



Border situation cannot be swept under carpet, says Vikram Misri

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After Manmohan Singh, Rahul Gandhi tests positive for COVID-19

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Chad President Deby dies on battlefield while fighting rebels

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Mishra, Dhawan star in Delhi Capitals's win over Mumbai Indians

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## NEARBY



COVID-19 rages as Delhi sees 28,395 new cases

NEW DELHI  
The Capital reported 277 deaths and 28,395 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours — the highest figures since the beginning of the pandemic. The test positivity has jumped to 32.82%. The case tally now stands at 9,05,541 and the death toll has gone up to 12,638.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

## No lockdown in Haryana, announces Chief Minister

CHANDIGARH  
Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Tuesday said no lockdown would be imposed in the State but there would be strict compliance with COVID-19 guidelines. He also urged labourers and migrant workers not to panic.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

## 'Lack of timely care hurting patients in U.P.'

LUCKNOW  
Families of infected patients in Uttar Pradesh, especially Lucknow, are facing an uphill battle to secure hospital beds, oxygen supply and medicine. Many said the delay due to running around from one hospital to another had led to deterioration in the condition of patients.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 3

# Use lockdown only as absolute last resort, Modi tells States

Curfew not required if everyone observes COVID-appropriate behaviour, says PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged the States to only resort to lockdowns as an absolute last resort and said that were everyone to observe COVID-19 appropriate behaviour, there would be no need for stringent reactions.

"We have to save ourselves from a lockdown and do our best to avoid it and I request the States to pay more attention to effectively managing micro-containment zones," Mr. Modi said in his 20-minute address to the nation.

"Were we to observe COVID-appropriate behaviour with collective enforcement, then we wouldn't need curfews and containment zones. Then, a lockdown would simply be out of the question," he said.

In his first address to the nation this year, Mr. Modi said the government's decision to make vaccines more widely available would translate to affordable vaccines for all adults.

"I would appeal to workplaces to use this as an opportunity to vaccinate their workforce so that nobody would have to move and leave the cities and their places of work," he said.

## 'Stay indoors, get vaccinated'

Highlights of PM Modi's address to the nation on Tuesday

- States should consider lockdown only as a last resort. They should pay more attention to effectively managing micro-containment zones
- All workforce residing in cities should stay where they are and take the vaccine once they become
- The Centre, the States and other entities are working together to ensure oxygen availability

The Prime Minister alluded to the prevailing oxygen supply crisis and said Indian industry as well as the transport sector was working hard to ensure that it was available as quickly as possible in the places needed.

He appealed to the children to ensure that elders do not step out without cause. Unlike a year ago when the pandemic hit and India had inadequate testing kits, PPE suits and little understanding of how it could be managed, there was much more knowledge now, Mr. Modi said. He added that youth in residential areas should form committees to enforce appropriate COVID behaviour and discipline.

On Tuesday evening, Mr. Modi interacted with vaccine manufacturers from across the country via video conferencing.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Production of Covaxin scaled up massively

Covaxin maker Bharat Biotech on Tuesday said it has scaled up manufacturing capacity to annually produce 700 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. "Manufacturing scale up has been carried out in a stepwise manner across multiple facilities in Hyderabad and Bengaluru," said the pharmaceutical company. ▶ PAGE 10

## In a first, India reports over 2,000 deaths

For the first time, more than 2,000 COVID-19 deaths were registered in a single day in India (without considering backlog) on Tuesday. As many as 2,007 deaths and 2,93,534 cases were recorded in the country. The country has so far reported a total of 1,56,08,423 cases and 1,82,557 deaths. The figures do not include cases and deaths in Ladakh. ▶ PAGE 10

# HC order for lockdown in 5 U.P. cities stayed by top court

Not the only option to curb spread of virus, says State govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Allahabad High Court order directing the Uttar Pradesh government to impose strict restrictions till April 26 in five cities due to the surge in COVID-19 cases.

A Bench, headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde, passed the order after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Uttar Pradesh, said the State had issued several directions to contain the spread of the coronavirus but to "lock down five cities by a judicial order may not be the right approach".

Mr. Mehta, while arguing that the High Court order would create "immense administrative difficulties", said the State government had taken adequate precaution and actions on its own.

"Issue notice. Until further orders, there shall be an ad interim stay of the impugned order," said the Bench, also comprising Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian.

"However, the petitioner-State government shall immediately report to the High Court about the steps it has taken and proposes to take within a period of one week in view of the pandemic," the Bench said.



Scrambling for space: Migrant workers boarding a bus in Lucknow on Tuesday after restrictions were announced. ▶ PTI

## Centre tells U.T.s to plan for crucial 3 weeks

The Centre told Union Territories that the next three weeks were crucial in the management of the second wave of COVID-19.

The U.T. administrations, including the Delhi government, "were advised to plan in advance for three weeks". Delhi raised the issue of a shortage of beds on Tuesday. ▶ PAGE 10

## 2 die, 8 injured as packed bus overturns

Two migrant labourers were killed and eight others injured after an overloaded bus overturned on a highway near Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior district on Tuesday, a police official said. The bus was on its way to Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh from Delhi, Gwalior SP Amit Sanghi said. ▶ PAGE 10

Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar and Gorakhpur — but stopped short of calling it a "complete lockdown".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# + Some Delhi hospitals down to 4-5 hours of oxygen

Kejriwal appeals to Centre again; orders placed with Union govt., says CMO

## Oxygen stock

(As of April 20, 6 p.m.)

**Major government hospitals**

DDU: 12 hrs.

Burari: 8 hrs.

Ambedkar Nagar: 24 hrs.

Acharya Bhikshu: 10-12 hrs.

Deep Chand Bandhu: 8 hrs.

Sanjay Gandhi Memorial: 12 hrs.

Lok Nayak: 12 hrs.

Baba Saheb Ambedkar: 8-10 hrs.

**Major private hospitals**

BL Kapoor: 8-10 hrs.

Batra: 8-9 hrs.

Venkateshwar: 4 hrs.

St. Stephen's: 12-15 hrs.

Sir Ganga Ram: 16-18 hrs.

Holy Family: 24 hrs.

Max, Patparganj: 8-10 hrs.

Balaji: 48 hrs.

Shree Aggarwal: 48 hrs.

Maharaja Agrasen: 5 hrs.

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Multiple government hospitals in the city said that their oxygen stock will last only for "7-12 hours" and COVID-19 patients will succumb if the situation isn't addressed on priority basis.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal again sought help from the Central government. "I again urge centre to urgently provide oxygen to Delhi. Some hospitals are left with just a few hours of oxygen (sic)," he said in a tweet.

Around 10.20 p.m., Health Minister Satyendar Jain, tagging Union Minister Piyush Goyal in a tweet, said oxygen supply in Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital, the second largest Delhi government hospital, may not last beyond 2 a.m. on

Wednesday.

A list shared by the AAP government showed that in some hospitals, the oxygen stock will last only for four to five hours.

"We need oxygen very badly. Have enough to last only seven to eight hours," Dr. D.S. Rana, chairman of Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, one of the city's largest private hospitals, told *The Hindu*. "Around 120 patients in the ICU are heavily dependent on oxygen," he said.

Dr. Jyoti Mishra, medical superintendent of Akash Healthcare, another private hospital, said the situation was similar in almost all hospitals. "We do not have oxygen to last more than 12 hours," he said.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 2

## CISCE cancels board exams for Class 10

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Monday told schools that the ICSE Class 10 examination had been cancelled due to the rising COVID-19 cases.

In a letter to the heads of all schools that were presenting candidates for the exams, CISCE chief executive and secretary Gerry Arathoon said, "Given the present worsening situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country, the CISCE has decided to cancel the ICSE (Class 10) 2021 examination."

"The safety and well-being of our students and teaching faculty is our topmost priority and of paramount interest," he added.

than exports in the COVID-affected year.

In response to a question on the U.S. move, Mr. Wadhawan said the RBI had been taking necessary steps to maintain stability in the financial markets and not accumulating foreign reserves like China did in the past.

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'Putting nations under scanner restricts central banks'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Commerce Secretary Anup Wadhawan on Tuesday questioned the rationale behind the U.S. government's decision to put India on the watchlist for currency manipulators, and said the list constituted an intrusion into the policy space needed by central banks around the world to meet their mandates.

**High dollar purchases**

The U.S. Treasury Department had recently retained India on a watchlist for currency manipulators submitted to the U.S. Congress, citing higher dollar purchases (close to 5% of the gross domestic product) by the Reserve

I think the central bank's activity in the foreign exchange market has been perfectly balanced and completely legitimate within the accepted monetary policy mandate of central banks across the world. This watchlist is a recent phenomenon. It is an intrusion into policy space of central banks

ANUP WADHAWAN,  
COMMERCE SECRETARY

Bank of India (RBI).

Another trigger for the inclusion on the currency watchlist is a trade surplus of \$20 billion or more.

India's trade surplus with the U.S. grew by about \$5 billion to \$23 billion in 2020-21, from around \$18 billion in the previous fiscal year, as imports fell more sharply

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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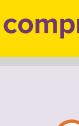
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## DMRC revises frequency schedule

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Tuesday said that operational plans for the six-day lockdown had been revised in order to offer more capacity in compliance with the 50% seating provision inside coaches.

According to the new schedule, metro trains will be available at a frequency of 15 minutes during peak hours and during non-peak hours the frequency will be 30 minutes.

In a statement issued, the DMRC said, "Services during morning peak hours - 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. - and evening peak hours - 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. - across the network will be available with a headway [frequency] of 15 minutes. For the rest of the hours of the day, services across the network will be available with a frequency of 30 minutes."

The DMRC added that standby trains on each line will also be available throughout the day for induction into services as per requirement.

On Tuesday morning, the DMRC closed entry gates of several metro stations across the network as a crowd-control measure.

Restricted entry was allowed in stations like Rajiv Chowk, MG Road, New Delhi and Chandni Chowk.

# Virus rages as city sees 28,395 new infections

99.4% of total 4,595 ICU beds occupied, only 31 vacant: govt.

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 277 COVID-19-related deaths and 28,395 new cases in 24 hours - the highest figures since the beginning of the pandemic, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

The total number of deaths went up to 12,638 and cases to 9,05,541. A total of 86,526 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said.

### Positivity rate

The positivity of new cases also jumped to 32.82%, which means that 32 out of 100 people taking the test are now positive.

Of the total cases, 8,07,328 people have recovered and there are 85,575 active cases.

A total of 59,491 beneficiaries took the COVID-19 vaccination in the city in 24 hours, as per the bulletin.

After the peak in November, the number of cases had gradually decreased. New cases were falling in early 2021 and on January 16, the number of daily new cases had dropped to 94. But it slowly increased to 200 on February 24 and it has been on the rise since then.

Out of the total 19,608



**Booster dose:** A beneficiary gets vaccinated in the city on Tuesday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

beds for COVID-19 treatment, only 13.6% were vacant.

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

Also, 99.4% of the total 4,595 ICU beds were occupied and only - 31 ICU beds - were vacant in Delhi on Tuesday night, as per a government website.

### 2,700 more beds

In another development, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said that around 2,700 more COVID-19 hospital beds will be added in a week.

Some of these beds were announced earlier, but they are in the process of being

added.

"In the last two weeks, the number of COVID-19-designated beds in Delhi have been increased by three times. The number of COVID-19 beds in Delhi was 6,071 on April 3, 2021, but it was increased to 19,101 on April 20," he said.

### Action against hospitals

The Minister said that action will be taken against hospitals which do not give proper information about beds and action has been taken against two hospitals.

"Doctors and the medical staff are working tirelessly, keeping their lives at stake. They are saving thousands of lives, we are obliged to them," Mr. Sisodia said after visiting Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar Hospital.

# Health workers stretched as cases mount

They are left with no choice but to work more hours and during weekends

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

From increased working hours to doctors and nurses testing positive, doctors of several hospitals said they were stretched for resources due to the record spike in COVID-19 cases in the city.

Some doctors said there is heavy rush in the emergency and others said that they have no option but to turn patients away as they do not have any vacant beds.

A doctor at Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) said their manpower is stretched due to increased workload. All 450 ICU beds of the hospital were occupied as on Tuesday night.

"We have been working at full capacity for about 10 days. People are working for longer hours and our re-



A team of doctors checks patients at the CWG Village COVID Care Centre in the city on Tuesday. • PTI

sources are stretched. The Delhi government is providing us with medical officers [doctors]. But we need specialists like doctors," she said.

The doctor said they are also trying to increase the oxygen capacity of the hospital to meet the increased workload. She said that patient satisfaction is another issue. "Since the attendant is

not with the patient, she gets uneasy and complains about things which may be a non-issue. That pressure also comes to us."

### 'Like a war zone'

Vikas Maurya, Head of Department of Pulmonology at Fortis Hospital in Shalimar Bagh, said that beds are filling up as soon as a patient is

discharged. They have a waiting list of patients.

"The manpower is the same and many staffers are also testing positive. We don't have any choice, but to work more hours and during weekends. It is like a war zone and we all are on our toes," Dr. Maurya said.

### 100 queries a day

He said that the 60 beds in the ICU have been full for more than a week and they get more than 100 queries a day for beds.

"We are taking one day at a time. All our beds have been more or less full for the past one week. People are working extended hours and on Sunday and on odd hours. But still we have to turn away some people as beds are full. It is inevitable," said a senior doctor from Aakash Healthcare.

# Increase oxygen beds across facilities: CM

Working on a war footing to ensure oxygen supply, he says at review meeting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday convened a review meeting in which he directed officials to increase oxygen beds across several facilities in the city. He said the Delhi government was working on a war footing to ensure oxygen supply in the city.

Following the meeting, Mr.

Kejriwal raised serious concerns over acute oxygen shortage across various COVID-19 facilities in Delhi and urged the Centre to urgently provide oxygen since some hospitals were left with just a few hours' supply.

In another development later in the day, Health Minister Satyendar Jain tweeted: "Acute shortage of oxygen at

GTB Hospital. Oxygen may not last beyond 4 hrs. More than 500 corona patients on oxygen. Pl help @Piush-Goyal to restore oxygen supply to avert major crisis [sic]."

A message from the head of the hospital to the Minister in U.P. was not being allowed to send oxygen to Delhi.

"Over 241 metric tonne

and 355 MT are the oxygen supplies provided to Delhi against a daily requirement of 700 MT. The figure of 508 MT is wrong as right now the stock position in most of the hospitals, public or private, is not more than 10 to 12 hours. This is when each hospital is required to maintain minimum three days of stock position of oxygen," he said.

# Head constable dies as kin scramble to find bed

38 officers have died of COVID-19 so far



Harish Tanwar

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old Delhi Police Head Constable died of COVID-19 on Tuesday. With little luck at five hospitals in the Capital, his family took him to three hospitals in Meerut before finding a bed.

Hailing from Meerut, Harish Tanwar was a resident of northeast Delhi's Karawal Nagar and was posted in Outer North Delhi's Samajpur Badli police station and was on duty till April 14.

After completing his night duty, he returned home and felt feverish. He had fever for three days, but on Sunday evening, he started facing breathing problems," said deceased's cousin Sanjay Kumar.

### Tried many hospitals

Recalling the ordeal, Harish's brother Ompal, a DTC staffer who was with him throughout this time, said that he and a few others tried over five hospitals in Delhi starting Sunday evening till late into the night but couldn't get help.

"All his seniors were aware of his situation and knew that we were looking for a hospital but nobody helped. But who can you blame when everyone else is facing the same problem," the brother said.

"Because we couldn't get a bed here in Delhi, we had to take a

huge risk of taking him in that situation to Meerut. There as well, we had to make many calls to get admission in hospitals," Mr. Ompal said.

Harish was first admitted in Santosh Hospital where his COVID-19 test was conducted. "The doctors said that his lungs were 90% damaged and they referred him to a better facility," Mr. Kumar said.

Later, Harish was taken to IIIMT Life Line Hospital where the family was allegedly told that they don't have ventilator support but the hospital helped them find a bed in Sudha Hospital where the required system was available.

"Harish's oxygen level kept dropping and he died around 2 a.m.," Mr. Kumar said.

A total of 38 officers have died of COVID-19 in the force so far.

# Green corridor created to supply oxygen tankers to city hospital

Delhi Police comes to the rescue of over 235 COVID-19 patients

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

As the Capital grapples with oxygen crisis, the Delhi police on Tuesday created a green corridor for oxygen tankers to travel from two borders.

DCP (Outer) Parvinder Singh said that around 11.30 p.m. on Monday night, they were informed by the Medical Superintendent of Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute in Paschim Vihar that the hospital had critical level of oxygen in their liquid gas tank and the lives of over 235 COVID-19 patients were at risk.

"The hospital further in-

formed that one of the tankers carrying 14,000 litre of oxygen that was supposed to be brought from Pari Chowk in Greater Noida was stuck near the border due to COVID-related restrictions and another one carrying 5,500 litres of oxygen which was to come from Faridabad, was stuck on the Delhi-Faridabad border," the DCP said.

### Teams sent to border

Two teams were sent to Pari Chowk and Badarpur border with instructions to facilitate movement by creating a green corridor after which both tankers reached

the hospital.

Besides this, the police managed to send oxygen cylinders from other hospitals too. They sent 10 oxygen cylinders from Saroj Hospital, 15 from Agrasen Hospital, five from ILBS Vasant Kunj and 10 from Fortis Hospital to meet the requirement and save 235 patients.

In a separate incident, Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Anto Alphonse himself arranged oxygen for a private hospital in Gulabi Bagh. With his team, he went to Mayapuri to facilitate filling of oxygen cylinders and went to the hospital to deliver them.

# Police chief reviews curfew enforcement

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Be polite but firm, said Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava while reviewing the situation on the first day of the week-long lockdown.

"The priority is to implement the week-long lockdown and restrictions are to be maintained," he said, adding that if anyone is found to disobey the restrictions without having a genuine

curfew. Anyone venturing out of home will be definitely checked by the personnel and questioned, the police said.

Expressing "concern" for police personnel on ground, he said, "Being front-line warriors, our personnel need to perform their duties, but also ensure COVID-19 safety".

He told the unit officers to keep sufficient stock of equipment.

# ISRO to support projects of IIT-D

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi on Tuesday said that the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has announced that it will support eight joint research projects mooted by the Space Technology Cell (STC), IIT-Delhi. The ISRO will support the projects under its RESPOND programme with varying duration of 1-3 years, it added.

The institute said that the Space Technology Cell was set up at IIT-Delhi under an MoU signed between the ISRO and IIT-Delhi in November 2019 with an aim to strengthen the research collaboration between the two organisations and to carry out focused research projects in the space technology domain with specific deliverables. Since then, eight collaborative research projects have been announced.

Some of the projects include developing a system for drought and flood forecasting and understanding land-atmosphere interactions.

V. Ramgopal Rao, IIT-Delhi director said, "IIT-Delhi is committed to taking its interactions with the ISRO to the next level. The institute has some of the world's experts in various technology domains."

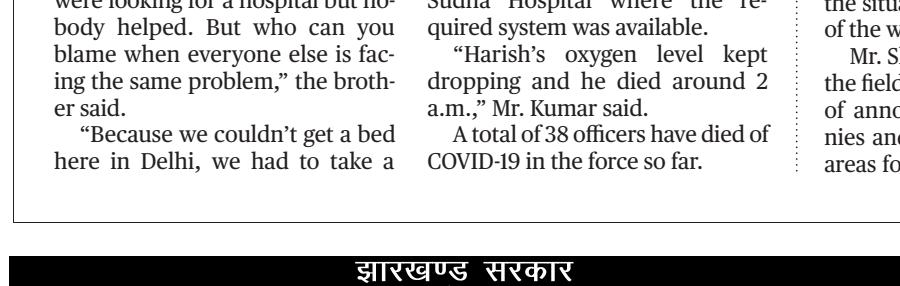
Sikh panel begins langar services for migrants, poor

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Tuesday began langar services to provide cooked meals to those migrants and other needy people waiting at New Delhi and Old Delhi railway stations and Anand Vihar bus terminus.

The meals are being prepared at the Bangla Sahib Gurdwara and then distributed across the city by volunteers, said DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa. The DSGMC has started providing cooked meals to COVID-19 patients who do not have caregivers at home. Mr. Singh said:

"On the first day itself, we had around 100 volunteers delivering across the city."



### Short e-TENDER NOTICE

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3/PR/SAJHA /2021-22	Renovation of Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Hockey Stadium, Morabadi Ranchi, Jharkhand.	4,99,04,942/-	5,00,000/-	10000/-	12 months
4/PR/SAJHA /2021-22	Replacement of Astro turf at Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Astro turf Stadium, Morabadi, Ranchi, Jharkhand.	4,97,78,418/-	4,98,000/-	10000/-	12 months
CE/PHE/DB /26378-84 Dated:- 15.02.2021					

Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, APR. 21
RISE 05:50 SET 18:51
RISE 12:44 SET 02:01
THURSDAY, APR. 22
RISE 05:49 SET 18:51
RISE 13:46 SET 02:44
FRIDAY, APR. 23
RISE 05:48 SET 18:52
RISE 14:49 SET 03:24

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	20
Safdarjung	34	20
Palam	34	23

Delhi Palam Today  
35°C Short spell rain or thunderstorm with gusty winds may occur at few places over the city.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
37°C Drop in morning temperature likely. Mainly sunny sky and hot day with light to moderate winds likely.

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# Migrant labourers press panic button, find ways to head home

Lockdown and barricades are not deterring them from reaching transport hubs

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI

Despite the Capital literally locked down with checkposts on all major roads preventing people from moving out without a reason, inter-state transport hubs were brimming with migrant workers making a desperate dash for their home States.

While at Anand Vihar ISBT and railway station the crowd had thinned from the footfall soon after the lockdown was announced, migrant workers continued to try and find ways to manage transport to ferry them out of the city. Some had camped overnight at the terminal hoping to find a commute to reach home while hundreds continued to arrive.

Mohd. Faizan, a resident of Gaya who is a construction supervisor, said he did not have a confirmed ticket but was willing to pay "double fine" to reach home as his employer had told him that he was not going to be paid during the



Migrant workers sitting on the roof of a bus passing through Ghaziabad on Tuesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

week. "My employer clearly told me that I will not be paid. What is the use of staying back? If things get better, I can return within a few days but without work, what is the point of staying back? We are only here to earn money," said Mr. Faizan, adding that he was scared of the virus but getting infected at home was better than falling ill in the city.

For many, the announcement of the six-day lockdown took them back to last year's

lockdown when trains and buses were halted immediately. "With no income, what will we do staying here? This virus has ruined our lives and will ruin it further. My family tells me that the situation back home is not as bad as it is in Delhi, so I am going home. Most people are here out of fear and are willing to take the risk of travelling home," said Prashant, who works as a help in a hardware shop, and is looking to head back to Almora.

"Trains and buses are still running. It is better to leave now than getting stuck here for a long time. I do not believe in the assurances by the govt. that they will not extend it," said Ram Kishan, waiting for a train to Darbhanga.

With autorickshaws still allowed to ply, people arriving at transport hubs were taking them till the nearest barricade and walking to the station from there. Mahesh Kumar, an auto driver, said that police at barricades were taking a humane view on those trying to reach transport hubs.

## Long queues

At the New Delhi Railway Station, long queues had formed outside with people jostling to get onto a home-bound train.

Those without a ticket were hopeful to get access to the platform and board a train heading out of the city but said that they were determined to leave the city as staying back was pointless.

"I appeal to all the migrant citizens of Delhi not to leave Delhi in panic. I assure you that the government will take care of your needs. All necessary arrangements are being

ensured. You run Delhi with your tireless hard work and this city is your own," Mr. Baijal said in his appeal to migrant workers.

## Floating tenders

Government sources said Mr. Baijal had on Tuesday directed the Divisional Commissioner and the Delhi Chief Secretary to float tenders to select NGOs to step up provisions for food and lodging to migrant workers fleeing the city. The L-G also directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to instruct personnel to counsel workers to stay back.

According to government sources, measures such as direct cash transfer of ₹5,000 into the bank accounts of workers registered with the government and arrangements for food and lodging at over 200 night shelters would begin by Wednesday.

"I appeal to all the migrant citizens of Delhi not to leave Delhi in panic. I assure you that the government will take care of your needs. All necessary arrangements are being

Other Construction Workers Welfare Board.

Contractors providing food to government schools under the mid-day meal scheme would be roped in to provide food to workers and daily wagers and 24x7 helpline would also be set up to act as a grievance management system, which would be shared through SMS. While 207 night shelters would initially accommodate workers, government schools and other facilities would soon be converted into lodgings.

## BJP knocks at L-G's door

Meanwhile, State BJP leaders held a videoconference meeting with L-G over problems being faced by citizens, especially COVID-19 patients and migrant labourers.

MPs Manoj Tiwari, Meenakshi Lekhi, Ramesh Bidhuri, Parvesh Sahib Singh, Gautam Gambhir and MLAs Ramvir Singh Bidhuri and Vijender Gupta among others were part of the meeting.

THE HINDU

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The IIT Tirupati Navavishkar I-Hub Foundation (IIFT) a Section-8 Company funded by Department of Science & Technology, Government of India, invites online applications from the Indian Nationals for the post of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) on contract basis. The detailed information regarding the position, eligibility criteria, qualifications, annual CTC etc are available on the website of this Institute <https://iitt.ac.in>. The applications for the above position will be received online (<https://forms.gle/8L68xiZTCwfLWwMG7>) from 21-04-2021 to 21-05-2021. Project Director

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**APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FOR THE POST OF REGISTRAR**  
Applications along with necessary documents shall reach to the office of the undersigned on or before 29.04.2021 For details log on to [www.bldedu.ac.in](http://www.bldedu.ac.in) Sd/-  
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<b>MECHANICAL ENGINEERING</b> Mechatronics and Robotics	<b>BIOMEDICAL ENGINEERING</b> Bio Chemical and Human
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S.No.	Position	Qualification
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3.	Nursing Staff : ICU / Critical Care/ Super Specialty/ General Ward	GNM / B.Sc. Nursing / M.Sc. Nursing

Note : ICU / Critical Care duties may also involve duties in COVID-19 ICUs/Wards. In that case following shall be applicable :

- COVID area duty hours & Quarantine shall be as per WHO / ICMR Guidelines.
- Best Quality PPE kits, Masks etc. will be provided.
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No. CSL/TSL/PROJ/HR/01/2021 19 April 2021

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Sl. No.	Name of posts	No. of Vacancies
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2	Manager (Finance)	1 Post (UR)
3	Manager (Materials)	1 Post (UR)
4	Deputy Manager (Health, Safety & Environment)	2 Posts (UR)
5	Deputy Manager (Estimation & After Sales)	1 Post (UR)
6	Deputy Manager (Planning & Project Management)	1 Post (UR)
7	Deputy Manager (Naval Architecture)	1 Post (UR)
8	Deputy Manager (Machinery Design & Piping)	1 Post (UR)
9	Deputy Manager (Electrical Design)	1 Post (UR)
10	Deputy Manager (Machinery Outfit)	1 Post (UR)
11	Deputy Manager (Information Technology)	1 Post (UR)
12	Assistant Manager (Quality Control)	1 Post (UR)
13	Assistant Manager (Estate & Administration)	1 Post (UR)
<b>B. Supervisory posts</b>		
14	Safety Supervisor	1 Post (UR)
<b>C. Workmen posts</b>		
15	Draftsman (Mechanical-Hull)	1 Post (UR)
16	Draftsman (Mechanical-Machinery Outfit)	1 Post (UR)
17	Draftsman (Electrical)	1 Post (UR)
18	Junior Technical Assistant (Electrical)	1 Post (UR)
19	Junior Technical Assistant (Mechanical)	1 Post (UR)
20	Assistant	2 Posts (UR)
<b>Total (A + B + C)</b>		<b>22 Posts</b>

For details, visit CSL website [www.cochinshipyard.com](http://www.cochinshipyard.com) (Career page). Last date of receipt of online application is 15 May 2021.

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**SAM HIGGINBOTTOM UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND SCIENCES**  
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Advt. No. 01/2021

**REQUIREMENTS**  
Applications are invited for the following TEACHING Posts:

S. No.	Positions	No. of Posts	Essential Qualification	Nature of Appointment
<b>PROFESSORS (03)</b>				
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2	Dairy Chemistry	01	Grant-in-Aid	
3	Food Process Engineering	01	As per UGC/ICAR/ICFRE/University norms	
<b>Salary for Professors mentioned in S.No. 1, 2, &amp; 3 ₹ 37400-67000 GP 10000 (unrevised)</b>				

# 'Lack of timely care hurting patients in U.P.'

Kin accuse hospitals of negligence; VIPs getting preference in ICU admission, testing, says Allahabad HC

## OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

A distraught Ambar Srivastava stands outside the mortuary at a government hospital, waiting to receive the body of his mother who died early on Monday after struggling for days to find necessary treatment.

Mr. Srivastava alleges that his mother, who was 67, died due to negligence by the hospital staff. He says they failed to administer oxygen to her in time. However, an official of the government-run Lokbandhu Shri Raj Narayan Combined Hospital denied the allegations but said he would look into the matter.

Mr. Srivastava's ordeal over the past few days typifies the struggle faced by patients in Uttar Pradesh, especially Lucknow, in securing hospital beds, oxygen supply and medicine in time as COVID-19 cases and deaths continue to rise.

Mr. Srivastava's mother was admitted to the hospital



A COVID-19 victim being cremated near Hindon Canal in Ghaziabad.

\* FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

at 2 a.m. on Monday. Kanak Srivastava, a diabetic with blood pressure and thyroid illness, was initially admitted to a private hospital here, but after her COVID-19 status turned out positive, the hospital asked the family to shift her elsewhere as they did not have the necessary quarantine facility, her kin said.

Even as her oxygen levels continued to drop, Mr. Srivastava says he spent over 24 hours calling up the COVID-19 control room but failed to se-

cure a bed. The family had to support her with an oxygen cylinder they purchased as the private hospital ran out of supply. However, following his appeals on social media, he managed to get his mother admitted to Lokbandhu.

### 'Was not given oxygen'

"Her oxygen levels dropped to 67-70 but she was fine at night. In the morning, she was breathless. My brother approached the doctors and the staff but they did not provide her with a cylinder," Mr. Srivastava alleged. Medical Superintendent of the hospital, Ajay Shankar Tripathi, said he would get Mr. Srivastava's allegations checked but maintained that there was no shortage of oxygen supply. The hospital had a stock of 265 cylinders besides the separate pipeline in the ICU, said the official. Mr. Srivastava submitted a complaint, demanding strict action against the staff for their "gross negligence."

His mother got tested on April 10 at a private laboratory. The results, however, came in three days later, he said. Since then, she was at home and all attempts made by the family to purchase oxygen cylinders proved futile. "We wasted all these days at home. After admission to the

Many families also narrated how the delay due to running around from one hospital to another had led to deterioration in the condition of patients. In Varanasi, Vishal Sahu, a law student, managed to get his mother Laxmi Devi admitted to a government hospital more than a week after she reported ill and after three-four days of desperate search. His mother is a diabetic. While it was difficult to find beds in government hospitals, the private facilities simply refused, said Mr. Sahu. "Private hospitals said the condition of the patient was bad and that they do not have Level-3 COVID infrastructure," Mr. Sahu said.

His mother got tested on April 10 at a private laboratory. The results, however, came in three days later, he said. Since then, she was at home and all attempts made by the family to purchase oxygen cylinders proved futile. "We wasted all these days at home. After admission to the

hospital, her oxygen level is under control—it is 91 with cylinder support—but she has become very weak and is unable to speak," said Mr. Sahu.

### Lockdown in 5 cities

While directing a lockdown in five cities of U.P., the Allahabad High Court on Monday took note of the issues in testing and treatment. While VIPs were getting their RT-PCR reports within 12 hours, the ordinary citizen was kept waiting for two or three days, the court said. It added that it emerged from the government hospitals that admission of patients to ICUs was largely being done on the recommendation of VIPs.

The judges termed the state's early testing scheme or plan "a farce". If hospitals are not able to provide beds and oxygen, cities like Prayagraj, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur and Gorakhpur cannot provide medical aid to even 10% of the population at any given point in time, the court said.

# No lockdown in Haryana, announces Chief Minister

Lal says no shortage of oxygen supply

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Tuesday said no lockdown would be imposed in the State but there would be strict compliance with COVID-19 guidelines.

The Chief Minister, addressing a live telecast programme, urged the labourers and workers to not panic. "Adequate arrangements have been made to ensure that no labourer and worker face any problem. This time, keeping the interest of the labourers and workers, especially those working on daily and monthly wages, no lockdown would be imposed in Haryana," said the Chief Minister.

"To ensure adequate medical arrangement for COVID-19 patients, the State government has recently held discussion with the DRDO officials for setting up a 500,000 bedded dedicated

COVID hospital in Panipat," he added.

He said there is a steady increase in COVID-19 cases, which is a serious matter of concern. "In the last one and a half months, the number of new infection cases has reached about 7000 in one day. To deal with this emergent situation a state-level COVID Monitoring Committee has been constituted under the chairmanship of Health Minister Anil Viji," said the Chief Minister.

Mr. Lal said: "There is no shortage of oxygen supply. Liquid oxygen is being produced in the oxygen plant at Panipat. Simultaneously, efforts are being made to ensure the availability of oxygen in gas form," he said.

Separately, Haryana Health Minister Anil Viji said at present there are about 42,000 active cases in the State out of which about 30,000 are in home isolation.

# Not all deaths getting audited in Odisha

## SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUBANESWAR

Despite COVID-19 cases rising sharply and a large number of consequential deaths occurring in different districts, the consolidated information disseminated by Odisha government has put the death toll on the lower side, fuelling suspicion about under-reporting of fatalities.

Since April 1, the State government has reported 32 deaths due to COVID from across 30 districts.

However, information trickling in from districts about fatalities is vastly different from the State government's claim.

"As many as 19 patients, who were admitted in our centre, have died. Only six deaths have been audited," said Sudhir Ranjan Nayak, who heads Nuapada COVID-19 Hospital.

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### NOTICE OF POSTAL BALLOT-E-VOTING

Members are hereby informed that pursuant to Section 110 read with Section 108 of the Companies Act 2013 ("the Act"), Rule 22 and Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 relevant circulars issued by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Company concerned has issued a Postal Ballot Notice, dated 18.03.2021 along with a Pro forma Statement, on 19.04.2021 only through electronic mode to all those Members of the Company whose email addresses are registered with the Company or with the depositories as on 16.04.2021 ("cut-off date"). The requirement for sending physical copy of the Postal Ballot Notice and Postal Ballot Form has been deferred with vide relevant MCA Circulars.

Members are hereby informed that:

a) Special Resolution pertaining to the entering into lease agreement with Bharat Electronics Ltd, Bangalore for leasing land and building of the company for a period of 29 years on terms and conditions mentioned in the draft lease agreement and approval for disposal of Machinery and other assets as set out in the Postal Ballot Notice, is to be transmitted through Postal Ballot by electronic mode which electronics needs only a remote e-voting system in the platform provided by Central Depository Services (India) Ltd (CDSL).

b) The e-voting period commences on Friday 23rd April 2021 (9.00 AM IST);

c) The e-voting ends on Saturday, 22nd May 2021 (5.00 PM IST), when remote e-voting will be blocked and voting shall not be allowed beyond said time.

d) Only those members, whose names are recorded in the Register of Members of the Company or in the Register of Beneficial Owners maintained by the Depositories as on cut-off date i.e., 16.04.2021 are entitled to cast their votes on the Special Resolution.

e) Members holding shares in physical form shall be entitled to vote by sending scanned copy of a valid request letter mentioning their name, folio number and complete address by mail to investor@camediaonline.com

f) For any enquiry or issues regarding e-voting you may refer the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-voting manual available at [www.evotingindia.com](http://www.evotingindia.com) under help section or write an email to helpdesk.evoting@cslindia.com

Date: 19.04.2021  
Place: Chennai  
for Tamilnadu Industrial Explosives Limited  
C.Kamaraj, I.A.S.,  
Managing Director (t/c)

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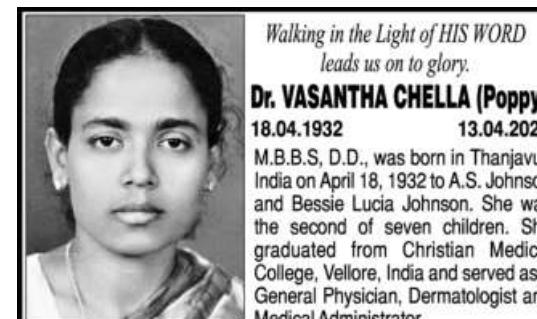
The Commissioner of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai invites e-Tenders for various works from the government registered contractors, who are also registered as 'MCGM Vendor'. Bidder should also give Rs. 1 Lack performance guarantee for the details of 02 number of Tenders of estimated amount Rs. 3841825.19 respective tender documents and process of e-Tendering, please visit [www.mcgm.gov.in](http://www.mcgm.gov.in)

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## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

### DEATH



*Walking in the Light of HIS WORD leads us on to glory.*

**Dr. VASANTHA CHELLA (Poppy)**

18.04.1932 13.04.2021

M.B.B.S, D.D., was born in Thanjavur, India on April 18, 1932 to A.S. Johnson and Bessie Lucia Johnson. She was the second of seven children. She graduated from Christian Medical College, Vellore, India and served as a General Physician, Dermatologist and Medical Administrator.

Vasantha gave her heart to the Lord Jesus as a young lady and grew in her love for Him over the years. Her greatest joy was in reading His Word. The fruit of the Spirit in her life was clearly evidenced by the manner in which she loved her family and friends.

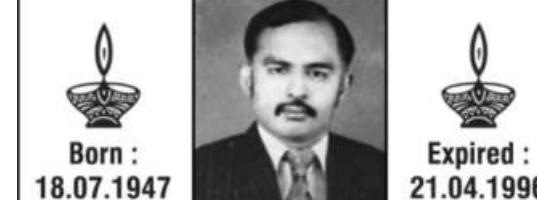
Vasantha followed her parents, her husband Manick Chella, her brothers Nesudoss Johnson and Arulodoss Chandrabhan Johnson to God's holy presence on April 13, 2021. She is survived by a multitude of family and friends whom she loved dearly.

Vasantha's heart's desire was that all family and friends should be saved through faith in Jesus Christ alone, and gather together at His feet to glorify Him through all eternity.

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**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**

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Former Managing Director :

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We all miss and love very much  
You are always in our hearts  
With Fond Remembrance*

**AR. Viswanathan, Managing Director**

**AR. Meenakshi, Director**

**AR. Umapathy, Director**

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## No lockdown in Haryana, announces Chief Minister

Lal says no shortage of oxygen supply

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## TO ADVERTISE PLEASE CONTACT

Mr. N SELVA KUMAR

PH: 9820350726

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IN BRIEF



Jagan launches crop loan scheme for farmers

GUNTUR  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the YSR Zero Interest Crop Loan Scheme on Tuesday. An amount of ₹128.47 crore was credited into the accounts of 6.27 lakh farmers who had taken crop loan of up to ₹1 lakh and repaid the amount within the stipulated time.

Cabinet okays Bengaluru Metro projects

NEW DELHI  
The Union Cabinet meeting on Tuesday, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the 58.19 km Bengaluru Metro Phase 2A and 2B, estimated to cost ₹14,788 crore. Announcing the decision, Union Minister Piyush Goyal said the new phases would have a transformative impact on commuting in the city.

# Kerala orders night curfew, restrictions

Inter-State buses ply but non-essential travel discouraged; no crowds allowed on election results day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala on Tuesday braced itself to combat the threat of a resurgent COVID-19. The State will enforce a curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. till May 3.

The administration has ordered bars, hotels, liquor outlets, shops and commercial establishments to down shutters at 7.30 p.m. Nevertheless, restaurants can serve food as takeaways till 9 p.m. No home delivery is permitted during the curfew.

The police have warned that those out of doors during the curfew would risk arrest. There is no restriction on the movement of vehicles at night. However, officers will require passengers to give them a valid reason for travel during the eight-hour shutdown.

Inter-State bus services will continue as usual. RT-PCR negative certificates are not mandatory for inter-dis-



Taking no chances: Police officers ensuring that COVID-19 protocols are followed in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday.

trict travel. A core committee meeting headed by Chief Secretary V.P. Joy reportedly ruled out imposing a total lockdown on weekends for now.

Malls and cinema halls will have to close shop at 7.30 p.m. The government has exempted medical stores, hospitals, fuel stations, night shift employees, milk vendors, newspapers and electronic media from the curfew. Notably, the government has decided not

to allow crowded merrymaking on the Assembly election counting day on May 2.

Telangana curbs

With a steep escalation in the number of people testing positive for COVID-19, the Telangana government has decided to impose night curfew across the State with immediate effect. Night curfew will be in force from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. till April 30.

The government said it had been decided to take the

step as a further measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Hospitals, diagnostic labs, pharmacies and those dealing with the supply of essential services have been exempted from the restrictions.

Weekend curfew

The Karnataka government also imposed weekend curfew and night curfew across the State and prohibited a range of businesses from functioning to contain the surge of COVID-19. The restrictions will be in place till May 4.

While the night curfew will be between 9 p.m. and 6 a.m., the weekend curfew will be between 9 p.m. on Friday and 6 a.m. on Monday. Educational institutions, cinema halls, shopping malls, gyms, yoga centres, spas, sports complexes, stadia, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres, and bars

have been brought under the prohibited list till May 4.

The guidelines ban social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious gatherings, and large congregation.

Tourist spots shut

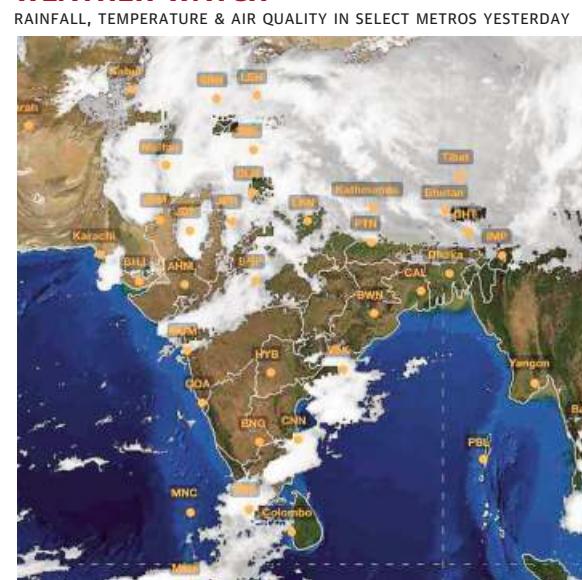
All tourist spots, including the Nilgiris, Kodaikanal and Yercaud hill stations, were closed on Tuesday as restrictions to contain the second wave of COVID-19 came into force in Tamil Nadu.

The authorities also began enforcing a night curfew between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.

The Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation released fresh timetables for long-distance bus services and suspended night-time operations. In the Nilgiris, boatmen staged a protest highlighting their concerns over loss of livelihood.

(With inputs from Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

WEATHER WATCH



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

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Bihar, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	36.8	27.0	Kozhikode	—	10.2	32.0
Ahmedabad	—	38.7	26.8	Kurnool	—	39.1	29.6
Aizawl	—	29.8	14.5	Lucknow	—	40.6	21.8
Altahabad	—	42.1	22.0	Madurai	—	37.0	26.7
Bengaluru	—	34.4	23.4	Mangaluru	—	32.9	26.0
Bhopal	—	40.7	23.3	Mumbai	—	33.2	25.4
Bhubaneswar	—	39.7	26.8	Mysuru	—	35.0	20.0
Chandigarh	—	39.3	19.4	New Delhi	—	33.8	19.5
Chennai	—	37.4	27.8	Patna	—	40.4	22.6
Coimbatore	15.4	31.3	20.8	Port Blair	1.8	31.8	24.5
Dehradun	—	30.4	16.2	Puducherry	—	35.2	26.6
Gangtok	48.8	—	12.1	Pune	—	38.2	22.8
Goa	—	34.5	26.8	Raipur	—	40.5	24.5
Guwahati	—	31.5	20.9	Ranchi	—	36.5	21.4
Hubballi	—	36.0	23.0	Shillong	—	25.5	15.2
Hyderabad	—	38.4	27.0	Shimla	—	20.5	15.0
Imphal	—	30.0	15.0	Srinagar	—	19.4	6.0
Jaipur	—	38.4	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	5.8	32.0	25.4
Kochi	2.8	—	23.8	Tiruchi	—	39.0	28.0
Kohima	—	26.6	12.2	Vijayawada	—	38.2	28.2
Kolkata	—	38.6	27.3	Visakhapatnam	4.3	33.6	24.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	39	55	91	.98	.99	■■■
Bengaluru	.7	85	33	.69	.89	■■■
Chennai	.6	16	75	.50	.23	■■■
Delhi	34	55	75	.237	.248	■■■
Hyderabad	.4	59	46	.107	.124	■■■
Kolkata	11	20	112	.230	.230	■■■
Lucknow	14	52	57	.209	.161	■■■
Mumbai	.9	20	20	.86	.104	■■■
Pune	—	.62	46	.73	.74	■■■
Visakhapatnam	—	.58	101	.54	.97	■■■

In observation made at 4.00 pm - Bhopal, Rajesthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 322 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 45

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>x</sub>:** 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. At high levels, it can cause unconsciousness and even death.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

# Karnataka asks schools to use continuous evaluation

Disruption leads to new CCE system till Class 9; Karnataka, Kerala cases soar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU  
As academic activities have taken another hit this year due to COVID-19, the Karn-

**COVID-19**  
taka government on Tuesday came up with a promotion evaluation system for students from Classes one to nine. "Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation Programme will be the deciding factor for promotion," Minis-



No space: Ambulances at Gandhi Hospital, Hyderabad, on Tuesday. Entry was restricted as cases mounted. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

ter for Primary and Secondary Education, S Suresh Kumar said. Schools must complete the process by April 30. The key features are that the children "must not be asked to physically attend the examinations," and the new system must be used as a tool only to assess learning capabilities.

Karnataka on Tuesday reported 21,794 cases, taking the total to 11,98,644, and 13,782 cases were from Bengaluru Urban. With 149 new deaths, the toll was 13,646.

In Kerala, Health Minister

activity rate (TPR) was steady at 17.45%. The active case load rose to 1,12,221.

The State added 28 deaths on Tuesday to touch 4,978 in all.

Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan faulted the Andhra Pradesh government's decision to go ahead with SSC (Class 10) board examinations, calling it "irresponsible." He urged the government to cancel both SSC and Intermediate examinations and promote students.

Andhra Pradesh reported 35 deaths and 8,987 infections on Tuesday. The TPR of 23.65% was a record. The cumulative tally rose to 9,76,987 and the toll touched

7,472.

Infection and fatality counts rose in Telangana, with 18 deaths and 5,929 cases reported on Monday.

As many as 10,986 persons tested positive for COVID-19 on Tuesday, taking Tamil Nadu's tally to 10,13,378. As on date, 79,804 persons are undergoing treatment. Among the newly infected were 54 persons who arrived from other States.

Forty-eight people succumbed, taking the State's toll to 13,205.

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

दिल्ली सरकार

आप की सरकार

Maintain  
a distance of 6 feet  
in public places  
Stay Safe

Once again Corona figures in Delhi are increasing rapidly, so remember to practice social distancing norms in public places. Come, let us together defeat this pandemic.



Please get vaccinated  
to protect yourself  
from Corona



Wash Your Hands  
Frequently with  
Soap and Water



Continue to  
Wear Masks





## Managing an upheaval

Universal vaccination is a necessary goal, but India is nowhere near achieving it

**A** combination of panic, public pressure and comprehension of the magnitude of the crisis that India is in seems to have prompted the Centre to authorise vaccines to anyone above 18 and give States more control over procurement. This is despite the problems in scaling up production, and in the supply and management of vaccines amid the surge in cases. The step could not have been easy to take. For one, the processes initiated by the government in early January to expand India's manufacturing capacity were under the assumption that it would be at least August before vaccines could be fully opened up for all. In December, it was announced that India's priority would be to fully inoculate 300 million of the most vulnerable. Given that about 127 million doses have been administered, including a section of those above 45 without underlying health conditions, around 17 million have been fully inoculated – or about 5% of the intended beneficiaries. At the optimistic rate of three million doses a day, it would take at least 260 days from today for every adult to get at least a single shot.

Eight months ago, India had begun a decline in daily infections to the extent that by January, India's leadership itself – going by its own policy actions – believed that a devastating second wave was unlikely. There is no other explanation why India, following the example of the U.S. and the U.K., did not tie up orders to inoculate most of its adults within this year. India also applied different standards: waiving critical trials for Covaxin, but having stringent requirements for foreign companies. The supply lines are thus inadequate. The second wave, the hospitalisation and medical-oxygen crisis, have derailed all previously laid out plans. Opening up vaccines for all on May 1 and letting States negotiate deals with manufacturers does sound like the government is 'listening to the people', but given the background of supply constraints until June, there is a likelihood that the story of 'vaccine shortage' will surface more acutely. Leading international vaccinators such as Pfizer and Moderna have supply commitments already tied up and it is unclear if merely the policy move of liberalising vaccine supply will leave States in India with the finances and negotiating power to procure enough stocks of vaccines. Moreover, given that this is the hottest month in India, lockdowns are resurfacing in cities, and no end is in sight for the second wave, the logistics of administration will continue to be challenging. It was always going to be impossible to rapidly inoculate a nation of a billion. But chaos and confusion, which now seem inevitable, could have been averted with some foresight and planning. Pragmatism and preparedness should replace hope that runs on nothing more than hype.

## A league of their own

European clubs, accountable only to investors, are looking for profit and ignoring fans

**T**he decision by 12 of Europe's biggest football clubs to unveil a plan to launch The Super League, a multi-billion-dollar tournament to be played largely among a closed group of 20 teams has thrown the European game into turmoil. Manchester United, Manchester City, Liverpool, Arsenal, Chelsea and Tottenham Hotspur from England, Real Madrid, Barcelona and Atletico Madrid from Spain, and Juventus, Internazionale and AC Milan from Italy have come together for an initiative "to put the game on a sustainable footing". But the principal aim seems to be to upend the Champions League, the crown jewel among all competitions managed by European football's governing body UEFA. That the announcement came just a day prior to UEFA announcing a reformed Champions League starting from 2024 is no coincidence. The Super League will inevitably damage the domestic leagues in each of the countries. Currently, league positions decide who qualifies for the Champions League, whereas in the proposed competition, the permanent members are under no risk of missing out, and are guaranteed a steady stream of revenue. According to one report, each founding member is assured of a whopping \$400 million in exchange for a mere commitment to establish a "sustainable financial foundation". This certainly appeals to clubs struggling to balance their books in the wake of COVID-19.

This use of a football club as mere for-profit business is the crux. Traditionally, clubs considered themselves to be public-spirited entities. Meaningful competition among them was seen as a meritocratic exercise. But with leagues increasingly awash with hedge fund money and handouts from oligarchs, outfits are answerable more to investors and shareholders than actual supporters. In such a scenario, unpredictability can be anathema and the Super League seeks to eliminate that. Understandably, fans are displeased. Jürgen Klopp, Liverpool manager, even claimed to have been kept in the dark. UEFA, desperate to protect its turf, has threatened to bar Super League players from its flagship events like Euros. FIFA bemoaned a "closed league", but stopped short of announcing sanctions. The Premier League, Spain's La Liga and Italy's Serie A are open to expelling teams, while British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has issued a stern warning. However, this is no endorsement of UEFA's new Champions League format, in which the number of games has nearly doubled and the additional revenue is sure to skew the domestic leagues further in favour of a few teams. Juventus has won the Serie A nine times in a row; Bayern Munich (Germany) and Paris Saint-Germain (France), both of whom have not signed up for the Super League, have been equally dominant. None of this feels like competitive sport. European football needs a rethink.

# A low-carbon future through sector-led change

In India, a sector-led, action-based approach could provide the framework to drive low-carbon transformation

ASHOK SREENIVAS,  
NAVROZ K. DUBASH &  
RAHUL TONGIA

**I**n the build-up to the 'Leaders' Climate Summit' organised by the United States this week (April 22-23), there has been a flurry of articles about whether India should announce a 'net-zero' emissions target, and by when. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 1.5°C report called for global carbon emissions to reach net-zero by 2050, which the pressure cooker of climate diplomacy has quickly transformed into a call for all countries to announce 2050 as the net-zero target year. Yet, global net zero may require some countries reaching net-zero before 2050 in order for others to have some additional time. Since a disproportionate share of the carbon space has been used up by developed countries, it is important that they act boldly at home, to match the vigour of their diplomatic efforts.

Nonetheless, as a climate-vulnerable country, India must also up its game to contribute to limiting global temperature rise, ideally below 1.5°C. While doing so, it should not lose sight of the history of global climate negotiations and its own developmental needs. Though a large country and economy, we are still a very poor country with a significant development deficit – for example, our per-capita carbon emissions are less than half the world average.

### What India must do

So, what is the way forward for India? Saying India will take only modest steps until richer countries do more is not viable in the context of a global climate crisis. Yet, announcing an Indian 2050 net-zero commitment risks taking on a much heavier burden of decarbonisation than many wealthier countries, and could seriously compromise India's development needs.

We suggest a third path, focused on concrete, near-term sectoral transformations through aggressive adoption of technologies that are within our reach, and an earnest effort to avoid high carbon lock-ins. This is best accomplished by focusing on sectoral low-carbon development pathways that combine competitiveness, job creation, distributional justice and low pollution in key areas where India is already changing rapidly. This approach is directionally consistent with India moving towards net-zero, which should be our long-term objective. Over time, India can and should get more specific about future economy-wide net-zero targets and dates. Here, we detail what such an approach would look like, by laying out the contours of an enhanced national pledge for the electricity sector, to illustrate how it can be both ambitious and in India's interest. A similar approach should be adopted for other sectors.

### De-carbonise power sector

To achieve net-zero emissions, a key piece of the puzzle is to decarbonise the electricity sector, which is the single largest source (about 40%) of India's greenhouse gas emissions. Decarbonised electricity would also allow India to undertake transformational changes in urbanisation and industrial development, for example by expanding the use of electricity for transport, and by integrating electric systems into urban planning.

So far, our efforts in the electricity sector have focused on expanding renewable electricity capacity, with targets growing by leaps and bounds from 20GW of solar to 175GW of renewable capacity by 2022, further growing to 450GW of renewable capacity by 2030. While useful as a direction of travel, India now needs to shift gears to a comprehensive re-imagination of electricity and its role in our economy and society.



One way to do this is to go beyond expanding renewables to limiting the expansion of coal-based electricity capacity. This will not be easy: coal provides firm, dispatchable power and accounts for roughly 75% of electricity today; supports the economy of key regions; and is tied to sectors such as banking and railways. These connections need to be unravelled to truly shift to a decarbonised future.

### Ceiling for coal power

A first, bold, step would be to pledge that India will not grow its coal-fired power capacity beyond what is already announced, and reach peak coal electricity capacity by 2030, while striving to make coal-based generation cleaner and more efficient. There is a strong rationale for this: coal is increasingly uneconomic and phasing it out over time will bring local gains, such as reduced air pollution, aside from climate mitigation. Such a pledge would give full scope for development of renewable energy and storage, and send a strong signal to investors.

A second, necessary step is to create a multi-stakeholder Just Transition Commission representing all levels of government and the affected communities to ensure decent livelihood opportunities beyond coal in India's coal belt. This is necessary because the transition costs of a brighter low-carbon future should not fall on the backs of India's poor.

Third, a low-carbon electricity future will not be realised without

addressing existing problems of the sector such as the poor finances and management of distribution companies, which requires deep changes and overcoming entrenched interests.

Finally, India will need to work hard to become a leader in technologies of the future such as electricity storage, smart grids, and technologies that enable the electrification of other sectors such as transportation. Through careful partnership with the private sector, including tools such as production-linked incentives, India should use the electricity transition to aim for job creation and global competitiveness in these key areas.

Thus, an electricity-supply focused component of India's climate pledge could provide the overarching framework to envision and drive transformative change.

### Improve energy services

Enhancing the efficiency of electricity use is an important complement to decarbonising electricity supply. Growing urbanisation and uptake of electricity services offer a good opportunity to shape energy consumption within buildings through proactive measures. Cooling needs are expected to increase rapidly with rising incomes and temperatures. Air conditioners, fans and refrigerators together consume about 60% of the electricity in households. Today, the average fan sold in the market consumes more than twice what an efficient fan does, and an average refrigerator about 35% more. India could set aggressive targets of, say, 80% of air conditioner sales, and 50% of fan and refrigerator sales in 2030, being in the most efficient bracket. In addition to reducing green house gas emissions, this would have the benefit of lowering consumer electricity bills. India can leverage this transition too as an opportunity to become a global leader in production of clean appliances.

Such a sector-by-sector approach, which can and should be developed for other sectors, can demonstrate concrete, yet ambitious, domestic action that sets India on the path toward net zero emissions. It empowers India to insist that developed countries complement their distant net-zero targets by enacting concrete near-term measures that are less reliant on unsure offsets. This approach also allows India to nimbly adapt its sectoral transition plans as technologies mature and enable it to ratchet up its pledges periodically as required by the Paris Agreement.

### Forming timelines

Going further, India may even consider committing to submit plausible pathways and timelines to achieving net-zero emissions as part of its future pledges. This would allow India adequate time to undertake detailed assessments of its development needs and low-carbon opportunities, the possible pace of technological developments, the seriousness of the net-zero actions by developed countries, and potential geo-political and geo-economic risks of over-dependence on certain countries for technologies or materials. India can also use this period to develop a strategic road map to enhance its own technology and manufacturing competence as part of the global clean energy supply chain, to gain benefits of employment and export revenues. Such an integrated approach, which is ambitious, credible and rooted in our developmental needs – including climate mitigation needs – will represent an ambitious, forward-looking and results-oriented India.

Ashok Sreenivas is a Senior Fellow at Prayas (Energy Group). Navroz K. Dubash is a Professor at the Centre for Policy Research. Rahul Tongia is Senior Fellow at the Centre for Social and Economic Progress

## Fight the pandemic, not the Opposition

The central government must shed its policy of 'credit is mine and crisis is yours' and get down to course correction



JAIVEER SHERGILL

**T**here is a famous saying, "bad examples serve as good warning signs". The nation was hoping that after witnessing and experiencing the effects of a shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE) kits, N-95 masks and HAZMAT suits in the harsh, dreaded summer of March-April 2020, the Central government would take corrective steps and not repeat the mistake of ending up with a lack of supply of oxygen, medicines and of prioritising exports over domestic demands in terms of vaccine availability. However, looking now at the heart-rending and urgent appeals for oxygen supplies and vaccines, and the snail's pace of the vaccination drive and reports of vaccine shortages, it is clearly *déjà vu* in terms of it being sheer mishandling by the event management-obsessed Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government.

However, amid the bad news of rising COVID-19 deaths and dipping resources, India's young population can heave a sigh of relief that the ruling regime has finally considered the suggestion of the Opposition to look at universal vaccination and woken up to the reality that 80% of the population below 45 years of age, who constitute a large segment of the COVID-19 infected citizenry, needs protection. But, a few questions

remain unanswered: why did it take so long to give the green signal for a 'vaccine for all' policy? Why do the scales remain tilted in favour of exports over domestic supply? Why did the wise men and women at the helm of affairs not ensure the acquisition and the manufacture of the arsenal of equipment and keep them ready to combat the current catastrophe? Had the government paid heed to saner voices and prepared itself during the last one year for domestic capacity augmentation, maybe India would have been in a better position to face the second wave. Now, the bottlenecks in the domestic supply of medicines, oxygen and vaccines have become a major constraint in the fight against COVID-19. In the absence of a steady stream of these key essentials, the 'liberalised' vaccination drive runs the risk of becoming another victim of sketchy implementation by the BJP government.

**India versus the world**  
To avoid this, decision makers must hunker down to give wings to the vaccination drive and ensure maximum factory output to achieve maximum coverage. According to information available in the public domain, India lags behind the world average of doses administered per one lakh population. Out of the population of 136 crore Indians, approximately only one crore have got both doses. With less than 8% of the population vaccinated so far, India is way behind in terms of vaccination speed and coverage. Israel has vaccinated 61.8% of its population while it is 39.2% in America. Countries such as the Seychelles and

Bhutan have vaccinated 67.4% and 62% of their population, respectively. The vaccination percentage in India is behind even Morocco, where 12.6% of the population have been vaccinated. To make matters worse, several State governments, including worst-hit Maharashtra, are facing shortages; in fact, vaccination has been halted at several centres across the country. This needs to change if India has to come out of the tailspin induced by the COVID-19 storm.

### Engage with the U.S.

The vaccine manufacturers, specifically the Serum Institute of India, has already raised a red flag over the shortage of raw materials to produce the vaccine due to export ban imposed by the United States Government invoking the U.S. Defense Production Act, 1950. Last year, India exported more than 50 million hydroxychloroquine tablets to the U.S. Therefore, the Ministry of External Affairs should not waste any more time in getting the U.S. embargo lifted by encashing the goodwill of medicine diplomacy and showing no hesitancy in seeking a return of the favour. An 'out of stock' vaccine scenario is not only weakening India's fight against COVID-19 but is also leading to the erosion of public confidence in the government's containment strategy.

In addition, for the purposes of ensuring that young India and the less privileged sections of our society are not deprived of vaccination, financial deterrents need to be removed. First, States are struggling with their finances and lakhs of crores of their Goods and Services Tax dues are pending with the Centre. These dues should be cleared so that direct purchasing from the manufacturers does not have an additional burden. Second, a pricing cap should be imposed considering that unemployment is at a 45-year-high, affecting youth, and free vaccination should be made available to the weaker sections of society.

### Vaccine diplomacy can wait

Another aspect which requires a rethink is India's global commitment to vaccine, medicine diplomacy *vis-à-vis* our domestic requirements. While it is true that the pandemic of the magnitude of COVID-19 has expanded the role of nation-states to fight the virus at the global level, the national priorities and lives of their own people demand the highest priority of governments to focus on domestic needs. As per the Government's reply in the Rajya Sabha (March 17, 2021), a total of 7.06 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines were supplied to the States and Union Territories; whereas, during the same period, 5.96 crore doses of vaccines were exported to 74 countries. According to the latest figure of the Ministry of External Affairs, 6.60 crore doses of vaccines have been exported out of India, as on April 19, 2021, which includes supplies in the form of 'grants-in-aid', commercial sales and under GAVI's

COVAX facility. Similarly, during the last six months, 11 lakh remedevir injections were exported without considering the imminent domestic demand at a time when scientists had warned about a severe second wave in India. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan made a statement in Parliament that vaccines are not being exported 'at the expense of Indians' – but the numbers speak for themselves. Clearly, it is time to balance out the equation. By not addressing the supply issue seriously, euphemistically speaking, the BJP government is locking up the fire brigade stations despite seeing the wildfire spread. Vaccine diplomacy can and should wait till the entire population of India is vaccinated.

Last, and most importantly, the government machinery needs to shift gear from fighting the political Opposition to fighting COVID-19. By ridiculing the constructive suggestions of Opposition leaders such as Dr. Mammotha Singh and Rahul Gandhi and then implementing them the very next day only exposes the BJP's brand of low politics. For the sake of upholding the spirit of cooperative federalism, the Centre must shed its policy of "credit is mine and crisis is yours" and follow the motto of "we shall fight it together". True "Utsav" will only be witnessed when a majority of Indians stand vaccinated and no patient dies as a result of a shortage of hospital beds, oxygen cylinders and/or unaffordable injections.

Jaiveer Shergill is a Supreme Court lawyer and National Spokesperson, the Indian National Congress

## 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.

### Pandemic management

One cannot dispute the need to vaccinate people of all ages. However, one should factor in the availability of vaccines in required numbers to make the campaign a success. Going by available reports, it would take a few more months for the manufacturers of the two locally available vaccines to scale up their production to meet the additional demand. Availability of raw materials to increase production needs to be reckoned with. There will

be a greater shortage as vaccination has been opened up for all aged 18 and above. As everyone knows, India has a more younger population to cater to and there are just about 10 days to stock vaccines to meet the requirements when they turn up to take their jabs. This decision would also affect the availability of vaccines to those aged above 45, who are either taking the first dose or due for their second dose. There could be an unprecedented rush which would inconvenience

senior citizens and persons with co-morbidities. One wonders whether it was a knee jerk reaction taken oblivious of the ground realities, for the purpose of silencing critics over a situation mishandled. We could have stocked up enough Sputnik vaccine before opening up vaccination for all. Such a proactive step would have also avoided possible shortcomings and chaos in distribution and availability as is happening now.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Chennai

■ The lockdowns are expected to break the chain of transmission which could offer some respite to health-care workers and facilities swamped by an avalanche of cases. But lockdowns are leaky unless disease surveillance improves, masking is enforced, institutional alternatives to home quarantining are made available, and the food security needs of migrant workers to avert an exodus like last year are fulfilled. Further, access to testing and health-care facilities must be made accessible. Otherwise,

a lockdown will not serve its purpose. Door-to-door testing and tracing to spot asymptomatic spreaders must be intensified. Despite much visibility about a micro-containment strategy, the public health system's disease surveillance capacity is poor. Lockdowns cannot become the default containment strategy.

N. SADHASIVA REDDY,  
Bengaluru

### Election rallies

The nation would like to know why the top political leaders continue to attend

election rallies in West Bengal when the people are facing a pandemic wave. Is winning an election more important to them than the lives of people? The top political leadership should take a decision by cancelling all election rallies and setting an example to others ("BJP to have smaller crowds at rallies", April 20). The decision should not be between smaller crowds or bigger crowds at rallies!

G.N. RAJU,  
Hyderabad

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# The long battle against the Maoists

Unconventional wars are not fought merely on the ground; they are battles between minds of steel



R.K. RAGHAVAN  
& D. SIVANANDAN



CoBRA jawan Rakeshwar Singh Minhas's wife participates in a protest demanding the safe return of her husband, in Jammu on April 7. Mr. Manhas was released by the Maoists on April 8. AP

In the April 3 encounter between security forces and the Maoists in Sukma, a Maoist stronghold in Chhattisgarh, 22 jawans were killed – seven from the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), a unit of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), and 15 from the Chhattisgarh Police. One CoBRA jawan, Rakeshwar Singh Minhas, who was held hostage by the Maoists, has since been released. This followed a message from the Maoists to a Bijapur-based journalist that mercy would be shown to Mr. Minhas if the government nominated a team of mediators to negotiate his release. A team of local people, who later went deep into the forest area from where the Maoists were operating, spoke to the rebels and prevailed upon them to release the jawan. What persuaded the extremist group to show this gesture after their cruel act of killing the 22 men is anybody's guess. It was possibly their attempt to broadcast to the world that they are not all that violent or merciless as portrayed by the administration; that they are in fact humane and compassionate, fighting only for a cause.

#### Determination and tactics

The ease with which the Maoists are able to strike at security forces and indulge in indiscriminate killing from time to time has confounded many analysts. The frequency of attacks may fluctuate depending on the preparedness of the extremists and the strength of the establishment's retaliation. But the tactics of the Maoists have not changed greatly. They usually spread misinformation about the numbers of Maoists on the ground in a village as well as their location. Communication equipment in the hands of government forces has not greatly improved over the years. Ambushes have, therefore, yielded rich dividends to the rebels. It is an entirely different matter that they have also paid substantially with the lives of their own ranks.

What should surprise an objective observer is the determination displayed by the extremists regardless of the difficulty in periodically replenishing their ranks and keeping them in a reasonable state of morale against great odds. The Maoists can never match the government's resources and professional prowess. This is despite the assistance they receive in terms of weaponry from various sources. But unconventional wars are not fought merely on the ground; they are battles between minds of steel.

Gory incidents like the recent one in Chhattisgarh have often led to the quick charge of lack of intelligence and planning on the part of the government, as though intelligence is a piece of cake. The criticism conveniently ignores the ruggedness of the terrain from where the extremists operate and the intoxication that an anti-establishment propaganda offers to almost all members of the group. In our view, if happenings during the past five decades or so are of any indication, one cannot overstate the capacity of the extremists. What works to their advantage is the fact that many States cannot give undivided attention to the task of eradicating extremism. All that the Central and State governments often do to step up their operations is to de-

ploy more policemen and pour in more money and improve technology, but this has an impact only for a short span of time. There is an element of fatigue that afflicts both sides.

**Does development help?**

A lot of well-meaning people, some of whom are from the five States that are often affected by Maoist fury – Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Maharashtra – have ceaselessly put forward the argument that rapid economic development of a region alone would lure people away from extremist ideology. Advocacy in favour of amelioration of living conditions is hard to dismiss. To be fair, the governments involved, both in the States and at the Centre, have taken the plea seriously and implemented several development schemes in these areas. However, this has helped only partially. Andhra Pradesh is perhaps an exception where the magic of development has succeeded, especially in Srikakulam district. Civil servants who have served in that area say a dedicated leadership at the district and grassroots levels is one explanation for this transformation.

Some also say inducing local youth into the security forces helps in fighting the extremists. Over-de-

pendence on Central forces is counterproductive. For able-bodied locals to comprise security forces is commendable. The Greyhounds, raised in Andhra Pradesh in 1989, is an eloquent illustration of this. History will remember the results it produced under the phenomenal leadership of K.S. Vyas, a courageous IPS officer who unfortunately paid with his life for the valour and dynamism that he had displayed.

Whatever is happening in parts of the eastern region of our country should not surprise us. Economic deprivation and religious fundamentalism often hijack the thinking processes of many populations. How else would you explain the savagery that you continually witness in many parts of poverty-afflicted Africa? What about Northern Ireland from where violent disturbances are being reported from time to time owing to the Catholic-Protestant divide? The romance attached to the Maoists is therefore difficult to dislodge. One must also realise that shared ideology and resources by like-minded groups boosts their capabilities.

#### Objectives

The objective of the Maoists is to drive a wedge between the security forces and the government so as to sow disaffection against the latter. Another aim is to serve a warning to the government that it has no option but to concede all the demands of the extremists. It is another matter that these demands, such as the formation of a 'people's government', are secessionist in nature, which no constitutionally elected establishment will ever concede.

This is a tricky situation that defies a lasting solution unless the rebels break down from fatigue and suffer from a situation where recruits dwindle. We don't see this happening in the immediate future. If this assessment proves right, we may see a gradual migration of younger rebels aspiring for a better life going to other parts of the country where there are better educational opportunities. It may start as a trickle but could become a deluge over the next few decades.

R.K.Raghavan is a former Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation and D. Sivanandan is a former Director General of Police of Maharashtra

# Same old rote learning

The pandemic gave administrators an opportunity to re-examine the education system, but nothing has changed



MAHESH GOPALAN

Last year, as the pandemic disrupted our lives, bureaucrats and administrators associated with educational institutions released a flood of notifications and circulars. Supposedly designed to enable academic activity, these orders disregarded the distress experienced by the academic community. The unrealistic 'one order fits all' approach established the distress as a new feature of educational institutions. The biggest failure of the administrative response was that instead of helping institutions, faculty and students overcome the uncertainties, the focus was on unnecessary bureaucratic centralisation.

The second wave, occurring at a time when students in schools and higher educational institutions transition from one level to another, has exposed the administrative inadequacies of the past year. It was obvious that the pandemic would disrupt the academic schedule for more than two years. As we return to ask the same questions from 2020 in 2021, such as those about the end and commencement of academic terms, we need to accept that the past criticisms of these administrative actions were justified.

**A lost opportunity**

The pandemic offered an opportunity to initiate sustainable reforms in the structure of the academic term and the nature of continuous assessment. It provided an opportunity to work with teachers to address their concerns, encourage better student-teacher interactions, and develop a better framework to determine the qualificatory grade for students to move to the next stage of study. But instead, the administrator's rigid insistence on rote learning, refusal to recognise the fact that marks obtained in exams are not the only markers of a student's capabilities, and reluctance to engage with fellow academicians and teachers to nurture academic engagement became a source of public distress.

The exam system, which has been crying out for significant overhaul, could have been reformed. We needed to reduce the pressure on our students and discourage them from memorising to prepare for set and repetitive exam questions. Attention should have been given to continuous assessment and evaluation of students. A system geared to assess the students' understanding rather than ability to memorise and reproduce should have

been in place.

The revised academic calendars introduced in 2020 not only undermined proper and constructive academic interaction between teachers and students but also exposed everyone to new levels of distress. While teachers conducted online classes daily, administrators were obsessed with monitoring them and showed scant interest in enquiring about the health and difficulties of their colleagues and staff. They failed to consider initiatives to assess the mental health of teachers, non-teaching staff and students. At times it seemed as if they did not fully understand the qualitative and operational differences between online and offline classes. The government and its academic bureaucracy forced upon us archaic academic visions that exposed their outdated understanding of technology and their lack of understanding of the contemporary challenges of classroom interactions.

#### The way forward

There is a pressing need for bureaucratic administrators to consult academic stakeholders and find a way forward. It is time for institutions to reconsider their approach towards exams and grading. We need to introspect on the objectives of stressful final exams, consider alternative forms of assessment for promoting students, and explore innovative ways for evaluating the teaching and learning process. School boards and universities need to alter the pattern of question papers. We need to make academic evaluation more rigorous and sustainable, reduce the number of questions to be attempted, and encourage students to write imaginatively. The idea of open book examinations needs to be developed.

The next few weeks will be a testing time for decision-makers in educational institutions. They will need to display administrative acumen and show willingness to learn from mistakes. The bureaucracy must recognise that universities and schools have their own academic considerations and that the standardisation of academic requirements, calendars, and teaching and learning processes are not feasible. Administrators of educational institutions should seize the initiative from the government, avoid shortsighted decisions, and decentralise decision-making. The decisions we take should not be knee-jerk responses such as cancelling and/or postponing exams and remaining fixated with the completion of the academic term; they should help secure the academic future for students, teachers and institutions.

Mahesh Gopalan is Assistant Professor, Department of History, St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi

# Tackling vaccine hesitancy

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, but the past has taught us some lessons

#### SAMIRAN PANDA

India is seeing a second wave of COVID-19 cases. However, this time we have diagnostic tools to tackle the infection, our healthcare workers are better equipped and more informed about the virus, and we have vaccines to counter the pandemic.

**Benefits of vaccines**

Yet I get several calls a day from concerned friends and relatives on which vaccine is better or if they should take the vaccine at all. My answer to most of them is simple – a resounding yes! Vaccines are one of the most important public health tools we have to mitigate the impact of infectious diseases. While some vaccines prevent infections from gaining a foothold in our body, others reduce the severity of illnesses. Currently available COVID-19 vaccines belong to the second category: they are disease-modifying vaccines.

It's important to understand that a vaccinated individual can contract SARS-CoV-2, and without getting noticeably ill, can pass it on to other susceptible individuals. That is why face masks should be worn even after one receives the COVID-19 vaccine. While at individual and community levels, COVID-19 vaccines can save lives, replacement of non-COVID-19 healthcare services at government and private facilities due to rising demand for COVID-19 care can also be avoided through rapid vaccination drives.

Yet, despite such direct and indirect benefits of COVID-19 vaccines, many are still hesitant to accept these life-saving scientific interventions. This phenomenon, vaccine hesitancy, is defined by the World Health Organization as a reluctance or refusal to be vaccinated and is one of the top threats to global health. It is a complex phenomenon for which there are no easy answers – hesitancy is often extremely localised to region and sociocultural contexts.

This is not new. Reluctance to vaccinate has had detrimental impacts on public health in the past. Hesitancy was observed in Britain around vaccination against whooping cough in the 1970s and 1980s, and against measles in 1990. Hesitancy around the HPV vaccine in Japan and tetanus

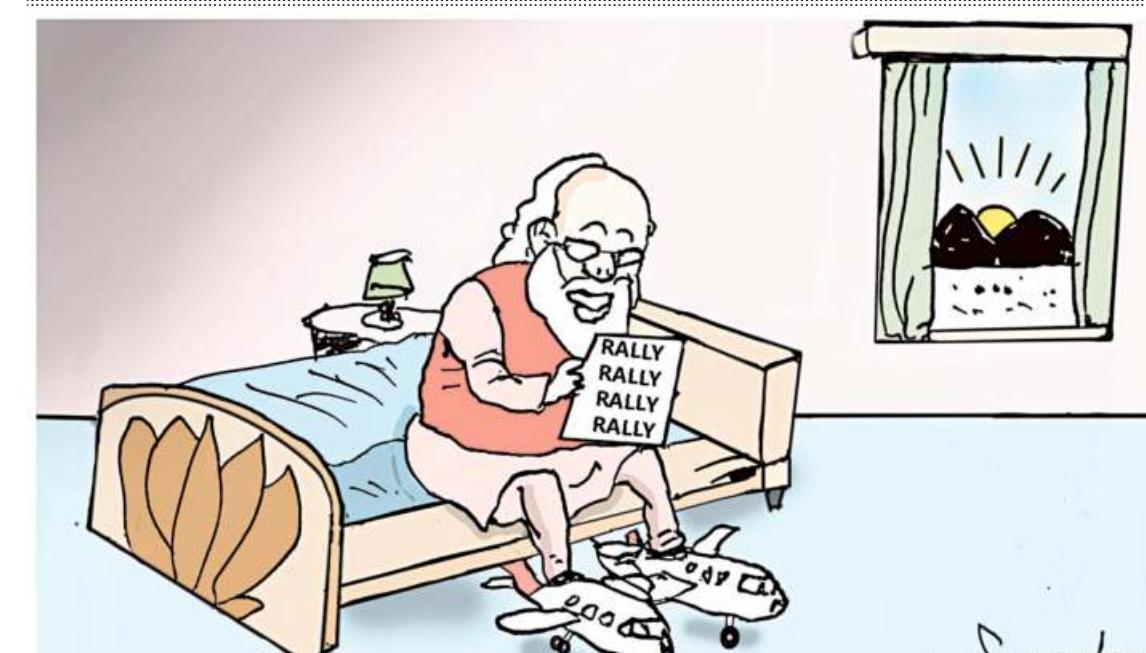
toxoid in Kenya has also been recorded. In India, too, there was hesitancy during the polio vaccination campaign. But mothers of the polio-affected children acted as agents for social change and paved the way for India reaching polio-free status.

But today's digital age has given vaccine hesitancy new momentum. In this age of surplus information, outbreaks of misinformation, spread through social and digital media channels, have the potential to significantly impact public health. India is particularly vulnerable to this challenge because we are increasingly moving towards consumption of news and information online and through social channels. This kind of misinformation, when directed towards public health programmes such as immunisation, can adversely impact public trust, especially through an 'echo chamber' effect.

#### Some solutions

There cannot be a one-size-fits-all approach to vaccine hesitancy, but some things have worked in the past. Key among them is building public trust through clear and transparent communication. We need to equip ourselves as well as healthcare professionals and frontline workers with the information needed to counter misinformation. The messenger is also as important as the message. Garnering the support of trusted local and community voices can build credibility and address region- and community-specific needs and remove hesitancy. Seeding positive messages proactively in the community and on social platforms and demonstrating positive behaviour change, instead of countering rumours once they circulate, have also been shown to combat hesitancy. Above all, we need to understand and address our community's concerns with empathy, because this is not just about the COVID-19 pandemic; it is about public trust in vaccines as a whole. Only when we as a community trust that vaccines work can we mobilise, protect those who cannot be vaccinated and take a giant step towards a healthier world.

Samiran Panda is Head, Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases, ICMR

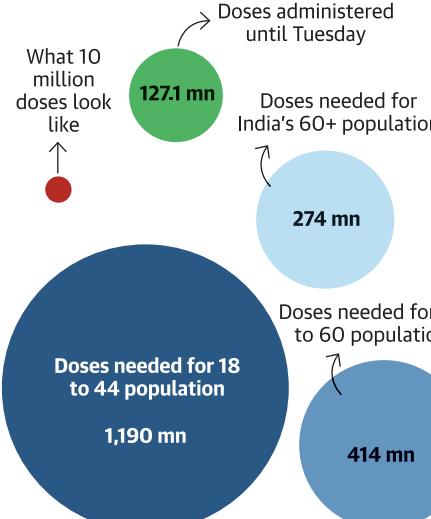


#### DATA POINT

## A matter of size

Opening up COVID-19 vaccines to all above the age of 18 from May 1 will mark the third phase of India's inoculation campaign. As of 7 a.m. on Tuesday, 127.1 million doses had been administered. The average daily vaccination rate stands at 2.65 million doses. In comparison, the number of people in India\* who are aged 60 or more is 137 million (274 million doses), the government's initial target. After it opened up vaccination for those above 45 on April 1, an additional 207 million people (414 million doses) got added to the intended target. On May 1, an additional 595 million people (1,190 million doses) will get added to this queue.

By Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Suman Sen



**STATE-WISE** | The chart shows the number of doses administered until Tuesday and the number of doses needed to vaccinate the 18-44 population in major States. For instance, Uttar Pradesh had administered 10.9 million doses by Tuesday. After May 1, an additional 99.5 million people (199 million doses) will get added to the intended target

	*	+
A.P.	*	+
Assam	*	+
Bihar	*	+
Chhattisgarh	*	+
Gujarat	*	+
Haryana	*	+
Himachal	*	+
J&K	*	+
Jharkhand	*	+
Karnataka	*	+
Kerala	*	+
M.P.	*	+
Maharashtra	*	+
NE States	*	+
Odisha	*	+
Punjab	*	+
Rajasthan	*	+
T.N.	*	+
Telangana	*	+
U.P.	*	+
Uttarakhand	*	+
West Bengal	*	+

\*Figures are projected for 2021 and sourced from "report of the technical group on population projections, November 2019"

#### The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 21, 1971

Sobers' tribute to Wadekar, Gavaskar

Port of Spain, April 20: India registered its first ever rubber victory against the West Indies at the Queen's Park Oval here yesterday when the fifth and final test ended in a draw. A large crowd gathered below the players' balcony and cheered the Indians after the match concluded on an exciting note.

Sobers, the West Indies skipper, congratulated his Indian counterpart, Wadekar on his victory and his splendid generalship, at the end of the match. He said India's superiority had a lot to do with Wadekar's plan of attack again the West Indies left-handers on whom the team's batting was based. "This was one of the hardest series I have ever played," he said.

Commenting on the performance of India's opening batsman Gavaskar, who aggregated 774 runs in four Tests, Sobers said "he is a tremendous player." The final Test saw a dramatic finish. The West Indies batsmen chasing a target of 262 runs in 155 minutes lost eight wickets for 165 runs when stumps were drawn. Final scores: India: 360 and 427; West Indies: 526 and 165 for eight.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 21, 1921

Corporal punishment

We publish elsewhere an extract from the *Times* on the dangers to civilisation involved in the continuance of corporal punishment in our schools. The resort to violence in setting children right must be admitted on all hands to be a confession of failure on the teacher's part in his attempt at reform with other and better methods of chastisement. No doubt it serves to some as a convenient, though not always an effective short-cut in the classroom to get over some difficulty, save prestige or establish discipline. In some cases, it may be, according to a few, the only way to avert dangerous mischief or persistent disobedience. But the other and more important fact cannot be ignored that the remedy is of a temporary and invariably of a superficial nature. It leaves the root cause of the trouble, which is most psychological and organic in the pupil's nature, unaltered and achieves its effects by brutal intimidation and physical force. Added to this ultimate futility is the moral degeneracy engendered in the impressionable mind of children by the apparent triumph of violence and the consequent necessity therefore in human relations.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Use lockdown only as absolute last resort'

He applauded the vaccine manufacturers for their achievements and professionalism. He also said that the biggest strengths of our vaccine industry are its 'Samartha, Sansadhan and Seva Bhaav', and these are what makes them a vaccine leader in the world.

### 'All adults'

On Monday, with over new 270,000 cases being added everyday – the most in the world – and hospital facilities in several States strained, the government

said all adults would be eligible for a vaccine from May 1. Several States had imposed weekend and days-long lockdowns in an attempt to halt the transmission of the virus and ease the burden on healthcare.

Half the approved vaccines could be bought by states directly negotiating with vaccine companies. The Centre would however continue its ongoing free vaccination programme of healthcare workers, frontline workers, the old and those over 45.

## HC order for lockdown in 5 U.P. cities stayed by SC

The High Court had directed the Uttar Pradesh government to impose strict restrictions, including closing of malls, shopping complexes and restaurants, till April 26 in five cities – Prayagraj, Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur Nagar and Gorakhpur – but stopped short of calling it a "complete lockdown".

During the arguments, Mr. Mehta said, "Several directions have been issued, some of which the State has already taken steps, but to lock down five cities by a judicial order may not be the right approach."

The Bench noted the submissions of Mr. Mehta, who said the State has issued several directions to contain the spread of COVID-19.

"He [Mehta] further submits that the directions issued by the High Court vide the impugned order are as rigorous as a lockdown, though the High Court has observed that 'they are nowhere close to a complete lockdown,'" the Bench noted in its order.

When the Bench said the State shall report to the High Court about the steps that it has taken and proposes to take on the issue, Mr. Mehta said the government can also apprise the apex court about it.

In its petition filed in the apex court, the State government has said, "Though the intention behind the impugned order passed by the Division Bench is both laudable and salutary, the High Court has completely failed to appreciate that while passing the direction of the nature as quoted above the High Court has effectively encroached upon the executive domain and has passed a mandamus which is incapable of being executed at the present stage, and if execut-

It had also directed the government to "consider the imposition of a complete lockdown in the entire State for at least two weeks". Reacting to the order, the U.P. government had said there would be no "complete lockdown" in the cities for now.

The High Court had said if people were restrained from going out of their homes for a week in the first instance, the current chain of the spread of COVID-19 could be broken.

## CISCE cancels board exams for Class 10

He said the April 16 circular, which made the exams optional, had been withdrawn. In addition, all CISCE-affiliated schools were advised to begin the admission process for Class 11, if they had not already done so, he said.

Schools should prepare a schedule for starting online

classes for Class 11 students.

The CISCE was committed to a "fair and an unbiased criterion" on which basis the Class 10 results would be declared.

The criterion and the date of result declaration would be announced later, he said.

## U.S. currency watchlist an intrusion, says official

"I think the central bank's activity in the foreign exchange market has been perfectly balanced and completely legitimate within the accepted monetary policy mandate of central banks across the world. This watchlist is a recent phenomenon [and] it is an intrusion into policy space of central banks. I personally don't understand its rationale," he said.

**To provide stability**  
"These are, in my view, very legitimate market-based operations of a central bank. It

is a mandate of the central bank to provide stability in the currency as a result of which central banks buy and sell foreign currency. Our overall reserves have been fairly steady at \$500 billion to \$600 billion. We are not accumulating reserves like China, which at one point had reserves of \$4 trillion," he pointed out.

India, the Commerce Secretary asserted, had a steady holding pattern of forex reserves "with ups and downs" based on market-based transactions that central banks may undertake.

# 'Border situation cannot be swept under carpet'

Maintaining peace at the border is the essential basis to take forward India's ties with Beijing: India's envoy Vikram Misri

**ANANTH KRISHNAN**

Maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas is the "essential basis" to take forward India's ties with China, Vikram Misri, India's envoy to China, said on Monday.

There needed to be "respect for mutual concerns and sensitivities and for each other's priorities", Mr. Misri said in an interaction with Chinese scholars from think tanks and universities in the southern city of Guangzhou, according to a statement from the Indian Embassy in Beijing.

Mr. Misri said, at another dialogue last week hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) and the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs (CPIFA), there was "a tendency in some quarters to sweep this situation under the carpet and characterise it as just a minor issue and a matter of

**In a post-pandemic world of altered equations, multipolarity is probably more important than ever, both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond**

VIKRAM MISRI,  
INDIA'S ENVOY TO CHINA

perspective".

"This, too, is inadvisable as it can only take us further away from a sustained solution to present difficulties and deeper into an unfulfilling stalemate," he said. "In fact, it would be tantamount to running away from the problem and in a direction opposite to that where the promise of our closer development partnership lies."

### Remain deadlocked

Talks between military commanders appear to remain deadlocked over carrying forward disengagement in the Gogra and Hot Springs areas following the comple-



tion of the first phase at Pangong Lake. China's state media reported on Monday that the People's Liberation Army (PLA) "has deployed an advanced long-range rocket launcher to the Himalayas".

"It is the first time that the PLA has confirmed the deployment of long-range rocket systems to the border with India," the *South China Morning Post* quoted a front page report of the official *PLA Daily* as saying, adding that "an artillery brigade stationed 5,200 metres above sea level in Xinjiang military district has intensified its drills using a rocket system during full-wing combat-re-

ady training".

The Indian envoy's comments indicated the difference in how New Delhi and Beijing view the way forward to restore normalcy in the relationship. At the same dialogue, Sun Weidong, China's Ambassador to India, said, "What happened over the past few decades has proven once and again that highlighting differences will not help resolve problems."

"Rather, it will erode the foundation of mutual trust," he said. "The boundary dispute is a reality and should be given sufficient attention and taken seriously. However, the boundary question is not the whole story of China-India relations and should be put at a proper place in the overall bilateral relations."

Mr. Misri, however, said both countries "worked out elaborate mechanisms and parallel structures for border control and for the management of issues that cropped

up on the ground on a regular basis" and "though they were tested on multiple occasions, these mechanisms and structures helped maintain the all important peace and tranquillity on the borders, thereby helping create the environment in which the India-China relationship grew spectacularly between 1988 and 2019".

"It is tempting today to remember this period with a touch of nostalgia, and to argue that we should shelve our differences and things should immediately go back to the way they used to be," he said. "But we must acknowledge that these enabling structures and the fundamental premise of the closer developmental partnership have been placed under considerable strain by the serious incidents and the resultant violation of peace and tranquillity at the Line of Actual Control in Eastern Ladakh in April 2020 and

thereafter."

The two envoys also offered differing takes on multilateralism. Mr. Sun said, "China and India need to practise true multilateralism, abide by the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and uphold the international system with the United Nations at its core and an international order based on international law" and "reject 'small circles' of closeness and exclusion targeting other countries", a phrase some Chinese experts have used to refer to groupings such as the Quad.

Mr. Misri said, "In a post-pandemic world of altered equations, multipolarity is probably more important than ever, both in the Indo-Pacific and beyond" and "in a multipolar world, no country can set the agenda by itself without prior agreement and consultation, and then expect everyone else to come on board".

## Boeing 737 MAX 8s allowed to overfly India

Regulator modifies ban on aircraft

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the aviation safety watchdog, on Tuesday allowed Boeing 737 MAX 8s to overfly India in a move that will enable foreign carriers to operate the aircraft.

The aircraft continues to be banned for commercial operations in the country since its involvement in two air crashes more than two years back.

### Operations resumed

However, several airlines in the past few months have resumed operating the aircraft following clearances by European and U.S. regulatory bodies upon modifications.

The regulator on Tuesday modified its ban on Boeing 737 MAX 8 to exempt "foreign registered Boeing 737



The move will enable foreign carriers to operate the aircraft. ■ REUTERS

Max aircraft, for overflying the Indian airspace provided that the aircraft has been permitted by the regulatory authority of the State of Registry of the said aircraft for conduct of such operations and subject to obtaining permission from DGCA".

The DGCA has also permitted 737 MAXs grounded in the country and belonging to foreign lessors to be flown out.

## PM cancels Europe trip, amid surge

EU-India summit to be virtual; U.S. and U.K. issue advisories on trips to India

**SUHASINI HAIDAR**  
NEW DELHI

With an uncontrollable surge of COVID-19 cases in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has cancelled his travel to Europe next month, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced. The decision was taken after discussions with the European Union (EU) leadership and the Portuguese government, which was going to host the summit in Porto and had invited the leaders of all 27 countries that comprise the EU to attend the meeting with Mr. Modi.

"In view of the COVID-19 situation, it has been decided, in consultation with the EU and Portuguese leadership, to hold the India-EU Leaders' Meeting in a virtual format on 8 May 2021. The India-EU Leaders' Meeting in the EU+27 format, the first time that such a meeting is being held, reflects the



shared ambition of both sides to further deepen the strategic partnership," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said.

The cancellation comes a day after U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson cancelled his visit to India in view of the pandemic. Both the U.K. and the U.S. have also announced travel restrictions and advisories to citizens against travelling to India at this time. Mr. Modi was expected to travel to France during the same visit, which

has now been put off.

In the run-up to the proposed meeting, Mr. Modi had held a number of bilateral meetings with European leaders, including those of the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Luxembourg, Italy and others, in which future EU-India cooperation was discussed.

### Indo-Pacific strategy

India and the EU are also expected to discuss progress on the long-pending Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA), which has made little headway in more than seven years, and are likely to forge an agreement on cooperation on the Indo-Pacific strategy during the now-virtual meeting.

"To fulfil our potential, we need to be more ambitious in our cooperation on preventing climate crises, promoting human rights, building connectivity, sustainable

trade and defending a multilateral international order," an EU official, quoted in a report on the road ahead for India-EU ties, said.

On April 12, the EU and Indian officials also held the 9th 'Human Rights dialogue', where they discussed "strengthening the human rights mechanisms for the promotion of human rights and the role of national human rights institutions, civil society actors and journalists," the MEA had said. A day later, the foreign affairs committee of the European Parliament, which had introduced several discussions critical of India on the issue of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and restrictions on NGOs in the past

+ years.

## EPFO adds 12.37 lakh subscribers in February

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Tuesday said it had recorded a net addition of 12.37 lakh subscribers in February.

Of the net additions, 7.56 lakh joined for the first time and about 4.81 lakh exited and rejoined while switching jobs.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, EPFO has added around 69.58 lakh net subscribers during the current financial year. The data reflects growth of 3.52% in net subscribers addition in February 2021 over January 2021. Year-on-year compari-

son of payroll data indicates an increase of 19.63% in net subscribers, as compared to the corresponding period in February 2020," it said.

Of the net additions, 7.56 lakh joined for the first time and about 4.81 lakh exited and rejoined while switching jobs. About 3.29 lakh of the net additions were in the 22-25 age bracket, while 2.51 lakh were in the 29-35 age group.

Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka were in forefront of the net payroll addition.

## Remove offending online content

The Internet never sleeps and the Internet never forgets, says Delhi High Court

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

"The Internet never sleeps and the Internet never forgets," the Delhi High Court remarked on Tuesday while issuing a slew of directions to deal with the complications in removing offending content such as photographs and videos from pornographic websites.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said a court, when approached with such a grievance, should issue a direction to the website or online platform on which the offending content is hosted to remove such content forthwith, and in any event, within 24 hours of the receipt of the court order.

"A direction should also be issued to the website or online platform on which the offending content is hosted to preserve all information and associated records relating to it



tion by a woman who claimed that her photographs and images, though not in themselves obscene or offensive, were taken from her Facebook and Instagram accounts without her consent, and were uploaded on a pornographic website with derogatory captions added to them.

Justice Bhambhani noted, "The true enormity of this fact has dawned over the course of hearings conducted in the present matter, when it transpired that despite orders of this court, even the respondents [Internet service provider, search engines], who were willing to comply with directions issued to them in pending legal proceedings."

During the hearing, Google had stated that it had no opposition in removing access to the offending content as may be directed by the court. Justice Bhambhani said for an order directing the removal or access disablement of offending content to be effective even within India, a search engine had to block the search results throughout the world.

Facebook, which also owns the social media plat-

form Instagram, submitted that it had a robust privacy policy.

It pointed out that though it was the woman's allegation that her photographs and images had been taken from her Facebook/Instagram social media accounts, she did not claim any relief against Facebook/Instagram.

The woman claimed that she had already filed a complaint on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal as well as to the jurisdictional police, but to no avail. She claimed that the photographs had received some 15,000 views within a week of being posted.

Noting that a solution to the problem needed to be crafted so that legal proceedings of the nature faced by the court did not turn futile, Justice Bhambhani said for an order directing the removal or access disablement of offending content to be effective even within India, a search engine had to block the search results throughout the world.

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Facebook, which also owns the social media platform Instagram, submitted that it had a robust privacy policy.

The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) has asked all Central government organisations to decide on corruption complaints against employees within three months.

Action on the remaining complaints against the employees must be taken to the logical conclusion within three months of the date of receipt of the complaint," it said in an order issued on Monday.

## Online meet on the rising Korean wave in India

Korea Tourism Organisation, *The Hindu* to present online discussion on April 22

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

The Korea Tourism Organisation along with *The Hindu* will present an online discussion on 'The rising Korean wave in India and how it will influence post-pandemic travel to South Korea' on April 22 at 4 p.m.

The case stems from a pe-

sonal experience, be it with Korean food, "K-Drama", "K-Pop", "K-Beauty", or the similarities between Korean and Tamil culture. Participants also stand a chance to be part of a virtual Korea quiz and win gift hampers.

The panellists for the dis-



# 43 seats at stake in phase 6 of Bengal poll

A total of 306 candidates are in the fray in districts across the State; 779 companies of forces deployed

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

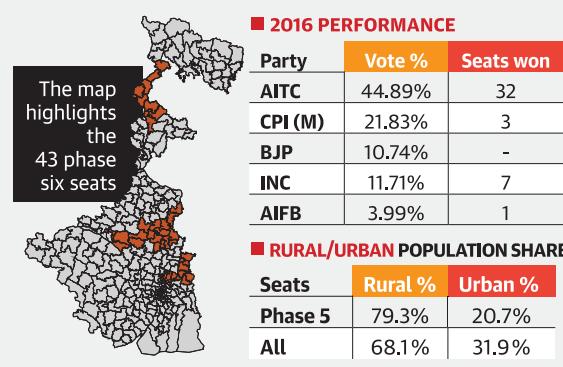
KOLKATA  
From the narrow stretch of land connecting north and south Bengal, often referred to as "chicken's neck", to the constituencies bordering Bangladesh in Nadia and North 24 Parganas districts, the sixth phase of polling in the State will be held across interesting geographies. The 43 Assembly seats that will go to the polls are spread across both north and south Bengal.

During this round, polling will be held in both Uttar Dinajpur district of north Bengal and Bardhaman Purba, Nadia and North 24 Parganas districts of south Bengal. Nine seats in Uttar Dinajpur and Nadia will go to the polls on April 22, along with 17 constituencies in North 24 Parganas district and eight in Purba Bardhaman district.

Several Assembly constituencies of Uttar Dinajpur, such as Chopra, Islampur, Goalpokhar and Chakulia, border Bangladesh on one side and Bihar on another.

The narrow stretch called

**Sixth leg** Forty-three constituencies will go to the polls in the sixth phase of the West Bengal election on April 22. A demographic and socio-economic profile of the constituencies:



SOURCE: LOKDHABA, DEVDALAB

"chicken's neck" has a strategic importance and is also inhabited by people of all religions and ethnicities.

Some of the constituencies in North 24 Parganas, particularly those located on the banks of the Hooghly, has centuries-old jute mills in places such as Naihati, Bhatpara, Jagaddal and Barrackpore, and an electorate comprising all communities of all religions.

In North 24 Parganas, and also in parts of Nadia such as Bongaon Uttar, Bongaon

Dakshin, Swarupnagar, Bagda and Krishnanagar Dakshin, there is a high concentration of Matuas. Most of the Assembly seats are reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Of the 43 Assembly seats, nine are reserved.

The poll plank of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and steps against infiltration, particularly in the border areas, whereas the Trinamool Congress, along with highlighting its

welfare schemes, has been campaigning against the implementation of the CAA and the National Register of Citizens.

In seats of Purba Bardhaman such as Katwa, Purbastali Uttar and Purbastali Dakshin, Ketugram, agrarian issues dominated the discourse. Despite the spike in the number of COVID-19 infections, there was a hectic election campaign, with several BJP leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Narendra Modi.

Nadda, participating in rallies and roadshows with a host of State and central leaders. For the Trinamool, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee, a Member of Parliament, were the star campaigners.

The campaigning ended on Monday. The ECI has extended the silent period from 48 hours to 72 hours for the remaining phases. The poll body will deploy 779 companies of central forces for this phase.

A total of 306 contestants are in the fray, including Trinamool Ministers like Jyoti Priya Mullick from Habra and Chandrima Bhattacharya from Dum Dum Uttar seats in North 24 Parganas. Senior BJP leader Mukul Roy is contesting from Krishnanagar Uttar and Rahul Sinha from Habra. Sitting MLAs of the Samyukt Morcha, Ali Imran Ramz of the All India Forward Bloc and Tamoy Bhattacharya of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), are contesting from Chakulia in Uttar Dinajpur and Dum Dum Uttar respectively.

The Chief Minister also cited her letter of February 24, requesting the Centre to permit the State to allow free vaccination for the people of West Bengal, adding that there was no response from the Central government on

# Centre evading responsibility on vaccines, says Mamata

Latest decision does not address supply concerns, she says

## SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA

Describing the Centre's decision of universal vaccination for COVID-19 as "hollow and without substance", West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday said the decision was a "regrettable show of evasion of responsibility at a time of crisis".

"Now, when the number of cases in the second wave is spiralling like anything, the Centre has chosen to tactically indulge in empty rhetoric and shy away from its responsibility of making available vaccines to the people of the country," Ms. Banerjee said in a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Chief Minister also cited her letter of February 24, requesting the Centre to permit the State to allow free vaccination for the people of West Bengal, adding that there was no response from the Central government on



Mamata Banerjee at a rally in Murshidabad district on Tuesday. ■ PTI

the communication.

In the letter, Ms. Banerjee pointed out that the announcement by the Centre does not address major issues like "ensuring the quality, efficacy, stable flow of supply of required number of vaccines by the manufacturers and also the price at which vaccines can be purchased by the States". She also expressed apprehensions that the announced policy might lead to unscrupulous mechanisms in the market, including pricing of vaccines, as it appeared to be based on market prices, which may put common people under a

huge financial burden.

The Chief Minister highlighted the shortage of vaccines and called for a "fair, transparent and credible vaccination policy", which would enable people to get vaccines urgently and at affordable prices. "More importantly, the supply would also become very erratic because the vaccine manufacturers are hardly prepared to scale up their production capacities to the desired levels to meet the nationwide demand," she said.

West Bengal, which is in the middle of a marathon eight-phase Assembly election, has seen a sharp spike in the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. Vaccination and related issues of managing the pandemic have become important poll issues.

On April 18, Ms. Banerjee had written to the Prime Minister on the shortage of medicines, oxygen cylinders and vaccines.

## 'Empty talk' by PM Modi, says Congress

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Tuesday described Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation as "empty talk" and said he had relinquished his responsibility.

"The Prime Minister addressed the nation in the middle of a full-blown catastrophe. He was expected to tell the nation as to what the government has done in terms of increasing beds in hospitals, increasing oxygen output and streamlining supplies, making drugs such as Remdesivir and Tocilizumab available, increasing the number of ventilators and enhancing vaccination. However, he chose to relinquish all his responsibilities and put the onus of saving India on NGOs, youth and Baal Mitras," Congress general secretary Ajay Maken said in a statement.

Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari said on Twitter, "Sub text of @PMOIndia's speech. Guys you are ... kind of on your own. If you are able to finally make it to the other side we will definitely meet again in some Utsav or Mahatov. Until then all the best. May God be with you."

## Rahul Gandhi tests positive for COVID-19

Cong. leaders wish him quick recovery

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said he had tested positive for COVID-19.

"After experiencing mild symptoms, I've just tested positive for COVID. All those who've been in contact with me recently, please follow all safety protocols and stay safe," Mr. Gandhi said on Twitter.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first few leaders who wished him speedy recovery.

"I pray for the good health and quick recovery of Lok Sabha MP Shri Rahul Gandhi," tweeted.

On Sunday, the former Congress chief had announced that he would suspend his political rallies in the wake of the rapid spread of the virus and also appealed to other parties to do so.

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram said on Twitter, "Learned that Mr. Rahul Gandhi has tested positive and has isolated himself. Deeply concerned. I wish him a full and speedy recovery."

"Please take care. With someone with your level of



Rahul Gandhi

physical fitness should be a breeze. @RahulGandhi," said Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari on Twitter.

Wishing the Congress leader fast recovery, party's chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said on Twitter, "In these challenging times, the nation needs your leadership more than ever."

Mr. Gandhi's results come a day after former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had tested positive and was shifted to the trauma centre of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS). Senior leader Anand Sharma had also tested positive and was admitted to a private hospital in Gurugram. He said he was feeling better and his vital parameters were fine.

## Rajnath reviews preparedness

Armed forces told to be in touch with the States to offer COVID-19 assistance

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday called upon the armed forces to be in touch with the State governments and be ready to provide assistance. He also delegated emergency powers of procurement to ensure that critical needs were met, the Defence Ministry said.

This was conveyed at a review meeting Mr. Singh held through video-conference with top officials of the Ministry, the Chief of the Defence Staff and the chiefs of the Army and the Navy, along with all Secretaries.

Separately, the Defence Ministry also directed that cantonment general hospitals maintained by Cantonment Boards across the country must extend all necessary medical assistance and service to patients approaching them for treatment, irrespective of whether they are Cantonment residents or not.

Mr. Singh was briefed about the measures taken by the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), the Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), the Ordnance Factory Board

(OFB) and other departments in providing aid to the civil administration.

"He urged the DPSUs, OFB and DRDO to work on a war footing to provide oxygen cylinders and extra beds to civil administration/State governments at the earliest," a Defence Ministry statement said.

G. Satheesh Reddy, Chairman, DRDO, informed Mr. Singh that a COVID-19 facility set up by his organisation had once again been made functional in New Delhi and efforts were being made to increase the number of beds from 250 to 500. Dr. Reddy added that the ESIC Hospital in Patna, which was converted to a COVID-19 hospital, had started functioning with 500 beds.

He said at the meeting that work was ongoing to set up a 450-bed hospital in Lucknow, a 750-bed hospital in Varanasi and a 900-bed hospital in Ahmedabad, the Ministry said.

Mr. Singh was also informed that based on the on-board oxygen generation technology developed for the light combat aircraft Tejas, a 1,000 litre per minute capacity oxygen generation plant technology had been given to the industry and the Uttar Pradesh government had placed order for five such plants with the industry.

Dr. Reddy said more plants could be supplied by the industry to cater to hospital requirements. SpO2 (blood oxygen saturation)-based supplemental oxygen delivery system developed

for soldiers posted at extreme high-altitude areas could be used for COVID-19 patients, as their conditions become similar.

The product would be available soon in the market from the industry, the Defence Ministry statement said. "Medical services should be provided to all Cantonment resident and non-resident patients in 67 Cantonment Board hospitals across India. The Ministry reiterated the instructions in this regard to the Director-General, Defence Estates (DGDE), Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar said on Twitter.

The Army announced that the Base hospital in Delhi Cantoment was being converted into an exclusive COVID-19 facility for the armed forces and veterans with effect from April 22. "All Out Patient Departments (OPDs) will shift and function at Army Hospital Research and Referral with effect from April 22, 2021," the Army said on Twitter.

Due to the prevailing situation, Army recruitment rallies in the northeast had been postponed till May 31. A fresh date for the common entrance exam, earlier scheduled for April 25, would be announced at an appropriate time, the Army said.

The development comes at a time when the Election Commission is short of one EC and when the West Bengal Assembly election is ongoing.

## Congress for 'one nation, one price' on COVID-19 vaccines

Centre's move would lead manufacturers to profiteer, it says

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A day after the Centre opened up the COVID-19 vaccination policy to expand coverage and include everyone above 18 years of age, the Congress on Tuesday alleged that the modified policy allows the Centre to run away from its responsibility, overburden the States and encourages vaccine manufacturers to profiteer.

Former Union Ministers P. Chidambaram, Jairam Ramesh and Ajay Maken, addressing a joint virtual press conference, claimed that "nowhere in the world has any government left its vaccination programme to be determined by the vagaries of market forces" and said the new policy in crucial aspects is "regressive and inequitable".

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, on Twitter, called it the government of India's "vaccine discrimination" policy and also claimed that India was now gasping for oxygen because of the Centre's "incompetence and complacency".

States that are already weighed down by increased borrowing would have to bear this additional burden

P. CHIDAMBARAM  
Congress MP

mand ... This is inequitable. We want States to get greater responsibility. But this is actually not giving the States any responsibility. So, 'one nation, one price'. We cannot have 'one nation, multiple prices.'

Mr. Chidambaram said the new policy would not only put additional burden on the already cash-strapped State governments but could also lead to the practice of bidding and profiteering by manufacturers. "States with limited resources will be at a considerable disadvantage. States that are already weighed down by shrinking GST revenues, lower tax devolution, reduced grants-in-aid and increased borrowing would have to bear this additional burden," he said, questioning where the funds collected under PM CARES have been spent.

With several States going for restrictions and lockdowns, the Congress reiterated its demand to provide ₹6,000 to migrant workers and other people who live on daily incomes," said the party.

## CPI(M) slams Centre's new vaccine policy

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau in a statement slammed the third phase of the national vaccine strategy, accusing the BJP government of attempting to absolve itself from the colossal health crisis and shifting the entire responsibility to the State governments.

"This policy is essentially an effort to liberalise vaccine sales and deregulate prices, without augmenting supply," the Polit Bureau statement said. The Centre, the party said, failed to ramp up the supplies for a year. The new policy is a recipe for exclusion of crores of people who will find it unaffordable to procure the life-saving vaccine, it said.

"Further, vaccines were so far free of cost to the States. Now States have to 'procure' them from the 'open market' without any price regulation. The vaccine providers, according to this latest policy, will declare their 'self-set price'. This again is bound to exclude an overwhelming majority of our people," said the party.

## VISVESVARAYA JALA NIGAMA LIMITED

(Government of Karnataka Enterprise)  
Office of the Executive Engineer  
VJNL, Yettinahole Project Division, No.3 Arasikere

Ph: 08174233111 e-mail: eeypd3ask@gmail.com  
No: EE/YP/VJNL/DIV-03/YGC/TN/2021-22/65 Dated: 17.04.2021

## CORRIDENCE : 01

Ref: SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION No:06/2020-21 dtd:30.03.2021 No: EE/YP/VJNL/DIV-03/YGC/TN/2020-21 1457 Dated: 30.03.2021 Tenders invited in e-procurement on

"PERCENTAGE BASIS" for the package work of "Improvement works to the roads in the purview of Yettinahole integrated drinking water project in Sakaleshpura, Alur, Belur and Arasikere Talukas of Hassan Dist".The following change is to be considered for the above said work notification. All other conditions remain unaltered. SINO.a)As per short term tender notificationTN06/2020-21 dated:30.03.2021

## IN BRIEF



## U.P. govt. imposes weekend shutdown

LUCKNOW  
The Yogi Adityanath government on Tuesday directed a weekend shutdown in the State a day after it declined the Allahabad High Court's directive to enforce a complete lockdown in five major cities till April 26. Night curfew from 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. will be imposed in districts with more than 500 active COVID-19 cases.

## Jharkhand announces seven-day lockdown

PATNA  
With a surge in COVID-19 cases in Jharkhand, the State government on Tuesday announced a seven-day lockdown from April 22 to check the spread of the pandemic. "After a high-level meeting with officials, it was decided to enforce a lockdown in the State from April 22 to 29 as part of Health Safety Week," Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren said in Ranchi.

## Maharashtra imposes additional restrictions

PUNE  
A week after it imposed lockdown-like curbs across the State, the Maharashtra government on Tuesday imposed additional restrictions by curtailing the timings of shops selling groceries, vegetables, dairies, bakeries, confectionery and meat. Such shops are to be kept open only between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m.

## Remdesivir import tariffs scrapped, says Centre

NEW DELHI  
The government has withdrawn the 10% customs duty levied on imports of Remdesivir injections, active pharma ingredients used in its manufacture, and also granted a conditional customs duty exemption for the critical inactive ingredient Beta Cyclodextrin used to make Remdesivir injections that attracted 7.5% duty, till October 31.

## 53 test positive on India flight to Hong Kong

HONG KONG  
At least 53 passengers on a flight from New Delhi to Hong Kong have tested positive for COVID-19, authorities said on Tuesday, as the Chinese financial hub introduced an emergency ban on arrivals from India over a new wave of cases. The passengers flew into Hong Kong on a flight run by Vistara on April 4. AFP

## Nepal's former royals test positive after Kumbh trip

NEW DELHI  
Nepal's former royals, Queen Komal Rajya Lakshmi Devi and King Gyanendra, have tested positive for the COVID-19 infection. Confirmation of their status came days after the couple returned from India, where they attended the Kumbh Mela at Haridwar.

## U.S. denies vaccine inputs ban

Covishield maker SII had appealed to Biden to lift embargo on raw material export

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON DC

The Biden administration has denied that there are any 'outright bans' on the export of vaccine raw materials. The denial comes in response to an appeal by vaccine manufacturer Serum Institute of India's (SII) owner, Adar Poonawalla, to U.S. President Joe Biden, asking him to lift an embargo on exports.

"The Biden-Harris Administration's top priority is saving lives and ending the pandemic. We reject any statement referring to a U.S. export ban on vaccines. The United States has not imposed any 'outright bans' on the export of vaccines or vaccine inputs. This assertion is simply not true," an administration official told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Poonawalla, on April 16, had asked Mr. Biden to "lift the embargo" on raw materials to assist the pro-



Bioreactor bags from the U.S. are used in the production of Covishield.

duction of COVID-19 vaccines. SII, which produces Covishield, a version of the COVID-19 vaccine developed by the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca, uses bioreactor bags from U.S. firms ABEC and GE Healthcare to grow cells for the vaccine, according to reports. It also uses filters, microcarrier beads and cell culture media – all of which are in short supply.

"Respected @POTUS, if we are to truly unite in beating this virus, on behalf of the vaccine industry outside the U.S., I humbly request you to lift the embargo of raw material exports out of the U.S. so that vaccine production can ramp up. Your administration has the details," Mr. Poonawalla had tweeted.

**Emergency legislation**  
The U.S. is a major source of these materials, with reports suggesting that shortages are a consequence of the U.S.'s Defense Production Act – an emergency law that requires domestic manufacturers to prioritise federal (central) government purchase orders. Both Mr. Biden and his predecessor, Donald Trump, had invoked this law.

"The United States has clearly committed to using all available tools, including the Defense Production Act, to expand domestic vaccine

manufacturing and prioritise the supplies that can serve as bottlenecks to vaccine production in order to ensure that all Americans can be vaccinated quickly, effectively, and equitably," the administration official told *The Hindu*.

India's Ambassador to the U.S. Tarun Singh Sandhu has met with his counterparts and other senior U.S. administration officials to discuss the specific concerns raised by vaccine manufacturers. U.S. officials said they will "positively consider" the concerns raised by the Indian side, sources within the (Indian) government told *The Hindu*.

Foreign ministers of the two countries – S. Jaishankar and his counterpart Antony Blinken – spoke on the phone on Monday.

Both sides alluded to cooperation on "COVID-19" or "health" in descriptions of the call.

## Centre tells Union Territories to plan for crucial three weeks

Health, Home Department officials told of surge in cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed all the eight Union Territories that the next three weeks were crucial in the management of the second wave of the pandemic. The UT administrations, including the Delhi Government, "were advised to plan in advance for three weeks".

Delhi raised the issue of a shortage of beds at a meeting held by the Union Secretaries of Home and Health to review the status of COVID-19 management in all the UTs on Tuesday.

Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan chaired the meeting with Chief Secretaries of all the UTs. The meeting, held through video conference, was also attended by V.K. Paul, Member (Health),

NITI Aayog; Balram Bhargava, Director-General of the Indian Council of Medical Research; and the Directors-General of Police of all the UTs.

Mr. Bhalla pointed out that India had reported almost 10 times more cases since January 1 and more than 2,00,000 cases were being reported daily since April 15. In the past 11 days, new cases have almost doubled from 1.31 lakh (on April 9) to 2.73 lakh cases on April 20.

"The UTs shared their present efforts for containment and management of the positive cases. Ladakh, J&K, and Lakshadweep pointed to the rise in cases due to a large number of inbound travellers. Lakshadweep has seen a sudden spike after April 14 primarily due to travel of large num-

ber of people to the mainland to shop for the recent festive occasions," the Health Ministry said in a statement.

"Chandigarh said that they are conducting door-to-door counselling for increasing vaccination. 90% of the patients are in home isolation being monitored by mobile teams," the statement said.

Delhi discussed a shortage of beds and the present efforts to augment this through Central Government infrastructure and support through the DRDO's recently operationalised COVID Hospital.

Dr. Paul pointed out the criticality of next three weeks for COVID response measures. "The UT administrators were advised to plan in advance for three weeks," the Ministry said.

## No crowding seen at rail stations: Goyal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

There was no railway station in the country where migrant workers had reached in large numbers, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

Responding to a question during the briefing on Cabinet decisions, Mr. Goyal said it was not true that migrant workers were crowding stations.

"There is no railway station in the country where migrant workers have come in large numbers or where they faced any trouble," Mr. Goyal said.

"Since trains are operational, people don't have any worry or fear. There is no form of lockdown. Trains are functional and will continue to function," he said.

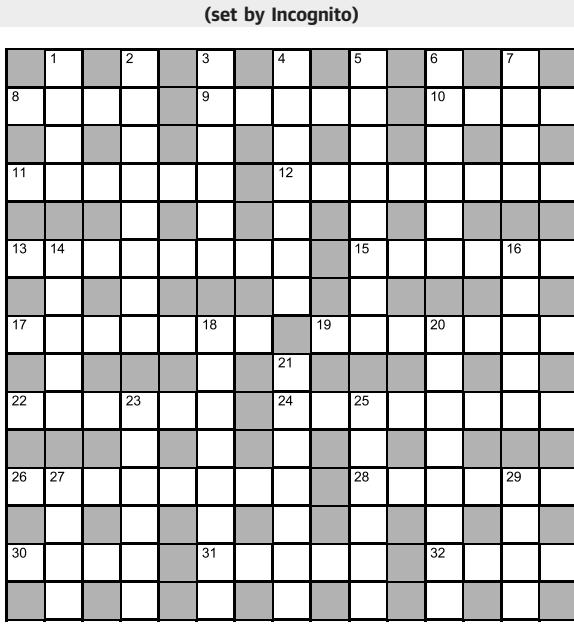
## Control rooms for migrant workers set up

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union Labour and Employment Ministry on Tuesday has reactivated the 20 control rooms it had set up in April 2020 to help migrant workers. Labour and Employment Secretary Apurva Chandra said an order had been issued to restart the control rooms to help workers who wanted to return to their home States from cities, as had happened during the lockdown last year.

## TH CROSSWORD + 13227

(set by Incognito)



## ACROSS

- Egyptian "King" has uniform dress for ballet dancers (4)
- Decipher: Loves getting confused (5)
- Locate rotating toys (4)
- Put a bit of lard in ground wheat to get richness (6)
- For starters, extraordinarily daring displays included in badges worn by pilots in marriage ceremonies (8)
- Mince mice with fish to create trouble (8)

15 Large snake's means of climbing (6)

17 Empty headed alien's means of keeping warm (7)

19 Influential person's large ball (3,4)

22 Sweet female, in crazy sitcom, losing son (6)

24 Nothing left, okay? (3,5)

26 Remaining laundries processed without using Nitrogen (8)

28 Note: Pointer's thin (6)

30 Father receives directions to make chess piece (4)

31 Steep dune built behind end of lane (5)

32 American versifier gets money for his output (4)

Display keystrokes of genius.  
Type your answers into our online grids.  
<https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>

SCAN TO PLAY



## SUDOKU

3	1		9					
			4	6		3	5	

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

No. SS/SS Distribution: www.mgfeatures.com

Solution to puzzle 13227

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

3 6 2 9 4 1 8 7 5

9 4 8 3 7 5 6 1 2

7 1 5 8 6 2 3 4 9

2 7 1 6 3 9 4 5 8

5 3 4 7 2 8 1 9 6

8 9 6 5 1 4 2 3 7

6 2 3 1 5 7 9 8 4

1 5 9 4 8 6 7 2 3

4 8 7 2 9 3 5 6 1

## FAITH

## Reducing Earth's burden

Why did Lord Narayana choose to live among cowherds in His Krishna avatar? It was because He wanted to show that He was going to lessen the Earth's burden, said V.S. Karunakarachariar, in a discourse. Bhooma Devi's burdens were increasing, for kings who ruled lacked righteousness. So, She took the form of a cow and went to Brahma for help. There were tears in Her eyes, and She looked worn out. She prayed that She should be relieved of Her burden and that good kings should rule the Earth.

But why did She go as a cow? The cow gives its milk not only to its calves, but to everyone. In the same way, Bhooma Devi yields Her wealth to everyone. We dig the Earth and cultivate crops. We mine the earth for gold and precious stones. Fertile earth provides us with the food we need. Bhooma Devi Herself is green in colour, indicating Her fertility. Andal is considered an avatar of Bhooma Devi. And Vedaanta Desika, describing Andal, says that Her colour was that of bunches of grass swaying in the breeze.

It is said that the following seven support the Earth: cows, Vedic scholars, the Vedas, women who are devoted to their husbands, honest people, those who give daana generously and those who adhere to dharma. If not for these seven, the Earth will be destroyed. As is clear, among the seven supports the Earth has, cows are the foremost. It was to stress this point that Bhooma Devi took the form of a cow, when She went to meet Brahma. And it was only natural that the Lord should incarnate as Gopala to show that He was going to reduce the

### TVS Apache RTR 200 4V

The Apache RTR 200 4V is one of the most feature packed motorcycles in the segment. Its Bluetooth-pairable instrument cluster displays a plethora of information, including lap times, top speed, incoming caller name and more. A dedicated phone app also allows riders to track their ride telemetry and maximum lean angle achieved. However, the latter is recorded using the phone's gyro sensors and requires the device to be rigidly mounted to the bike in a vertical position.



**Hero Xtreme 200S, Xpulse 200, Xpulse 200T**

Hero's trio of 200cc motorcycles – the Xtreme 200S, Xpulse 200 and Xpulse 200T – feature a simple-looking LCD display that offers Bluetooth connectivity. The cluster is connected to your smartphone via the Hero RideGuide app, enabling you to see call status and turn-by-turn navigation, apart from regular information like gear position and trip details. The Xtreme 200S is priced at ₹1.20 lakh, while the Xpulse 200T and Xpulse 200 are priced at ₹1.16 lakh and ₹1.18 lakh, respectively.

### Yamaha FZS-FI

The Yamaha FZS-FI was also recently updated with a Bluetooth-enabled instrument cluster. The Yamaha Motorcycle Connect X App is available on Google Play Store and iOS App Store and offers information about trip distance, battery voltage and average speed. It also provides vehicle location information via the Locate My Bike and Answer Back feature, which turns on the indicators and sounds the horn to help find the bike in a crowded parking lot.

Besides this, the system also has a Hazard mode that turns on all four indicators, to warn others of your presence while parked at the side of the road. On the downside, the system misses out on turn-by-turn navigation and a call and SMS alerts function. Prices for the new Yamaha FZS-FI start at ₹1.08 lakh. The device can be also fitted as an accessory on the rest of the BS6 FZ-FI and FZS-FI (existing and new motorcycle) range.



A look at the five most-affordable Bluetooth-enabled two-wheelers in India

VISHAL VENUGOPAL

Until a few years ago, Bluetooth connectivity was a novelty that not too many two-wheelers in our market could boast. Now, however, it is becoming a much more common feature, with scooters and motorcycles across different segments allowing you to connect your smartphone to the instrument cluster.

Connecting your device to your vehicle allows for a host of functions, including phone notifications, navigation and ride statistics, depending on the vehicle.



**TVS Ntorq 125**

The TVS Ntorq 125 was one of the first scooters in our market to offer Bluetooth connectivity. Even now, it offers the most technologically advanced instrument console on a combustion engine scooter. The 5-inch LCD display includes a lap timer, a 0-60kph recorder, top speed recorder, engine temperature gauge, average speed indicator and service reminder.

The 'Smart Xonnect' system allows all this data to be displayed on your smartphone via Bluetooth. The app also enables you to see phone notifications, a trip report and also displays navigation arrows on the console. Unlike other vehicles in our list, Bluetooth connectivity comes as standard on this TVS. Prices for the TVS Ntorq 125 range between ₹70,555 and ₹79,535.

### Q&A WITH HORMAZD

#### Case for trial runs

I am undecided between the Husqvarna Vitpilen and the Royal Enfield Meteor Supernova – I know both are different bikes, but I like both of them. The deciding factors for me would be aftersales service and ease of maintenance. In a couple of years, I would like to give it to my son as he will be eligible for a licence.

**Vikram, Daman**

Both bikes should cost you similar amounts to maintain and both should have decent levels of aftersales reliability. They are very different bikes, as you have pointed out, but a few things to consider are that the Husqvarnas have tall seats, but are rather small motorcycles. The Meteor has a very low seat and it is more comfortable to ride, but it is a large and heavy machine. Both will not be the ideal choice as learner bikes, given these factors, plus the strong performance, especially on the Husqvarna.

The best way for you to decide which of these factors suits you better is to take a test ride on both.

From quality upgrades and spacious interiors to supple ride comfort and strong performance, the facelifted 6GT series possess a lot of appeal

## Ace of Space

SAUMIL SHAH

First launched in India in 2018, the BMW 6 Series Gran Turismo (6GT) is a more practical and comfier alternative to the 5 Series sedan. Now, BMW has introduced the facelifted 6GT in India, bringing with it updated styling and new features. So, what is it like?

The most prominent changes to the 6GT's design are the sleeker headlamps with twin L-shaped DRLs and the bolder, more aggressive-looking grille. This M Sport variant additionally gets sportier design touches, such as the trendier front bumper, lightweight 19-inch M alloy wheels and blue brake calipers, and twin trapezoidal exhausts tips to further enhance its looks.

The other styling highlights of this car are its uber cool frameless doors, which lift its premium quotient up a notch; however, the soft-close function is only reserved for the diesel M Sport version.

Also new to the line-up are BMW's sophisticated laser light headlamps which are available in the 6GT M Sport variant. Both high and low beam are laser lights which switch to low beam automatically when it detects oncoming traffic, but also turns up



the beam to a certain degree with the steering angle for better visibility.

Step into the bright and airy cabin, and the 6GT impresses with its top-notch quality and levels of finish. The lacquered wood, matte silver highlights and ambient lighting strips are tastefully executed. With the larger twin 12.3-inch screens – one for the instrument cluster and the other for the infotainment – the overall design looks truly modern.

Other features include a panoramic sunroof, four-zone climate control, gesture control, driver's seat memory, ambient lighting, and wireless charging, to name a few.

Access to the rear seat is quite easy due to the wide opening door, the placement of the rear seat, and the option to raise the car by 20mm, thanks to its air suspension.

Once seated, you will appreciate the sheer amount of space on offer – knee-, leg- and headroom are in abundance. Thigh support is spot on, the seatback reclines by 9 degrees to a comfortable angle and the soft pillow on the headrests further enhances comfort.

However, not all is perfect. The rear armrest is placed a bit too high for comfort, and although there are multiple charging provisions at the rear, there is not a wireless charging pad.

#### BMW 630i GT M SPORT SPECIFICATIONS

ENGINE 1998cc, 4 cyls, Turbocharged

POWER 258hp at 5000rpm

TORQUE 400Nm at 1550-4400rpm

GEARBOX 8-speed automatic

LENGTH 5091mm

WIDTH 1902mm

HEIGHT 1538mm

WHEELBASE 3070mm

GROUND CLEARANCE 138mm

#### A rung above

When will the Honda Shine get a digital console meter and LED headlights?

**Arif Husain, Patna**

There is no clarity on if/when Honda plans to update the Shine with these features. We would recommend you consider the Honda SP 125 to get these features. It is a more premium version of the Honda Shine and it uses the same engine and chassis, and also offers better style and kit.

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



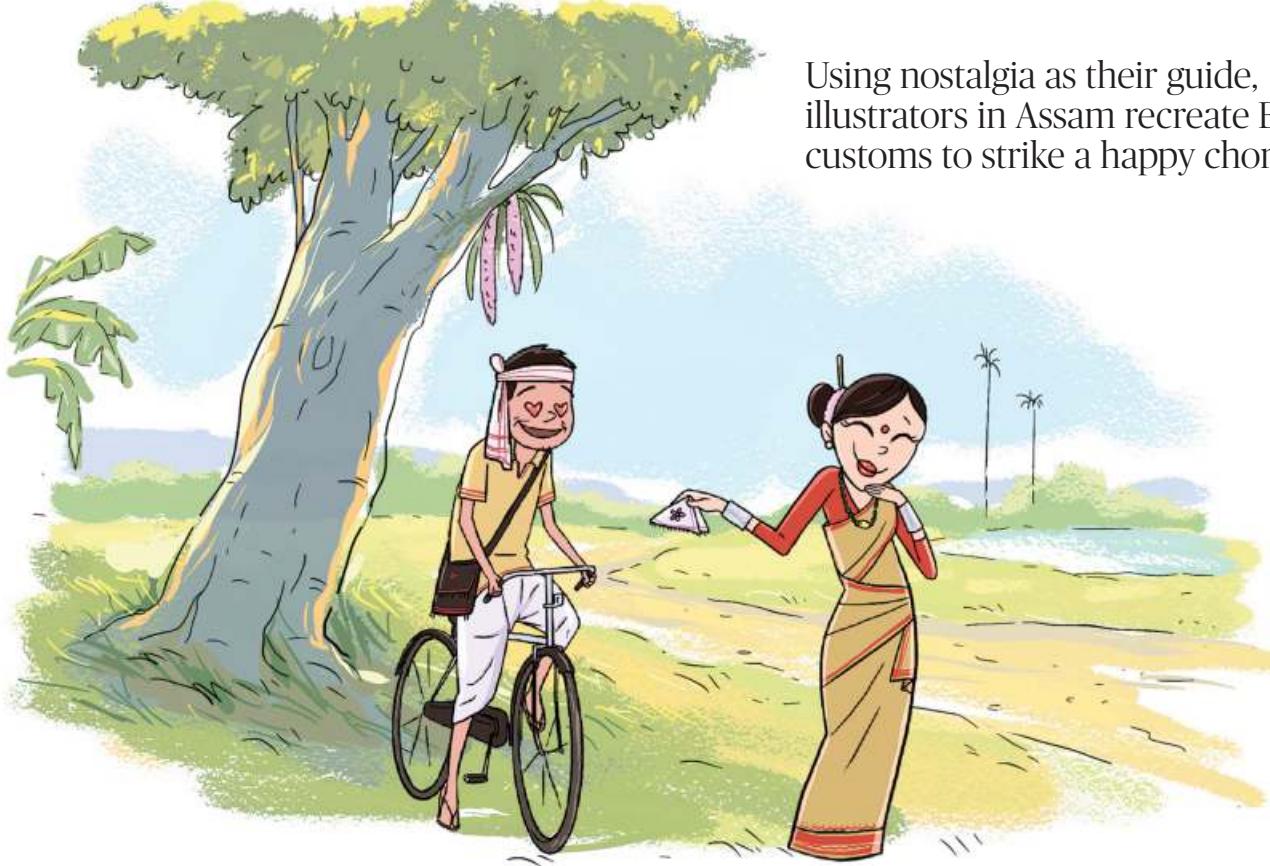
**A fine balance** The 6GT is where sporty driving manners meet a comfortable chauffeur-driven experience ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### Suzuki Access 125, Burgman Street

Back in 2020, the Suzuki Access 125 and Burgman 125 were updated with Bluetooth enabled consoles. The Bluetooth-enabled Access 125 is priced at ₹78,200 (drum brake) and ₹80,200 (disc brake), while the Burgman is priced at ₹86,200. The scooters are also available without Bluetooth for about ₹4,000 less.

The LCD display provides features such as turn-by-turn navigation, call and SMS alert display, WhatsApp alerts, estimated time of arrival, missed call alerts and caller ID, overspeed warning and phone battery level display. Users can connect their smartphone to the console via the 'Suzuki Ride Connect' application which, unfortunately, is available only for Android. That said, Suzuki India has said that it will be evaluating iOS compatibility.





PRABALI M BORAH

When it is time for Bohag or Rongali Bihu, Assam dons a festive look. The sound of the dhol (drum) and pepa (wind instrument) fills the air.

As households get busy preparing *pitha*, almost every shopping discussion is about fresh *til* (sesame), *gur* (jaggery), good coconut and the best quality of sticky rice. This is also the time of the year when non-resident Assamese return to participate in the festival, which transcends religion and ethnicity.

The pandemic has dampened spirits and spread a veil of gloom on all festivities, including Bihu. Undeterred, illustrators from Assam are compensating for the loss with illustrations fuelled by nostalgia. The illustrations also introduce children to customs such as the presentation of the *Bihuwan*, a beautiful handmade Assamese *gamusa* or a hand-stitched handkerchief to a secret admirer.

#### A perfect 10

Pankaj Saikia (@saikiapankaj1990), a Guwahati-based professional illustrator, who created a 10-frame comic titled *A Bohagi Tale*, says his inspiration came from what he missed while away from Assam. The self-taught illustrator wants his work to be a window to Assamese culture, food and traditions.

"My illustrations are based on childhood memories," he says. "As a story teller, I wove a tale around them. Some of my previous illustrations on our culture show the essence of *pitha*. Assamese *pitha* is losing its identity with experiments in the name of fusion. I did *A Bohagi tale* because I notice children today missing the fun around Bihu – there is more to it than new clothes and a holiday."

Spring in Assam brings a festive cheer, households preparing *pitha-pona*, dance, music and family/social visits. The illustrations have gained positive response

## Framing festive cheer



and sparked discussions on culture, nostalgia and stories around *bihu-tolis* (a place for public gatherings for dance and music).

**Drums of destiny**  
Illustrator Nilim Mahanta (@mamanta\_livingart) from Lakhimpur, Assam, posted a stop motion animation of 100 frames. The animation has a *dhulia* (one who beats the *dhol*) creating beautiful beats for a dancer. Nilim shares, "We took four days to complete it and the end result is quite melodious than the *dhol* to herald the advent of spring or bohag."



Most illustrators say they realised how much they miss the happy buzz and commotion of Bihu when it all went silent last year. People couldn't stop watching YouTube videos of Bihu music videos and songs.

**Turn the page**  
Daakor boson, a page on Instagram, has been actively documenting Assamese culture and rituals.

Maitri Das, one of the founders, says though they have been around since 2019, the page gar-

Using nostalgia as their guide, illustrators in Assam recreate Bihu customs to strike a happy chord



**Remember the time** Daakor Boson, Anuradha Dances Bihu, A Bohagi Tale, Pankaj Saikia and Tarique at work ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nered a lot of hits since last year. "The Assamese ghost series that got us a lot of followers. That is when I realised there is a lack of documentation of our culture. As we started posting more animated series, the shares started to go up. We did a Bihu illustration for the *Bihuwan* and for the teaser we highlighted the tradition of *husori* (where groups of children bihu-dancers visit the neighbourhood)."

Amalendu Kaushik, also a founder of Daakor Bason, maintains a personal account for his illustrations on Instagram. "As Maitri and I started work, we realised many details of culture were missing. Our goal is to document and bring about awareness about Assamese culture and traditions. Culture is dynamic and we are looking at collective growth. It is a must that illustrators push each other's work and keep the dialogue going. I am planning to launch a series showcasing some lesser-known culture and traditions."

Guwahati-based Tarique Aziz posted an illustration titled 'Anuradha dances bihu' as part of the illustrations he did for Pratham books. "I followed the storyline, but the inspiration was from my childhood. Bihu was all about visiting home, eating homemade *pithas* and dancing, irrespective of whether one could dance or not. The series that I posted is about the importance of Kapau phool (garland orchid). I would definitely love parents to use our illustrations to talk about what it means to be in Assam during Bihu."



#### POOCH CAFE



#### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



#### TIGER



## More than child's play

Coimbatore-based toy designer Kanaka Ananth develops indigenous games inspired by kolam and rangoli patterns and *the Ramayana*



**Fun with culture**  
Maniams Designs' toys draw on Indian traditions of kolam, rangoli, jaali work and the epic *Ramayana*, (below) Designer Kanaka Ananth ■ PERIASAMY M

K JESHI

Her love for board games started in the 1990s, growing up in Germany. "My family would sit together and play Scotland Yard, Scrabble and Monopoly for hours. It was fun and a lot of learning too," recalls Kanaka Ananth, director of Maniams Design Studio in Coimbatore.

She has launched a set of four indigenous games – Krazy kolam, Rangolio, Trikona and Paheli – at the India Toy Fair 2021, a virtual fair on Indian toys.

"Abroad, especially the US, the concept of gaming night is big. While playing the games, one also learns strategy, probability, negotiation, how to interact and so on. The HR department of some corporates uses it as a tool to gauge a candidate's ability to work in a team," she explains.

Kanaka who is an architect was among the first batch of six students for the toy design course at the National Institute of Design. Later, she worked for Funskool as well as Creative Education Aids in Delhi and developed games on spellings, Maths Wiz and Amazing Me, the last a game that encourages interaction between parents and children. She also taught Industrial Design and Product Design at NID and at the DJ Academy of Design in Coimbatore.

Designing toys for children is her toughest job yet, she declares. "It has to be a fun-way of learning that also instils values in a child, besides honing skills like concentration and logical thinking."

Her Krazy kolam, a design patented product, has puzzles drawn from kolam, for the age group of six plus. "I researched designs from my mother-in-law's kolam book to arrive at motifs and over 30 patterns



ranging from simple to difficult levels. While joining the wooden pieces (made from beech wood and rosewood to differentiate colours) to form patterns, children develop a sense of precision and their visual and spatial development improves."

Designed in line with Waldorf & Montessori education methodologies, children with special needs like the ones in the ADHD spectrum also benefit, as it works on motor skills, dexterity and eye-hand coordination.

**Designing toys for children... has to be a fun-way of learning that also instils values in a child, besides honing different skills**

"Parents and teachers who work with autistic children have bought it. Some children have come up with innovative ideas. They fill colours using the motifs and make designs on paper."

Kanaka says she paid attention to sustainable designs that are child-friendly.

The toys are packed in handmade bamboo baskets, made by artisans in Assam. "I tapped into the unique skill sets of artisans and looked inwards at our culture for design inspiration." She

roped in artisans from Karnataka for their lac and lac work and Assam/Tripura for their bamboo weaving techniques, and Uttar Pradesh for their work on hard wood to make motifs. The Channapatna toy makers make the pawns for board games.

While the Rangolio puzzles have over 500 patterns inspired from rangoli designs, Trikona is based on traditional jaali work.

"It has shapes designed such that one can create endless number of patterns. It's a dexterity game involving stacking, collecting the right shapes and completing the patterns before the structure collapses."

Maniams' toys short listed for the finals of All India Toyathon also include Paheli, a family game that can be played with two to four players.

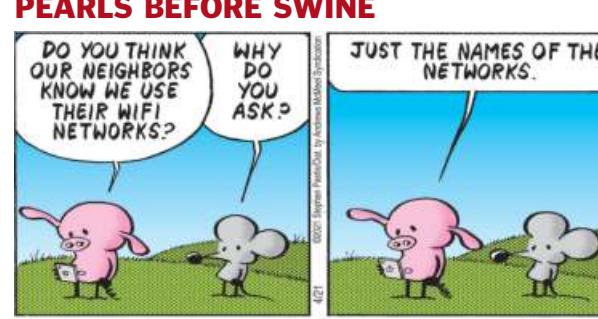
"India's culture is among the world's oldest dating back to 4,500 years. This game helps one understand these symbols such as, why we wear a bindi? why we worship tulasi? why do we women wear bangles? Why do we break a coconut? Why do we place betel leaves in festivals? This game helps families understand symbols in a fun manner."

The game board is divided into pathways and the theme is based on the *Ramayana*. "Sita has been kidnapped by Ravana. Your task is to find and rescue her. But in order to do that you must first find Rama, Lakshmana and Hanuman before Ravana reveals his 10 heads. To find all these characters players need to answer as many as 300 riddles related to festivals, symbols, the gods and along the way learn about modesty, values,

friendship and moral values on how truth alone triumphs," says Kanaka.

For more information call 89036-92606

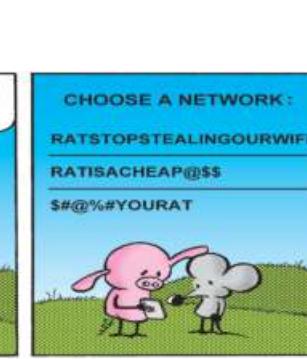
#### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



#### PEANUTS



#### CALVIN AND HOBBES



# A few countries cannot set global rules, says Xi Jinping

At the Boao Forum, China's leader says instability is on the rise in the world

**ANANTH KRISHNAN**

China's President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday global rules cannot be imposed "by one or a few countries" and attempts to "decouple" would not benefit any nation.

He was speaking at the annual Boao Forum, a meeting known as China's Davos and this year attended virtually by a number of Asian leaders, Chinese official media reported, including South Korea's Moon Jae-in, Indonesia's Joko Widodo, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.

Mr. Xi outlined China's view of a world in flux and contained veiled criticisms appeared to be aimed at the U.S., although he did not name the country. He said "combined forces of changes and a pandemic both unseen in a century have brought the world into a phase of fluidity and transformation" with "instability and uncertainty clearly on the rise".

That said, there is no fundamental change in the trend toward a multi-polar world; economic globalisation is showing renewed resilience; and the call for upholding multilateralism and enhancing communication and coordination has grown stronger," he said, calling for countries "to uphold true multilateralism" and "safeguard the UN-centred international system".

His comments followed his remarks to the World Economic Forum at Davos in January, when he hit out at "small circles", a reference that Chinese officials have subsequently used to describe U.S.-led groupings in-



**Taking notes:** President Xi Jinping delivering a speech on Monday as mediapersons watch on. ■ AFP

cluding the Quad, comprising India, the U.S., Japan and Australia. Chinese officials have rejected the Quad calling for a "rules-based order" to ensure a "free and open" Indo-Pacific region.

On Tuesday, Mr. Xi said: "We must not let the rules set by one or a few countries be imposed on others, or allow unilateralism pursued by certain countries to set the pace for the whole world." "What we need in today's world is justice, not hegemony. Big countries should behave in a manner befitting their status and with a greater sense of responsibility," he added.

## Joint vaccine production

He said China would continue to take forward its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), including for joint vaccine production that had begun with BRI partners, including Indonesia, Brazil, the UAE, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkey. With a push to deepen connectivity, he said China will "promote 'hard connectivity' of infrastructure and 'soft connectivity' of rules and standards".

While China is advocating for its own rules and stan-

dards under the ambit of the BRI, including in new emerging areas such as 5G, the U.S. has pushed for its allies and partners to seek alternatives. Last month, President Joe Biden said he had suggested to British Prime Minister Boris Johnson that democratic countries should explore coming up with an alternative to the BRI.

In its first leaders' summit last month, the Quad countries announced a joint vaccine initiative as well as plans to coordinate standards in critical and emerging technologies. The India-U.S.-Australia-Japan grouping agreed to set up a Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group, recognising that "a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific requires that critical and emerging technology is governed and operates according to shared interests and values." The working group will facilitate coordination on technology standards development, including between respective national technology standards bodies, as well as joint plans on telecommunications deployment and building critical technology supply chains.

## China rejects Xinjiang accusations

**ASSOCIATED PRESS BEIJING**

China's government on Tuesday rejected accusations of abuses in the Xinjiang region after a human rights group appealed for a UN investigation into possible crimes against humanity.

Accusations of forced labour or detentions in the northwestern region are "lies and false information concocted by anti-China forces," said Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin. He accused critics of trying to "undermine Xinjiang's stability and security and curb China's development".

On Monday, Human Rights Watch appealed to the UN Human Rights Commission to investigate reports of mass detention of Muslims, a crackdown on religious practices and other measures against minorities. It said they amount to crimes against humanity as defined by the treaty that established the International Criminal Court.

More than 1 million people have been confined to camps in Xinjiang, according to foreign governments and researchers. Authorities there are accused of imposing forced labour and birth controls.

Beijing rejects complaints of abuses and says the camps are for job training to support economic development and combat Islamic radicalism.

# Sri Lanka-India travel bubble delayed

'When things get better in India, we look forward to launching the bubble'

**MEERA SRINIVASAN COLOMBO**

Sri Lanka has decided to postpone launching the proposed "travel bubble" with India, in the wake of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in India, officials at the Ministry of Tourism here said.

"We are just postponing the bubble, this is not a cancellation. When things get better in India, we look forward to launching the travel bubble," an official at the Ministry told *The Hindu*. Sri Lanka has been preparing to open up the country for tourists in phases as earnings from the sector, a crucial foreign exchange earner, fell steeply in the pandemic year.

## Special flights

Less than two weeks ago, the Civil Aviation Ministry in India announced setting up a "bilateral air bubble" arrangement with Sri Lanka for operation of special interna-



**On alert:** Health experts in Sri Lanka have cautioned the public about a possible new wave of infections ■ AP

tional passenger flights between the two countries.

According to official sources, New Delhi had also conveyed to Colombo its interest in welcoming an inaugural flight from Sri Lanka to the Kushinagar airport in Uttar Pradesh that was recognised as an international airport last year.

The two governments have discussed ways to enhance connectivity with the airport to help Buddhist pil-

lating protocols for on-arrival testing, quarantine and travel within the country. Witnessing a gradual increase in the last four months, Sri Lanka recorded 4,581 tourists from select countries in March 2021. Just before the pandemic hit, Sri Lanka received 2,28,434 tourists in January 2020 and the highest percentage of arrivals was from India, at 18%.

Sri Lanka has over 3,000 active cases of Covid-19, after reporting nearly 1 lakh cases in total, and 620 fatalities. Public health experts have cautioned the public about a possible new wave of infections.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan Airlines, the country's national carrier, had planned to restart operations to several Indian cities, to create the travel bubble. With the surge in infections in India, the plans have been put on hold for now, a spokesman said.

## Tourist source

India accounts for one of the highest sources of tourists in Sri Lanka. Following the virus outbreak in March last year, Sri Lanka closed its borders and reopened it only in December 2020, stipu-

# Duterte ready to deploy Navy over SCS claim

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MANILA**

Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he is willing to deploy military ships to the South China Sea to assert the country's claim over oil deposits in a contested part of the waterway. He has faced growing domestic criticism for his reluctance to confront China over its activities in Philippine-claimed waters.

"When we start to mine, when we start to get whatever it is in the bowels of the China sea, our oil, then by that time... I will send my grey ships there to state a claim," he said.

# U.S. envoy to Moscow returning to Washington for consultations

The announcement comes amid a spike in tensions

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MOSCOW**

Washington's envoy to Moscow will return to the United States for consultations, the U.S. Embassy said on Tues-

den administration in Washington about the current state of bilateral relations," the statement quoted Mr. Sullivan as saying.

The announcement came amid a spike in tensions between Moscow and Washington over a litany of disputes, including alleged meddling in the U.S. elections, Russia's troop build-up along Ukraine's borders and the deteriorating health of President Vladimir Putin's imprisoned critic Alexei Navalny.

U.S. President Joe Biden is pursuing a tougher line against Mr. Putin but has al-

so proposed that the two leaders meet for a summit in a third country later this year.

Mr. Sullivan said he would return to Moscow "in the coming weeks", before any meeting between Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin. Moscow has said it is studying the sum-mit proposal.

Moscow recalled its own envoy, Anatoly Antonov, from Washington for consultations in March and last week the former Cold War foes announced a wave of tit-for-tat sanctions and expulsions of diplomats.

# Pakistan Parliament to decide on French envoy's expulsion

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ISLAMABAD**

A resolution was tabled in the lower house of Parliament on Tuesday for the expulsion of the French Ambassador from Pakistan over the issue of blasphemous cartoons being published in the European country.

Amjad Ali Khan of the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party presented the resolution in the National Assembly. Technically, it was not an official document as it was moved by a member in his private capacity but it

was accepted for discussion.

The resolution condemned the publication of blasphemous caricatures by French magazine *Charlie Hebdo* in September last year and expressed regret over the French President's "encouragement of the elements hurting the sentiments of the hundreds of millions of Muslims in the name of freedom of expression".

It stated that a debate should be held in the House on the expulsion of the French Ambassador from

Pakistan. The main Opposition Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) and Jamaat Ulama-e-Islam (JUI-F) attended the session but the Pakistan People's Party boycotted it.

Ahsan Iqbal of PML-N demanded that the government should bring a new resolution after discussion with the Opposition. Speaker Asad Qaiser said that he would like to give time to the House for discussion to come up with the consensus document and adjourned the session until Friday.

# Chad President Deby dies on battlefield: Army

He sustained injuries while fighting rebels; son named transitional leader

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE N'DJAMENA**

Chad's President Idriss Deby Itno died on Tuesday from wounds sustained in battle after three decades in power, the Army said, opening a period of uncertainty in a country that is a key strategic ally of the West.

His son was immediately named transitional leader as head of a military council and both the government and parliament were dissolved, but the Army vowed "free and democratic" elec-



Idriss Deby

tions after an 18-month transitional period.

## Sixth term

The shock news of Mr. Deby's death came only the day after the 68-year-old career military man was proclaimed the winner of a presidential election that had given him a sixth term in office. The Army also announced a curfew and border closures.

Mr. Deby had ruled Chad with an iron fist since taking power on the back of a coup

fought rebels who had launched a major incursion into the north of the country on election day, April 11.

Mr. Deby "has just breathed his last breath defending the sovereign nation on the battlefield", Army spokesman General Azem Bermandoa Agouna said in a statement read out on state television.

The Army said a military council led by the late President's 37-year-old son Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, a four-star General, would replace him.

The council has already met to draw up a transitional charter, General Agouna

said, without elaborating.

Mr. Deby's son oversaw his father's security as head of the elite presidential guard and often appeared alongside him, wearing the force's red beret, dark glasses and military fatigues.

On Monday, the Army had claimed a "great victory" in its battle against the rebels from neighbouring Libya, the Front for Change and Concord in Chad (FACT).

FACT, which waged its attacks in the provinces of Tibesti and Kanem, had claimed in a statement that Mr. Deby had been wounded – a report that could not be confirmed.

# Russia says it will launch own space station in 2025

It plans to withdraw from ISS project

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE MOSCOW**

Russia's space agency said on Tuesday it hoped to launch its own orbital station in 2025 as Moscow considers withdrawing from the International Space Station programme to go it alone.

Roscosmos said on Monday that a decision on quitting the ISS had not yet been made. "When we make a decision we will start negotiations with our partners on forms and conditions of cooperation beyond 2024," the space agency told AFP in a statement.

Russia lost its monopoly for manned flights to the ISS last year after the first successful mission of U.S. company SpaceX.

Despite its much-lauded history – Russia this month marked the 60th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin becoming the first person in orbit – the country's space programme has struggled in recent years. Analysts say Mr. Putin is more interested in military technology than space exploration.

**OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL S.M.S. MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER OF THE ATTACHED HOSPITALS, JAIPUR No. /F/MC/Store/2021-22/649-52 Dated:-16/4/2021 Notice Inviting Bid No.02/2021-22**

**SHORT RE-TENDER NOTICE**

Bid for supply, installation & commissioning of Digital subtraction Angiography Machine (Turnkey Project of DSA Machine) for Radiodiagnosis departments of SMS medical College Jaipur are invited from interested bidders upto 07/05/2021 at 04:00 PM. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state and College website.

**UBN SMS2122GLOB00013 DIPR-4160**

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**No. Mktg. M2/2298/Food Fortification 2020-21 Dated:21.04.2021**

**SHORT RE-TENDER NOTICE**

E-TENDERS ARE RE-INVITED FOR EMPANELMENT OF SUPPLIERS FOR SUPPLY OF 2430 MTS (APPROXIMATELY) OR FORTIFIED RICE KERNEL (FRK) CONTAINING THREE MICRO-NUTRIENTS I.E. IRON, FOLIC ACID AND VITAMIN B12 AS PER FSSAI SPECIFICATIONS IN 25 KG BAGS FOR FORTIFICATION OF RICE TO BE DISTRIBUTED UNDER PDS IN JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY DISTRICT AND ALSO UNDER MDM & ICDS SCHEMES IN ALL THE DISTRICTS OF TELANGANA. FILING OF TENDERS: [www.tscsd.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tscsd.telangana.gov.in). TENDER DETAILS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE AT: [www.tscsd.telangana.gov.in](http://www.tscsd.telangana.gov.in)

**SCHEDULE FOR TENDERS:**

Date of publication of tenders:	21.04.2021
Bid Document downloading starts from :	22.04.2021
Bid Document downloading ends on :	30.04.2021
Last Date/ Time for receipt of online bids :	30.04.2021
Date of opening of Technical Tenders:	01.05.2021
Date of opening of Financial Tenders:	04.05.2021

**CONTACT DETAILS: 9949902084 & 7995050703. Sd/- DIPR. DIPR. R.O. No.: 1728-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Dt. 20.04.2021**

**VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR**

**एनटीपीसी NTPC Limited (A Govt. of India Enterprise)**

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

NTPC has set up a Water Treatment Plant at NTECL, Vallur, Tamil Nadu (30 kms. from Chennai) to convert Sea water into Distillate/ Mineral water. NTPC is looking for an Applicant to Purchase the Desalinated Distillate/ Mineral Water ("Re-mineralized") 20 Ltr. Bottled Water produced at NTECL, Vallur. Published EOI is available at [www.nptcpender.com](http://www.nptcpender.com). For any

## MARKET WATCH

	20-04-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	47,706	-0.51
US Dollar	74.88	0.00
Gold	46,756	-1.13
Brent oil	65.69	-1.33

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	720.45	-0.50
Asian Paints	2553.65	-18.25
Axist Bank	651.75	3.60
Bajaj Auto	3600.90	85.35
Bajaj Finserv	9819.40	349.50
Bajaj Finance	4612.65	134.05
Bharti Airtel	530.20	3.75
BPCL	408.10	-0.65
Britannia Ind	3729.90	-12.90
Cipla	949.30	3.00
Coal India	124.50	-0.10
Divis Lab	3779.70	-27.40
Dr Reddys Lab	5156.75	188.65
Eicher Motors	2340.00	-30.35
Grasim Ind	1291.90	-32.80
HCL Tech	961.30	-33.30
HDPC	2415.90	-76.45
HDPC Bank	1391.40	-21.00
HDPC Life	685.20	19.25
Hero MotoCorp	2823.70	38.15
Hindalco	359.35	-2.05
Hind Unilever	2397.45	-39.20
ICICI Bank	559.10	-0.65
IndusInd Bank	845.00	13.00
Infosys	1351.35	-11.20
Indian Oil Corp	87.80	-0.30
ITC	203.55	-2.05
JSW Steel	620.60	4.80
Kotak Bank	1697.70	-3.05
L&T	1331.50	21.05
M&M	811.15	16.20
Maruti Suzuki	6646.65	134.90
Nestle India Ltd.	17095.65	5.70
NTPC	99.05	0.00
ONGC	102.85	-0.20
PowerGrid Corp	203.70	2.50
Reliance Ind	1901.15	-0.55
SBI Life	898.95	-7.30
State Bank	329.50	-1.65
Shree Cement	29320.70	-737.05
Sun Pharma	645.15	-4.50
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	680.10	16.00
Tata Motors	298.05	-3.35
Tata Steel	894.00	5.95
TCS	3144.55	-17.25
Tech Mahindra	983.40	-16.70
Titan	1522.90	-4.20
UltraTech Cement	6200.85	-308.90
UPL	591.75	-5.70
Wipro	470.10	-2.65

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.68	75.00
Euro	89.95	90.34
British Pound	104.22	104.71
Japanese Yen (100)	68.87	69.17
Chinese Yuan	11.49	11.54
Swiss Franc	81.56	81.92
Singapore Dollar	56.20	56.45
Canadian Dollar	59.61	59.86
Malaysian Ringgit	18.14	18.22

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## Lockdowns will result in business closures: RAI

With localised restrictions being imposed across States in the wake of the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic, Retailers Association of India (RAI) said closure of economic activity will lead to permanent closure of businesses and millions of job losses. "Shutting down non-essential or non-food retail and malls is not the solution," RAI CEO Kumar Rajagopal said. PTI

## Zaggle's profit surges as digital payments rise

Fintech firm Zaggle Prepaid Ocean Services Pvt. Ltd. said the rapid adoption of digital payments in enterprises during COVID-19 time helped grow its gross turnover value (GTV) by 4.5 times in FY21 from the previous year. We were profitable in FY20. But our profit in FY21 increased 14 times. This was because we introduced a lot of digital products at the right time," said Raj N, founder Zaggle.

## Gold imports zoom to 160 tonnes in March

Gold imports surged to 160 tonnes during March from 28.09 tonnes a year earlier, on account of the cut in duty to 7.5%, price declines and a rise in export demand, Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said on Tuesday. Growth in gold imports indicated the "positive sentiment in the domestic and international markets," GJEPC chairman Colin Shah said. PTI

## Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC files IPO papers

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC has filed preliminary papers with SEBI to raise ₹1,500-2,000 crore through an initial share sale. The initial public offer (IPO) is entirely an offer for sale, wherein promoters — Aditya Birla Capital and Sun Life (India) AMC Investments — will divest their stakes in the firm. The IPO is expected to fetch ₹1,500-₹2,000 crore, merchant banking sources said. PTI

## Govt. says container shortages resolved

India drafting long-term plan to spur local manufacture of the boxes crucial to global maritime trade

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The container shortages dogging exporters in recent months have been resolved for now as is reflected in the higher goods exports in March, top commerce ministry officials said on Tuesday. India, they added, has begun drafting a long-term plan with steel producers to make containers domestically.



On the move: Resolving the issue of container shortages has helped goods exports rise, says Mr. Agarwal ■ V. RAJU

tary (logistics) in the Ministry.

"The container shortages issue... has been eased out though the problem has really been a manifestation of in-

ternational developments," Mr. Agarwal said. "During March 2021, India's goods exports were 17%-18% higher than March 2019, so that is a very heartening feature and

## 'Target over 25% growth in exports'

Addressing a meeting with export promotion councils of various sectors, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal urged exporters to

target over 25% growth in 2021-22 so as to take merchandise exports to \$400 billion and promised them government support.

this has been feasible because of addressing the container shortages," he added.

"The non-availability of space in vessels calling on Indian ports, congestion at the ports and because exports were higher than imports, this imbalance was creating shortage of containers," he said, adding that the government had cut the quarantine period for Chinese vessels from 14 days to 5-7 days in order to improve availability.

As many as 2,000 empty containers were released after clearing unclaimed cargo from ports, which were also urged to stop using containers for handling cargo.

While Concor had ordered 2,000 containers, which were expected in the next 4-6 months, the ministry was in talks with steel producers to create an ecosystem for manufacturing containers that need special steel, Mr. Agarwal said. China currently produces three out of every four containers.



which are used as proxies to track economic activity, softening somewhat. It needs to be seen whether this softening is a blip, or marks a shift in trend, Crisil said.

The saving grace is that manufacturing and construction activities are operating, and travel and recreation services are also allowed in most States with social distancing measures,

the rating agency observed.

Local curbs have started to hurt activity, says Crisil

'Power use, e-way bill collections drop'

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

With the daily pandemic caseloads remaining above the 2.5-lakh mark, Crisil has warned of a grim economic scenario, as with even limited curbs on people's movement and some businesses, power consumption and e-way GST bill collections have seen a decline.

Ratings agency Crisil has in a report called for speeding up the vaccination drive, which of late has been on a decline on a weekly basis.

With infections spreading fast, more States are clamping localised restrictions on movement and commerce, which is only short of a complete lockdown, Crisil said.

This has resulted in electricity consumption and e-way GST bill collections, which are used as proxies to track economic activity, softening somewhat. It needs to be seen whether this softening is a blip, or marks a shift in trend, Crisil said.

DBS, others mull bids for Citi's business

## REUTERS

SINGAPORE

Banks including DBS Group, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group, OCBC and Standard Chartered are set to bid for parts of Citigroup's consumer business in Asia, people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

"We don't have the scale

we need to compete," Citigroup CEO Jane Fraser had said on April 15, explaining the rationale behind the decision to exit the 13 markets.

As part of this strategy Citi

plans to exit the credit card,

retail accounts and mortgage (home loan) business in

India, in due course.

Citigroup would, however,

continue to offer in India

its corporate, commercial

and investment banking,

brokerage, treasury and

trade services, securities

and fund services.



## Citi tells retail customers it's 'business as usual' in India

U.S. financial group set to exit consumer banking in country

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI



to serve our clients with the same care, empathy and dedication that we do today," he asserted.

"There is no immediate change to our operations and no immediate impact to our colleagues as a result of this announcement," Citibank India CEO Ashu Khullar said in a statement. "In the interim, we will continue

## Nestlé India March quarter net rises 14.6%

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Nestlé India posted a 14.6% increase in net profit to ₹602.25 crore for quarter ended March 31 from a year earlier, as in-home consumption boosted demand for key products.

Total sales rose 8.9% to ₹3,600 crore. In a statement, the company said the growth "was broad based and largely driven by volume and mix... Key products boosted by in-home consumption, posted double-digit growth".

"Domestic sales increased by 10.2%... Export sales were lower by 12.9% due to lower exports to affiliates. Demand in Out-of-Home channel further improved... but continues to be impacted by COVID," it added. The company declared an interim dividend of ₹25 per share.

Outside of the U.S., Twitter has dedicated engineering teams in multiple markets, including London, Toronto and Singapore.

"He will be responsible for strengthening the company's engineering capacity

## LIC's premium income rises 10% in FY21

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) said it had achieved first-year premium income of ₹56,406 crore for FY21 under the individual assurance business, a 10.1% increase from the previous year.

The insurer had also procured 2.1 crore policies and garnered a market share of 74.6% for FY21. In first-year premium, LIC reported a market share of 66.2%. Pension and group schemes vertical of the insurer saw new business premium income of ₹1,27,768 crore from ₹1,26,749 crore in the previous year. With the addition of 3,45,469 agents, LIC now has a sales force of 13,53,808 agents.

"But assuming that this wave will not cripple the industry completely, we anticipate at least 7-10% growth



in the quantum of used cars sold in the year," he said.

However, irrespective of the short-term impact, the industry expected the number of used cars sold in the country to be 7.1 million in FY25, the CEO said.

"The industry faces no demand issue as smaller cities account for 60% of pre-owned car sales today," Mr. Pandey said.

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# Mishra bamboozles MI heavy-hitters in game-breaking spell

Leggie removes Rohit, Hardik, Pollard and Ishan to leave defending champion reeling; DC almost fluffs its lines in tense 138-run chase but gets home

## IPL 2021

AMOL KARHADKAR

**N**ot long ago, they said T20 was a youngster's game. But Amit Mishra, Shikhar Dhawan and Steve Smith underlined the worth of seasoned campaigners as the trio played a vital role in helping Delhi Capitals avenge last year's IPL loss against Mumbai Indians.

While Mishra spun a web around the Mumbai Indians batsmen on a turner at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai to restrict the defending champion to 137 for nine on Tuesday, Dhawan and Smith batted sensibly to put Capitals' chase on course.

Despite both batsmen getting dismissed at an inopportune time – Smith plumb in front by Kieron Pollard at the halfway mark and Dhawan getting caught on the square boundary off leggie Rahul Chahar in the 15th over – Lalit Yadav and Shimron Hetmyer saw Capitals home with five balls and six wickets to spare.

**Smart changes**  
Besides the players, credit must be given to the Capitals management for making smart changes for the game

against a side which it lost to four times last season. Playing its first match of the season in Chennai, Capitals read the turner to perfection and brought in Mishra and Hetmyer in place of Lukman Meiriwala and Chris Woakes. It turned out to be a masterstroke despite captain Rishabh Pant losing the toss.

When Rohit Sharma got off to a flier – smashing Kagiso Rabada on to the roof for a huge six in the PowerPlay – it looked like he would run away with the game even before the dew would make things tough for the MI bowlers later in the night.

However, Mishra changed the course of the game with three wickets off eight balls. With Quinton de Kock edging to Marcus Stoinis, who opened the bowling, and Suryakumar Yadav snicking behind off Avesh Khan in the seventh over, Rohit had to bat deep.

### Twin strikes

However, Mishra deceived Rohit and Hardik Pandya with flight and turn in the ninth over, giving Capitals the advantage. The pitch continued to assist the tweakers as Mishra deceived Pollard with a googly and dismissed Ishan Kishan in the 18th over. Jayant Yadav,



**Delhi's architects:** After Mishra had delivered a telling spell, Dhawan spearheaded Capitals' pursuit. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

brought in to combat the left-handers in the Capitals line-up, forced Prithvi Shaw into hitting back to him.

But a risk-free 53-run partnership between Dhawan and Smith steadied the ship

before the former switched gears in the second half of his innings.

Despite Mumbai Indians' recent trend of defending modest totals, Hetmyer and Lalit, promoted to No. 4,



**Next assignment**  
MI: April 23 vs. PBKS  
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.  
DC: April 25 vs. SRH  
Chennai, 7.30 p.m.

## SCOREBOARD

### MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma c Smith b Mishra 44 (30b, 3x4, 3x6), Quinton de Kock c Pant b Stoinis 2 (4b), Suryakumar Yadav c Pant b Avesh 24 (15b, 4x4), Ishan Kishan b Mishra 26 (28b, 1x4, 1x6), Hardik Pandya c Smith b Mishra 0 (1b), Krunal Pandya b Lalit 1 (5b), Kieron Pollard lbw b Mishra 2 (5b), Jayant Yadav c & b Rabada 23 (22b, 1x4), Rahul Chahar c Pant b Avesh 6 (6b, 1x4), Jasprit Bumrah (not out) 3 (3b), Trent Boult (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-5); Total (for nine wkt. in 20 overs): 137.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-9 (de Kock, 2.1 overs), 2-67 (Suryakumar, 6.6), 3-76 (Rohit, 8.4), 4-77 (Hardik, 8.6), 5-81 (Krunal, 10.4), 6-84 (Pollard, 11.5), 7-123 (Ishan, 17.3), 8-129 (Jayant, 18.5), 9-135 (Rahul Chahar, 19.4).

### CAPITALS BOWLING

Bout 4-0-23-0, Jayant 4-0-25-1, Bumrah 4-0-32-1, Krunal 2-0-17-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-29-1, Pollard 11-0-9-1.

### Toss: MI; MoM: Mishra.

DC won by six wickets with five balls to spare.

### POINTS TABLE

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Royal Challengers	3	3	0	6	0.750
Delhi Capitals	4	3	1	6	0.426
Chennai Super Kings	3	2	1	4	1.194
Mumbai Indians	4	2	2	4	0.187
Kolkata Knight Riders	3	1	2	2	-0.633
Rajasthan Royals	3	1	2	2	-0.719
Punjab Kings	3	1	2	2	-0.967
Sunrisers Hyderabad	3	0	3	0	-0.483

After the DC-MI match on April 20

## SRH and PBKS eye climb from bottom

Hyderabad must solve middle-order muddle, Punjab needs to sort bowling out

AYAN ACHARYA

**P**unjab Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad are currently in the bottom two places and will try to climb up the points table when they meet at the M. A. Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Wednesday.

SRH has started with three defeats in a row, ceding the advantage from promising positions in all three chases. It needs to solve a middle-order muddle.

David Warner and Jonny Bairstow have been aggressive, but there remains a question mark over the batting line-up, not least around Manish Pandey, who has failed to close games out.

**Williamson could play**  
Kane Williamson, if fit, could play. Bairstow donning the keeping gloves could open up a slot for Kedar Jadhav.

SRH's bowling is its strongest suit: an array of options, with Rashid Khan as a genuine wicket-taking threat in the middle overs.

But the form of Bhuvneshwar Kumar will be a concern. He has gone for 120 runs in three matches and picked up just two wickets.

Meanwhile, PBKS will



**Firepower:** Mayank Agarwal and Kane Williamson have the ability to swing games. ■ SPORTZPICS/IPL

draw inspiration from Mayank Agarwal's return to form. He made a 36-ball 69 against Delhi Capitals on Sunday.

The side has quality bat-

smen in K.L. Rahul, Chris Gayle and Deepak Hooda, but the bowling is spread thin.

Mohammed Shami, Jhye Richardson and Riley Meredith have gone for runs, with Arshdeep Singh, currently its highest wicket-taker, being the only outlier.

PBKS could consider including Chris Jordan to break the sameness in the pace attack.

The game will give an early indication of whether one of these teams can go deep in the tournament.

## TODAY'S MATCHES

<b>PUNJAB KINGS</b>	VS.	<b>SUNRISERS HYDERABAD</b>
<b>CHENNAI, 3.30 P.M. IST</b>		
<b>HEAD-TO-HEAD</b>		
Played: 16		
PBK 5	VS	SRH 11
In 2020		
Played 2   PBK 1   SRH 1		

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

<b>Knight Riders</b>	VS.	<b>CHENNAI SUPER KINGS</b>
<b>HEAD-TO-HEAD</b>		
Played: 22		
KKR 8	VS	CSK 14
In 2020		
Played 2   KKR 1   CSK 1		

Dhoni's side has made the most of its resources unlike inefficient Knight Riders

S. DIPAK RAGAV

spark to its batting firepow-

er, playing at No. 3.

With deep batting re-

sources, stretching down to

No. 11 Deepak Chahar, the

team can be more aggressive

at the top of the order.

The only area of concern

is opener Ruturaj Gaikwad's

form, but coach Stephen

Fleming categorically said

the team would continue to

back the youngster. The

team is unlikely to tinker with its line-up and is on firm

footing against KKR, which

will play its first game in

Mumbai on Wednesday.

In a welcome development

for CSK, Jason Behrendorff has reached New Delhi and is serving his mandatory quarantine.

After a comprehensive

win against Sunrisers Hyderabab in its first match, KKR has struggled. It lost from a position of strength against both Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The team will need a bit more consistency from its middle-order of Rahul Tripathi, Eoin Morgan and Dinesh Karthik.

Coach Brendon McCullum hinted that Sunil Narine could play in this game, most likely as a replacement for Shakib Al Hasan.

KKR will hope that the more batting-friendly pitchers of Mumbai, compared with the ones in Chennai, can change its fortunes.

## BCCI shortlists T20 WC venues despite COVID-19 scare

It is learnt that two ICC full members have expressed their reservations about travelling to India

AMOL KARHADKAR

**M**umbai and Bengaluru are the only two cities in India that have been shortlisted by the International Cricket Council (ICC) as potential hosts for the 2023 World Cup. The BCCI has also shortlisted Chennai, Hyderabad, and Ahmedabad as potential hosts.

However, with a surge in COVID-19 cases, The Hindu

understands that at least a couple of full members of the ICC have expressed reservations about travelling to India.

In order to ensure the safety for all the travelling contingents, an ICC events and logistics team is scheduled to travel to India next week to conduct recce at a few venues.

However, the recent wave in COVID-19 cases may force postponement of the tour.

According to a BCCI insider, even if the ICC team defers its plan, it shouldn't be construed as "a cause for

concern" since the BCCI hopes that the ICC annual conference in June will erase all the doubts".

A couple of member boards are in favour of the event being awarded to Australia, which is scheduled to stage the next year's T20 World Cup.

the current impasse is not resolved soon, South Africa may not be able to take part in the ICC T20 World Cup to be held in India in October-November.

"At a time when we should be enthusiastic about the future, we have to be concerned about the future

(of the game)," they wrote. "The Proteas men's team has an ICC World T20 event in November. The current state of cricket administration undermines our preparation in this regard.

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