriors seem to be carrying on nonetheless with single-minded focus. Immediately after tragedies come the routine statements, high-level inquiries and compensation. Unless there are stringent punishments in place, and visible action, nothing will change. It will be the topic for a day or two and forgotten the next (Page 1, "24 COVID-19 patients in Nashik die without oxygen as gas leaks", April 22).

BALASUBRAMANIAM PAVANI,
Secunderabad

Vaccine pricing

The differential pricing on vaccines for the Centre, the States and private hospitals is sure to embolden black marketing. Though the government is claiming the availability of 'Remdesivir', the reality is otherwise. Vaccines earmarked for the Centre and State could go into the hands of private parties. The fallout could be a rigging of records and non-availability of vaccines in government hospitals. The Centre ought to revisit its pricing policy.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

American, has established that gone are the days when a perpetrator of a murder for reason of race could escape punishment by exploiting the loopholes in the judicial system. The verdict has been more significant for recognising that Floyd was a human being.

How far the guilty verdict will act as a deterrent to other white police of Chauvin's ilk remains to be seen especially as racism is still entrenched in America. Police brutality against people of colour is a by-product of systemic racism in America. Police reforms such as banning the chokehold are absolutely necessary to curb racial violence by the white-dominated police force. But to bring about

real and enduring change, the realisation that all – people from all backgrounds – are the same under the skin and equal should dawn on everyone.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthandane, Tamil Nadu

■ The conviction of Derek Chauvin marks the dramatic end to a case that transfixed the world and became a flash point in a raging debate about police brutality versus race. Though the verdict is not going to resolve the systemic racism and police excesses in America overnight, it will serve as a decisive moment for marginalised communities in the country seeking justice against the abuses of power. America has always been very adept at giving the

impression that it is equality-based and democratic. But is it really so?

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

■ Inside of a year from the date of George Floyd's passing, a U.S. judge has delivered a decisive verdict. Chauvin's day-to-day trial was telecast live on TV. The prosecutor and defence attorney examined witnesses deftly with their soft approach and without

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The TV Picks column on Sports page (April 22, 2021) erroneously referred to the first Test in Sri Lanka as a game between South Africa and Bangladesh. It should have been Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-28552963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. No personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com



intimidation. In our country, a criminal trial goes hysterical. Why cannot our courts emulate the proceedings of this trial and endeavour to complete criminal trials? A simple cheque dishonour complaint takes years to reach terminus.

Should election campaigns be made virtual?

PARLEY

The EC should either enforce virtual rallies or not conduct elections if the pandemic persists

India is witnessing a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, with record numbers of new cases and deaths every day. At the same time, States holding Assembly elections have seen mass rallies by political parties. In most such rallies, especially in West Bengal, which still has two phases to go and where campaigning is still on, COVID-19 protocols such as masking and physical distancing are blatantly flouted. In view of the COVID-19 surge, and the fact that public rallies are super-spreader events, should campaigning be restricted to virtual mode – at least until the pandemic is behind us? In a discussion moderated by G. Sampath, Sanjay Kumar and Neelanjan Sircar explore this question. Edited excerpts:



Sanjay Kumar
is a political analyst, psephologist, and co-director of the Lokniti Research Project at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, New Delhi



Neelanjan Sircar
teaches political science at Ashoka University and is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

FROM PAGE ONE

We expect national plan on oxygen, drugs: SC

It said the Centre should respond on considering declaration of essential medicines and medical equipment, including the above articles, as essential commodities in relation to COVID-19 and also on coordination of logistical support for inter-State and intra-State transportation and distribution of the above resources.

"We expect the Central Government to place before this court a national plan for dealing with the above services and supplies during pandemic," it said.

The top court, which said it would hear the matter on Friday, appointed senior advocate Harish Salve as an *amicus curiae* to assist it in the matter.

To hear Vedanta plea
In a related development, the Supreme Court, which termed the COVID-19 situation almost a 'national emergency,' agreed to hear Vedanta's plea for opening of its Sterlite copper unit at Thoothukudi in Tamil Nadu on the ground that it would

produce thousand tonnes of oxygen and give it free of cost to treat patients.

The plant is closed since May 2018 over pollution concerns.

The Bench headed by the CJI was unimpressed with the objection of the Tamil Nadu government which initially sought hearing of Vedanta's plea on Monday and opposed its opening on various grounds including that it had been rejected by the apex court earlier.

"We understand all this. We will ensure compliance of all environmental norms by the plant and its oxygen producing facility would be allowed to operate. We are on the oxygen plant," the Bench said when senior advocate C.S. Vaidyanathan, appearing for Tamil Nadu, objected to the plea of the company. "There is almost a national emergency and you [Tamil Nadu] don't put spokes in the solution. We will hear it [plea of Vedanta] tomorrow [on Friday]," the Bench said in the hearing conducted through video conferencing.

New cases cross 3.32 lakh; 2,247 more deaths

Uttar Pradesh followed with 34,379 cases and Kerala with 26,995. Maharashtra also recorded 568 casualties, followed by Delhi (306) and Chhattisgarh (197).

Nearly 22.11 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Thursday. It is about 7.78 lakh doses lower than what was recorded in the previous 24 hours. Also, it is over 11 lakh doses lower than what was recorded in the same period one week before.

The daily vaccination rate has been declining over the past week. Between April 8-14, India administered an av-

erage of 34.70 lakh doses every day. However, as on April 21, the average daily doses given fell to 25.48 lakh. A daily rate of over 68 lakh doses a day is required to vaccinate all adults in India by the end of 2021.

As of April 21, India recorded over four times the average daily cases detected in Brazil, which has the second most number of average daily cases – about 64,000.

As of April 21, India recorded the second most number of average daily deaths in the world next to Brazil with about 2,800 average daily fatalities.

Centre cracks down on curbs to oxygen supply

It prohibited supply of oxygen for industrial purposes, except those exempted by the Government.

It asked the States and Union Territories that they strictly abide by the supply plan of medical oxygen prepared by Empowered Group-II and as revised from time-to-time. "The District Magistrates/ Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police/

Superintendents of Police/ Deputy Commissioners of Police will be personally liable for implementation of the above directions," the order said.

The EG-II has recommended the prohibition of the supply of oxygen for industrial purposes by manufacturers and suppliers from April 22 till further orders, with the exception of nine specified industries.

ECI bans roadshows in W.B.

Starting 7 p.m. on Thursday, the ECI said no roadshow, vehicle rallies, or meetings with over 500 people would be allowed.

"Permission for road show, cycle/bike/vehicle rally, if granted already, stands withdrawn. Permission for public meeting stands modified to the extent above," the ECI said.

The ECI had issued guidelines for campaigning during the pandemic in August

2020 and extended the same for the West Bengal, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and Kerala elections.

After finding violations, including on social distancing and mask-wearing, the ECI had issued a warning to parties on April 9.

It had banned rallies, public meetings and street plays from 7 p.m. to 10 a.m. starting April 16.

The ECI warned parties again on Wednesday.

Those above 18 can sign up for jab from April 28

On Monday, the Centre announced that everyone above 18 years will be eligible for a vaccine from May.

Estimates of India's adult population range from 800 to 900 billion. Leaving out those above 45 years, and the 130 million who have received at least one dose, about 500 to 600 million people are likely to register for vaccine from Saturday.

Unlike the ongoing drive, where the Centre is the sole buyer and supplier of vaccines to States, the May roll-

out will also include doses that have been directly purchased by the States from vaccine manufacturers. It could also include Russian vaccine Sputnik V.

However, both Bharat Biotech (maker of Covaxin) and the Serum Institute of India (SII), maker of Covishield are fulfilling existing commitments to the Centre, and have said they are unable to substantially ramp up supply before July. It's also unclear when Sputnik V will be available.

Pak. arrests 30 fishermen off Gujarat coast

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

The Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA) seized five fishing trawlers with 30 fishermen on board from the Arabian Sea off Gujarat coast on Thursday.

All boats were from Porbandar and were on a fishing expedition near the International Maritime Boundary Line (IMBL), when they were cornered by Pakistan's maritime security agency.

Manish Lodhari, a leading activist fighting for fishermen's rights from Porbandar, said one boat with five fishermen managed to escape from the PMSA's cordon. Mr. Lodhari said all fishermen would be taken to Karachi, where they would be lodged in jail.

More than 100 fishermen are already in Pakistani jails.

WhatsApp challenges CCI's privacy policy

WhatsApp had contended that since the issue of its privacy policy was before the Supreme Court, the CCI did not need to order the probe. Not only WhatsApp, but social media giant Facebook, which owns the instant messaging app, had also filed a similar petition challenging the competition watchdog's March 24 decision.

WhatsApp had said the CCI "jumped the gun" and started the probe when this

High Court dismisses FB, WhatsApp pleas

They questioned Competition Commission move on probe

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday dismissed plea of instant messaging app WhatsApp challenging a decision of the Competition Commission of India (CCI) calling for an investigation into its controversial new privacy policy.

WhatsApp had contended that since the issue of its privacy policy was before the Supreme Court, the CCI did not need to order the probe. Not only WhatsApp, but social media giant Facebook, which owns the instant messaging app, had also filed a similar petition challenging the competition watchdog's March 24 decision.

WhatsApp had said the CCI "jumped the gun" and started the probe when this



The Commission felt that WhatsApp's new policy may lead to "excessive data collection" of consumers.

was not a competition issue. It had said the issue with respect to personal data of users, and sharing of personalised data was already before the Supreme Court, hence CCI ought not to have intervened.

The High Court, however, noted that CCI's order of in-

vestigation could not be quashed merely because it did not await the outcome of the pending cases before the Supreme Court and High Court.

Data access

The CCI, on the other hand, had argued the probe order was made to gauge whether access to data would lead to abuse of dominant position.

The commission had said it was dealing with the instant messaging app's new privacy policy that could lead to "excessive data collection" of consumers, the use and sharing of the data in anti-competitive context.

The commission had said it was not concerned with the privacy aspect of the issue as the Supreme Court was already seized of it.

CPWD calls bids for 3 secretariat buildings

These are to be built on IGNCA site

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre's project of constructing a new common Central Secretariat for its Ministries was kick-started this week with the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) on Tuesday inviting bids for the first three buildings at an estimated cost of ₹3,408 crore.

The CPWD invited technical bids for the two-stage tender process for three buildings to be constructed on the plot that houses the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).

The IGNCA is proposed to be demolished and relocated to a new campus at Jamnagar House.

The CPWD estimated the construction work to cost

₹3,269 crore and maintenance for five years to cost ₹139 crore. In the tender document, the CPWD said it did not "bind itself to accept the lowest or any other bid".

The project was estimated to take 24 months to complete. The project would include "dismantling of existing structures [without blasting]," the tender document said in reference to the IGNCA.

The work could take a large number of workers in three shifts to complete, it said. As a part of the Central Vista redevelopment project, the government is planning to construct 10 new secretariat buildings on Rajpath after demolishing most of the existing buildings.

CPI(M) criticises bid to 'monitor' J&K staff

Tarigami wants order reviewed

PEERZA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami on Thursday described the Jammu and Kashmir administration's move to set up a Special Task Force (STF) to monitor activities of employees as "arbitrary and draconian".

"The J&K administration's latest order to constitute a STF to dismiss or take other punitive action against the government employees allegedly found in "anti-national" activities without holding any inquiry is arbitrary, draconian and is against the interests of the lakhs of employees working in the region," Mr. Tarigami said.

"Indian Navy's DSRV system can locate a submarine up to 1,000-metre depth utilising its state-of-the-art side scan sonar and remotely operated vehicle," it stated, adding that after the submarine is successfully located, another sub module of DSRV – the submarine rescue vehicle (SRV) – links with the submarine to rescue the trapped personnel. The SRV can also be used to provide emergency supplies to the submarine.

The Indonesian Navy launched a massive search and rescue effort for the missing submarine while Australia too has offered assistance.

M.Y. Tarigami

sions in the law to take action against those employees found violating service rules. "There was no need to issue new orders. The latest order can serve as a tool to the government and bureaucrats to suppress their subordinates. A sword of uncertainty has been kept on the heads of employees which can also be exploited by their superiors," he added.

He said an employee was a citizen first and had all the constitutional rights. "The need of the hour is to safeguard these rights," he said.

Deep submergence rescue vessel to assist Indonesia in operations off Bali



Diving deep: A file photo of the Navy's deep submergence rescue vessel. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

received by the Navy through the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office (ISMERLO), regarding the missing Indonesian submarine, the Navy said in a statement. The submarine was reportedly exercising in a location 25 miles north of Bali, it stated.

The DSRV departed by sea and has to cover a distance of approximately 2,500 nautical miles, a Navy official said.

Air Chief Marshal Hadi Tjahjanto, Commander of Indonesian armed forces, said *KRI Nanggala* 402 was participating in a torpedo firing exercise when it went missing. The Indonesian Defence Ministry said the submarine lost contact after being granted clearance to dive.

The Indonesian Navy launched a massive search and rescue effort for the missing submarine while Australia too has offered assistance.

in the region. The 53 personnel onboard are 49 crew members, three gunners and its commander.

Specialised capability

India is amongst the few countries in the world capable of undertaking search and rescue of a disabled submarine through a DSRV, the Navy said.

"Indian Navy's DSRV system can locate a submarine up to 1,000-metre depth utilising its state-of-the-art side scan sonar and remotely operated vehicle," it stated, adding that after the submarine is successfully located, another sub module of DSRV – the submarine rescue vehicle (SRV) – links with the submarine to rescue the trapped personnel. The SRV can also be used to provide emergency supplies to the submarine.

The Singapore Navy has already pressed its rescue vessel while Australia too has offered assistance.

Webinar spotlights India's connect with Korean wave

In boost to travel, Seoul is launching vaccine passports

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

Travelling to South Korea, "K-dramas", "K-beauty" and Korean cuisine came under the spotlight at a webinar on "The rising Korean wave in India and how it will influence post-pandemic travel to South Korea" on Thursday. The webinar was curated by *The Hindu Weekend* for *The Hindu*, in association with the Korea Tourism Organisation, and delved into the various facets of South Korean culture which has found new fans over the past year.

Speaking about the Korean language learning boom, Rathi Jafer, Director, InKo Centre, who also moderated the webinar, recalled how, in 2006, people registered to learn the language solely for reasons of employment.

"Today, it is to follow what their idol is singing or their favourite star is saying. There's always a waiting list for the language classes now," she said.

Scherezade Shroff, fash-

ion, beauty, travel and lifestyle content creator, said that K-dramas provided a holistic viewing experience and spoke about the strong messaging that many shows had.

"The shows are subtly bringing in important conversations about mental health or sexual harassment at work," she said.

Chef Vikramjit Roy, a panellist, showed the audience white *kimchi*, the flavourful, non-spicy dish made with cabbage and seasonal vegetables, and *gochujang*, the savoury-sweet red chili paste that goes into *bibimbap*, and a host of other Korean dishes.

"I am fascinated by how people are using K-beauty and its detailed regimens as a method of self care, to ground themselves, to overcome anxiety," said singer and entrepreneur Chinmayi Srivada, who started Isle of Skin, an e-portal to bring her favourite K-beauty brands into India.

Sandeep Dutta, market-

IN BRIEF



Amaranth Yatra registration suspended

SRINAGAR
The Shri Amaranth Shrine Board, which organises the annual yatra in Kashmir, on Thursday said it was temporarily suspending the registration of pilgrims for the upcoming pilgrimage "in view of the evolving COVID-19 situation in the country and the need to take all precautionary measures".

"Mass vaccination is ongoing in the country, and South Korea hopes to achieve herd immunity by the end of September. They are also launching vaccine passports by the end of this month. So by the end of this year, hopefully, travel can happen without quarantine," he added.

Young-Geul Choi, Director, Korea Tourism Organisation, in his closing address, said he hoped to see everyone in South Korea soon.

Check out the full session on YouTube, on the THEME-The Hindu page - <https://bit.ly/3na9Lvg>, or scan the QR code.



APPEAL

Name of Patient: Master Vishal Kumar, 9 years. Hospital and City: Agartala, Tripura. Diagnosis: Thalassemia Major. This is a type of Blood Disorder which is life threatening the best option for him would be to undergo Allogeneic Blood Stem Cell Transplant (PBSCT). The estimated cost of PBSCT at this hospital is approximately Rs. 14,00,000/-.

We request kind-hearted Philanthropists to save him. Kindly send donations by Cheque/D.D/M.O. Bank: State Bank of India, Agartala Branch, Date: 04/04/2021, Account No. 200009134, A/c Name: Agartala, Amount: ₹ 14,00,000/-.

Contact: SAVE POOR LIVES REGISTERED PUBLIC CHARITABLE TRUST, (ADMIN DIVISION) Flat No. A1, Ceebos Garden, Ground Floor, Opp. 76th Street, Sector 1, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai - 600 028. Pin No. 600044. Mobile: 9840673777. Email: savpoorlives@gmail.com. Website: www.savpoorlives.com.</

High turnout in phase 6 of Bengal poll

But isolated incidents of violence and police firing were reported from several areas

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Isolated incidents of violence, including police firing, were reported in the sixth phase of polling in West Bengal held for 43 Assembly seats across four districts of the State on Thursday.

This round recorded high polling, with about 79.09% voters exercising their franchise by 5 p.m. in the sixth phase. Nadia district recorded 82.67% polling, followed by Purba Bardhaman, which registered 82.15% turnout. The polling figures were expected to rise.

The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of West Bengal, Aariz Aftab, said the police had fired three rounds after the office in-charge of the Bagda police station and a constable suffered sharp cuts in an attack by a group of 200-250 local people. The police personnel have been admitted to a hospital. The police forces were rushed to the area in North 24 Parganas district after the sector officer was attacked by local people, the



Intense battle: People queuing up to cast their votes at a polling station in Khardah, North 24 Parganas, on Thursday. ■ PTI

CEO said. Mr. Aftab said at least one person sustained bullet injuries. People said they had been fired upon without any provocation.

Crude bombs

In another incident, miscreants lobbed crude bombs near a polling booth in Khardah in the same district. Three persons sustained inju-

ries and two were arrested in connection with the incident. According to the CEO, polling was largely peaceful on Thursday, except these two incidents of violence.

The voting was held at 14,480 polling booths in the 43 constituencies, which included 17 in North 24 Parganas, nine each in Nadia and Uttar Dinajpur districts, and

eight in Purba Bardhaman district.

Violence was reported from the Barrackpore industrial region that went to the polls in North 24 Parganas. Crude bombs were lobbed in Jagatdah minutes after polling was over in the evening. Earlier in the day, there was violence in Amravati in the same district. The situation

was volatile in Kanchrapara, where Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Trinamool Congress supporters clashed with each other. BJP supporters attacked makeshift offices of the Trinamool. A Trinamool supporter was beaten up in Kanchrapara. Two of the party's candidates – Raj Chakraborty from Barrackpore and Kaushani Mukherjee from Krishnanagar Uttar – were surrounded by BJP supporters who raised "go back" slogans.

The situation in Ketugram in Purba Bardhaman district turned volatile when the vehicle of the BJP candidate was attacked. There was also some unrest at Kaliaganj in Uttar Dinajpur district after woman supporters surrounded a police vehicle when the police tried to arrest a miscreant.

Earlier in the day, an unidentified body was found at the Habra segment, which went to the polls on Thursday. A Trinamool councillor was attacked at the Bijupur segment during the day.

It is not clear at the moment whether the suspen-

Assam Cong. moves poll candidates to resort

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Assam unit of the Congress herded its Assembly election candidates to a resort in Sonapuri, about 30 km east of Guwahati. The move ahead of election results on May 2 is apparently to stop the ruling alliance led by the BJP from luring its candidates away.

The Congress had fielded 95 candidates in the three-

phase election that ended on April 6. It left the remaining 31 seats to its coalition partners in the 10-party *Mahajot*, or grand alliance.

The party believes that the people will reject the BJP-led alliance and that the saffron party could indulge in horse-trading if the verdict on May 2 is fractured.

Congress spokesperson Bobbeeta Sharma played down the decision to keep its

flock together. "The candidates want to stay together for a few days in a relaxed environment away from public contact," she said on Thursday.

BJP sending feelers'

But Rupiyoti Kurmi, the party's three-time MLA from Marijan constituency, told mediapersons that the BJP has been sending feelers to a few candidates.

"Everybody knows what happened in Goa and Manipur. The BJP will try to buy some voters among us or browbeat the Opposition MLAs with threats of implicating them in some case or the other," he said.

Other candidates at the resort said that the party had convinced them that the grand alliance would get an absolute majority and form the government.

Ready to extend help to India, says China

+ ANANTH KRISHNAN

China said on Thursday it was "ready to provide India with necessary support and assistance", amid the ongoing surge in COVID-19 cases.

The Foreign Ministry in Beijing said it had noted the "grave situation" in India, in response to a query from an official Chinese media outlet at a daily press briefing.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is a common enemy of all mankind that necessitates international solidarity and mutual assistance," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

"China takes note of the recent grave situation in India with a temporary shortage of anti-epidemic medical supplies," he said. "We stand ready to provide India with necessary support and assistance to get the epidemic under control."

EC reschedules Pipili bypoll for May 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHUBANESWAR

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday rescheduled polling for the Pipili Assembly byelection in Puri district to May 16, official sources said. The earlier date was May 13, and it was rescheduled in view of the Eid-ul-Fitr festival. The counting of votes would be on May 19 and the entire byelection process would be completed by May 21.

Plea for judicial probe into Nashik deaths

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A plea was filed in the Supreme Court seeking an independent judicial enquiry into the oxygen leak in a Nashik hospital that killed 24 patients. The PIL, filed by NGO 'Save Them India Foundation', sought setting up a three-member commission under the chairmanship of a retired Supreme Court judge to probe the incident. The plea, filed through advocate Vishal Tiwari, also sought directions to initiate policies and guidelines for the channelised and administered distribution of medical equipment and to set up a technical committee for the monitoring of the medical equipment crisis.

E-43

It was built on publicity and PR management, says party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday claimed that the second wave of COVID-19 has exposed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "failed" Gujarat model that was built on "publicity, good headlines and PR management".

The party also said that Congress-ruled States would make every effort to ensure free vaccines for all.

All India Congress Committee in-charge for Gujarat, Rajeev Satav, State unit chief Amit Chavda and Congress Legislative Party leader Parash Dhanani said in an online press conference that the pandemic situation in Gujarat was out of control.

2014 poll promise
Recalling Mr. Modi's promise of implementing the Gujarat model across the

country ahead of the 2014 Lok Sabha election, Mr. Satav said, "Nobody understood that the Gujarat model means only publicity, good headlines and PR management. In the last six years, what the PM has done is replicate the Gujarat model in the country... He talked a lot about the Gujarat model, but neither the health infrastructure nor other things could be improved. The Gujarat model has only been of publicity," he added.

Mr. Satav, who is a Rajya

Sabha MP from Gujarat, alleged that the the BJP in the past 25 years of being in power in the State had not built any new hospital but added "some MLAs poached from the Congress".

The Congress MP asked the Centre to put on hold projects like the Central Vista, the bullet train and aircraft purchase, and instead provide free vaccines for all.

Asked if Congress-ruled States would provide free vaccines for all, he said, "I am confident that Congress-ruled states will work effectively towards providing vaccines for all. They will be exploring the options."

Mr. Chavda alleged that the state of affairs in Gujarat was so bad that 14 districts still did not have CT scan machines in district hospitals and antiviral drug Remdesivir was in short supply.

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IN BRIEF



Composer Shravan Rathod passes away

MUMBAI Composer Shravan Rathod, of the music director duo Nadeem-Shravan, passed away on Thursday due to COVID-19 related complications, his son said. Rathod was 66. The composer was admitted to SL Raheja hospital in a "critical" condition. PTI

ICMR gets nod for drone trials to deliver vaccines

NEW DELHI The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation have granted permission to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to conduct trials for delivery of COVID-19 vaccines using drones. The ICMR will conduct the feasibility study in collaboration with IIT-Kanpur.

UAE, Oman ban travellers from India
NEW DELHI The UAE announced on Thursday the suspension of travel from India for 10 days from April 25. Oman has said that it will bar travellers from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh from April 24. PTI

Thief returns vaccines with apology note

ASHOK KUMAR GURUGRAM Hours after he stole COVID-19 vaccines from the Civil Hospital in Haryana's Jind in the early hours of Thursday, an unidentified thief returned the doses at a police station with an "apology note" saying that he didn't know that they were meant for virus patients.

As many as 1,270 doses of Covishield and 440 doses of Covaxin were stolen from a storeroom of the hospital. The matter came to light when a sanitation worker found the locks of the store and deep freezer broken on Thursday. The police registered a case and took up investigation.

In an interesting turn of events, a young man with his face covered left a bag at a tea stall outside the police station saying that it had lunch for the munshi. "The tea stall owner handed over the bag to the munshi. The policeman opened the bag and found that it contained the stolen vaccines with an apology note. The handwritten note said, 'Sorry, did not know that this is corona medicine,'" said SHO (Civil Lines) Inspector Rajender Singh, adding that attempts were being made to identify him.

Uncertainty looms over vaccine rollout for all above 18 years

While 500 mn are expected to register, suppliers are unlikely to meet demand

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

With registrations to be opened up from next week for vaccination of all those above 18 from May 1, uncertainty remains on whether the rollout will be smooth.

A senior government official, closely connected with the COVID management strategy, said the Centre's decision was led by most States wanting the "flexibility" to domestically procure vaccines as well as import them.

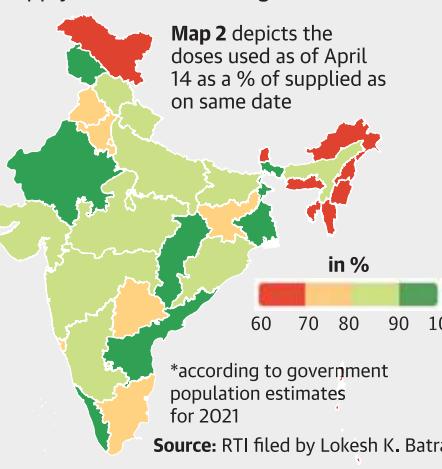
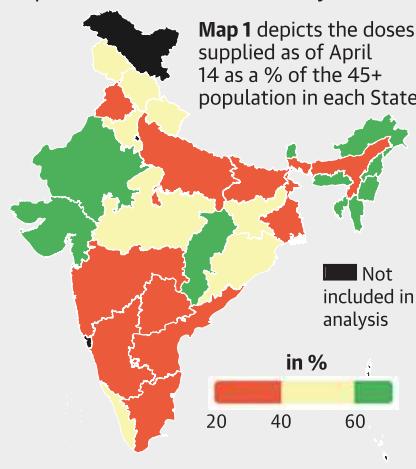
The National Expert Group on Vaccination discussed the pros and cons of whether State and private hospitals should be allowed to source vaccines independent of the Centre.

"The discussions were detailed; there was no dissent," the official told *The Hindu*.

To address the ongoing crisis, the way out was a "massively parallel process of rollout" and the "surge has also brought to the front the need for speeding vaccination," the official said.

However, it would be premature to expect a prompt

Sharing the shots | As of April 14, about 12.93 crore vaccine doses have been supplied to the States/U.T.s. Wide disparities exist in distribution of these doses. Tamil Nadu received 54.3 lakh doses, which is 22% of its 45+ population*, whereas for Gujarat its over 60%. Also, usage varied significantly across the States. As of April 14, Tamil Nadu used only 76% of its supply, whereas Chhattisgarh used 94%



*according to government population estimates for 2021
Source: RTI filed by Lokesh K. Batra

rollout beginning May 1.

In spite of having approved three vaccines – Covishield, Covaxin and Sputnik V – suppliers have said they will not be able to ramp up supply before July.

Adar Poonawala of the Serum Institute of India said he had supplied 110 million doses and was in the process of supplying another 100

million of Covishield. Bharat Biotech's Krishna Ella said he had supplied 30 million doses and would supply 10 million more by April end.

By July, with all their proposed manufacturing facilities running, they expected to be able to produce 60-70 million doses per month.

However, at least 500-600 million beneficiaries

are expected to sign up for vaccinations from May 1, which is the approximate number of Indians between 18 and 45 years old.

Giridhar Babu, epidemiologist and part of the Karnataka Covid Task Force told *The Hindu*, "We are still to see a strategy or a document on how this rollout will be scheduled."

PM presses for improving oxygen supply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said there was a need to increase production and improve distribution of oxygen as well as prevent hoarding, while chairing a high-level meeting to review oxygen supply in the country on Thursday.

A statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) said Mr. Modi was briefed by officials about the steps taken in the past few weeks to improve oxygen supply.

"Stop hoarding"

"PM spoke about the need to work rapidly on multiple aspects: increasing production of oxygen, increasing the speed of distribution and using innovative ways to provide oxygen support to health facilities. He spoke about the need to fix responsibility with the local administration in cases of obstruction. PM also stressed that the States should come down heavily on hoarding," the statement said.

The PMO added that the Centre had allocated 6,822 metric tonnes/day of oxygen to 20 States whose demand was 6,785 MT/day.



Special delivery: Tankers loaded on a train wagon to transport medical oxygen to Lucknow. PTI

Oxygen trains to set off for Maharashtra, U.P.

Green corridor for quick movement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

ly," the Railways said in a statement.

The tankers are being transported on roll on, roll off (Ro-Ro) services.

An Oxygen Express was sent from Lucknow to Bokaro, via Varanasi, to load liquid oxygen.

"For the movement of the train, a green corridor was created between Lucknow and Varanasi. The distance of 270 km was covered by the train in four hours and 20 minutes with an average speed of 62.35 kmph," the Railways said.

It added that transportation of oxygen by trains was faster than by road over long distances.

IRDAI clarifies on cashless treatment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI has asked health insurance companies to ensure that policyholders entitled to cashless treatment are extended the facility for treatment of COVID-19 as well.

"It is clarified that where insurers have an arrangement with hospitals for providing cashless facility, such network hospitals are obliged to provide cashless treatment for all treatments, including treatment for COVID-19," the regulator said on Thursday.

The IRDAI statement followed reports of some hospitals not granting cashless facility for COVID-19 treatment.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had tweeted: "Reports are being received of some hospitals denying cashless insurance. Spoken to Chairman, IRDAI, Shri S.C. Khuntia to act immediately."

Advising insurers to ensure "smooth availability of cashless facility at all the network hospitals empanelled with them", the IRDAI said aggrieved policyholders can lodge complaints with the insurance company.

Vaccine policy has failed youth: Sonia

Cong. president seeks re-evaluation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging the modified vaccine policy was not only "discriminatory but also a complete abandonment of the youth" and urged the government to re-evaluate it.

Ms. Gandhi, in her letter, asked, "In these said times, how can the Government of India permit such brazen profiteering from people's misery?"

She said the aim of the government should be to vaccinate everyone above 18, regardless of their economic circumstances, but "the policy implies that the Government of India has abdicated its responsibility to provide free vaccination for citizens between the age group of 18 to 45 years".

"It is surprising that despite the harsh lessons of last year and the pain inflicted on our citizens, the Government continues to follow an arbitrary and discriminatory policy, which promises to exacerbate existing challenges," she said.

On Wednesday, the Serum Institute of India (SII), which manufactures Covishield, announced three

rate slabs: ₹150 for the Central Government, ₹400 for State Governments and ₹600 for private hospitals per dose.

"This means that citizens will be compelled to pay these high rates to be vaccinated. This will also bleed the finances of State Governments. This begs the question, how can the same vaccine manufactured by the same company have three different prices? There is no rationale or justification that allows for such arbitrary distinction," Ms. Gandhi noted.

"At a time when medical resources are scarce, hospital beds are unavailable, oxygen supply and availability of essential medicine is dwindling rapidly, why is your Government allowing a policy that reeks of such insensitivity," she added.

Yechury's son Ashish passes away

The 35-year-old was in the ICU since April 12 after COVID-19 infection worsened



Ashish and Sitaram Yechury. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's eldest son Ashish Yechury, 35, passed away early on Thursday from COVID-19 complications.

Ashish is survived by his wife Swati, his mother Indrani Mazumdar, sister Akhila and brother Danish. He had worked in *The Times of India*, *IBN Live*, *Newslaundry* and *Pune Mirror*.

He had been in the ICU since April 12, after the infection spread to his lungs.

"It is with great sadness that I have to inform that I lost my elder son, Ashish Yechury, to COVID-19 this morning. I want to thank all those who gave us hope and who treated him – doctors, nurses, frontline health workers, sanitation workers

and innumerable others who stood by us," Mr. Yechury tweeted.

President Ramnath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior leaders offered condolences.

"Grieved beyond words to learn about the untimely demise of Shri Ashish Yechury. In this moment of profound grief, my deepest condolence

to Shri Sitaram Yechury, his family and loved ones. May you find the strength to bear this irreparable loss," Mr. Kovind tweeted.

"Condolences to Shri Sitaram Yechury Ji and his family on the tragic and untimely demise of his son, Ashish. Om Shanti," Mr. Modi wrote on Twitter.

CPI general secretary D.

ITBP COVID care centre to be reopened

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday deputed the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to restart one of the largest COVID care centres in south Delhi that was discontinued on February 23. The ITBP said it will

try to restart the facility with about 500-oxygen beds in the next three days and additional beds could be added in future.

"Delhi Government had sought medical officers and paramedical staff from the MHA to man the Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre and Hos-

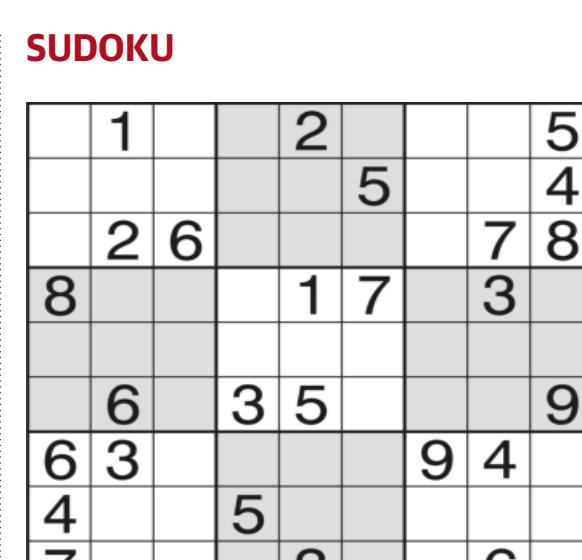
pital (SPCCCH) at Chhatarpur, which is being re-operationalised. MHA has designated ITBP as nodal force for operating the facility.

A deliberation in this regard took place at the centre this evening by ITBP officials with all stakeholders and the ITBP will try to open

it as soon as possible, target less than 3 days," an MHA spokesperson said.

The 10,000-bed SPCCCH was operationalised on July 7, 2020 and it was discontinued on February 23 due to dwindling number of patients. ITBP was tasked to run the centre.

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13228

I	C	O	I	D	N	E
A	M	M	P	H	O	T
P	N	P	T	P	S	U
L	E	T	S	G	B	O
T	S	G	O	A	I	N
A	C	P	S	C	E	T
C	P	S	C	E	T	I
O	C	C	I	D	N	S
C	O	C	I	D	N	S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	4	8	1	6	2	5	3	7
1	7	6	5	9	3	2	8	4
2	3	5	7	4	8	1	9	6
8	5	2	9	3	4	6	7	1
6	3	1	7	8	5	2	4	9
4	6	7	3	5	9	8	1	2
7	2	1	4	3	6	5	8	0
5	8	9	7	1	2	4	3	6
3	1	6	8	7	4	9	5	2

FAITH

The One who controls

Lord Narayana's abode, Paramapada, is a place beyond time, whereas the Earth is bound by time. And yet the Lord chose to come to this Earth on many occasions to save His devotees. He is not bound by karma, but we are, said Kidambi Narayanan in a discourse. When Dhritarashtra weeps for his dead sons, Lord Krishna tells him that everyone operates within the framework of time. Here what the Lord is indicating is that everyone is bound by karma. None can escape its consequences. This being so, how can any relationship be permanent? What use then all the grieving over death? Will the same persons be our relatives in subsequent births?

Imagine a flooded river. A twig happens to fall into



Open secrets of summer

Every region in India has that one go-to drink it turns to when the sun shines its brightest. We take a minute to appreciate three such local favourites, beyond the mainstream bounty of mango and watermelon

CHITRADEEPANANTHARAM

The hottest days of summer are here, and it is time to pay attention to staying hydrated while replenishing nutrients.

There are various healthy summer coolers which help us to stay refreshed and energised as the mercury rises. The traditional choices of the hot season: muskmelon, watermelon, lemon and tender coconut water are also pocket friendly. Here are some more juices that have been part of southern India's cuisine for many generations.

"It was *nungu paal* (ice apple-based) and *nannari sherbat* that we had during my childhood in Thanjavur, but now the options are wider and healthier," says Devi Bala Chandrasekar, whose foodblog, KitchenDB focusses primarily on traditional, healthy family recipes.

"Each region in our country has special cool drinks and I have tried *Nellai pazharasam* (mixed fruit punch) and the much easier *neer moru* (spiced buttermilk) during summer," she adds.

Devi Bala shares recipes of herbal summer drinks like lemongrass lemonade, orange and oregano juice, *tulsi* sherbet and *variyal* sherbet (fennel seeds and raisin) on her blog.

Nandita Shah, a homeopath

suggests juicing vegetables. "In North India, *aam panna* (made with raw mango and jaggery), *sol kadhi* (a coconut milk drink laced with herbs) and *jal jeera* (herbs and lemon juice) are popular. But we can also try blending nutrient-rich vegetables with a little lemon juice and mint in a sugar-free drink," she says.

She says sugar can be substituted with dates paste or raisins. She also suggests drinking tender coconut *chaas*, made by combining half a cup of creamy tender coconut kernel, eight drops of lemon juice, two-and-a-half cups of water and one teaspoon *chaas masala*.

"When it comes to vegetable juices, everyone prefers carrots and beetroots, which are naturally sweet. But by blending any kind of gourd along with raw mango (*the kilimooku* variety) and you will enjoy it," says Sreedevi Lakshmi of Coimbatore-based Biobasics.

Electrical mixer/blenders have made fresh juices easy to make at home. "But we must aim at making these without sugar or at least substituting it with palm sugar or jaggery," she says.

Sreedevi suggests trying blending curly leaves with coconut milk seasoned with some salt and palm sugar and adding little water to make it a nutrient loaded drink for the season. "I



When life gives you beets (Clockwise from top left)
Beetroot chaas; shikanji; a raw mango drink and iced apple or nungu

■ WHISKAFFAIR, M SRINATH AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

wonder why people have stopped drinking the *ragi koozh* (fermented porridge) or the simple lemon water with a pinch of salt," she adds.

Pune-based Neha Mathur, who blogs at The Whiskaffairs says "In Pune, *chaas*, *shikanji* and *Jeera soda* are a daily affair during summer months. I make beetroot *chaas* which looks great, tastes good and kids simply love it. Also cucumber blended with tender coconut flesh can also be added to the regular *chaas* as it can cool the body," says Neha.

Down South, it has always been the *neeraagaram* or *pazhaya sadam* (cooked rice fermented in water overnight) that has been the saviour for many during the harsh weather, says Seethalalshmi N, of Organic Farmers Market, Chennai.

She adds, "Using heritage rice and making sure to soak few fenugreek seeds along with the rice can promote health and keep the body cool and has numerous health benefits." She adds that "soaking *sabja* seeds and almond gum overnight in water, and adding lemon juice and water and a pinch of salt makes a wonderful drink."



Ash gourd and Raw Mango Cooler

INGREDIENTS

- 300 grams ash gourd, peeled and cubed
- 1 medium size raw mango (*kilimooku*) peeled and sliced
- 3-4 sprigs of curry leaves
- 8-10 peppercorns
- Salt to taste
- 3 cups water

METHOD

Blend all the ingredients by adding a cup of water, and finally add two more cups of water and mix the juice well and serve. @biobasicsin



Ice Apple Milk Dessert

INGREDIENTS

- 5 palm fruit/*nungu*, skinned/chopped
- 200 ml milk, boiled/chilled
- 4 tbsp organic brown sugar
- 1 tbsp edible rosewater
- A few rose petals
- A few pistachios

METHOD

Chop the skinned palm fruits into fine pieces and keep aside, add it to the chilled milk in a bowl. To this add sugar and rosewater and mix well. Refrigerate for 30 minutes and while serving, garnish with rose petals and pistachios. @Kitchen_db

HORS D'OEUVRES

NAHLA NAINAR

Life is not easy for the 'ugly ducklings' of the agricultural world. For all the perfectly shaped fruits and vegetables that we buy from the green grocers, there are thousands left on their stalks to rot unharvested in the field simply because they do not meet the aesthetic criteria of retailers.

Mumbai-based foodtech innovator Science 4 Society (S4S) Technologies has been working to cut down on this waste by promoting solar dehydration as a way to preserve such produce. In the wake of the lockdown, the company, founded in 2014 by young entrepreneur Vaibhav Tidke along with colleagues Ganesh Bhere, Tushar Gaware, Shital Somani, Ashwin Pawade, Nidhi Pant and Swapnil Kokate, has empowered 2,700 women farmers and 200 micro-entrepreneurs near Aurangabad by training them in dehydration of natural produce.

They do this through the patented Solar Conduction Dryer (SCD), a portable solar-powered machine that dries vegetables and spices while retaining nutrients.

"When we started, the business model was about selling our dehydration equipment to farmers. But we realised eventually that what most farmers want is an alternate source of income during the dry season. That's how we pivoted, and rather than just providing technology, we started buying back the produce in 2018. So we are now not just selling the machine, but also the food dehydrated by it," says company co-founder Nidhi Pant in a telephone interview from Mumbai.

The technology won S4S the 2020 Ashden Award for Energy and Livelihoods, supported by the Waterloo Foundation, UK. It has been installed in 1,200 units and is used in France, Jamaica, Nepal, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Kenya and Bangladesh, besides India.

Components of the dehydrator vary according to the size and model selected, though all of them are designed to be user-friendly, especially for women. "We give a cutting machine, a primary processing dryer and solar conduction dryer in our package. The equipment is non-electrical, as power outages are quite common



While the sun shines

An innovative company is promoting solar dehydration as a means to empower women farmers and reduce food waste

in villages. It is as simple to use as a domestic mixer or grinder. Our dehydrator helps to maintain moisture, colour and aroma, and completes the process in six to seven hours, to minimise microbial growth," says Nidhi.

Four machines with a capacity of 200 kilograms output, cost around ₹1,40,000. Purchasing the

equipment isn't mandatory, as it can also be hired by farmers through financial assistance.

Mutual benefit

The company's twin-pronged business model works with growers and women processors in villages. "S4S Technologies procures the B and C grade produce (that has



Cut and dried Women farmers in Aurangabad district who use the S4S solar dehydrator to preserve natural produce on a contractual basis. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

been rejected by commercial retail sales because of its non-standard appearance) and delivers it to the women who have been trained in the dehydration process. Since 2019, we have been ensuring that the farmers earn an assured income from our work for at least nine months of the year," says Nidhi.

S4S trains women farmers in clusters of 20 per village guided by a field executive, to work on their dehydration projects. The decision to target women agriculturalists was conscious, she says. "Due to the water shortage in the Marathwada region, the growing season is limited to four months of monsoon here. Male farmers are more likely to migrate in search of work elsewhere during the dry season, while the women-folk are usually left behind. Operating our dehydration equipment allows women farmers to earn from the comfort of their homes. Besides, women are more open to trying new things," she says.

Sunita Dhyaneeshwar Muthe, 30, from Khamkheda village in Nashik district, Maharashtra, is one of the many micro-entrepreneurs who have learned to be-

The S4S dehydrator is as easy to use as a domestic mixer or grinder

come financially independent with the help of S4S work. "I am from a farming family that grows maize, cotton and bajra. For the past three years, instead of working in the nearby factory during the dry season, I have been drying garlic, turmeric and onion on a contractual basis for S4S at home. I have earned up to ₹50,000 last year, which helped us buy seeds, repay vehicle loans and budget other household expenses. Earlier, we would have to borrow money at high interest rates just to buy seeds," she says.

Building stability
Amol Padul, an S4S agriculture extension officer, says his mother, Prabhavati from Hatmali village was among the earliest women agriculturalists to get trained in the project. "My mother started with farming and dehydrating beetroot, ginger and other crops for S4S. She was able to educate me in a city college and fulfil other family responsibilities with her income as a micro-entrepreneur. I feel we have regained some of our self-respect with this kind of ancillary skill," he says.

Saving for posterity
While S4S has its own natural snack brand DesiVdesi made with dehydrated produce, it also supplies dried raw material like garlic, ginger, onion, turmeric, coriander and so on, to big players like Nestle, Sodexo, Marico, IRCTC, Taj Stays and Capital Foods. The mechanism can also be used to preserve meats, seafood and spices.

The lockdown validated S4S Technologies' core work, as more farmers returned home to wait out the lean season and started exploring dehydration equipment. Besides earning a decent wage through the decentralised dehydration, the equipment also helped them to preserve their harvest when the wholesale markets closed down last year.

Already present in Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad with 700 corporate customers, S4S aims to expand operations add more products to its list, including pulses this year. It is funded by Shell Foundation, Factor (E) Ventures, Acumen Fund and DBS Foundation.



What's for dinner?

The Dinner Box is a gourmet home delivery curated by some of India's most celebrated chefs. To kick off the summer line-up is chef Hemant Oberoi, known for Mediterranean cuisine at Souk, Sichuan at Golden Dragon, and Japanese at Wasabi. The Dinner Box features versions of some of his most crowd-pleasing dishes from his years. The Martabaan menu, in Abu Dhabi, is also available. Try Chicken Anticuchos, with panca chili and aji verde; Ganderi Kebab, served on sugarcane sticks, Dhokla Cupcake, gram flour, rocoto chili pepper, sour cream; and Jackfruit Khumb Kebab, with piquante chutney, pav bread, and roasted beet. Dinner Wednesday to Friday; lunch and dinner Saturday and Sunday; ₹2,800 non-veg meal for two; ₹2,400 veg meal for two; at thedinnerbox.in

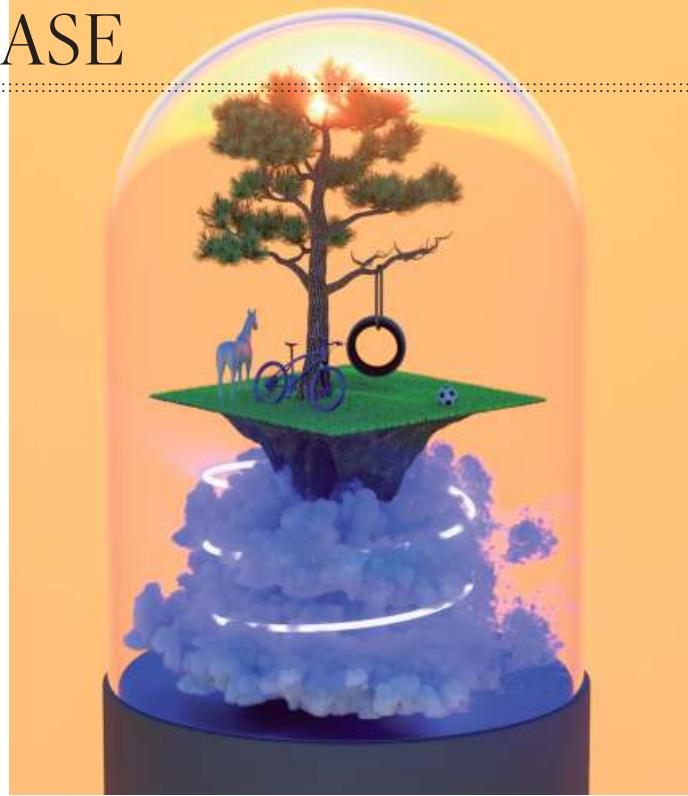
As the hype around NFT art reaches a crescendo, here's how we may have to shift our thinking as more artists venture into this crypto-fuelled world



DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

"Let's be honest, the NFT art world would not be having the trajectory it is, if Metakovan and Twobadour did not spend \$70 million worth of crypto on Beeple's Everydays: The First 5000 Days," says Amrita Sethi. "That figure alone is enough for artists to start delving into the virtual NFT art space." Amrita, having been a banker for many years is aware of the economics and hefty financing required to get NFT off the ground.

An NFT (non-fungible token) is a unit of data stored on the Ethereum blockchain. NFT art sees original artwork linked to the NFT, as a form of certification that the artwork is original, ie the digital art can be replicated but the token cannot. So naturally, when the Beeple piece sold for tens of millions of dollars, a wave of artists got into it. Now, the hype is



Virtual wonders (Clockwise from top right) Amrita Sethi with one of her mixed media art pieces, NFT art Big Mama's L'il Gangster and the artist Raghava KK, one of Siraj Hassan's CagedNFT art ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



ruptive India in their collections," he chuckles. But he points out artists should look into the mindsets of the buyers: what they are interested in and willing to spend precious crypto on. "Exclusivity is rare in a capitalistic economy, but crypto investors – typically libertarian – look to break out of this. It's an anti-political statement to de-establish the real-world art system."

Chennai-based software developer Siraj Hassan just launched a series of glass jar-oriented art pieces – which he calls his signature work – called CagedNFT on OpenSea. He agrees that artists should be aware of what buyers' inclinations are. "I've noticed the buyers are often future-thinking individuals, so they tend to lean towards sci-fi and hyper-luminous works," he observes.

A new rat race?
One of the biggest questions is 'which is the best marketplace?'

Currently, there are OpenSea, Rarible, SuperRare, Foundation and, launching today, musician Doja Cat's platform Juicy Drop, with her own collection of artworks. Siraj sees potential for India to create a homegrown NFT art marketplace, while Amrita started her own, called Terra Virtua, where people who do not have existing crypto investments can use fiat money (real world, Government-issued currency) to buy.

Amrita points out that due to the nascent stages: "There is no gold standard for NFT art marketplaces yet. In the physical world, you have different galleries and you have Sotheby's and Christie's as the gold standard of auction houses; the virtual world will reflect the same. So what we may observe over the next few months or next year, is more NFT art marketplaces coming out with competing benefits for both artist and buyer, and eventually, there will be the 'top dog.'

Raghava, Amrita and Siraj all say artists should go into NFT art having learned as much as one can. Amrita concludes, "The best part of the crypto community is it is always willing to answer queries with evidence. Learning along the way is a constant; so keep your wide open, and the age of the starving artist could be over."

Digital in the detail

real but are artists' expectations realistic?

In the know

Based in Bengaluru, Raghava KK is not just an artist – he is a storyteller, a researcher and a technologist obsessed with Artificial Intelligence. An early crypto investor, he was one of the few people in India who saw scope for art investment in this space; he had examined a lot of it in terms of aesthetics, patronage, what it would liberate for the art world, and even how it can cause a lot of harm.

"This disruptive technology has the potential to create utopias and dystopias – as with any technology. Six years ago, I put together a 200-year plan for art but it was not called NFT back then, it

was 'standardised encryption for digital assets', he shares.

Raghava says artists should know the history; there is a rich and complex one.

One early example is Denmark's Bank of International Art Money established in 1998 by Lars Kremer and Flemming Vincent. Artists were invited to mint their own currency (literally called Art Money) and exchange it amongst themselves. Eventually, they got local stores to start accepting it, and this spread to other countries. Raghava decided to bring it to India, by which time a few artists were on board. Unfortunately, BIAM got halted and disassembled once the Danish Government sued them for using the word 'bank'.

Then there is Sedition Art, one

of the world's first digital art marketplaces where artists such as Yoko Ono and Damien Hirst hosted their works; Raghava also joined in. In the early 2000s, the gaming industry stepped into the world of digital assets and micro-transactions where gamers could purchase avatars and skins for use in the virtual world. Raghava sees this moment as a game-changer (pun intended) for digital art. But NFT art still would not happen for years to come and when it did, Raghava was fuelled up to take part again. "I did not join because of FOMO, but for the intent," he avers.

Amrita is known in international art circles as the banker who became an NFT artist and is Dubai's first NFT artist. Her mixed media work sees soundwave art created with striking visuals; these soundwaves can be played via a QR code.

Having lived in Kenya, Switzerland, London, and Dubai, she has an informed global perspective on digital art and buyer behaviour. "Artists have to also consider 'gas fees', payments made by users to compensate for the computing energy required to process and validate the Ethereum transactions."

Raghava's own NFT art has traces of Eastern influences. "I want the world to have a bit of dis-

A daily dose of positivity

Wheelchair user and former Indian Navy officer Vijay K Nair is on a mission to spread positivity through his "nuggets of wisdom"

ANASUYA MENON

I am awake at 7 am, feeling a bit blue. I reach for my phone and see a familiar name in my inbox. I open it to a message: "There is no dearth of reasons to be happy in this world. It's there all around us, hidden in unexpected places, waiting to be discovered by you...." The note works for me just as well as a cup of strong filter coffee would.

For the past nine months, every day – without a break – has begun with a similar dose of positivity. The sender who calls these messages

"small shareable nuggets of wisdom", hopes he can brighten up the day of at least one recipient. For the past one-and-a-half years Vijay K Nair has been sending out these positive quotes to his network of friends and acquaintances.

A commissioned officer in the electrical branch of the Indian Navy (of the rank of Lieutenant), Vijay met with a near-fatal road accident in 2009 while on duty outside the Naval Base at Jamnagar, Gujarat. The motorcycle accident left him paralysed following injuries to his head and spine. He had a brain and

spine surgery and was unconscious for "a very long time". Vijay was later shifted to the Military Hospital in Pune where he regained his senses.

Vijay spent five years at the Military Hospital, recuperating and preparing himself for a life in the wheelchair. His speech was slightly impaired and he knew he had to accept the reality of living with a permanent disability. "My mother stood by me every minute and it empowered me to move on," he says. Settled in Aluva now, the 36-year-old says the time he spent with himself and the silence helped him understand the nuances of the human mind.

Vijay lives with his mother and though he has an assistant, he has

been 80 % independent for over two years. He had always loved writing and in the initial days after his relocation to Kerala, he wrote content for e-commerce websites. "I started feeling that all I was doing was helping people sell products. I wanted to serve a higher purpose and started writing down positive notes on my blog," he shares.

Apart from penning his thoughts and making GIFs, he enjoys writing poetry. "I only write things that can benefit the reader; I don't write to entertain." Born and raised in Mumbai, Vijay joined the Indian Navy through the technical officers' entry after completing his Class XII.

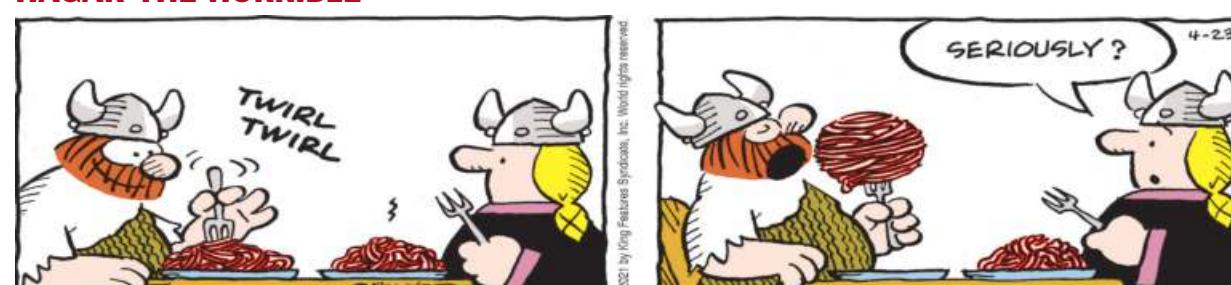
Smile under pressure Vijay K Nair's messages seek to raise spirits during these trying times ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



POOCH CAFE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	48,081	-0.79
US Dollar	74.94	-0.08
Gold	47,450	1.48
Brent oil	65.38	-0.47

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	737.80	17.35
Asian Paints	2511.25	-42.40
Axis Bank	658.70	6.95
Bajaj Auto	3681.40	80.50
Bajaj Finserv	9853.85	34.45
Bajaj Finance	4688.70	75.05
Bharti Airtel	530.85	0.65
BPCL	418.35	10.25
Britannia Ind	3752.00	22.10
Cipla	944.35	-4.95
Coal India	125.05	0.55
Divis Lab	3755.25	-24.45
Dr Reddys Lab	5199.85	43.10
Eicher Motors	2373.85	-2.15
Gasim Ind	1300.20	8.30
HCL Tech	961.90	0.60
HDFC	2479.70	63.80
HDFC Bank	1422.50	31.10
HDFC Life	679.05	-6.15
Hero MotoCorp	2851.15	27.45
Hindalco	355.85	-3.50
Hind Unilever	2349.40	-48.05
ICICI Bank	579.20	20.10
IndusInd Bank	385.70	-9.30
Infosys	1351.10	-0.25
Indian Oil Corp	87.85	0.05
ITC	205.90	2.35
JSW Steel	640.75	20.15
Kotak Bank	1736.05	38.35
L&T	1336.80	5.30
M&M	799.70	-11.45
Maruti Suzuki	6650.10	3.45
Nestle India Ltd.	16790.45	-305.20
NTPC	98.95	-0.10
ONGC	103.10	0.25
PowerGrid Corp	203.45	-0.25
Reliance Ind	1906.40	5.25
SBI Life	914.40	15.45
State Bank	336.65	7.15
Shree Cement	28521.95	-798.75
Sun Pharma	639.95	-5.20
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	665.50	-14.60
Tata Motors	294.55	-3.50
Tata Steel	921.40	27.40
TCS	3118.80	-25.75
Tech Mahindra	967.80	-15.60
Titan	1480.85	-42.05
UltraTech Cement	6092.30	-108.55
UPL	591.60	-0.15
Wipro	486.65	-16.55

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.75	75.07
Euro	90.05	90.46
British Pound	103.68	104.13
Japanese Yen (100)	69.11	69.41
Chinese Yuan	11.52	11.57
Swiss Franc	81.58	81.97
Singapore Dollar	56.27	56.55
Canadian Dollar	59.78	60.05
Malaysian Ringgit	18.18	18.28

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Accenture's Menon is chairperson of Nasscom

BENGALURU
The National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) on Thursday appointed Rekha M. Menon, chairperson and senior managing director at Accenture India, as chairperson for 2021-22. "It is critical to cautiously navigate as the pandemic continues to test the resilience of more than four million people," she said.

GSK Consumer to foray into gum care in India

NEW DELHI
GSK Consumer Healthcare will be foraying into the gum-care segment in India market with the unveiling of its global toothpaste brand Parodontax, a senior official said. "We are announcing our foray into the gum-care space with Parodontax," Anurita Chopra, area marketing director, oral health, GSK Consumer Healthcare, said.

SPORT

Wizards best Warriors

REUTERS

WASHINGTON, D.C.
The streaking Washington Wizards harassed Stephen Curry into 7-for-25 shooting while getting 29 points from Bradley Beal and a triple-double from Russell Westbrook (14 points, 20 rebounds, 10 assists) in a 118-114 win over Golden State Warriors on Wednesday.

The results: Cleveland 121 bt Chicago 105; Washington 118 bt Golden State 114; Toronto 114 bt Brooklyn 103; Indiana 122 bt Oklahoma City 116; Phoenix 116 bt Philadelphia 113; Utah 112 bt Houston 89; New York 137 bt Atlanta 127 (OT); Miami 107 bt San Antonio 87; Dallas 127 bt Detroit 117; LA Clippers 117 bt Memphis 105; Denver 106 bt Portland 105; Sacramento 128 bt Minnesota 125.

Retail asset quality concerns re-emerge as cases surge: ICRA

If COVID case severity increases, microfinance, unsecured SME loans will be hit'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

With fresh COVID-19 related restrictions in place, microfinance and unsecured SME loan pools would likely face the most stress if case severity increases, ICRA said in a report. However, housing loans would remain the most resilient as was seen even last year, it added.

"The restrictions on movement would have a bearing on collection efforts for the NBFCs, especially for microfinance loans where cash collections still remain dominant. Commercial vehicle loans could also face stress if the inter-State restrictions are reimposed, though even the current re-



Back to square one: Securitisation volumes may get hit in Q1 FY22 as NBFCs will be more selective in lending. ■ BIJOY GHOSH

strictions put in place in Maharashtra and Delhi would lead to lower fleet utilisation for the operators," ICRA said in the report. Abhishek Dafria, VP and head, Structured Finance Ratings, ICRA,

said, "While it is too early to comment on the extent of impact on the asset quality of retail loans due to the rising COVID cases, there is reason to be cautious."

"Post the nationwide lock-

down last year, we had witnessed a severe drop in collections for most asset classes... The restrictions at present are localised and less harsh, but the severity has been gradually increasing as the surge in COVID cases is yet to be brought under control," he said.

Securitisation volumes had dropped to a quarterly record low of ₹7,500 crore in the first quarter of last fiscal due to the nationwide lockdown.

Following the second wave of the pandemic, ICRA said it expected securitisation volumes to again get impacted in the first quarter of this fiscal as NBFCs and HFCs will be more selective in fresh lending.

Life insurers' FY21 first year premium rose 7.49%

March performance aided growth

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Life insurers have clocked a 7.49% rise in first-year premium at more than ₹2.78 lakh crore for the financial year ended March 31.

According to their new business statements, released by insurance regulator IRDAI, the first-year premium, a key indicator of performance, totalled ₹2,78,277.98 crore.

Market leader Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) reported a 3.5% increase to ₹1,84,174.57 crore during the fiscal when most businesses and economy were impacted on account of the pandemic. The first quarter of 2020-21 particu-

RBI allows banks to pay 50% dividends

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Thursday allowed commercial banks to pay dividends for FY21, subject to certain conditions and limits.

The revised circular from the RBI provides that commercial banks can pay up to 50% of what they could pre-COVID.

For co-operative banks, all the restrictions on dividends have been removed.

In the face of the COVID-19 crisis, the Reserve Bank had disallowed all banks from declaring any dividend for FY20, as the focus shifted to conserving capital amid an uncertain environment.

COVID impacts 82% of small businesses, shows survey

'Market and credit access, productivity remain challenges'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

More than 82% of businesses have suffered a negative impact on account of COVID-19

and 70% expect it will take almost a year for demand to recover to pre-pandemic levels, a survey showed.

About 60% of the companies surveyed by Dun & Bradstreet said they would require more support measures, including government initiatives, to withstand the adverse impact.

Market access (42%), improving overall productivity (37%) and access to more finance (34%) were cited as the three key challenges that



Nirmala Sitharaman

stressed that the way to tackle the current situation was through micro containment zones 'so that life and livelihoods can be protected'.

The government was 'working arduously for smooth co-ordination between States, hospitals and suppliers of oxygen and vaccines', Ms. Sitharaman had pointed out.

"Provision of oxygen, vaccines and their logistics to people affected by coronavirus is being ensured, given the recent surge in cases of COVID-19 pandemic across the country," she was quoted as having said, adding that the government was identifying idle manufacturing capacities for bolstering oxygen supplies.

Exploring best way to resolve Cairn issue: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday reiterated that an international arbitration ruling on India's sovereign right to taxation sets the wrong precedent, adding that the government was looking at how best it could sort out the issue arising out of New Delhi being ordered to return \$1.2 billion plus interest and costs to U.K.'s Cairn Energy Plc.

"We don't believe in retrospective taxation," she said at a webinar organised by the Financial Times and The Indian Express. India argues that tax levied by a sovereign power should not face arbitration.

Help scale up COVID centres, India Inc urged

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Urging corporate India to help the government battle the second wave of the pandemic, the Centre on Thursday asked them to consider setting up temporary COVID care facilities and makeshift hospitals to treat the rising number of cases.

Businesses may even consider letting their vacant office premises or buildings for such facilities, since most employees are working from home, Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh Verma said.

Mr. Verma also said businesses were allowed to spend their mandatory corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds on setting up makeshift hospitals and temporary COVID care facilities.

IBA suggests restricting banks' business hours, staff rotation

Doorstep banking should be encouraged, association says

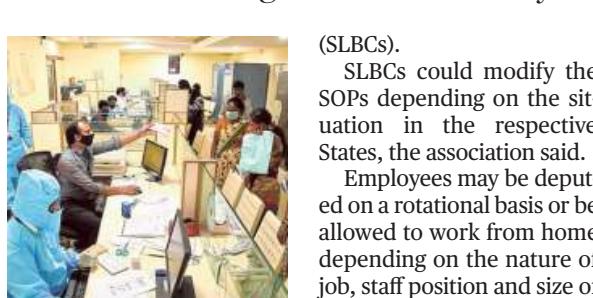
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The Indian Banks' Association has suggested some additional standard operating procedures for banks, including restricting business hours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and deploying staff on a rotational basis in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19.

The association said it held a meeting of the special managing committee on April 21, which suggested issuing an advisory on the measures to be taken in addition to the existing standard operating procedures (SOPs) issued last year.

Considering the fact that there is no nationwide lockdown and States are issuing relevant guidelines, the ma-



naging committee had advised that banks should continue to provide four mandatory services — accepting deposits, cash withdrawals, remittance and government businesses across the country.

Doorstep banking activities should be encouraged, the association said in the communication to State level bankers committees

emphasis on vaccination for the staff in the event of an infection, the association said, emphasising on vaccination for the staff.

The pandemic has ad-

Supply issues, curfews hit deliveries

LALATENDU MISHRA

MUMBAI

Logistics operations have been hit by the increase in COVID-19 related restrictions across the country, industry officials said. Non-availability of trucks had also added to the problem.

"We see that challenges still remain on the supply side (transporters). With large sell-off of vehicles and limited new purchases, the number of trucks on the road is not increasing," said Mudasar Mohamed, COO and co-founder, Ezyhaul, a road freight exchange platform for B2B shipments.

The pandemic has added uncertainties in the supply chain of retail and e-commerce brands, said Harsh Vaidya,

Padikkal bosses the chase, RCB back on top after mauling RR

Opener slams unbeaten 52-ball 101, puts on 181 with Kohli (72 n.o.) in just 16.3 overs; Siraj the pick of the bowlers in Royal Challengers' fourth straight win

IPL 2021

ASHWIN ACHAL

Devdutt Padikkal came of age with a brilliant unbeaten 52-ball 101 to guide Royal Challengers Bangalore to a 10-wicket win over Rajasthan Royals at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday.

Padikkal's masterclass took RCB to the top of the points table with a fourth straight win. RR – hampered by the unavailability of key players Jofra Archer, Ben Stokes and Liam Livingstone – slumped to a third loss in four matches.

Big impression

Padikkal, an immensely talented youngster, made a big impression with his maiden IPL century. That he only recently recovered from COVID-19 made his performance all the more special.

The 20-year-old scored his runs at a rapid rate, but there were no wild slogs. The southpaw played late and used pure timing to pierce the gaps. When the bowlers pitched it up, Padikkal brought the bat down with a

clean swing, sending the ball far into the stands.

Padikkal scored the fastest IPL century by an uncapped player, bettering the record of Paul Valthathy (52b, KXIP v CSK in 2011) by one ball.

Chasing 178, openers Padikkal and Virat Kohli (72 n.o.) made short work of the target. During the course of his knock, Kohli became the first cricketer to cross 6,000 runs in the IPL.

After being put in, RR lost wickets early, but recovered well to post a healthy score. Jos Buttler, Manan Vohra and David Miller were dismissed cheaply, with Mohammed Siraj and Kyle Jamieson doing the damage. Siraj was impressive once again, taking out Miller with a sharp, fast yorker.

Captain Sanju Samson blasted off-spinner Washington Sundar for a huge six, but chipped the next ball to mid-wicket to fall for 21. From 43 for four, RR came back into contention through good knocks from Shivam Dube (46, 32b, 5x4, 2x6), Riyan Parag (25, 16b, 4x4) and Rahul Tewatia (40, 23b, 4x4, 2x6).

Dube and Parag put on an attacking 66-run fifth-wicket



Extra special: It was a night to remember for Devdutt Padikkal, who hammered his maiden IPL hundred. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

stand, shifting the initiative back to RR. Pacer Harshal Patel broke the dangerous partnership with a slower ball, which Parag tried to scoop to fine-leg. A top edge, however, landed in the hands of deep third-man. Dube was



Kohli climbs Mt 6000
Virat became the first batsman to score 6000 runs in the IPL

sent back by a good diving catch by Glenn Maxwell at long-on. Tewatia was deceived by a cutter from Siraj.

Harshal and Siraj finished with three wickets each. Harshal retained his spot as the highest wicket-taker (12).

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Jos Buttler b Siraj 8 (8b, 2x4), Manan Vohra c Richardson b Jamieson 7 (9b, 1x4), Sanju Samson c Maxwell b Washington 21 (18b, 2x4, 1x6), David Miller lbw b Siraj 0 (2b), Shivam Dube c Maxwell b Richardson 46 (32b, 5x4, 2x6), Riyan Parag c Chahal b Harshal 25 (16b, 4x4), Rahul Tewatia c Shahbaz b Siraj 40 (23b, 4x4, 2x6), Chris Morris c Chahal b Harshal 10 (7b, 1x6), Shreyas Gopal (not out) 7 (4b, 1x6), Chetan Sakariya c de Villiers b Harshal 0 (1b), Mustafizur Rahman (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, w-8): 13; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 177.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-14 (Buttler, 2.3 overs), 2-16 (Vohra, 3.5), 3-18 (Miller, 4.3), 4-43 (Samson, 7.2), 5-109 (Parag, 13.3), 6-133 (Dube, 15.3), 7-170 (Tewatia, 18.6), 8-170 (Morris, 19.1), 9-170 (Sakariya, 19.2).

RCB BOWLING

Siraj 4-0-27-3, Jamieson 4-0-28-1, Richardson 3-0-29-1, Chahal 2-0-18-0, Washington 3-0-23-1, Harshal 4-0-47-3.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Virat Kohli (not out) 72 (47b, 6x4, 3x6), Devdutt Padikkal (not out) 101 (52b, 11x4, 6x6); Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-6): 8; Total (for no loss in 16.3 overs): 181.

ROYALS BOWLING

Shreyas 3-0-35-0, Sakariya 4-0-35-0, Morris 3-0-38-0, Mustafizur 3.3-0-34-0, Tewatia 2-0-23-0, Parag 1-0-14-0.

Toss: RCB; MoM: Padikkal.
RCB won by 10 wickets with 21 balls to spare.

Innings scan

RR	Dots	RCB
49	4	25
18	4	17
7	5	9
32/3	PP	59/0
8.85	RR	10.96

Next assignment

RR: April 24 vs. KKR, Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

RCB: April 25 vs. CSK, Mumbai, 3.30 p.m.

Padikkal played an outstanding and flawless innings. Once he got going, there was no stopping him. I had the best seat in the house

VIRAT KOHLI

PBKS desperate to arrest slide against MI

Rahul's men are on a run of three losses; Mumbai has middle-order issues to fix

AYAN ACHARYA

Defending champion Mumbai Indians will hope to get its campaign back on track against struggling Punjab Kings in Chennai on Friday.

MI's defeat against Delhi Capitals has raised questions about the middle-order. Against Sunrisers Hyderabad and DC, Mumbai's batting never hit top gear in the middle overs.

Rohit Sharma's side has been undone by the slowness of the Chepauk surface, with the lack of power-hitting from Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya compounding the woes.

Pollard has 49 runs from four matches and Hardik, 35. Suryakumar Yadav's 56 against DC, Jayant Yadav



The Generals: Rahul and Rohit will be eager to call the shots.

ers remains the highest score by an MI batsman this season.

However, with Jasprit Bumrah among the wickets and Trent Boult in form, MI's bowling has enough strength. It has generally used two spinners: Krunal Pandya and Rahul Chahar. But against DC, Jayant Yadav

got a look in. MI might persist with the same combination against PBKS.

With three losses on the trot, PBKS is second from bottom.

In Chennai, with the conditions getting tougher for batting, skipper K.L. Rahul and Mayank Agarwal need to begin well.

It's still early days, but PBKS would want to arrest its slide against a settled MI.

Mominul scores 11th Test hundred



Mominul Haque. ■ AFP

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Skipper Mominul Haque's century and his 242-run third-wicket stand with Najmul Shanto (163) took Bangladesh to a commanding 474 for four against Sri Lanka on Thursday.

Mominul reached his 11th Test century in the morning session and was out for 127 on a day when only two wickets were lost.

The scores: Bangladesh 474/4 in 155 overs (Tamim Iqbal 90, Najmul Shanto 163, Mominul Haque 127, Mushfiqur Rahim 43 batting) vs SL.

TV PICKS

IPL: Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.
Sri Lanka vs Bangladesh: 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9.50 a.m.

AFC Champions League: Star Sports 3, 10.30 p.m.

SHORT TAKES

Hamilton prays for COVID-hit India

LONDON

Lewis Hamilton sent in his good wishes as India battles a massive second wave of COVID-19, with daily cases going past three lakh. "Praying for the beautiful people of India this morning. I know this pandemic is hitting so many places around the world. Please stay safe out there," Hamilton wrote in his Instagram story. PTI

Cop on Olympic torch duty tests COVID positive

TOKYO

Tokyo Olympics organisers said on Thursday that a policeman tested positive for COVID-19 a day after his assignment last week at the Olympic torch relay. It is the first positive test connected to the relay since it began March 25 from northeastern Fukushima prefecture. Organizers said the officer developed symptoms and tested positive the day after the relay. AP

Norrie enters quarterfinals

BARCELONA OPEN

SPORTS BUREAU

BARCELONA

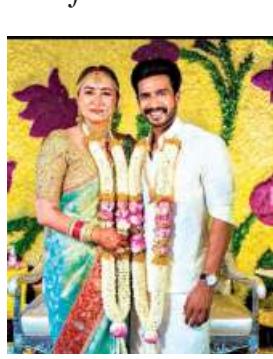
Britain's Cameron Norrie advanced to the quarterfinals of the Barcelona Open after eighth seed David Goffin retired with an issue in his leg on Thursday.

Roberto Bautista Agut lost to Jannik Sinner 7-6(9), 6-2 while Felix Auger-Aliassime beat fellow Canadian Denis Shapovalov.

The results: 10th round: Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 6.5) bt Kirill Alekseenko (Rus, 4); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5.5) drew with Anish Giri (Ned, 5.5); Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5.5) drew with Ding Liren (Chn, 4); Wang Hao (Chn, 4.5) drew with Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 4.5).

The results: Third round: Félix Auger-Aliassime bt Denis Shapovalov 6-2, 6-3; Andre Rublev bt Albert Ramos-Viñolas 6-4, 6-7(4), 6-4; Jannik Sinner bt Roberto Bautista Agut 7-6(9), 6-2; Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Alex de Minaur 7-5, 6-3; Cameron Norrie bt David Goffin 6-0, 3-5, retd.; Diego Schwartzman bt Corentin Moutet 6-4, 6-2.

One for the album



Hitched: Jwala Gutta tied the knot with actor Vishal on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CL semis may go ahead, says UEFA chief Ceferin

LJUBLJANA

The Champions League semifinals next week are expected to go ahead, UEFA president Aleksander Ceferin said, after the chaos created by the Super League. "There is relatively little chance that next week's matches will not be played," Ceferin told Slovenian television Pop TV late on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Super League chief Florentino Perez was defiant, saying: "The project is on standby. The project exists." AFP

Balaji-Jeevan combine exits

TALLAHASSEE (USA)

Sriram Balaji and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan were beaten 6-4, 7-5 by second seeds Treat Huey of Philippines and Sem Verbeek of the Netherlands in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the \$52,080 Challenger tennis tournament here.

SPORTS BUREAU
KIELCE (POLAND)

Indian women boxers, featuring in seven of the 10 summit clashes, performed magnificently to sweep gold in all the categories in the World youth boxing championships here on Thursday.

Gitiya posted a commanding 5-0 win over local favourite Natalia Kuczewska to claim the 48kg gold medal and give India a fine start. Gitiya remained ahead by landing plenty of punches, including a few shots to the head.

She switched her tactics to use her feet, stay away from her opponent and de-

liver some straight punches resulting in a bloodied nose for the Pole in the last two rounds.

Poonam Poonia beat

Frenchwoman Stélyne Grosy 5-0 in the 57kg final.

With a power-packed performance, Vinka defeated Zhuldyz Shaykhmetova of

Kazakhstan in the 60kg final when the referee stopped the contest in the third round.

The results (finals):

Women: 48kg: Gitiya bt Natalia Kuczewska (Pol) 5-0; **51kg:** Balaji-Jeevan bt Valeria Linkova (Rus) 5-0; **57kg:** Poonam

Poonia bt Stélyne Grosy 5-0; **60kg:** Vinka bt Zhuldyz Shaykhmetova (Kaz) RSC-R3;

69kg: Arundhati Choudhary bt Barbara Marcinkowska (Pol) 5-0; **75kg:** Sanamacha Chanu bt Dana Diday (Kaz) 3-2; **+81kg:** Alfiya Pathan bt Daria Kozorez (Mda) 5-0.



Youth power: Gitiya, Balaji-Jeevan, Poonam, Vinka, Arundhati, Sanamacha, and Alfiya with their reward. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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