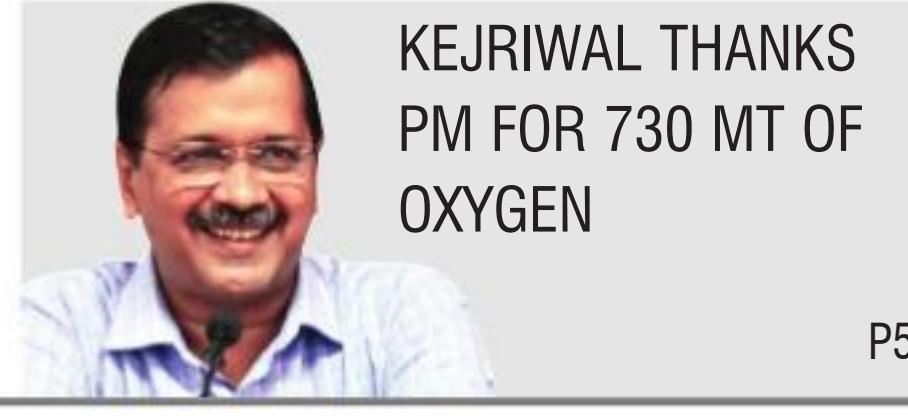




STALIN TO BE SWORN  
IN AS TAMIL NADU CM  
TODAY

P4



KEJRIWAL THANKS  
PM FOR 730 MT OF  
OXYGEN

P5



KOREA AND THE  
POLITICS OF PARDON

P7



BACH FACES  
MUSIC HE  
CAN'T LIKE

P12



## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively.

**RAINFALL:** 0.4 MM

**RELATIVE HUMIDITY**

Max: 68% Min: 32%

**TEMPERATURE**

Max: 39.8°C (+1) Min: 26.5°C (+2)

SUN RISES

05:35 hrs

MOON RISES

03:50 hrs

SUN SETS

19:00 hrs

MOON SETS

15:12 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Ganga ghats wear a deserted look during lockdown, in Varanasi on Thursday. AGENCE

**Covid vaccination of aviation personnel:** The Centre on Thursday issued guidelines to facilitate expeditious Covid-19 vaccination of aviation personnel working in government as well as private entities. A dedicated vaccination facility will be established by the airport operators in their respective airports to facilitate expeditious vaccination of staff, the guidelines issued by the Civil Aviation Ministry stated.

**India, EU to announce resumption of FTA talks:** A much-awaited decision on resumption of negotiations for a comprehensive India-European Union free trade agreement after a gap of eight years and unveiling of an ambitious connectivity partnership are set to be the key takeaways of a virtual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top leadership of the 27-nation bloc on Saturday.

**Rlys cancels slew of premium trains:** The Northern Railways on Thursday cancelled "till further advice" eight Shatabdi Express, two Rajdhani Express, two Duronto Express and one Vande Bharat Express citing low patronisation and rising coronavirus cases as the reason behind the decision.

**RLD chief Ajit Singh dies of Covid-19**

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Former Union minister and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) leader Ajit Singh passed away at a Gurgaon hospital on Thursday morning battling Covid-19, his family said. He was 82.

Singh, a prominent farmer leader and the son of former Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh, was diagnosed with Covid-19 on 20 April, the family said in a statement.

"Chaudhary Ajit Singh ji battled his condition till the very end and breathed his last today morning," his son Jayant Chaudhary tweeted. President Kovind, PM Modi condoled the death of the Jat leader. PTI

DETAILS ON PAGE 5

**'Foreign aid dispatched, no Customs pendency'**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday said no oxygen concentrator, received as aid from abroad, is lying with the customs authorities at any port of import as these consignments are being cleared swiftly.

In all, 3,000 oxygen concentrators have been received as global aid to support the Central government's efforts and that of the states and Union Territories in their collective fight against the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, the health ministry said in a statement.

China has sent 1,000 oxy-

gen concentrators, Ireland 700, the United Kingdom 669 in four consignments, Mauritius 200, Uzbekistan 151, Taiwan 150, Romania 80, Thailand 30, and Russia 20.

Some media reports had claimed that oxygen concentrators are lying at Customs warehouses awaiting clearance.

"The news is totally incorrect and without any basis. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs has clarified that there is no such pendency with Indian Customs. The Indian Customs is swiftly clearing all consignments and no such figure of pendency exists across any port of import," the health ministry said.

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**Record 4.12L fresh cases, 3,980 fatalities**

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 6 MAY

Coronavirus cases and deaths in India hit new daily highs on Thursday, with the number of new confirmed cases breached 4,00,000 for the second time since the devastating surge began last month.

The 4,12,262 new cases reported on Thursday morning pushed India's official tally to more than 21 million. The Health Ministry also reported 3,980 deaths in the last 24 hours, bringing the total to 2,30,168.

Active cases have increased to 35,66,398, comprising 16.92 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has dropped to 81.99 per cent, the data updated at 8 am showed.

**The UK strain of the coronavirus is currently dominating parts of north India while the "double mutant" could be found mostly in Maharashtra, K'taka and Gujarat**

The states of Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Jharkhand account for 75.55 per cent of the new deaths.

Meanwhile, according to a top health ministry official, the UK strain of coronavirus is currently dominating parts of north India while the so-called double mutant could be found mostly in Maha-

rashtra, Karnataka and Gujarat. Sujet Singh, Director of National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), also said that the B.1.1.7 lineage of SARS CoV-2 (UK variant) is declining in proportion across the country in the last month and a half. The double mutant variant, also known as B.1.617, is mostly dominating Maharashtra, West Bengal, Delhi and Gujarat, Singh said. The South African variant, also known as B.1.315, was predominantly found in Telangana and Delhi. Bengal logs 18,431 new cases: West Bengal registered 18,431 fresh Covid cases and 117 deaths today. Kolkata recorded 3,887 cases and 33 deaths in the last 24 hours. The total Covid case count is 9,35,066.



**Post-poll violence: CM announces ex gratia; slams Centre for sending team to Bengal**

KOLKATA, 6 MAY

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today announced ex gratia compensation of Rs 2 lakh for the families of the victims of post-poll violence and slammed the BJP-led Central government for sending a team to West Bengal within 24 hours of her swearing-in as they could not accept defeat.

"Within 24 hours of our government coming to power, a letter was sent, a team was rushed in and a Union minister came to the state. The swearing-in was at 10.48 am. MHA sent a stern letter in the evening and next morning a team reached the state. I would request BJP to show some restraint. Please accept the people's mandate," said Miss Banerjee at a virtual press conference in Nabanna.

A four-member team of the Home Ministry arrived in Kolkata this morning and met with state officials. Last evening, the ministry wrote to the state chief secretary asking why no steps had been taken to stem the violence. On 3 May, the MHA had sought a report on the incidents of post-poll violence and in its letter yesterday, questioned as to why the state government had not submitted the report.

"Central teams don't come when patients don't get oxygen or vaccines. They could have visited the hospitals to see Covid situation. They didn't go when Hathras (gang-rape incident) happened or riots broke out in states," she said, adding that visiting Central officials, like all incoming travellers, too would be required to carry negative Covid test report.

**Support grows for waiving vaccine patent rules, snags remain**

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA, 6 MAY

France joined the United States on Thursday in supporting an easing of patent and other protections on Covid-19 vaccines that could help poorer countries get more doses and speed the end of the pandemic. While the backing from two countries with major drug makers is important, many obstacles remain.

The move to support waiving intellectual property protections on vaccines under World Trade Organisation rules marked a dramatic shift for the United States and drew cheers from activists, complaints from Big Pharma, and a lot of questions about what comes next. Washington had previously lined up

with many other developed nations opposed to the idea floated by India and South Africa in October.

Attention is now turning to those richer nations, notably in the European Union and France was the first to voice its support. "I completely favour this opening up of the intellectual property," French President Emmanuel Macron said on Thursday on a visit to a vaccine centre.

But he also expressed doubt, as pharmaceutical companies have, that the measure would be the panacea some hope. Even if patents are waived, he said, drug makers in places like Africa currently are not equipped to make Covid-19 vaccines so donations of doses should be prioritized instead.

Another key hurdle remains: Any single country could block a decision at the WTO, a Geneva-based trade body of 164 member states, to agree to a waiver.

The EU Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen,

said the 27-nation bloc was ready to talk about the US proposal but vaguely remained noncommittal for now.

"We are ready to discuss how the US proposal for waiving on intellectual property protection for Covid vaccines could help end the crisis, she said in a video address. In the short run, however, we call upon all vaccine producing countries to allow exports and to avoid measures that disrupt supply chains."

That echoed the position

of the global pharmaceutical industry, which insists a faster solution would be for rich countries that have vaccine stockpiles to start sharing them with poorer ones.

The industry insists that production of coronavirus vaccines is complicated and can't be ramped up by easing intellectual property protections. Instead, it insists that reducing bottlenecks in supply chains and a scarcity of ingredients that go into vaccines are the more pressing issues for now.

"A waiver is the simple but the wrong answer to what is a complex problem, said the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations.

"Waiving patents of Covid-19 vaccines will not increase

**TIMELY REMEDY OR PANACEA?**

► Supporters say a waiver would be important because it would allow manufacturers around the world to get access to the recipes for making the life-saving vaccines as well as the ingredients

KEY HURDLE ■ Any single country could block a decision at the WTO, a Geneva-based trade body of 164 member states, to agree to a waiver

■ The pharmaceutical industry insists that production of coronavirus vaccines is complicated and can't be ramped up by easing intellectual property protections.

► India, which with South Africa had floated the idea, welcomed the US decision to support a waiver on patent protections for Covid-19 vaccines, saying this would help enable rapid scaling up of manufacture and timely availability of affordable jabs and essential medical products.

Even if patents are waived, drug makers in places like Africa currently are not equipped to make Covid-19 vaccines so donations of doses should be prioritized instead

EMMANUEL MACRON FRENCH PRESIDENT

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"Waiving patents of Covid-19 vaccines will not increase

SNS



*I have questions about the rationality of the decision; it could be more political*

ASOK BHATTACHARYA, CPI-M LEADER & FORMER SILIGURI MAYOR

ON THE STATE GOVT'S DECISION TO APPOINT FORMER MINISTER GAUTAM DEB AS THE SMC BOA CHIEF

# Won't let anyone die due to O2 crisis if we get 700 MT daily: CM

Kejriwal says Delhi govt could set up 9,500 oxygen beds immediately if it gets 700 MT of oxygen supply daily, appeals to city hospitals to raise their bed capacity to their original levels

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

**R**eeling under an unprecedented public health crisis caused by an acute shortage of beds, medical oxygen and essential medicines among other things amid the raging Covid-19 storm, Delhi yesterday received 730 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen, with chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today pointing out that it was for the first time the city got over 700 tonnes of the life-saving gas.

"It was a matter of great relief that Delhi yesterday got 730 MT of oxygen from the Centre for the first time. We require at least 700 MT of medical oxygen daily to fulfil the needs of the city's hospitals. But for some time Delhi's hospitals have been faced with a major crisis because of an inadequate availability of oxygen. I have been getting distress calls and messages from different hospitals every day, saying that they had very little oxygen left and, therefore, it would be difficult to save lives. So far we had been getting very



little oxygen supply, sometimes 300 MT, 350 MT, 400 MT or 450 MT, though there was a fast rising demand from hospitals owing to an unprecedented surge in the number of coronavirus patients," the CM told an online press briefing.

Kejriwal expressed gratitude to the Delhi High Court, the Supreme Court and the Centre for ensuring 730 MT of oxygen for Delhi.

He appealed to the Centre that there should be no reduction in oxygen supply now. The national capital must get 700 MT of oxygen daily to take care of the requirements of its

Covid patients and hospitals. The CM asserted that his government will not let anyone die in Delhi due to lack of oxygen if the city continues to get 700 MT of oxygen daily.

He said many hospitals had reduced their bed capacity during this period of oxygen shortage. One hospital, which had 300 beds, reduced 100 beds. Government hospitals too had brought down their bed capacity.

Kejriwal appealed to all such hospitals to bring their bed capacity to the original position as Delhi would now "hopefully get 700 MT of oxy-

gen daily".

He said that some hospitals told him that they could increase their bed capacity substantially if they receive an adequate oxygen supply regularly. This would, obviously, result in saving lives of critical Covid patients.

"The Delhi government has made a big plan to increase the oxygenated bed capacity of hospitals. We can create around 9,500 hospital beds with oxygen immediately if we get 700 MT of oxygen daily. I can assure you that in such a situation no one will die of the oxygen problem in Delhi," the CM said.

Later in the day, Kejriwal also said the Delhi government will set up 48 oxygen plants, including 21 that are being imported from France, across the national capital to address the shortage of the life-saving gas.

Kejriwal inspected the installation of a new oxygen plant at the Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra Hospital.

He said the plant can generate 330 litres oxygen, which can fill 50-60 cylinders, and if used directly, 33 patients can

be treated 24x7, adding that it will help the 200-bed hospital.

"Inspected the installation of the new oxygen plant at Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra Hospital. I want to thank the French govt for their support. We are setting up 48 such plants across Delhi to address the shortage of oxygen," he tweeted.

"Though these are small plants, I feel they will provide a lot of support to the entire system that is under pressure due to a shortage of oxygen," Kejriwal said.

Hospitals across the national capital and its suburbs have been sending out SOS messages on social media about their depleting oxygen supplies.

On 1 May, 12 Covid patients,

including a senior doctor, died at south Delhi's Batra Hospital after the facility ran out of oxygen for around 80 minutes in the afternoon. The disturbing incident occurred within days of 20 coronavirus patients dying at Jaipur Gold-en Hospital and 25 at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital amid a severe oxygen crisis in the national capital.

## O2 concentrators racket busted in Capital, 4 held

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Police said that each oxygen concentrator was being sold for Rs 70,000. Police said that four people have been arrested so far in connection with the case

An FIR has been filed under sections of the Essential Commodities Act and Epidemic Diseases Act against the four accused, who have been identified as Gurav Singh, Satish Sethi, Vikrant and Hitesh.

Delhi Police have busted many rackets involving black-marketing of oxygen concentrators for the past few weeks. The racket was busted at a time when Delhi faces an acute shortage of medical oxygen supply amid skyrocketing Covid-19 cases.

A total of 78 cases of black marketing and hoarding have been registered. In all 144 miscreants have been arrested so far while police teams are looking to nab more, police said.

In another case, Delhi Police arrested five persons in connection with a Covid online fraud from Delhi and Faridabad for allegedly duping people in the name of supplying remdesivir injections and oxygen cylinders.

City witnesses sudden change in weather

Dusty winds accompanied by thunders were witnessed

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

A sudden change in weather was witnessed in Delhi on Thursday afternoon as skies turned cloudy and light rains in some parts of the city brought the mercury down, giving much-needed relief to the people of the city.

The meteorological department had forecast generally cloudy skies with possibility of light rain or drizzle in the day.

Dusty winds accompanied by thunders were witnessed in the city.

The people had earlier woken up to a warm Thursday morning with minimum temperature settling at 26.2 degrees Celsius, two notches above the season's average. The air quality of the city was 'moderate' with index value of 153 at 9 am, real-time data of Central Pollution Control Board showed.

The relative humidity was recorded 59 per cent at 8.30 am.

The maximum temperature is expected to be around 39 degrees Celsius, according to the Met department.

## 1.3 lakh people in 18-44 age group vaccinated in three days: Kejriwal

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday said around 1.30 lakh people in the 18-44 age group have been vaccinated against coronavirus since the inoculation of this category started on May 3. He also said the entire population of the capital can be vaccinated in three months, but only if adequate doses are available.

"In the last three days, around 1.3 lakh people (in the 18-44 age group) have been vaccinated. I hope more will

## Charges for private ambulance services in Delhi capped at ₹1,500-4,000

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

In an order issued by special secretary and director of Centralised Accident and Trauma Services (CATS), charges of patient transport ambulances (PTA), basic life support ambulances (BLS) and advanced life support (ALS) ambulances, have been capped.

For each type of ambulance service, the maximum charges will include oxygen, all ambulance equipment, PPE kit, gloves, mask, shield, sanitization, driver, emergency medical technician and doctor, stated the order. The maximum charge for PTA will be Rs 1,500 per call for up to 10 kilometres, followed by Rs 1,00 per extra kilometre, it added.

"It has come to our notice that private ambulance services in Delhi are charging illegitimately. To avoid this practise, Delhi govt has capped maximum prices that private ambulance services can charge. Strict actions will be taken against those who violate the order," Kejriwal tweeted.

metres and Rs 100 per extra kilometre, it added.

"It has come to notice that some private ambulance drivers, service providers are charging exorbitant rates in Delhi during the COVID 19 pandemic for transporting patients which is a matter of serious concern," read the order. The CATS provides 24X7 free ambulance service in Delhi through a single toll free number 102.

"If any instance of charging rates higher than the aforesaid maximum comes to the notice by any private ambulance driver, service provider, operator or owner, strict action as per applicable laws shall be taken," said the order. The action can be cancellation of driving license of ambulance driver, cancellation of registration certificate of ambulance and impounding of the vehicle, it added.

## Delhi sees over 1,349 per cent jump in Covid containment zones in past 1 month

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The national capital has witnessed a staggering 1,349 per cent jump in the number of its COVID-19 containment zones in the past one month, with South Delhi accounting for the maximum 21,172 such zones out of the total 47,704, according to official figures.

Northeast Delhi has 600 containment zones closely followed by East Delhi (504) which has the lowest number of such zones

(1,290), Northeast Delhi (600) and East Delhi (504).

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Delhi has had a total of 65,527 containment zones, with South Delhi recording 22,546, the highest in the city. Of these, 17,823 have been de-contained.

There are 42,244 active containment zones in the city.

In compliance with the Union Health Ministry regulations, an area or building is marked as a containment zone when three or more COVID-19 positive cases are reported there. To prevent further contamination, more stringent restrictions are imposed in these areas.

Delhi recorded 20,960 new coronavirus cases on Wednesday and 311 related fatalities which pushed the total number of cases in the city to 1,253,902 and the death toll to 18,063.

## Can't allow court to become ground of recrimination between Centre and Delhi: SC

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Supreme Court on Thursday said it will not allow the top court of the country to become a ground of recrimination between the Centre and the Delhi government as they indulged in a blamegame on the issue of allocation and supply of oxygen to the national capital.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and M R Shah warned both Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, and senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, and said everyone should work in a cooperative manner.

"We are making it clear that this is not an adversarial litigation. We are not going to allow this constitutional court to become a ground of recrimination between two governments. We won't allow any recrimination to be made against Delhi government or the Central government. All we want is that everyone should work in a cooperative manner," the bench told Mehta and Mehra. Mehra, claiming not to be adversarial, said the Centre did not allocate the requisite amount of oxygen to Delhi even after the top court's direction, and that even on Thursday, the supply is not 700MT as per their estimates.

He said the Centre has tried to put the Delhi government in the dock in every affidavit they have filed before the courts, and he also claimed that other states such as Madhya Pradesh and Punjab were given more oxygen than their demands.

At the outset, Mehta told the bench that the Centre has complied with the top court's order



Wednesday, the supply is being brought down to 566MT.

"This court should not allow the supply to be brought down as it will be in violation of the court's April 30 order and we must say that it is not followed in letter and spirit. This court should ensure that the supply is maintained at 700MT," Mehra said.

He said that people are dying in Delhi for a shortage in supply of Oxygen to hospitals, and the Centre should not be allowed to dilute the supply either directly or indirectly and the solemn assurance given by the Union government to court that the demand of oxygen will be met shall be followed.

"If an audit of Oxygen supply is to be made, then it should be done on the allocation policy of the Centre which in our view is arbitrary. The audit of tankers should also be done as these vehicles are national assets," he said, adding that there should also be no allocation on just papers.

Mehra added that many COVID-19 patients may need more oxygen than contemplated by the Centre whether for Oxygenated beds or non-Oxygenated beds and actual allocation and requirement has to be seen.

"If at all a committee is to be formed for auditing the supply and demand of Oxygen, it should be representatives from top five-affected states," Mehra said, adding they have started installing GPS on tankers to track the vehicles.

He said the Delhi government is also in the process of developing an app by which a COVID-19 patient in home requiring refilling of oxygen cylinders can register himself/herself and make a request after which the administration will deliver it.

## Oxygen plant donated by Italy starts at ITBP-run hospital in Greater Noida

PTI

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

A medical oxygen generation plant, which has been sent by Italy to tackle the COVID-19 health emergency in India and can support 100 patients at one time, was operationalised at a CAPF hospital located in Greater Noida on Thursday.

The machinery for the plant was brought to the country onboard a special flight few days back and the Cen-

tre had deployed it at the CAPF referral hospital that is operated by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

"Italian Ambassador to India Vincenzo De Luca switched on the plant at a ceremony that was attended by senior ITBP officers. The plant has been installed and made operational at the hospital campus within 48 hours," a spokesperson for the border guarding force said. It will supply medical oxygen to more than 100 COVID-19 beds available at this hospital, he added.

## APPOINTMENT

### INTEGRATED DISTRICT HEALTH SOCIETY (NORTH EAST DISTRICT)

DISTRICT PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT UNIT, C-BLOCK,  
WEAVER'S COMPLEX, D.C. OFFICE COMPLEX, NAND NAGRI, DELHI-93  
Phone No., 22593424, 22596507, dpmunorneast@gmail.com

#### WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

For Medical Officer's on Short Term/Adhoc Basis

| Sl. No | Post | No. Required | Age Limit      | Consolidated Monthly Remuneration | Essential Qualification  |
|--------|------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 1      | ANM  | 70 (Seventy) | Below 50 years | Rs. 40,000/-                      | ANM course from recognized Institute/ University or Diploma in MPW |

- Note:
1. The above posts are purely on Short Term/Adhoc basis till 31-07-2021 due to emergency of COVID-19
  2. The period of engagement can be extended as per requirement.
  3. The posting of the ANMs can be done at any vaccination site / Centres of North East District with all right reserved with Mission Director cum CDMO - North East District.
  4. Documents required are Diploma / Certificate in ANM Course from recognized Institute / University or Diploma in MPW, two passport size photographs, any other experience certificate of working in medical field.
  5. The Walk-in-Interview will be held on
    - 1. Dated: 09-05-2021 (Sunday)
    - 2. Reporting Time: 11:00 AM
    - 3. Venue: J-Block, Conference Hall, Weaver's Complex, DC / DM Office North East District, Nand Nagri, Delhi-93
  6. The Selected Candidates would be required to join with immediate effect.

DIP/Shabdarth/0046/21-22

Sd/- Mission Director  
IDHS - North East District



*But, what will happen to the inoculation process which is stalled because of the vaccine crisis?*

SAYING PRIME MINISTER SHOULD SEND VACCINES FIRST INSTEAD OF MHA TEAMS

# Delhi's medical infra in shambles, got exposed during pandemic: HC

The HC directs the Delhi govt to provide facility for medical treatment to all residents of the Capital suffering from Covid, asks the govt not to behave like an ostrich with its head in sand

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Delhi High Court on Thursday said that the existing medical infrastructure in the national capital was "exposed" and in "shambles" when put to the test during the pandemic and directed the Delhi government to provide facility for medical treatment as required by all residents of the national capital who are suffering from COVID-19.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli further said the government was behaving like an ostrich with its head in the sand if it was disputing that the medical infrastructure was not in shambles.

"Now you are behaving like the ostrich with its head in the sand. When you defend this situation, then you are not rising above the politics. We always call a spade a spade," the bench said to senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the Delhi government, when he argued that the court may not say the medical infrastructure was in shambles.

The bench said, "the existing medical infrastructure in the state is completely exposed... when it was put to the test and this court cannot turn away people like the



petitioner by merely telling him that the state does not have the infrastructure to deal with his situation..."

To this Mehra said, "The existing infrastructure is struggling, but the court may not say it is in shambles as that has a different connotation to it.

In the absence of oxygen what could the infrastructure do. Hospitals were reducing beds due to lack of oxygen."

He said the government has taken several initiatives, like augmenting beds by 15,000 and ICU beds by 1,200, which are in the pipeline and the oxygen is also coming in.

However, the bench said "No that is not right. It is not just oxygen. Is oxygen enough? If you have oxygen, do you have everything? Pipeline is pipeline. They are not there now".

The observations and direction came while hearing a 53-year-old COVID patient's

state to provide the infrastructure to enable the petitioner to undergo the treatment required to save his life..."

"At the same time we cannot lose sight of the fact that thousands of others are afflicted by the same disease in the city and whose condition may be as bad as that of the petitioner, if not worse," it added.

The court said that just because the petitioner was able to approach the court cannot be a reason to pass an order in his favour so that he can steal a march over others who may not have had the same option.

"We, therefore, dispose of the petition with a direction to the respondent (Delhi govt) in rem that they shall provide facility for medical treatment as may be required by all the residents of Delhi who are suffering from COVID-19.

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

The court, however, made it clear that merely because it passed the order in the instant petition, it does not mean the petitioner can claim preferential treatment.

## Moral fabric of people torn: HC on hoarding, black marketing of O2 cylinders, medicines

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Delhi High Court Thursday said the moral fabric of people has been "dismembered" to a great extent as instead of coming together to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, they are engaging in hoarding and black marketing of oxygen cylinders, medicines and concentrators.

"We are still not understanding the gravity of the situation and that is why we are not coming together. Which is why we are seeing instances of hoarding and black marketing. Our moral fabric has been dismembered to a great extent," a bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said.

The observation came in response to a suggestion by a senior lawyer that medical professionals who have retired as well as medical and nursing students can be tapped to provide assistance in the prevailing situation when there is shortage of personnel also not just medicines, equipment and beds.

Senior advocate Nitya Ramakrishnan also suggested that a committee of experts in the field of health be constituted, like a public-private partnership, to assist the court.

To this, the bench said people would have to be "incentivised" in the form of some comfort or some compensation to encourage them to venture out and expose themselves to the infection

on a daily basis.

Senior advocate and amicus curiae Rajeshwar Rao said having the infrastructure was not enough, we need to have personnel manning the infrastructure.

He also said that presently a handful of people were taking all the decisions and there was need to bring in more people at the ground level, so that the burden on the handful who are making decisions is eased.

Advocate Tarun Chandhok, who recently recovered from COVID-19 said he faced immense difficulties in getting plasma from recovered patients and urged the court to make it mandatory to donate plasma once a patient recovers.

He said that just like the State has a responsibility towards the welfare of the people, the citizens too have a responsibility.

He said that once a person recovers from COVID with the help of government machinery, they have the percentage of breath analyser (BA) testing mentioned in the April 27 order of aviation regulator DGCA and that no carrier should go beyond it for the safety of their pilots and cabin crew in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The high court issued the direction after it was informed by the DGCA that some airlines were testing more pilots and cabin crew than the 10 per cent limit set by the regulator.

Justice Prathiba M Singh also said that the court will not substitute its view with that of the medical committee, created by DGMS (Air) to examine whether BA tests could be substituted by blood tests to detect alcohol levels, which has said that blood alcohol testing was not feasible.

The committee also said it was satisfied by the UV sanitisation method used by DGCA for the BA test machines.

While declining to interfere with the committee's findings, the court, however, called for an additional report from it on whether the BA test can be conducted in an open area so that spread of COVID-19 through the suspended particles or aerosols in a confined room can be avoided.

This query was posed by the court as the ATC Guild had expressed an apprehension that since the BA test is conducted in an enclosed space and the air blown into the equipment is released out from the other end of the machine, the droplets or aerosols of COVID may remain suspended in the air and could infect others who enter that room.

## 250 ventilators gathering dust in Pb for 1 year: BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 6 MAY

The Bharatiya Janata Party's Punjab unit on Thursday alleged 250 ventilators sent by the Centre are gathering dust for the last one year and the people are losing lives due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Punjab BJP president Ashwani Sharma said Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh was indulging in mere talk and propaganda.

"The Centre gave 290 ventilators out of which 250 have not been made functional as no staff was trained or hired by the state government which is making tall claims of being hands on in managing the pandemic," he said.

"Not only is the Amarinder Singh government responsible for the total collapse of the medical infrastructure in the state. The state government received Rs 995 Crore and medical supplies from the Central government to fight the dreaded disease. Where

was the money used?" asked the BJP leader.

Sharma said the Central government sanctioned 162 oxygen plants and three were allocated to Punjab. "The state also received money from Centre. However the Chief Minister and his government totally failed in rising up to the crisis and not one plant has been set up," he said.

"We need statesmanship and leadership and not petty politics. People are dying, some private medical hospitals are over charging the poor and black-marketing oxygen," said Sharma.

Urging the government to set up quarantine centres immediately to keep the coronavirus patients separated from the population to control the spread of the disease, the BJP leader said, "Challenging times facing the humanity can only be handled if the chief minister realises that there will be enough time for politics. Let us save lives for now."

## Delhi got 730 tonnes of O2 on 5 May, led to reduction in hospitals' SOS: Chadha

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY



Delhi got 730 tonnes of oxygen on May 5, the highest so far, which led to a significant reduction in SOS calls from hospitals, AAP MLA Raghav Chadha said on Thursday.

He, however, said of the 730 tonnes of oxygen, around 250 tonnes "did not come from our regular sources".

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

The AAP MLA, who has been leading efforts to battle oxygen shortage in Delhi hospitals, said, "We need 976 tonnes of oxygen every day. I appeal to the central government with folded hands to provide 730 tonnes daily."

## Strictly abide by DGCA order on breath analyser tests: HC to airlines

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

The Delhi High Court has directed all airlines in India to "strictly abide" by the percentage of breath analyser (BA) testing mentioned in the April 27 order of aviation regulator DGCA or should it be random for all categories of employees - Air Traffic Controllers (ATCs), pilots and cabin crew.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had on April 27 issued an order stating therein that 10 per cent of flight crew and cabin crew members involved in domestic operations shall be subjected to random preflight BA test.

DGCA had also told the court that undertakings are required to be furnished by flight and cabin crew that they have not consumed any alcohol or psychotropic substance in the 12 hours prior to a flight.

The court, in its order of May 4, also asked the committee "whether the cabin crew, ATCs and other personnel who have to undergo the BA test could be first subjected to a rapid antigen test and thereafter be made to undergo the BAT and whether the percentages need to be changed and if so, to what extent." "Let a further report be submitted by the DGMS (Air) at least one day before the next date of hearing on May 11. In the meantime, the percentage of testing and other directions as contained in the order dated April 27 shall be adhered to by the airlines.

It is again emphasised that all staff of the airlines, including ATCs, cabin crew and the pilots, would be bound to give the undertakings and the declarations, in respect of having not consumed alcohol in terms of the applicable regulations, failing which, they could be re-rostered and strict action would be liable to be taken against them," the court said.

This query was posed by the court as the ATC Guild had expressed an apprehension that since the BA test is conducted in an enclosed space and the air blown into the equipment is released out from the other end of the machine, the droplets or aerosols of COVID may remain suspended in the air and could infect others who enter that room.

*But, what will happen to the inoculation process which is stalled because of the vaccine crisis?*

TINAMOOL CONGRESS MLA FIRHAD HAKIM

## TENDER

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NOTICE INVITING TENDERS'

Sealed item rate tenders on form 688 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Palampur Division HPPWD, Palampur on behalf of the Governor of H.P for the following work from the approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HPPWD, (B&R) whose registration stand renewed as per revised rules and also registered under the H.P General Sales Tax Act 1968 so as to reach in his office on or before 16.06.2021 up to 11.00 AM, and the same shall be opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender documents can be had from his office against cash payment (Non-refundable) on 17.06.2021 up to 4.00 PM and the application for issue of tender form shall be received on 16.06.2021 up to 12.00 noon.

The earnest money in the shape of FDR/saving account of the Post office/Bank in H.P duly pledged in favour of the XEN must accompany with each tender. Conditional/ incomplete tenders & tender without earnest money will be summarily rejected. The XEN reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders or drop the proposal of tenders without assigning any reasons.

| S. No. | Name of work.  | Estimated Cost (in Rs.) | Earnest Money (in Rs.) | Time Limit   | Cost of form |
|--------|--|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1.     | C/O Neelkanth to Bhadrana road Km: 0/000 to 1/200 (- SW:- C/O R/Wall at Rd: 0/105 to 0/125 (- Black Spot)  | Rs.1,70,494/-           | Rs. 3,450/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 2.     | C/O link road Molichak to Ghujir road Km: 0/000 to 2/500 (- SW:- P/L Wearing , Premix Carpet & seal coat in Km. 0/047 to 1/955)  | Rs. 2,92,866/-          | Rs. 5,900/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 3.     | C/O link road Padharikh to Sarsawa road Km: 0/000 to 1/500 (- SW:- P/L Wearing , Tarring in Km. 0/000 to 0/185, & 0/375 to 0/690)  | Rs. 4,29,056/-          | Rs. 8,500/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 4.     | Padharikh Neelkanth-Sarsawa road Km: 0/000 to 3/000 (- Neelkanth to Bhadrana road Km: 0/000 to 1/150, Nanah to Gouat road Km. 0/000 to 1/50 & Rajehar to Goyal Tikker Road Km. 0/000 to 5/550 (- SW:- Repair of Pot Holes) | Rs. 2,91,513/-          | Rs. 5,850/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 5.     | Sungal Matt Road Km: 0/000 to 0/750 & Chandpur Holta Bhamat Road Km: 0/000 to 2/250 (- SW:- Repair of Pot Holes)   | Rs. 3,85,921/-          | Rs. 7,750/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 6.     | C/O Dharamshala Yol-Dadhi Palampur Holta Chadhar Road Km: 33/000 to 40/500 (- SW:-Tarring in Both side Bearths at Rd. 39/810 to 40/500 )   | Rs. 4,34,601/-          | Rs. 8,700/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 7.     | C/O Dharamshala Yol-Dadhi Palampur Holta Chadhar Road Km: 33/000 to 40/500 (- SW:-Tarring in Both side Bearths at Rd. 38/280 to 39/810 )   | Rs. 4,98,730/-          | Rs. 10,000/-           | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 8.     | C/O Deognan-Patti Bodhal Pahra road (- SW:-C/O B/Wall at Rd: 3/209 to 3/222)   | Rs. 1,23,647/-          | Rs. 2,500/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 9.     | C/O Deognan-Patti Bodhal Pahra road (- SW:-C/O U-Shape drain at Rd: 3/400 to 3/800 & 3/510 & edgeWall at Rd. 3/510 to 3/600 )  | Rs. 3,97,954/-          | Rs. 8,000/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 10.    | Up- Gradation of Manaria via Ropha Ghar Kapoor Basti KM: 0/000 to 6/120 (- SW:- C/O CC Pavement at Km. 5/609 to 5/750)   | Rs. 4,68,143/-          | Rs. 9,400/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 11.    | C/O Link road Ghuggar in front of Shri Ravinder Sood House to Nalleh Ghuggar Har Ram Mandir to Gogra Colony. (- SW:-Providing & Laying & Tarring in Km. 0/000 to 0/400)  | Rs. 1,91,156/-          | Rs. 3,850/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 12.    | C/O link road Banuri to Bharmat road (- SW:-P/L Soling , Wearing & Tarring at Rd: 4/595 to 4/795 )   | Rs. 2,50,904/-          | Rs. 5,050/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 13.    | C/O link road Palampur Neugal Park Road (- SW:-P/L Inter locking Paver for road side foot path Km. 1/715 to 1/880 to 2/200 )   | Rs. 3,59,411/-          | Rs. 7,200/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 14.    | Link road Rattan-Ropha Ghar Kapoor Basti road Km: 0/000 to 7/500 (- SW:- Repair of Pot Holes in Km. 1/200 to 5/700)  | Rs. 1,56,936/-          | Rs. 3,200/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 15.    | C/O Deognan Patti Bodhal Pahra road (- SW:- Tarring in Both side Bearths at Rd: 1/300 to 2/000 )   | Rs. 2,96,800/-          | Rs. 5,950/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 16.    | Special Repair to D.A.V School road from Fire Brigade Building to School Gate at Rd: 0/000 to 0/160 (- SW:- P/L Bitumen concrete from Rd. 0/000 to 0/180 )   | Rs. 3,35,365/-          | Rs. 6,750/-            | Three Months | Rs. 350/-    |
| 17.    | C/O Link road Neelkanth Bhadrana via Rampur Rajher road KM: 0/00 to 3/00 (- SW:- C/O 1.00 Mtr span RCC slab Culvert at Rd  |                         |                        |              |              |



People outside a Covid-19 vaccine centre in Thiruvananthapuram, on Thursday. ■ IANS

**Parole to prisoners:** In view of unprecedented increase in Covid-19 case load in the state, the Kerala government has decided to grant a two-week parole for eligible prisoners to decongest jails and maintain social distancing there. PTI

**Sanskrit scholar at AMU passes away:** Sanskrit scholar at Aligarh Muslim University Prof Khalid Bin Yusuf, showing Covid-19 symptoms and had acute pneumonia, passed away after a brief illness. PTI

**'Encounter cop' transferred:** Police inspector Daya Nayak, known as "encounter specialist", was on Thursday transferred to Gondia district, Maharashtra, where he will be attached to the caste certificate verification committee. PTI

#### FOOD FOR THOUGHT



Needy people receive meals at a relief camp amid a total lockdown imposed to curb the spread of Covid, in Patna on Thursday. ■ IANS

#### Cong seeks arrest of BJP MP Tejasvi, MLA Sathish for bed scam

##### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BENGALURU, 6 MAY

The Opposition Congress on Thursday stepped up its attack on the ruling BJP in Karnataka and demanded the arrest of party MP Tejasvi Surya and a party MLA, alleging they were behind the scam involving blocking of hospital beds meant for Covid patients in the city.

Surya, the Bengaluru South BJP MP and Yuva Morcha president, Bommanahalli BJP MLA M Sathish Reddy and Basavanagudi MLA Ravi Subramanya on Tuesday made claims about the bed blocking scam in Bengaluru and

doubted the involvement of a few Muslims, who were deployed at the Covid War Room of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

As the expose went live on Tuesday and Surya read out their names, Subramanya screamed at the BBMP officials, "Have you appointed these people for Madrassa or the Corporation (BBMP)?"

To this, Reddy was seen saying there was an intention behind hiring them and these people were behind it.

Meanwhile, BJP national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh slammed the Congress for attacking Surya.

#### Top leader quits Haasan's MNM

##### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

Makkal Needhi Maiam vice-president R Mahendran on Thursday resigned from the party, saying "there seemed to be no democracy" in the Kamal Haasan-led organisation.

The decision of the party's number two-ranked leader came on a day when MNM announced that seven other senior functionaries have also tendered their "resignation."

Mahendran, who unsuccessfully contested the 6 April Assembly polls from Singanallur constituency in Coimbatore, told reporters he submitted a letter to Haasan, informing his resignation from the party post as well as its primary membership.

He blamed a "few advisors" at the "top" over the running of the party and said Haasan's way of steering the party "is not okay." Mahendran said he "felt like there is no democracy."

"Many worked hard with the hope that this will change after polls. So I stayed with him (Haasan) but felt that in the last month or so there was no change in his approach."

#### Ensure equitable distribution of oxygen, medicines: Mardas HC

##### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

Madras High Court on Thursday urged the state and the Central governments to ensure equitable distribution of medical oxygen, Covid-19 vaccines and other life saving materials, by ramping up the production capacity.

The position should not be altered to the detriment of state, particularly Tamil Nadu, since it has production capacity of about 400 MT of oxygen cylinders per day, which with some additional supply may suffice for its needs. The Union and the empowered committee should take immediate steps in such regard to ensure adequate supply of oxygen to Tamil Nadu to meet the needs.

This must be ensured by tomorrow, so that the emergency that the officials speak of the reserve supply running out by Saturday does not happen, the first bench of Sanjeev Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy said.

It is critical and requires the attention of the highest

Rddy's involvement.

"It's like pot calling the kettle black. The truth has come out now that the BJP leaders are behind the bed blocking scam," the Congress tweeted. "Arrest Satish Reddy who has been operating the bed booking scam with the help of his supporters, and the young MP (Tejasvi Surya) who accompanied him, and carry out a detailed investigation," the party added.

Satish Reddy was not available for his comment.

Meanwhile, BJP national general secretary (organisation) B L Santhosh slammed the Congress for attacking Surya.

"After @Tejasvi\_Surya exposed the hospital bed booking scam of BBMP, all were silent for a while. Suddenly everyone started shouting realising that the names were from a single community. Their secularism was in danger. @INCKarnataka leaders are bankrupt both in thoughts & action," the senior BJP leader said.

Meanwhile, the agency, which had hired these 17 Muslims said they were among the 214 people deployed at the War Room. An executive of the firm said caste and religion are not the consideration for them to hire people.

#### Rangasamy to be sworn in as Ponds CM today

PUDUCHERRY, 6 MAY

AINRC chief N Rangasamy will be sworn in as chief minister of the Union Territory of Puducherry at a brief ceremony here on Friday.

Lt-Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan would induct Rangasamy as CM at a brief session on the precincts of Rajiviyas here. Official sources said Rangasamy alone would be inducted as CM tomorrow although he would be heading an NDA dispensation which has the BJP as the other constituent.

According to party sources, the swearing-in of other ministers, including those from BJP, will take place in the next few days. The strength of a ministry in Puducherry would be six, including chief minister. There is, however, a reported move to have one deputy chief minister now although there is no precedent in this regard. A Namassivayam, who joined the BJP in January after quitting the Congress is tipped for the post of deputy chief minister.

PTI

Despite misuse of official machinery, use of money power by rival parties, BSP's performance is encouraging

BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY CHIEF MAYAWATI

ON PANCHAYAT POLLS IN UTTAR PRADESH

## Stalin to be sworn in as TN CM today

34-member Cabinet will have two women representatives

##### STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, 6 MAY

A 34-member Cabinet headed by Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin will be sworn in at the Raj Bhavan today. Stalin has included veterans and new faces alike in his first Cabinet and has also given representation to two women.

A Raj Bhavan communiqué said the CM-designate has sent a list of persons to be appointed as ministers along with their portfolios today. Governor Bhanwarilal Purohit, who will be administering the oath of office and secrecy to Stalin and his Council of Ministers, has approved the recommendations and allocated portfolios.

Stalin, while accommodating senior leaders, who had served as former ministers, had also included a few new faces in the Cabinet, like P K Sekar Babu, S M Nasar, former Chennai Mayor Ma Subramanian, former DMK whip R Sakkaranpani, P Moorthy, Ra Gandhi, S Sivasankar, Palanivel Thiagarajan, Anbil Mahesh Moymozhi, Siva V Meyyanathan, C V Ganesh and T Mano Thangaraj.

The two women representatives are former minister Geetha Jeevan and a new



K Stalin and DMK leaders with Governor Bhanwarilal Purohit at Raj Bhavan on Wednesday. ■ SNS

face N Kayalvizhi Selvaraj.

The ministerial list, how-

ever, does not include Stalin's son, Udhayanidhi, who has won from Chepauk-Thiruvallikeni.

Stalin, as expected, shall hold home and other portfolios including public general administration, IAS, IPS, other all India services, district revenue officers, police, special incentives, special programme implementation and welfare of differently-abled persons.

Former minister and DMK general secretary Duraimurugan will be second in command and was allotted the water resources portfolio.

At a time when the state was facing a sharp increase in daily Covid caseload, the key portfolio of health was allotted to former Mayor Ma

Subramanian, who was elected from Saidapet for a second term. Another key portfolio of finance was allotted to former minister PTR Palanivel Rajan's son Palanivel Thiagarajan, who was also given the charge of human resources management.

Stalin will be sworn in as Tamil Nadu chief minister for the first time at a simple function to be held at Raj Bhavan at 9 am on 7 May.

Soon after taking oath, Stalin will go to the Secretariat where he will chair a video conference with district collectors and top officials to discuss and devise strategies to control Covid-19 spread.

Some important announcements are likely to be made after the meeting. He will hold discussions about fulfilling DMK's poll promises.

#### Gehlot targets Modi govt over fuel price rise after polls

JAIPIUR, 6 MAY

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Thursday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government over rise in fuel prices after the completion of Assembly elections in five states.

He said the Central government should reduce the tax on petrol and diesel and give relief to the "already troubled" people.

The chief minister stressed that as long as the Assembly elections were underway in five states, the Modi government did not make any changes in the prices of petrol and diesel while crude oil prices were changing daily in the international market.

PTI

## Three Al-Badr terrorists killed in J&K

##### STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, 6 MAY

Three newly recruited terrorists of the Al-Badr outfit were killed and one surrendered during information about the presence of terrorists there and the

an district of south Kashmir.

The security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Kanigam area during the night following

encounter broke early in the morning.

The killed terrorists have been identified as Danish Mir, Mohammad Umer Bhat both residents of Khajapora Shopian and Zaid Bashir Reshi res-

ident. The security forces exercised maximum restraint and made repeated efforts to persuade them to surrender. They turned down the offer and security forces retaliated, ensuing an encounter.

## TENDER

| NORTHERN RAILWAY   |   |
|--|---|
| 1 <sup>ST</sup> CORRIGENDUM  |   |
| Sub:- 1 <sup>st</sup> Corrigendum to tender notice no.172-Sig/TW/NR/T-06 dated 12.04.2021 in connection with tender for the work of " Provision of OFC & associated equipments Phailaur-Lohian khas Sections of FZR Division." |   |
| As per Original NIT  | Revised as per this Corrigendum   |
| Cost of Tender- ₹ 2,59,69,360.32 (Two Crore Fifty Nine Lakh Sixty Nine Thousand Three Hundred Sixty and Paisa Thirty Two Only).  | Tender No. 172-Sig/TW/NR/T-06 dated 12.04.2021 may be treated as cancelled. |
| Closing Date : 11:30 Hrs. on date 07.05.2021   | Date of Opening: 11:30 Hrs. on date 07.05.2021                              |
| Tender Notice No.172-Sig/TW/NR/T-06 dated 12.04.2021   |   |
| 972/2021 SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE  |   |

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LTD.  
(Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)  
Corporate Identification No. U40109PB2010SGC033B13  
Website: www.pspcl.in (Contact: 9646118773)

Tender Enquiry No.: Q-3998/20-21/PPO-1/CE-MM

Chief Purchase Officer / MM, Central Purchase Organization, PSPCL, 2nd Floor, Multi Storey Building, The Mall, PSPCL Invites E-tender of 80 Nos. EEL-3 (Re-designed as EEL-2), ISL Marked, Three Phase, 315 KVA, oil immersed, CRGO / Amorphous core Aluminium wound distribution transformers complete with fittings as per PSPCL specifications & conforming to IS 1180 Part-1 (2014) & IS 2026 (with latest amendments). For detailed NIT & tender specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 07-05-2021 onwards.

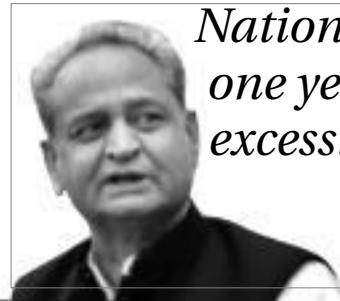
Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any, will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C172/21

## HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT \*NOTICE INVITING TENDER\*

Sealed item rate/percentage rate tender on Form No. 6&8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, Arki Division, HP, PWD, Arki on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the competent (In this regard the decision of the Executive Engineer shall be final) contractors enlisted with HP, PWD in appropriate class whose registration stand renewed as per revised instruction and also registered dealers under the Himachal Pradesh sales Tax Act, 1968. The application for tender form will be received on 09.06.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be issued on 10.06.2021 upto 4.00 P.M. The tender form will be received on 11.06.2021, up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of the contractors or their authorized representative who may like to be present. The form can be had from this office against cash payment as shown below (Non refundable) during the working hours on 9.06.2021. The earnest money should be deposited in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time deposit/Post Office saving bank account in any of the Post Office in H.P./F.D.R. from any Nationalized Bank duly pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer. Tender form will be issued only to those contractors who will deposit the Earnest Money at the time of sale of tender. The conditional tenders shall not be entertained. If holiday is declared suddenly by the govt. on the above date due to some reason the tender shall be received and opened on the next working day. The intending contractors/firms will have to produce all required documents at the time of making application such as Income Tax clearance certificate for the preceding year, registration/renewal of registration and sales tax number (Under H.P.G.S.T.) Act. Special care should be taken to write the rates both in figures and in words, failing which their tender will be rejected. No tender form shall be issued to the contractors/firms who have already two works in H.P./PWD. The offer of the tender shall remain open for 120 days from the date of opening of the tender. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept or reject the tender without assigning any reason.

| S.No | Name of work  | Estimated cost. | Earnest money | Form of tender | Cost of form | Time     |
|------|---|-----------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|----------|
| 1.   | A/R & M/o KBSB road Km. 0/0 to 56/200(SH:-Providing and laying interlocking cement concrete Block pavement between Km. 0/0 to 9/200 | 4,23,245/-      | 8500/-        | 6&8            | 350/-        | 1 Months |
| 2.   | M/T on Dadal Panjiplu Dhaina road Km. 0/0 to 8/900(SH:-Providing and laying soiling G.I,Gr.II & Gr.III in Km. 5/500 to 6/015        | 4,08,828/-      | 8200/-        | 6&8            | 350/-        | 2 Months |
| 3.   | M/T on Dadal Panjiplu Dhaina road Km. 0/0 to 8/900(SH:-MT in Km. 5/500 to 6/0   | 3,66,450/-      | 7400/-        | 6&8            | 350/-        | 2 Months |
| 4.   | C/o link road from Mangoo to Mandap Km.   |                 |               |                |              |          |



Nationwide lockdown only option left to check Covid. For more than one year our doctors, medical staff have been performing under excessive workload for the nation. We have lost many of them

RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT  
ON COVID SITUATION

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 07 MAY 2021

05



A woman takes a selfie after receiving a dose of a vaccine at Dawoodi Bohras Saifee Ambulance vaccination centre in Mumbai on Thursday.

PTI

**Rape by godman in Raj:** Four women, three from the same family, have accused a self-proclaimed godman of raping them in his ashram in Jaipur, police said on Thursday. The women filed a complaint against Shailendra Mehta, accusing him of raping them when they used to visit Tapasvi Ashram to attend satsang.

PTI

**Over 7 kg uranium seized:** The Maharashtra ATS has seized over seven kg of natural uranium worth about Rs 21.30 crore and arrested two persons in, an official said on Thursday. The substance is "highly radioactive," the ATS official said quoting a report of an analysis conducted by the BARC.

PTI

**Dabholkar killing:** The Bombay High Court on Thursday granted bail to Vikram Bhave, an accused in the case of killing of rationalist Narendra Dabholkar in 2013, saying there are "not enough reasonable grounds" to conclude that the allegations against him are prima facie true.

PTI

**Ashraf Sehrai dies in J&K:** Prominent separatist leader Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai, who was arrested under the Public Safety Act, died at a hospital in Jammu on Wednesday, officials said. Sehrai, 77, a close confidant of hardline Hurriyat Conference leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, was incarcerated at the district jail in Udhampur.

PTI

**Pragya terms Bengal CM's new innings as 'Mumtaaz Loktantra'**

BHOPAL, 6 MAY

BJP Lok Sabha Member from Bhopal, Pragya Singh Thakur has equated Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee to the mythological character 'Taadka' and termed Banerjee's new innings as the CM of Bengal to be 'Mumtaaz Loktantra'. The BJP MP took to Twitter to express her acrimony against the three-time Bengal CM. She also termed Mamata Banerjee as 'Kalankini'.

Pragya Thakur's rancor on the social media came about a week after a Congress leader in Madhya Pradesh had offered a reward of Rs 10,000 to anyone who found Pragya Thakur. The Congress leader had alleged that the BJP MP was 'missing' at a time when her Lok Sabha constituency was recording a high number of cases.

However, Thakur minced no words in expressing her feelings about the situation in Bengal. She tweeted that BJP workers were being mercilessly targeted, killed and raped in Bengal. 'Tit for Tat karna hi hogा,' averred Thakur. She further declared that now the only solutions for Bengal is President's Rule and NRC.

'Santo aur veero ki bhoomi par Taadka ka shaashan hogaya' (Taadka now rules over the land which belonged to sages and brave hearts), Thakur's tweet states.

On 27 April, Madhya Pradesh Congress general secretary Ravi Saxena had alleged that when Thakur was missing at a time when people needed her most, Saxena said it was a misfortune of Bhopal's citizens who are running from pillar to post for Covid facilities.

SNS

# Ten states account for over 72% of new cases

Maha has reported the highest daily new cases at 57,640, followed by K'taka



A family member conducts last rites at Sarai Kale Khan Cremation Ground in New Delhi on Thursday.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

**U**ttar Pradesh and Delhi are among 10 states that account for 72.19 per cent of the new Covid cases reported in a day, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday. New coronavirus cases and deaths in India hit a record daily high with 42,262 new infections and 3,980 fatalities being reported, taking the total tally of Covid cases to 2,10,77,410 and the death toll to 2,30,168.

The ministry said that Karnataka, Kerala, Haryana, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Rajasthan are among the other states in the list of 10. Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 57,640. It is followed by Karnataka with 50,112 while Kerala reported 41,953 new cases.

Besides Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan and Jharkhand account for 75.55

per cent of the new deaths.

Maharashtra saw the maximum casualties (920). Uttar Pradesh follows with 353 daily deaths. The National Mortality Rate has been falling and currently stands at 1.09 per cent," the ministry said.

India's total active caseload has reached 35,66,398 and now comprises 16.92 per cent of the country's total infections. A net incline of 79,169 cases recorded from the total active caseload in a span of 24 hours.

Twelve states cumulatively account for 81.05 per cent of India's total active cases, the ministry said.

The cumulative number of Covid vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 16.25 crore. The ministry said 9,04,263 beneficiaries in the age group of 18-44 years received their first dose of Covid vaccine across 12 states and UTs.

These states are Chhattisgarh (1,026), Delhi (1,29,096), Gujarat (1,96,860), Jammu and Kashmir (16,387), Haryana (1,23,484), Karnataka (5,328), Maharashtra (1,53,966),

## Kejriwal thanks PM Modi after receiving 730 MT of O2 on 5 May

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi after the national capital received 730 metric tonnes of oxygen on 5 May.

In a letter, Kejriwal said that it was for the first time the national capital received more than 700 metric tonnes of the life-saving gas.

"Delhi has a consumption of 700 metric tonnes of oxygen on a daily basis. We have been urging the Centre on a regular basis to give us 700 metric tonnes. It was for the first time yes-

terday that Delhi received 730 metric tonnes," he said in the letter in Hindi. He requested the prime minister that the national capital should be given this quantity everyday.

"I thank you from the bottom of my heart on behalf of Delhiites. I request you that Delhi should be given at least this much of oxygen on a daily basis and there should not be any reduction in this quantity. The whole of Delhi will be grateful to you," he said.

Hospitals across the national capital and its suburbs have been sending out SOS messages on social media about their depleting oxygen supplies.

Odisha (21,031), Punjab (1,535), Rajasthan (1,80,242), Tamil Nadu (6,415) and UP (68,893). Cumulatively, 16,25,13,339 vaccine doses have been administered through 29,34,844 sessions, as per the provisional report till

7 am. Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh account for 66.87 per cent of the cumulative doses given so far in the country, the ministry said.

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## G7's geopolitics

As the Group of Seven meeting of foreign ministers wrapped up their jaw-jaw on Wednesday, it was obvious that China, Russia and the pandemic dominated proceedings at the high table in London. Fairly predictably, the first was accused of violating human rights such as against the Uighurs in Xinjiang province and the second for its expansionist designs and aggression on Ukraine. G7 was, therefore, riveted to what it calls the "biggest current threats". It has stridently condemned China and Russia, referring to the Kremlin as "malicious" and Beijing as a "bully". Beyond such strong words, however, few concrete steps were announced aside from expressing support for Taiwan and Ukraine, somehow forgetting Hong Kong. Founded in 1975 as a forum for the West's richest nations to discuss crises such as the OPEC oil embargo, the G7 this week addressed what it perceives as the biggest current threats - China, Russia and the coronavirus pandemic. It isn't a coincidence that members of the Indian delegation headed by the external affairs minister, Mr S Jaishankar, are in isolation. In a voluminous 12,400-word communique, G7 has been fairly explicit on the fact that Russia was trying to undermine democracies and threatening Ukraine. At another remove, China is guilty of human rights abuses and of using its economic clout to bully others.

In terms of concrete action, there is little or nothing in the communique that will be a source of worry to the likes of President Xi Jinping or President Vladimir Putin. The G7 has pledged to give an impetus to collective efforts to stop China's "coercive economic policies" and to counter what it calls "Russian disinformation" - part of a move to portray the West as a much broader alliance than just the core G7 countries. "I think China is more likely to need to, rather than react in anger, it is more likely going to need to take a look in the mirror and understand that it needs to take into account this growing body of opinion, that thinks these basic international rules have got to be adhered to," was the British Foreign Secretary, Mr Dominic Raab's contention. Russia denies it is meddling beyond its borders and argues that the West is "gripped by anti-Russian hysteria". China contends that the West is a bully and that its leaders have a "post-imperial mindset that makes them feel they can act like global policemen". China's spectacular economic and military rise over the past 40 years is among the most significant geopolitical events of recent history, alongside the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union that ended the Cold War. There was no announcement on fresh funding to improve greater access to vaccines, despite repeated calls for the G7 to do more to help poorer countries. This week's meeting sets the tone for the G7 leaders' meeting in Cornwall, south-west England, next month, at which President Joe Biden will make his international debut.

## Governance in limbo

As Nepal lunges from crisis to crisis, the current bout is ever so deep with Wednesday's decision of the Prachanda faction of the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) to withdraw support to the embattled government helmed by KP Sharma Oli. The latter's resolve to seek a vote of confidence in Parliament on May 10 is thus reduced to irrelevance. Pushpakamal Dahal "Prachanda" would thus appear to have won the current round amidst the turmoil, which has been almost relentless since the House of Representatives was dissolved on December 20. Governance is in limbo as the government in Kathmandu has lost its majority support in the House of Representatives after the Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-Maoist Centre) officially withdrew support. The destructive rivalry within the Communist movement in the Himalayan country has now peaked. We do not know if enlightened self-interest is at the core; but we do know that one leader is trying to outdo the other. If the statement by the Chief Whip of the Maoist Centre, Dev Gurung, is any indication, the party decided to withdraw support to the Oli government as it had breached the Constitution. Nay more, the government's recent activities have threatened democratic procedures and national sovereignty. Prachanda has distinctly upped the ante five days ahead of the trust move, which arguably would have exposed the differences still more acutely. The Prachanda faction's decision to withdraw support to the government comes two days after Mr Oli announced that he would seek a vote of confidence in Parliament on May 10. The Maoist Center has a total of 49 lawmakers in the Lower House. Since the ruling CPN-UML has a total of 121 lawmakers, Prime Minister Oli is short of 15 legislators to save his government in the 275-member House. A constitutional stalemate has perhaps been staved off, but the worst sufferers amidst the imbroglio are governance per se and the common man. Indeed, governance has been accorded a relatively minor rating by both factions of the NCP in the overall construct. Nepal deserves better.

A dire political crisis has plagued Nepal since December 20 after President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the House of Representatives - on Oli's advice - and announced fresh elections on April 30 and May 10. In parallel, there has been a tussle for power in the country within the ruling Nepal Communist Party, of a kind that few Communist parties in Asia have witnessed. The dissolution of the House by Oli had sparked protests from a section of the NCP led by Prachanda, also a co-chair of the ruling party. In February, the Supreme Court had reinstated the dissolved House of Representatives in a setback for Oli who was preparing for snap polls. The uncertainty over the confidence vote is now over. For better or worse, Nepal's hoi-polloi cannot quite tell.

# At death's door ~ II

From time to time, health workers, multi-tasking staff, nurses and doctors - all clad in their PPE gear from head to toe and all looking almost identical in these outfits - would come, check on the patients, push injections or administer medicines and oxygen, or help take them to the toilets in wheelchairs. Their dedication, commitment and endurance were much beyond the call of mere duty



After a week of home isolation since testing positive, when it was becoming obvious that we could not manage any more on our own, we found no hospital would respond to our frantic calls. My old office somehow arranged for a check-up at the Casualty Ward at AIIMS where we reached in a hired ambulance. As we were stepping out, my wife collapsed on the ground - all the strength I could muster was not enough to hold her in my arms. Some kindly soul got a stretcher from somewhere and put her on it - she was lying almost lifeless as I, sitting on the ground bereft of all strength to get up, looked on helplessly. There was a long queue at the Casualty before a single doctor and there were scores of people before us, many sitting on the road like me. Then suddenly a storm appeared from nowhere - with blinding dust flying all over followed by a drizzle that drenched us; my wife was already running high fever and as the merciless rain poured over her frail body, being unable to move, I kept on wondering how worthless husband I was who could not even shield his wife from rains - let alone supporting her in sickness and in health.

I could only waive my hands at anyone who would take notice to move the stretcher a little towards the wall so that she could at least get some protection. A security guard did take notice, he not only rested the stretcher against a wall, but supported and led me to the doctor's chamber where there was a single stool available for one to sit.

The doctor on duty - clearly exhausted, overworked and hence a little irritable - examined me and then came out to check on my wife as well, but said he could not help as there were no beds available for admission.

I thanked him and then requested the security guard to please assist me in getting a cab that could take us home where we could die in peace. I don't know if it was the desperation or the resolution in my voice, but it made the doctor look up. He wrote something on a prescription, handed it over to the security guard who ran with it.

Ten minutes later, we were pushed into an ambulance along with three more patients - one of them using the single oxygen support available. The driver explained that we were being taken to AIIMS Jhajjar - which is

in Haryana. It is in fact a 700+ bed cancer hospital - the largest cancer hospital in India - that has now been converted entirely into a Covid facility. It took us one and a half hours to reach. As we were led inside the sprawling building into a waiting area, we found ourselves among scores of patients with only two doctors available for checking, screening and admitting.

Here I was separated from my wife who was led into the ICU while I was guided into a ward where there were patients waiting for beds vacated by those who had been discharged, besides those who had finally departed. There were kids and teenagers, men and women of all ages. Some of them wailed in pain, and some lay almost lifeless on their beds.

From time to time, health workers, multi-tasking staff, nurses and doctors - all clad in their PPE gear from head to toe and all looking almost identical in these outfits - would come, check on the patients, push

injections or administer medicines and oxygen, or help take them to the toilets in wheelchairs. Their dedication, commitment and endurance were much beyond the call of mere duty; despite being physically and emotionally exhausted beyond limits, they kept on helping, supporting and counselling the patients in every possible manner.

Here there was only the finest professionalism from the finest of people, and no time for anything else. This was my first hospital stay in living memory. I only have a hazy recollection of the only other time I was in a hospital when I was ten and was studying at Narendrapur Ramkrishna Mission, when I had to be quarantined in the school hospital after I had an infection of mumps, a benign virus that needed about two weeks to get cured.

But then I was too young then to understand disease and suffering, least of all death; now here for the first time perhaps, death was constantly staring at each one of us. When you see bodies of the dead being wrapped in protective clothes like a mummy and being wheeled

away, when you see patients

turning critical and being surrounded by doctors and nurses or being taken out to the ICU - every moment was a stark reminder that the next one could be me. I never had any occasion to reflect on death, but here, left with nothing else to do and too weak to focus my mind that was constantly wandering to thoughts of suffering and death, I almost overcame any fear I might be having of death. It looked almost like a reality I came to peace with.

One morning after my wife was released from the ICU but shifted to a different ward - they segregated the patients according to the severity of their infections - I called her up for a video chat; it was her birthday. She was crying and tears were rolling past her oxygen mask. She explained that a one-year-old child had just died and as her body was being wrapped into a plastic bag, her father was sitting immobilised in stony silence with a vacant stare that was impossible to forget.

Such heartrending stories and the unfolding of human tragedies will continue to wrench tears from our eyes.

There would be many more stories about the greed and wickedness of people trying to profit from the suffering of others, and of the insensitivity of those in authority. In Agra, some policemen had seized an oxy-

gen cylinder a teenager had somehow procured for his mother who was ailing in a hospital that could not provide her any oxygen, leading to her death within two hours. The kneeling boy pleading for the cylinder before policemen will perhaps be an iconic image of the terrible times we are living through.

In another incident in the same city, a woman, unable to find a bed for her husband anywhere, at last tried to revive him through CPR in the auto in which they were moving from hospital to hospital, an effort too inadequate to save his life. Outside some hospitals, unscrupulous people were selling the drug Remdesivir at Rs 1.5 lakh a dose; some sold fire extinguishers as oxygen cylinders at Rs 10,000, with no one to check and control them.

In ancient Rome, the term

Interregnum was used to refer to the period of legal and political void after the death of a sovereign and before the enthronement of his successor. The declaration of interregnum was accompanied by the proclamation of iustitium, for it was not only sovereignty but also legality that was suspended. It was a time of utter chaos.

Reflecting on the Interregnum, the Marxist philosopher and Italian communist Antonio Gramsci, who died in the prison of the Fascist ruler Benito Mussolini, wrote in his Prison Notebooks, "The old world is dying and the new world struggles to be born. Now is the time of monsters." We are also in an interregnum, and our good old familiar world is already dead. Indeed, all the monsters which were lying dormant in the dark recesses of our hearts seem to have been let loose in the open.

In this interregnum, humanity itself has been suspended and selfishness and greed have supplanted love and kindness which have so far sustained our civilisation and made us what we are. What would be the world we would inherit after this interregnum? Would we ever be able to look our fellow humans in the eye and talk about love again? Would the scars left in our hearts ever heal? Would we ever be able to rediscover our lost humanity once the pandemic stops its dance of death?

In the Narendrapur Ramakrishna Mission Hospital, the only way the Doctor Maharaj could quieten an unruly child was by telling him stories. He read me Erich Maria Remarque's classic - "All Quiet on the Western Front" from which I recall a line, "A hospital alone shows what war is." The hospital provided a living proof of the callousness, criminal neglect, stupidity and insensitivity of our leaders, politicians and institutions.

The brief hospital stay has also probably made me a little wiser to understand that in the face of death, our possessions, wealth and whatever we strive to accumulate throughout our lives carry no meaning and cannot help us. Once your time is up, you just leave, heedless of the will that may reside in you. None of our departures has any extraordinariness and neither is there any bravery or courage involved in it. Nor should be there any fear while saying good bye.

(Conclude)



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

The writer is a commentator, author and an academic

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**ASIAN VOICES**  
**Covid-19**  
**bonanza**

Some private hospitals in the Kathmandu Valley and elsewhere across the country are reported to have refrained from taking Covid-19 patients, and referring anyone who tests positive during screening to public hospitals. Medical professionals and administrators at public hospitals have complained that they are receiving a large number of referrals from private hospitals. This, even after the Ministry of Health and Population has directed private hospitals not to refer patients without ensuring that the hospitals designated for Covid-19 care have enough beds.

The choice of whom to treat and whom to refer to public hospitals is reported to have been based on the particular patient's financial status. Moreover, private hospitals have reported to have failed to put the ideals of public service above all else, as they continue to keep profit-making at the centre of their work. While the Health Ministry has fixed the costs for Covid-19 treatment at hospitals at Rs3,500 per day for normal patients, Rs7,000 for moderately ailing patients and Rs15,000 for those needing intensive care, private hospitals are charging many times more than those rates. As a result, patients are forced to either depend on the overburdened public hospitals for treatment or stay at home even if they begin developing severe Covid-19 symptoms.

In trying to accumulate more and more wealth, some private hospitals have exposed their poverty of social responsibility. Of course, they cannot be asked to be completely charitable - after all, they have salaries to pay, loans to repay, and profits to make. But these requirements should not

**THE KATHMANDU POST**

blind them to the responsibility of keeping the country's population healthy. They cannot turn the crisis into a money minting festival. And the fact that their work involves saving precious lives aggravates the degree of their social responsibility and accountability.

The government did not discriminate between health workers, sanitation workers and supporting staff from public and private hospitals during the immunisation drive. This was an acknowledgement on the part of the government that frontline workers, notwithstanding their association, are important members of the system that is necessary to fight the pandemic. However, private hospitals have been a missing link in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

This is not to undermine the role they have played in the treatment and management of patients. But the fact that they have failed to become reliable alternatives to the overburdened public hospitals means that they have faltered in fulfilling their social responsibilities.

Public hospitals across the country are having to return patients because they have literally run out of beds and resources. In such a situation, the responsibility of private hospitals to fulfil the gap is unequivocal. The already overwhelmed public health system cannot take the sole burden of taking care of patients, as the responsibility of rescuing the country from the current crisis lies equally with private hospitals as well. Private hospitals should, therefore, rise to the occasion and take care of the sick and dying.

**PERSONAL**

THANK You Divine Mercy, Mother Mary and St. Jude for the brilliant results. — D.S.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR editor@thestatesman.com**

## Can't hold a candle to BC Roy and Basu

SIR, Apropos of your editorial "Singular Triumph" (4 May), while Mamata Banerjee won the elections with a thumping majority, she cannot be compared with the erstwhile chief ministers Dr B C Roy and Jyoti Basu in terms of their leadership quality and statesmanship. Mamata Banerjee herself might not have thought she would win with such a great margin but it happened. It is due to a lack of BJP's Bengal leadership.

The Prime Minister and the Home Minister came to Bengal and delivered their speeches in Hindi, which common rural people could not follow. The slashing of bank interest rates, hike in prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas, and misinterpretation of the CAA by the TMC greatly influenced the

voters. BJP's Bengal organisation is very weak. There is no grass-root level organisation nor any suitable mass leader in Bengal who can convince the people by countering the TMC's propaganda. Subhendu Adhikary joined BJP just before the election. How much can he do within a short period? Yet he was able to defeat Ms Banerjee in Nandigram. Now it is to be seen what the BJP can do as

a strong opposition for the betterment of Bengal.

Yours, etc., Mihir Kanungo, Kolkata, 4 May

### TASKS AHEAD

SIR, This refers to the editorial, "Singular triumph" (4 May). I endorse the remark that Miss Banerjee has returned to power with renewed strength but with great challenges ahead of her. In West Bengal, Mamata Banerjee succeeded in mobilising

mentum. TMC must now work for betterment and development issues locally. Right now, attending to the pandemic is top priority. Yours, etc., Yugal Kishore Sharma, Faridabad, 4 May

### CHARISMATIC

SIR, Compliments to *The Statesman* for the editorial "Singular triumph" (4 May). Rightly said, Mamata Banerjee with her success in 2021 has accomplished what Dr B C Roy and Jyoti Basu had done in the past in Bengal. Singular too was uprooting the Left Front in 2011 and significant was her victory in 2016. Didi is charismatic, she knows how to connect with people and has vast political understanding and experience. Her governance brought in several welfare measures for common folk, and was inclusive. For this reason, common people and women in vast numbers

### INQUIRY

SIR, Your news report "Nandigram poll officer feared for his life: Didi" (May 4) has got wider implications. If the returning officer of Nandigram had been prevented from performing his duty, he should have brought the matter to the notice of the Election Commission. I think a thorough inquiry into the matter is the crying need of the hour. The credibility of the EC will largely depend upon the outcome of an impartial inquiry.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 4 May.

voted for TMC. Divisive ideas have been shunned and cosmopolitanism has triumphed.

Yours, etc., Partha Sarathy Sen, New Delhi, 4 May.



Bengali regionalism besides adopting soft Hindutva. The BJP leadership from the state and Centre deployed workers from outside West Bengal and irritated locals.

Anti-incumbency factors failed in West Bengal. Arrogant catcall of Didi-O-Didi ended up favouring TMC. Even after having faced defeat in Nandigram, Mamata Banerjee's influence in national politics is likely to gain mo-

A AMARENDER REDDY

In spite of the second wave of Covid, urban areas have been supplied and are flush with fresh fruits, vegetables, milk and a variety of agricultural related produce without any interruptions from rural areas. It shows the latent potential of the rural production sector to adjust to pandemic shocks. This vibrancy is in spite of decades of negligence of the successive governments in building rural infrastructure like railroads, digital connectivity and market development.

This latent potential of rural and agricultural sector needs to be aroused to improve livelihoods of the rural mass who make up about 65 per cent of India's population. In spite of growing demand for agricultural produce in urban areas and urban consumers being willing and able to pay higher prices, the farmers' share in the consumer rupee in most of the cases is not even 30 or 40 per cent. The remaining 60-70 per cent is going to middlemen, who generally live in urban areas.

It is imperative to increase farmers' share in the consumer rupee not only to increase the farmer's income, but also to plough back increased incomes to finance capital expenditure like construction of cleaning, grading and other post-harvest infrastructure within rural areas near the farm gate to meet consumer tastes and preferences to get higher prices.

The increased farmers' incomes will be used for adoption of new technology and farm machinery with high yield potential. This again increases farmers' incomes and relieves them of the need to work in alternative fields such as the food trade, food processing and food service industry where opportunities are plenty with the growing urban demand for tasty and processed food.

There is huge scope for setting up agri-ancillary industries in rural and small towns to add value to agricultural produce such as preparation of ready-to-eat products, fruit and vegetable juices and retailing etc. It is likely that employment potential of this sector may grow at 10 per cent per annum for the next five years.

Now, a significant share of fruit juice and other ready-to-eat food

## Transform rural areas during the pandemic



100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

Both the Malegaon and Giridih rioting - the two zones are separated by nearly a thousand miles of country - exhibit non-cooperation in an identical light. In one case lathis were forbidden by due authority. That authority was defied by non-cooperators and several Indian policemen were murdered and burnt with the concomitants which invariably accompany this kind of outbreak in India. At Giridih non-cooperators instituted a boycott which extended apparently to the victim's wife. An arrest under due process of law followed, but the mob, as at Malegaon, though with less brutality, defied the authority of the constituted guardians of the law. Does the vast law-abiding element in India really desire that the constituted authority of the Government shall be thus defied or does it repudiate the Gandhi-ite suggestion that governments is all a blunder and that the unregulated human conscience can settle these matters? In view of the anarchical consequences which invariably follow the practical exemplification of the Gandhi-ite theory there can be but one answer to this question. The constituted Government must rule, and the mass of public opinion in India desires that it should rule. Explicit declarations that, both at Malegaon and Giridih, constituted authority has duly re-asserted itself are, we fully believe, anxiously awaited by all the reasonable members of Indian society.

### NEWS ITEMS

### STRIKE ON THE BURMA RAILWAYS

Menials of the Burma Railways, a good number of subordinate staff of the traffic department from Rangoon and Malagon, and menials and foremen of the loco department, numbering about 1,000 in all, went on strike last night. Express trains are leaving as usual. Local passenger traffic, however, is being worked on an emergency time table. Great difficulty is being encountered in getting firemen and Anglo-Indians are doing the work. One of the reasons for the strike is said to be the dismissal of three men who were present at the meeting on April 17 of the loco and carriage department menials to discuss grievances. The men also want an increase of pay. Booking of goods has been cancelled until further notice.

### ALLEGED SEDITIOUS SPEECHES

In Dr. Chokkar case, Hariram Trurkram Athale, Oriental Translator, examined by Mr. Dick, Government Advocate, said the translations of Dr. Chokkar's speech as read and amended in court were correct. In cross-examination by Mr. Abhyankar witness said he checked and certified the translations. He went through them cursorily and took them to be correct because the persons who made them were capable of making correct translations. Witness was then questioned with regard to section 124A Indian Penal Code, and said that he understood by a Government established by law in British India, the de facto British Government established in India. By established by law he understood de facto, but he agreed that a de facto Government did not mean a Government established by law.

**PAGODA TRUSTEES OBJECT TO MILITARY**

Rangoon, April 29  
The trustees of the Shwe Dagon Pagoda have presented two memorials to the Lieutenant-Governor objecting to further military occupation and the continuation of the arsenal in the Pagoda precincts and asking for consent to construct a terraced roofing over the eastern stairway. In the first memorial they ask that the arsenal and fort be removed from Shwe Dagon Hill at an early date, that military occupation of the area around might be relinquished and the land belonging to the Pagoda before the occupation be restored to the Pagoda Trust at the same time and that the western approach to the Pagoda be reopened to the public immediately, preparatory to the removal of the arsenal and fort from the hill.

**COTTON PLANTER AND SLAVERY**

John Williams, a Georgia cotton planter, has been found guilty of causing the death of Negroes on his plantation, and sentenced to imprisonment for life. Evidence was given of eleven Negroes having been murdered at Williams' plantation, which was known as "the death farm," in order to prevent their giving evidence of the state of slavery existing there. It is almost without precedent for a verdict to be given against a Southern white man accused of murder by Negroes. The jury in this case made a recommendation to mercy. Direct evidence against Williams was furnished by his Negro foreman. Some of the Negroes were killed with an axe, after having been forced to dig their own graves, while others were placed in sacks and thrown in the river.

## Korea and the politics of pardon

KIM MYONG-SIK

The 2 1/2 year prison sentence given to Lee Jae-yong, leader of the Samsung business group convicted of bribery, is to end in July next year. Speculations are rising over whether President Moon Jae-in will keep the richest man in South Korea in jail as long as he remains in the Blue House, or give the 51-year-old a special pardon using his prerogative.

Calls for Lee's early release are coming from individuals and organizations that cite the need for his role in helping revive the national economy from the devastating impact of Covid-19. They speak of the possibility of exchanging semiconductor chips for coronavirus vaccines, which can be better pushed under direct leadership of the corporate leader, who has global connections.

Public support for Lee's freedom has been growing since Samsung Electronics, the flagship company of the business empire, announced plans to pay an astronomical amount of inheritance tax, make huge cash donations for health care programmes and deliver a vast collection of artwork to the public sector. Initial calculations put the total value at approximately US \$20 billion.

Still, it's entirely up to President Moon, who is entering the final year of his five-year tenure next week. During the next 12 months, he will do anything he deems useful for an extension of Democratic Party rule and will be reluctant to do something that may be detrimental to achieving that goal. Then, will the release of Lee Jae-yong from jail help the continuation of the leftists' hold on power, or to the contrary?

One thing that we missed in Moon's presidency over the last four years was boldness as a national leader to set realistic objectives and make utmost efforts to persuade the



people to pursue them. Instead, we have witnessed him choosing unrealistic and rather fantastic policies such as "income-led growth" in the economy and "South-North detente" in national security, while making deceptive claims of progress to the people.

With regard to the ongoing fight against the coronavirus pandemic, Moon's government led the people to a premature complacency after initial success in keeping infections down in some areas but the authorities have failed to secure vaccines from foreign manufacturers in time. Vaccination schedules for different age brackets have been changed because of import delays amidst a worldwide scramble for the preventive drugs.

There were reports that Lee Jae-yong, even while remaining behind bars, used his personal ties with Shantanu Narayen, chairman of the US software company Adobe, who is also an independent director of Pfizer, to help Korean authorities reach a vaccine supply deal with the US drugmaker earlier this year. Information

like this indicates public distrust in the government's ability to ensure universal vaccination and achieve "herd immunity" sometime in November as they promised.

People have maintained an ambivalent attitude toward top conglomerates like Samsung, the locomotives of Korea's economic development, in recent decades. Feeling proud that Samsung smartphones and semiconductors control the global market, they are uneasy when they are told that the combined sales of the 22 affiliates of the Samsung Group alone account for nearly 20 per cent of the nation's annual gross domestic product.

The 12 trillion-won inheritance tax to be paid by Lee Jae-yong and his family from the death of Lee Kun-hee in October last year amounts to more than three times the total collection of inheritance taxes during the whole of 2020. This shows the prodigious share of the Samsung Empire in Korean economy, awareness of which incurs grave public awe and concerns about the increasing territory and

influence of the conglomerate.

When an independent counsel arrested Lee Jae-yong in its probe into wrongdoings by former president Park Geun-hye and her close confidante Choi Soon-sil, many people anticipated exposure of an immense scale of corruption. When the trial ended last January with the Supreme Court's final sentence of 2 1/2 years' imprisonment for 8.7 billion won (\$7.8 million) in bribes, or solicited donations including a racehorse, many questioned the appropriateness of the punishment.

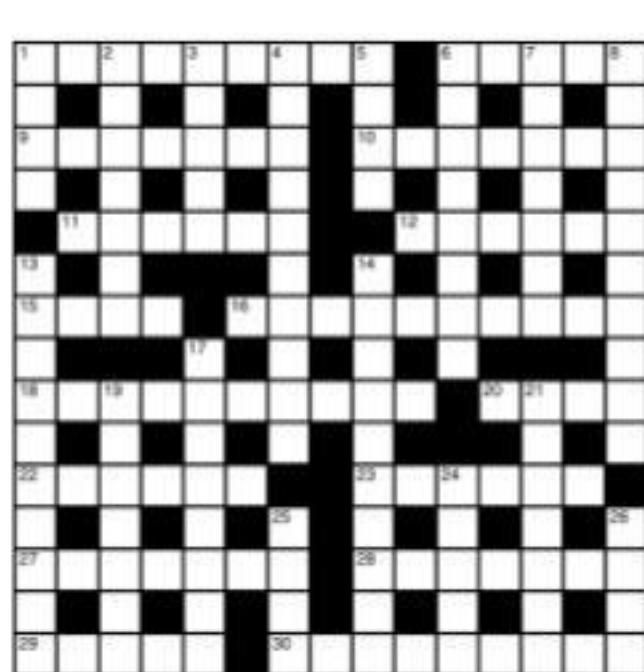
The announcement of the Lee family's inheritance tax plan once again drew attention to Korea's exorbitant tax rate of 50 per cent plus 20 per cent premium for corporate inheritance, which makes it as high as 60 per cent of the bequeathed assets, undoubtedly the highest in the world. Pundits compared it to zero in Sweden (down from 70 per cent in 2005), 11 per cent of the actual rate after corporate deductions in Japan and 4.5 per cent in Germany.

Petitions for Lee's release reached

| ACROSS   | DOWN   |
|--|--|
| 1 Outlaw experiencing life as a bird? (5,4)  | 18 Staff harbouring a fugitive? That's cuckoo! (10)                            |
| 6 Silly craze recalled fairly heartlessly (5)  | 19 A delightful thing recalled in story (4)                                    |
| 9 Children behaving wildly in vehicle (7)  | 20 Tense character in Macbeth making sudden movement (6)                       |
| 10 Scoundrels accommodating remote depressive states (7)                                       | 21 Measurements of length, the very thing adopted by Baden-Powell's groups (6) |
| 11 Plan that is a recurring idea, but not initially (6)  | 22 Runs a decrepit hotel, home to vermin (7)                                   |
| 12 Wolf, evasive, returning to back of butte (6)   | 23 French verse form, right-hand page with Auden's translation (7)             |
| 15 Cumbrian river valley last to take prime position (4)                                       | 24 Offers to cage rook or rooks? (5)   |
| 16 Offering temptation, friend embraces university lecturer bearing sign of being married (10) | 25 A bit of sense, holding back my number, concealing identity (9)             |
|  | 1 Popular music, something often encountered at the seaside (4)                |
|  | 2 Woman to briefly boil eggs, at the outset (7)                                |
|  | 3 Definitely not cancelling women's public talk (5)                            |
|  | 4 British, in playing golf, say, mostly not going well (2,3,5)                 |
|  | 5 Avoid love (4)   |
|  | 6 Day off upheld in European Parliament? That's a bloomer (8)                  |
|  | 7 Hide bit of wood around new section of course? (7)                           |
|  | 8 Sure injecting drug into damaged artery is history (10)                      |
|  | 9 Perhaps film-star's hot -  |
|  | 10 Old style trade ruined company (3,4)  |
|  | 11 Notes brought in to purchase rabbit (5)                                     |
|  | 12 Hindu festival? Some time later (4)   |
|  | 13 Annoys German aboard vehicle (4)  |

NOTE: Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required. (By arrangement with The Independent, London)

### CROSSWORD



NO 28905



*The government should regulate and control cryptocurrencies instead of prohibiting them*

S C GARG

FORMER FINANCE SECRETARY

## THUMBNAILS

Joshi tells coal PSUs to achieve production target: Union coal minister Pralhad Joshi on Thursday reviewed the functioning of coal PSUs, including state-owned CL, and asked the companies to achieve the production target. The minister also asked the public sector companies in the coal sector to stick to their promised quality and grade of the fossil fuel. "Chaired a review meeting today via VC, with coal PSUs. Emphasised on achieving production target and liquidating pit-head stocks, adhering to promised quality & grade," the minister said.

PTI

**J B Chem foray:** J B Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd on Thursday announces its foray into the area of nephrology with a new dedicated division called "Renova" which will endeavour to serve patients who are under treatment for chronic kidney disease. The new division will focus exclusively on comprehensive renal care ranging from the management of hypertension in chronic kidney disease to end-stage renal disease, said a release.

SNS

**IDBI Bank initiative:** IDBI Bank on Thursday said that it has launched the facility of periodic KYC updation through video-based customer identification process (V-CIP). Announcing this initiative, Suresh Khatanhar, deputy MD, said: "In continuation of various digital measures introduced by IDBI Bank, customers can now update their KYC through the V-CIP without any need to visit the branches."

SNS

**NDBB pact:** National Dairy Development Board on Thursday said it has signed an agreement with Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) to promote efficient renewable technologies in the dairy industry. The MoU was signed on 5 May at Anand, Gujarat, by NDBB executive director Meenesh Shah and EESL director (projects) Venkatesh Dwivedi in the presence of senior officials, it said in a statement.

PTI

**ArcelorMittal income:** ArcelorMittal on Thursday posted a net income of \$2,285 million for the first quarter ended 31 March 2021. The world's largest steel maker had posted a net loss of \$1,120 million in the year-ago quarter, the company said in a statement. "ArcelorMittal recorded net income for Q1 2021 of \$2,285 million... as compared to net income of \$1,207 million for Q4 2020 and a net loss of \$1,120 million for Q1 2020," it said.

PTI

**Bobble AI:** Bobble AI, an artificial intelligence-powered innovation startup, has introduced a unique section on the keyboard called "Covid 19 Resources" that has credible, real-time links providing nationwide information, according to a Press release.

SNS

# Fitch forecasts 9.5 percent GDP growth for FY 2021-22

There appears to be signs that spiralling Covid-19 crisis has dented support for the ruling BJP, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

**T**he spiralling crisis from resurgence of Covid-19 cases in India has dented support for the ruling BJP but voter support for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party will remain strong over the coming quarters and through this humanitarian crisis, Fitch Solutions said today.

The sudden and steep surge in the number of coronavirus cases - the highest ever 4,12,262 new infections and a record 3,980 daily death toll in a day - has swamped the health system, which seemed to have collapsed.

While containment measures will weigh on India's ongoing economic recovery, the localised nature of restrictions means that the actual impact is likely to be much less severe relative to April-June 2020 when a strict nationwide lockdown was imposed, Fitch Solutions said.

It forecasted real GDP to grow 9.5 per cent in financial year 2021-22 (April 2021 to



"The perception that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has considerably mismanaged the Covid-19 crisis will weigh on his and the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) popularity somewhat. Some of this erosion in popularity is evidenced in the state elections..."

FITCH SOLUTIONS

March 2022). Risks to this forecast are to the downside, as the surge in new daily Covid-19 caseloads will most likely see an extension and expansion of lockdowns, it said, adding that the resurgence of Covid-19 cases exposed cracks in the Indian healthcare system.

"While there appears to be signs that the spiralling Covid-19 crisis in India has dented support for the ruling

BJP, we maintain our view that voter support for Prime Minister Modi and the BJP will remain strong over the coming quarters and through this humanitarian crisis," Fitch Solutions said.

This second wave in India has been widely attributed to the B.1.1.7 variant - first identified in the UK - which had ramped up cases in Punjab. Another possible culprit is a

homegrown variant, B.1.617, with two worrying mutations that originated in Maharashtra, the worst affected state.

"In addition to this, in India, a year of Covid-19 fatigue gave way to an ill-advised euphoria over herd immunity as cases began to dip in January 2021.

"Inadequate government measures and people not adhering to public health guidelines, such as wearing face masks and maintaining social distancing, are also the main reasons for India's upward tick in infections," it said.

It added that a number of political, social and religious events and elections for local bodies in multiple states and preparation for Assembly elections in others also created an opportunity for the virus to move fast.

Fitch Solutions said that in March this year, a few weeks before the new surge, health minister Harsh Vardhan, who is also a physician, asserted that India was in the "endgame" of the Covid-19 pandemic, justifying the government's decision to export medical

resources to other countries. India exported around 193 million doses of vaccines.

Fitch Solutions said "the perception that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has considerably mismanaged the Covid-19 crisis will weigh on his and the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) popularity somewhat. Some of this erosion in popularity is evidenced in the state elections".

"A less-than-stellar performance at these polls adds to the political challenges the BJP had been facing in recent months, which include the anti-farm protest by farmers and anti-BJP government sentiment on social media platform Twitter amid the resurgence in Covid-19 cases, which the government has sought to suppress.

"For now, however, we are cautious against concluding that the BJP's support has weakened across the country, given Modi's strong personal-led support across the country, which we believe can still sustain through this humanitarian crisis," it said.

# Centre releases ₹9,871 cr revenue deficit grant to states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

**The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended a total post devolution revenue deficit grant of Rs 1,18,452 crore to 17 states in the financial year 2021-22.**

deficit grant are Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

The eligibility of states to receive this grant and the quantum of grant was decided by the Commission based on the gap between assessment of revenue and expenditure of the state.

Assessed devolution for the financial year 2021-22 was also taken into account by the Commission. The Fifteenth Finance Commission has recommended a total post devolution revenue deficit grant of Rs 1,18,452 crore to 17 states in the financial year 2021-22.

# Cognizant reports 37.6% rise in Q1 profit at \$505 million

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY



"Cloud migration and digital adoption will create a significant opportunity for Cognizant in the coming years."

BRIAN HUMPHRIES  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER, COGNIZANT

ing the Cognizant brand. Cloud migration and digital adoption will create a significant opportunity for Cognizant in the coming years.

Proceeds of the fresh issue will be utilised for repayment of certain loans availed by the company as well as for general corporate purpose.

Nuvoco Vistas is a cement manufacturer with a consolidated capacity of 22.32 million metric tons per annum (MMTPA). It has 11 cement plants comprising five integrated units, five grinding units and one blending unit.

IT company Cognizant has reported a 37.6 per cent rise in its March quarter net income at \$505 million, and said it expects its revenue to grow 7-9 per cent during the year. The company, which follows January-December financial year, said its net profit was at \$367 million in the March 2020 quarter.

The US-headquartered company, which has about 2 lakh employees based in India, saw its March 2021 quarter revenue growing 4.2 per cent to \$4.4 billion over the year-ago period.

"In the first quarter, we successfully executed our strategy of embracing digital, investing in international expansion and reposition-

"This is focused on covering operational expenses at hospitals throughout India that are caring for Covid-19 patients. Funding the efforts of Unicef in India to deploy oxygen generation plants, Covid diagnostic testing and medical supplies and partnering with one of India's leading hospital chains to set up vaccination centres in locations across the country, including some of Cognizant's own facilities," he added.

# India, EU set to announce resumption of FTA talks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

2013 when the two sides failed to bridge substantial gaps on crucial issues, including tariff, data security status for the IT sector and market access.

India and the EU will agree to resume the negotiations at the virtual summit between Prime Minister Modi and top leadership of the bloc, sources said on Thursday.

The two sides are also likely to announce a connectivity partnership at the summit that is aimed at boosting cooperation in sectors like railway, maritime and aviation as well as in the digital domain to bring people of the two sides closer to each other, sources said.

Official sources in the European Union (EU) also said the free trade agreement package will include an investment protection pact as well as a framework on geographical indication.

Launched in June 2007, the FTA talks between India and the EU hit a roadblock in May

was called off in view of the coronavirus crisis and both sides decided to hold the deliberations virtually.

A strategically important grouping for India, the EU as a whole was country's largest trading partner in 2018. India's bilateral trade with the EU in 2018-19 stood at \$115.6 billion with exports valued at \$57.17 billion and imports worth \$58.42 billion.

In the 15th India-EU summit in July last year, Prime Minister Modi had pitched for bringing out an "action-oriented" agenda to further expand ties between the two sides.

In that virtual summit, the two sides came out with a roadmap to further strengthen strategic partnership by 2025.

Nuvoco Vistas files ₹5,000-cr IPO papers

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Nuvoco Vistas Corporation Ltd, part of Nirma Group, today filed preliminary papers with markets regulator Sebi to raise Rs 5,000 crore through an initial share sale.

The IPO comprises fresh issue of shares worth Rs 1,500 crore and an offer for sale of Rs 3,500 crore by promoter Niyoji Enterprise, according to the draft red herring prospectus.

Proceeds of the fresh issue will be utilised for repayment of certain loans availed by the company as well as for general corporate purpose.

Nuvoco Vistas is a cement manufacturer with a consolidated capacity of 22.32 million metric tons per annum (MMTPA). It has 11 cement plants comprising five integrated units, five grinding units and one blending unit.

include reduction in the TDS rate for 2021-22 to the tune of 50 per cent; ban of exports of steel to China; imposition of 35 per cent export duty on steel; levy of uniform duty on all forms of iron ore exports including pellets; and cut in GST rates for Ayush industry.

"The cash deposit limit may be enhanced to Rs 10 lakh. Presently, there are charges on cash deposits in banks beyond the limit of Rs 2 lakh. This will provide much-needed relief to the struggling population and provide some relief amidst the crisis," it added.

In a separate statement, the chamber said that there is an urgent need to ramp up the production of Covaxin and Covishield through voluntary licensing.

Voluntary licensing refers to the authorisation given by the patent holder to a third party to manufacture and sell the patented product on the basis of mutually agreed terms.

# Honda Cars advances maintenance shutdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

Honda Cars India today said it is advancing maintenance shutdown at its Rajasthani-based manufacturing plant by around ten days in the wake of second wave of Covid.

The Japanese automaker, which sells models like Amaze and City, has decided to shut production at its Tapukara-based facility for 12 days starting from 7 May in order to curtail spread of coronavirus infections.

"In view of the current severe situation from the second wave of Covid-19, the company has informed its associates and suppliers that the company is making calendar adjustments along with its maintenance block closure at its manufacturing plant in Tapukara, Rajasthan," a Honda Cars

spokesperson said.

The production will be halted from 7 May till 18 May.

"The manufacturing operations will resume from 19 May. The maintenance block closure was originally scheduled from middle of May 2021," the spokesperson noted.

Honda's Tapukara plant has an installed production capacity of 1.8 lakh units per annum.

The company's employees working in corporate and zonal offices for all functions have been primarily working from home, extending all possible support to customers and business partners.

"Only some associates involved in running essential services that require physical presence or minimal staffing for a few critical activities are attending office with full precautions," the spokesperson said.

This is the third straight day of increase in petrol and diesel prices since state-owned fuel retailers ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

In three days, petrol price has increased by 59 paisa per litre from Rs 90.74 while diesel rates went up to Rs 81.42 litre from Rs 81.12, according to a price notification by state-owned fuel retailers.

Rates have been increased across the country and vary from state to state depending on the local incidence of taxation (VAT).

This is the third straight day of increase in petrol and diesel prices since state-owned fuel retailers ended an 18-day hiatus in rate revision during assembly elections in states like West Bengal.

In three days, petrol price has increased by 59 paisa per litre and diesel by 69 paisa ~ neutralising most of the reduction that came between 24 March and 15 April.

After raising petrol price by a record Rs 21.58 per litre and diesel by Rs 19.18 since the government raised excise duty to an all-time high in March last year, state-owned fuel retailers IOC, BPCL and HPCL had reduced petrol price by 67 paisa a litre and diesel by 74 paisa per litre effected between 24 March and 15 April.

Oil companies, who have in recent months resorted to unexplained freeze in rate revision, had hit a pause button after cutting prices marginally on 15 April. This coincided with electioneering hitting peak to elect new governments in five states, including West Bengal.

# Covid to shave off 20-25% off fuel demand

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's second wave of coronavirus infections and the resultant city and state-specific restrictions may shave off about 20-25 per cent of auto fuel demand in April, consultancy Wood Mackenzie said today and estimated a modest impact on oil demand in the absence of a full nationwide lockdown.

India's Covid crisis shows no sign of slowing. The country has reported new cases above 3 lakh per day for two weeks straight, though experts think the true number is likely to be far higher, it said. "Yet despite increasing calls for the government to impose a nationwide lockdown to



reduce the rate of infection, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has so far resisted, citing the economic impact on an already suffering population."

Compounding this terrible human tragedy, the crisis is also impacting India's near-term economic performance as travel is curtailed and local restrictions enforced. "This is inevitably impacting the country's energy markets, with all sectors being impacted. However, without a nationwide lockdown along the lines of that seen in Q2 (April-June) 2020, energy demand has so far proven relatively resilient, despite the more severe levels of infection compared to 12 months ago," Wood Mackenzie said in a report.

It trimmed India's GDP forecast to 9 per cent year-on-year in 2021 from 9.9 per cent previously due to the second peak of Covid cases. But there is further downside risk if lockdown measures and restrictions on movement are tightened further.

"While current localised restrictions appear inadequate in comparison to the

severity of the pandemic, tighter restrictions come with expectations of additional financial support from the government. India's stimulus measures have been modest since the start of the pandemic, totalling 9 per cent of GDP. If a nationwide lockdown is enforced, the government will need to provide much more," it said.

With the domestic econ-

omy gripped by the pandemic and



We need to act now and we need to act fast to have any hope of containing this human catastrophe.

ASIA PACIFIC DIRECTOR FOR FEDERATION OF RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT SOCIETIES ALEXANDER MATHEOU

COMMENTING ON THE STRUGGLE NEPAL IS FACING DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 07 MAY 2021

09

# Myanmar junta restricts satellite TV, internet, media

The restrictions will also affect foreign news channels broadcast via satellite into the country

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

YANGON, 6 MAY

The Myanmar junta has banned satellite television after imposing severe restrictions on the Internet and media, provoking global rights groups to protest the military's tightening grip over information flow in the country.

The ruling State Administration Council announced this week that anyone using satellite dishes to watch television will face up to one year in prison or a fine of 500,000 kyat (\$320). The military junta claimed that "illegal organisations and news agencies" were broadcasting programs via satellite that threaten state security.

The ban appears targeted at independent Burmese-language broadcasters such as the Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) and Mizzima, which have continued broadcast-



Anti-coup protesters flash the three-finger sign of defiance during a demonstration in Yangon, Myanmar. ■ AGENCIES

ing via satellite since the junta revoked their operating licenses in March.

The ban will also affect foreign news channels broadcast via satellite into Myanmar.

"The satellite TV ban is a blatant attempt to deny access to independent news broadcasts and further isolate Myan-

mar's people," said Linda Lakhdhir, Asia legal advisor at Human Rights Watch.

"The junta should immediately withdraw its outrageous blanket censorship and end its relentless assault on news reporting."

The ban on satellite television is part of the military's full-scale attack on the coun-

try's media, alleged Mizzima chief editor Soe Myint. He said the military crackdown now extends from ground to air in an unprecedented way and Myanmarese people can only look forward to the global community to redress their plight. On 4 May, the junta also announced that it was banning two more media outlets, Kachin-based 74 Media and Shan-based Tachileik News Agency, increasing the number to eight.

Many of those outlets, including 74 Media and Tachileik News, have responded with defiance to the junta's bans, vowing to continue their reporting.

In addition to banning media outlets, the security forces have aggressively targeted journalists for arrest.

At least 71 journalists have been arrested since the 1 February coup, of whom at least 48 remain in detention.

The authorities have

charged many of those detained, including Japanese freelance reporter Yuki Kitazumi, with violating a new provision in the penal code adopted by the junta that makes it a crime to publish or circulate comments that "cause fear" or spread "false news". Those convicted face up to three years in prison.

The authorities have imposed severe restrictions on the internet, making it very difficult for people to access or to share information.

Mobile internet data and wireless broadband have been turned off for more than six weeks, and other social media platforms popular in Myanmar have been blocked.

"The Myanmar junta's increasingly desperate efforts to block those inside the country from accessing independent news and information won't hide the truth about its violations of rights," Lakhdhir said.

## China suspends economic dialogue with Australia, cites 'cold war mindset'

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING, 6 MAY

governments to discuss trade disputes and other economic issues.

China's relations with Australia, India and some other neighbours are increasingly strained by the ruling Communist Party's assertiveness abroad, including claims to disputed territory and accusations that Beijing is trying to influence politics in Australia and other Western democracies.

China blocked imports of most Australian goods last year after its government called for an investigation into the coronavirus, which emerged in central China in late 2019.

The Chinese government accused Australia of taking steps to disrupt normal exchanges due to a "Cold War mindset and ideological discrimination".

Beijing will indefinitely suspend all activities under the China-Australia Strategic Economic Dialogue, said a statement by the Cabinet's planning agency, the National Development and Reform Commission.

China holds such dialogues with Australia, the United States and some other

China rejects G-7 criticism on human rights

BEIJING, 6 MAY

China's government on Thursday rejected criticism of its human rights and economic record by foreign ministers of the Group of Seven major economies and accused them of meddling in its affairs.

A statement on Wednesday by G-7 diplomats in London made groundless accusations against China, said a Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Wang Wenbin.

He accused them of blatantly meddling in China's affairs. China strongly condemns it, Wang said.

The officials from the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, France said they were deeply concerned but announced no formal action on reports of forced labour and other abuses.

## Imran to visit Saudi

ISLAMABAD, 6 MAY

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan will embark on a three-day official visit to Saudi Arabia on Friday during which he will discuss all areas of bilateral cooperation with the Kingdom's top leadership, as the two nations work to rebuild ties after recent setbacks.

He has been invited by Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman.

The Foreign Minister and other members of the Cabinet will be part of his delegation, the Foreign Office (FO) said in a statement.

The Prime Minister's consultations with the Saudi leadership will cover all areas of bilateral cooperation including economic, trade, investment, energy, job opportunities for the Pakistani workforce, and welfare of Pakistani diaspora in the Kingdom.

Several bilateral agreements/MoUs are expected to be signed during the visit, according to the FO.

The Prime Minister will also meet the Secretary-General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Yousef Al-Othaimeen, the Secretary-General of the World Muslim League, Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa and the Imams of the Two Holy Mosques in Makkah and Medina.

## Palestinian suspect arrested over West Bank attack

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JERUSALEM, 6 MAY

reported that he also held US citizenship.

The arrest came shortly after Defense Minister Benny Gantz announced that Yehuda Guetta, one of those wounded, had died of his injuries. In the attack, a gunman had opened fire from a car at a group of Israelis standing at a busy West Bank intersection.

The death occurred during a recent uptick in violence coinciding with the month of Ramadan. On Wednesday, Israeli troops killed a 16-year-old Palestinian during a confrontation in Nablus.

The Seoul Metropolitan

## South Korea raids activist's office over anti-North leaflets

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SEOUL, 6 MAY

They refused to provide details, including who they plan to question him, citing an ongoing investigation.

Park issued a brief statement saying police officers had arrived at his office.

His mobile phone was turned off when Media tried to reach him for additional comments.

Park earlier said he would fight the new law banning cross-border leaflets and keep launching them to let the North Korean people learn about the truth of their authoritarian government led by Kim Jong Un.

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His mobile phone was turned off when Media tried to reach him for additional comments.

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## Pakistan court asks India to cooperate in Jadhav case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 6 MAY

Ministry of Law and Justice seeking appointment of a lawyer for Jadhav.

Attorney General Khalid Javed Khan told the bench that to comply with the ruling of the International Court of Justice, Pakistan last year promulgated the law, CJ (Review and Reconsideration) Ordinance, 2020, to enable Jadhav to avail himself of the statutory remedy, Dawn newspaper reported.

The ICI, in its 2019 verdict, had asked Pakistan to provide a proper forum for appeal against the sentence given to Jadhav by a military court.

## Gunmen kill ex-Afghan TV presenter

KABUL, 5 MAY

Gunmen killed a former Afghan TV presenter on Thursday as he was travelling in the southern city of Kandahar, a provincial official said, adding to fears for press freedom in the war-wrecked country.

Nimat Rawan was shot at noon, provincial spokesman Baheer Ahmadi said, by two assailants who were able to escape with his mobile phone. Security officials have told several other journalists in the area that extremists are targeting them as well, he added.

## Ramadan in China: Faithful dwindle under limits on religion

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KASHGAR, 6 MAY

under rules set by China's Communist Party.

"My children know who our holy creator is, but I don't give them detailed religious knowledge," he said. "After they reach 18, they can receive religious education according to their own will."

Under the weight of official policies, the future of Islam appears precarious in Xinjiang, a rugged realm of craggy snow-capped mountains and barren deserts bordering Central Asia. Outside observers say scores of mosques have been demolished, a charge Beijing denies, and locals say the number of worshippers is sinking.

A decade ago, 4,000 to 5,000 people attended on Friday prayers at the Id Kah Mosque in the historic Silk Road city of Kashgar. Now only 800 to 900 do, said the mosque's imam, Mamat Juma. He attributed the drop to a natural shift in values, not government policy, saying the younger generation wants to spend more time working than praying.

The Chinese government organized a five-day visit to Xinjiang in April for about a dozen foreign correspondents, part of an intense propaganda campaign to counter allegations of abuse.

Officials repeatedly urged journalists to recount what they saw, not what China calls the lies of critical Western politicians and media. Beijing says it protects freedom of religion, and citizens can practice their faith so long as they adhere to laws and regulations.

In practice, any religious activity must be done in line with restrictions evident at almost every stop in Xinjiang from a primary school where the headmaster said fasting wasn't observed because of the "separation of religion and education," to a cotton yarn factory where workers are banned from praying on site, even in their dormitory rooms.

### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 180012511

■ SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886,

54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

■ ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

■ AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 09910383383,

18001803838, Reservation

43513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-

23860562

■ Rajasthan Roadways

23864470

■ U.P. Roadways 23868709

#### FLIGHT INQUIRY

■ AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 09910383383

25656421/25656431 Reservation

25652294 (Airport)

■ Air Canada Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

■ Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

■ Indigo Airlines Air-

and Reservation 23354373

### SCRABBLE

BRAND

G R A M S I

O S H M T R U

D P E

M A O Y W N L

V I D S O A W

PAR SCORE 155-165

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

SCRABBLE

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

ACROSS

P A R O T S

P A C K

S C A L L

P A C K

V A G R A N T

P A C K

C O V I C U S

P A C K

J U D D'S TOTAL

279

PIPS

279

PIPS

279

PIPS

279

PIPS

279

PIPS



The speed with which the Covid crisis in India has escalated, it has created a sense of urgency in the corporate community

US INDIA BUSINESS COUNCIL PRESIDENT NISHA DESAI BISWAL

AT A MEETING

## WEATHER

| CITY          | MAX(°C) | MIN(°C) |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| SINGAPORE     | 31      | 26 R    |
| HONG KONG     | 28      | 25 H    |
| TOKYO         | 21      | 15 R    |
| LONDON        | 14      | 6 S     |
| DUBAI         | 36      | 27 H    |
| SAN FRANCISCO | 19      | 9 H     |
| NEW YORK      | 16      | 9 H     |
| MOSCOW        | 16      | 9 H     |

S= sunny, CL= clear, H= hazy, R= rainy...

## THUMBNAILS



Collared macaque mother Elodie carries her as-yet nameless cub, born on 9 April, in the fur of her thigh at Tierpark Berlin, Germany, on Thursday. AP

**Australian mom convicted of killing 4 children:** Nearly two decades after an Australian woman was convicted of killing her four children, dozens of scientists are backing the claim that they may have died of natural causes. AP

**EU to let US, Norway join military mobility project:** The European Union is set Thursday to allow the United States, Canada and Norway to join one of its military projects aimed at speeding up the deployment of troops and equipment around Europe. AP

**Fishermen gather boats in post-Brexit protest:** French fishermen angry over loss of access to waters off their coast, gathered boats in protest on Thursday, the flash-point for the first major conflict between France and Britain over fishing rights in the wake of Brexit. AP

**Thailand assures foreign residents of vaccination:** Thailand sought on Thursday to assure its foreign residents that they can get Covid vaccinations, countering comments by some officials suggesting they would be at the end of the line for it. AP

# US backs waiver on Covid vaccine patent

The Biden administration's decision will make it easier for the WTO's General Council to approve the proposal, says Katherine Tai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 6 MAY

The Biden administration has backed an initiative by India and South Africa at the WTO to temporarily waive patent rules on Covid-19 vaccines, seen as a breakthrough in the global fight against the deadly pandemic by potentially expanding the supply of the vaccines and more affordable doses for less wealthy nations.

Announcing the major policy decision after intense internal debate and strong push-back from American drugmakers, US Trade Representative Katherine Tai on Wednesday said this is a global health crisis and the extraordinary circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic call for extraordinary measures.

"The (Biden) administration believes strongly in intellectual property protections, but in service of ending this pandemic, supports the waiver of those protections for Covid-19 vaccines, Tai said.

The Biden administration's decision will make it easier for the WTO's General Council to approve the proposal. The General Council's meeting is currently underway in Geneva. If approved, the waiver would allow production of vaccines to be ramped up and provide more affordable



United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai at a press conference on Wednesday. AP

doses for less wealthy countries, she said.

"We will actively participate in text-based negotiations at the World Trade Organisation needed to make that happen. Those negotiations will take time given the consensus-based nature of the institution and the complexity of the issues involved," Tai said.

For the past several weeks, India's Ambassador to the US Tarun Singh Sandhu, along with the diplomats from South Africa, had been meeting with the US government regarding their proposal.

"We appreciate the US administration's announcement today of its support for waiver of IPR for Covid-19 vaccines, Sandhu told PTI on Wednesday.

The head of the World Health Organisation Tedros

Adhanom Ghebreyesus called the move a "monumental moment" in the fight against the pandemic.

"This is a monumental moment in the fight against #COVID19," he tweeted, adding that the commitment by President Biden and USTR Tai to support the waiver of IP protection on vaccines is a powerful example of US leadership to address global health challenges.

President Biden, as a Democratic candidate promised to support such waivers, but had been under pressure from American pharmaceutical giants to keep them in place, US media reported.

Over the last one month, Tai had extensive consultations with various stakeholders both within and outside the US. The White House described

it as a policy process. "The administration's aim is to get as many safe and effective vaccines to as many people as fast as possible."

"As our vaccine supply for the American people is secured, the administration will continue to ramp up its efforts working with the private sector and all possible partners to expand vaccine manufacturing and distribution. It will also work to increase the raw materials needed to produce those vaccines," Tai said.

US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy said the Biden administration's support of a Covid-19 vaccine waiver proposal "put people over patents."

"To me it was a value statement," Murthy told CNN.

He emphasised the role of the US in helping lead the world through the global Covid-19 crisis, saying that "if we stick together, if we work together, if we help work and collaborate with countries around the world, I do believe we will turn this pandemic around."

The Biden administration took such a major decision despite stiff opposition from major pharma companies and US Chambers of Commerce, which argued that this will impact their intellectual property. The Opposition Republican Party had also written to President Joe Biden and Tai expressing concerns over the proposal.

**Sri Lanka bars all arrivals from India with immediate effect**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, 6 MAY

Sri Lanka on Thursday announced that all arrivals from India will be banned with immediate effect due to the record rise in Covid-19 cases in the neighbouring country.

Several countries like the UK, the UAE, Australia and Singapore have already banned travellers from India as well as other South Asian countries.

The Civil Aviation Authority on Thursday said that travellers from India will not be allowed to disembark in Sri Lanka. The decision has been taken as the coronavirus continues to spread rapidly in India.

The Director General Civil aviation in a letter to the CEO of the national carrier SriLankan Airlines has said, "in accordance with instructions received from health authorities of Sri Lanka due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation, it is hereby directed that passengers travelling from India will not be permitted to disembark in Sri Lanka with immediate effect."



► US lawmaker propose sending mercy ship: A top American lawmaker has proposed sending a mercy ship to India to help the country which is struggling to deal with a deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

► Australia to send \$41-million-worth aid: A top American lawmaker has proposed sending a mercy ship to India to help the country which is struggling to deal with a deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

► Canada sending medical supplies: With the raging second wave of the pandemic, Canada has announced that it is sending up to 25,000 vials of Remdesivir and up to 350 ventilators from its National Emergency Strategic Stockpile to help India.

## EU to discuss US vaccine patent plan

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BRUSSELS, 6 MAY



donating more vaccine doses to poorer countries.

EU nations have long insisted they were in the vanguard of helping the rest of the world obtain vaccines, and have looked with a weary eye at how the United States effectively banned such exports itself.

The move to support waiving intellectual property

protections on vaccines under World Trade Organisation rules marked a dramatic shift for the United States, which had previously lined up with many other developed nations opposed to the idea floated by India and South Africa.

While the EU did not echo the US position, it generally

welcomed President Joe Biden's move.

EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that we are ready to discuss how the US proposal for waiver on intellectual property protection for Covid-19 vaccines could help end the crisis.

von der Leyen said in a video address Thursday, though, that other issues should take center stage. In the short run...we call upon all vaccine-producing countries to allow exports and to avoid measures that disrupt supply chains," she said

The European Union is now the last place in the world to protect big pharma's profits over public health.

Greens President Ska Keller said Biden's opening made sure there can be no more excuses from the European Union. She called on the EU to support this historic initiative and make global solidarity a reality".

## 'Polish regime for judges against EU law'



ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WARSAW, 6 MAY

A top European Union legal advisor argued in an opinion Thursday that a Polish regime for disciplining judges is contrary to EU law.

Many judges in Poland fear that the chamber is meant as a tool to pressure judges to issue rulings that favor the ruling authorities. To date, while the party has taken control over the highest courts, many lower court judges continue to show their independence. Some have issued rulings against government officials or interests.

The party, Law and Justice, says it seeks to reform an inefficient and corrupt justice system. Critics, however, see that argument as a pretext for seizing control over the courts in an undemocratic way.

Law and Justice in 2017 created a new body the Disciplinary Chamber at the Supreme Court with the power to discipline judges, including those of the lower courts.

Many judges in Poland fear that the chamber is meant as a tool to pressure judges to issue rulings that favor the ruling authorities. To date, while the party has taken control over the highest courts, many lower court judges continue to show their independence. Some have issued rulings against government officials or interests.

Advocate General Evgeni Tanchev recommended that the European Court of Justice the EU's highest court rule that the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court is not in line with EU law.

Such legal opinions are not legally binding but are often followed by the court. The judges of the EU court are now beginning their deliberations in this case and a judgment is expected later this year.

The European Commission, which ensures that EU law is respected by the member states, brought a complaint to the Court of Justice over the issue. It believes that independence and the impartiality of the Disciplinary Chamber cannot be guaranteed.

The chamber is composed of judges selected by the National Council of the Judiciary, a body whose own members are chosen by the parliament where Law and Justice holds a majority.

The news of Tanchev's opinion arrived in Warsaw as lawyers and others gathered outside the Supreme Court as the Disciplinary Chamber was hearing the case of a judge.

## Britain votes in 'Super Thursday' local elections for mayors, councillors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 6 MAY

Millions are voting in the so-called Super Thursday local elections for mayors and councillors in England, seats in the devolved Scottish parliament and Welsh Assembly as well as a by-election for the Westminster parliament.

It marks the biggest round of polling covering most of the United Kingdom, except Northern Ireland, since the December 2019 General Election just as the Covid-19 pandemic hit the country.

Up to 48 million people across Britain are eligible to vote in the elections which are

being held in a Covid-secure setting, requiring voters to carry their pens or pencils for the ballot paper.

According to Electoral Commission guidance, voters will also have to wear a face-covering and limits will be in place on how many people can be inside a polling station and social distancing will be required for those volunteering to help out.

In Scotland and Wales, the electorate will decide on their national representatives in Holyrood and the Senedd respectively.

In Wales, young people aged 16 and over will get the chance to vote for the first time.

People have also been told not to offer anyone outside of their bubble a lift to the polling station, something political parties usually do to encourage people to vote.

Elsewhere there are a total of 143 different councils running elections today, while in Hartlepool in north-east England voters are deciding who should represent them in Westminster.

There are also 13 mayoral elections, including for the London Mayor, and 39 police and crime commissioner elections across England and Wales after these votes were postponed in 2020 because of the pandemic.

Even as he engages with Republicans in Washington, Biden is trying to sell their voters on the idea that higher corporate taxes can provide \$115 billion for roads and bridges and hundreds of billions of dollars more to upgrade the electrical grid, make the water system safer, rebuild homes and jump-start the manufacturing of electric vehicles.

Biden hinted at the theme

of answering questions from reporters after a Wednesday speech at the White House that also emphasized his separate \$1.8 trillion plan for education and children to be funded by higher taxes on the wealthiest Americans.

What's going to grow America more? Biden said. What's going to help you and your security more?

The super wealthy having to pay 3.9% less tax or having an entire generation of Americans having associate degrees? Biden then began to whisper: Guess what. It grows the economy. Benefits everybody. Hurts nobody. Republican lawmakers have doubled down on low taxes as a core pillar of their ideology and partisan identity.

when answering questions from reporters after a Wednesday speech at the White House that also emphasized his separate \$1.8 trillion plan for education and children to be funded by higher taxes on the wealthiest Americans.

Though the US is the world's largest economy, Britain's trade with the EU is far higher as a proportion of its annual GDP.

That's why it was a priority for the government of Prime Minister Boris Johnson to negotiate an agreement that ensured that tariffs were not put up on trade between the UK and the EU.

Though tariffs have been avoided, there are numerous non-tariff barriers, such as customs checks, that hinder trade and add costs to businesses.

The Brexit deal has caused particular consternation with the UK, which did not exist when the UK was part of the EU.

We want to make sure that,

whether it's with the United Kingdom or anyone else, any agreements reached are consistent with the principles that President Biden has established to focus on making sure that these agreements really advance the wellbeing of our workers and their families. That's our focus.

Biden said during a video interview with Hawaii Pacific Health.

We want to make sure that, whether it's with the United Kingdom or the EU that we make sure that the tremendous gains from the Good Friday Agreement are sustained and that the economic as well as the political wellbeing of Northern Ireland is taken fully into account, he said.

## Colombia: 46 injured during violent protest

BOGOTA, 6 MAY

At least 46 people were injured in further violent clashes in Bogota and other cities in Colombia after a seventh night of protest.

"We had a brutal escalation of violence. Thirty civilians and 16 police were injured," Bogota's Mayor Claudia Lopez tweeted on Wednesday.

The destruction meant fewer buses were running, she said. There were renewed clashes between protesters and a special police unit, dpa news agency quoted the El Espectador newspaper as saying in a report.

IANS

## US downplays prospect of post-Brexit trade deal with UK

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON, 6 MAY



We want to make sure that, whether it's with the United Kingdom or anyone else, any agreements reached are consistent with the principles that President Biden has established to focus on making sure that these agreements really advance the wellbeing of our workers and their families. That's our focus.

Biden said the US' new trade negotiator, Katherine Tai,

would be taking time to review the discussions that had taken place with the preceding administration of Donald Trump before progressing with the talks.

Trump had been a keen proponent of a trade deal with Britain, which formally left the economic orbit of the European Union at the start of this year. Now outside the EU, the UK can negotiate its own trade deals previously, when within the bloc, the EU had negotiated trade deals on behalf of its members. One of the main arguments of Brexit supporters in the runup to the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU in 2016 was the prospect of a swift trade deal with the US, the world's largest economy.

The EU and the US do not have an overarching trade</

# Sikkim, 50 years on

**Satyajit Ray's documentary on the erstwhile royal kingdom has remained controversial till date**

SHOMA A CHATTERJI

**S**ikkim, the documentary by Satyajit Ray was produced by the Chogyal royal family of a sovereign Sikkim in 1971 but banned by the Government of India till 2010. A digital versatile disc, however, was finally launched by ANT Digital Private Limited (Angel Video) in Kolkata in 2014 after they succeeded in getting a copy from Ray's son, filmmaker Sandip Ray. He accessed it from a friend of his father's, a distributor based in London, "because the original negative is no longer available," said Ray. Away from these shores, the print was restored by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in 2003 and the restored version was screened during a Ray Retrospective at the 2008 Nantes Three Continents Festival in France.

Sandip Ray shared a few anecdotes from the shooting trip to Sikkim with his father while reaffirming the notion, "Sikkim portrays only the flora and fauna of the land. It only shows the beautiful landscape and I assure you that there is no controversial footage." Ray revealed that obtaining a decent print had been a hassle as the owner of the original negative, Hope Cooke, wife of the then Chogyal of Sikkim, could not be contacted.

In the last few years, there has been a sudden flurry of activity around *Sikkim*. The first of those was in the shape of the film's DVD version. It was formally released in Kolkata and present on the occasion were Sandip Ray, Goutam Ghose, Sudip Burman, general manager of the Art and Culture Trust of Sikkim, and Abhay Tantya of Angel Video.

One must also congratulate the painstaking efforts undertaken by Bengal Studio O Taar Chalachitra Kendra to organise a photographic exhibition of a collection of stills from *Sikkim* taken by Purnendu Bose and curated by Arindam Saha Sardar, founder-director of Bengal Studio.

The documentary, which remains controversial till date, was jointly commissioned by the then Chogyal of Sikkim and his American wife, Cooke. It was more a result of the enthusiasm of the latter to promote Sikkim as an attractive tourist spot to the world

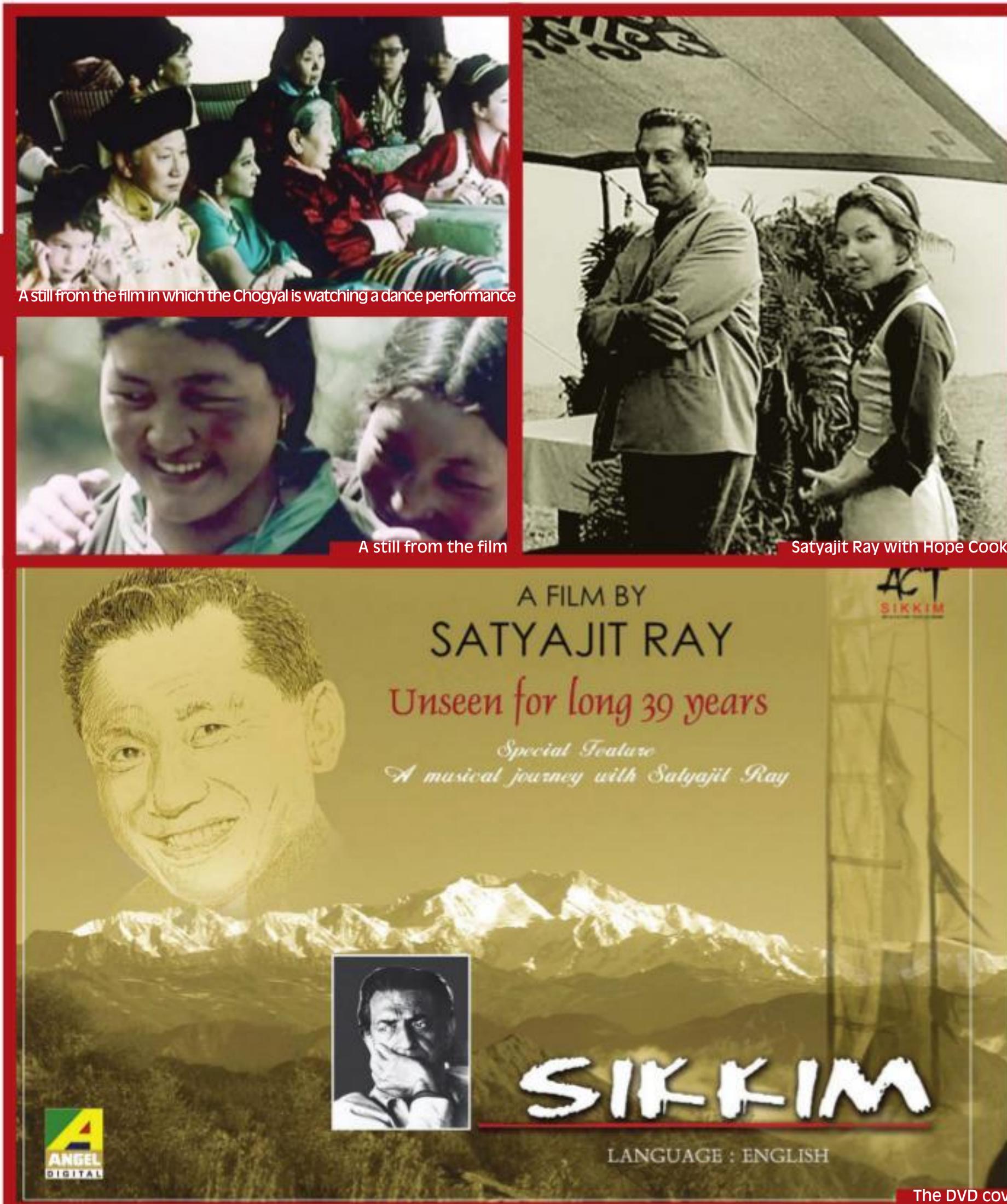
that Ray was asked to make the film and he agreed. The Chogyal is said to have felt that the sovereignty of Sikkim was threatened at the time both by China and India.

Visually, *Sikkim* is a beautiful film that not only shows scenic mountains and the state's diverse orchids, but also Ray's cinematic command and his inimitable signature in presenting a picture of its people, culture, poverty, music and dance. Sandip Ray says that the original "rush" print of the film was screened to a small audience at Indrapuri Studio's projection room in Kolkata. The "rush" footage ran for nearly five hours of screening time and covered nearly 40,000 feet. *Sikkim* was processed at Mumbai's Film Centre and the commentary for the film was written and narrated by Satyajit Ray himself.

The documentary ran into problems because the royal couple, the Chogyal and his wife, was not happy with the final version when they saw it. The objections, wrote late professor Dilip Ghosh, were probably due to some sequences in the film which the king and his wife found unpalatable and unflattering to the royal family and the image of Sikkim. There is a scene of an alfresco party thrown by the royal couple in the palace gardens where a grand table is laid for invitees comprising local aristocratic families and foreign guests. Ray is said to have juxtaposed that with visuals of poor and starving people outside the palace gates, hunting madly for left-overs in the darkness on a biting cold evening.

Without saying it in so many words, Ray pointed out the contrast in the beautiful land ruled by a king, who either did not care about the poverty his subjects reeled under or did not know about the same. The Chogyal asked for several cuts in the film along with some snipping of Ray's commentary but the filmmaker held firm. He staunchly refused to make any changes to the original footage. By virtue of ownership rights, the film went back to Sikkim and according to reports, just 60 per cent of Ray's original print remains.

Critic Andrew Robinson in *Satyajit Ray: The Inner Eye*, reprinted in



*Chitrabhash's* special issue on Ray, Bergman and Antonioni (Volume 42 and 43, 2008) writes that Ray "was compelled to make about 40 per cent of the film into something 'bureaucratic with statistical information' and a disproportionate emphasis on the Sikkimese population instead of the Nepalese, as would have been appropriate given the latter's actual preponderance in the state." In fact, Ray realised while he was well into the film that it smelt suspiciously of a promotional to project a royal image of the king.

Four years later, the Government of India banned its screening when Sikkim was integrated into India in 1975. In 2000, the copyright of the film

was transferred to the Art and Culture Trust of Sikkim and the ban was finally lifted by the Union ministry of external affairs in September 2010. No one knows which version was screened at Nandan during the 16th Kolkata International Film Festival in 2010 – the one Ray originally made or the one edited by Sikkim royalty. Cinematographer Soumendra Roy said in his pre-screening speech that the print had been reproduced from another print and was therefore, a reproduction.

The screening of the version that was shown at Nandan in 2010 suffered from the ordeal of double censorship, first from the commissioners in Sikkim and second, the Government of India

in 1975. After the ban and the end of the royal regime in Sikkim, reports were rife that all prints were destroyed. In January 2003, however, it was reported that a good quality print was kept at the British Film Institute in London. The Kolkata-based Satyajit Ray Society had tried to trace a print of the film with the Chogyal's family, but it was damaged beyond repair.

The DVD of *Sikkim* comes in a beautiful album with details of the film, its production and crew for ready reference. The cinematography is by Roy, editing by Dulal Dutta and the narration by Ray is in English.

The writer is a senior film critic

**SNIPPETS**

**Faris' lament**



Anna Faris has said she "ignored the warning signs" in her relationship with Chris Pratt. The actor was married to the *Guardians of the Galaxy* star from 2009 to 2018, with the pair announcing they had split in a joint statement released in August 2017.

They first met while playing a couple in the comedy film *Take Me Home Tonight*, which was released in 2011.

Now, opening up about her break-up to both Pratt and previous husband Ben Indra, in an episode of her podcast "Anna Faris Is Unqualified" recently, the actor said, "At some point, I realised there were a lot of things I ignored that I really shouldn't have."

She told guest Rachel Bilson, "In hindsight, I feel like my hand was forced. I don't think it was ever an independent decision."

Faris, who appears in the sitcom *Mom*, said she struggled to open up to friends about problems she was having while married to Marvel star Pratt.

"I never talked about any issues," she said, "With Pratt, I think that we both protected that imagery even within our close circles."

She suggested she went through with the marriage because "everyone (was) expecting it".

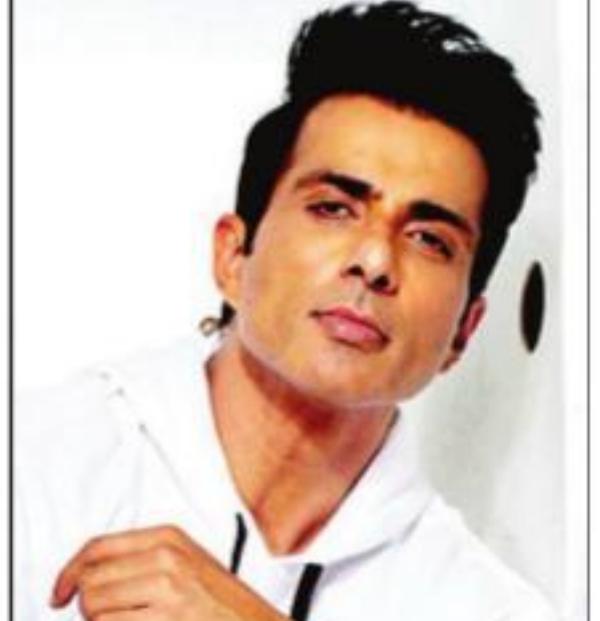
"I really feel like calling off an engagement is a smarter, stronger, braver move than what I did, which was like, 'well, I guess everyone is expecting this, so let's just go through with it,'" Faris said.

Faris and Pratt, whose divorce was finalised in 2018, share an eight-year-old son named Jack.

She is now engaged to cinematographer Michael Barrett, while Pratt married Katherine Schwarzenegger in 2019.

—THE INDEPENDENT

**Showing empathy**



Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood said anyone who has lost a loved one due to scarcity of oxygen or injection has not failed.

"Anyone who has lost a loved one due to scarcity of oxygen or an injection will never be able to live in peace all their life. They will always live with a feeling that they failed to save their family. I want to tell them... You didn't fail, we did," he tweeted recently.

Since last year, Sood has been working relentlessly to help people amid the Covid crisis. He and his team recently saved the lives of 22 patients at a Bengaluru hospital, and also arranged for a critically ill Covid patient to be airlifted from Jhansi to Hyderabad for necessary treatment.

Sood also thanked actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas for backing his appeal for free education to children of those who lost their lives to Covid.

TAPATI CHOWDHURIE

**A**n accomplished Odissi exponent and artistic director of a dance institution Kalajyoti, Monalisa Ghosh recently hosted the Kalajyoti Mahotsav 2020-21 at Kalamandal, North 24 Parganas, in collaboration with the Union ministry of culture. The noble objective behind organising this festival was to give succour to the diverse Indian classical performing arts during these critical times as Covid-19 has once again compelled home confinement. It wished to provide a platform to aspiring, talented dancers, thus instilling confidence in them. The programme witnessed the presence of legendary artists who shared their years of experience to motivate upcoming performers and imbibe positivity in them.

The institution's initiative was indeed a brilliant offering to mark this year of calamity. On the inaugural day, Bangladeshi vocalist Razia Sultana Munni's rendition of patriotic songs touched everyone present, enthralled the audience with gems from Bengali folk music. One of them, *Epar Bangla Opar Bangla* brings out all the things that are in common between the two Bengals. It is almost impossible to not

## MELTING POT OF CLASSICAL DANCE

**Kalajyoti Mahotsav, spearheaded by Odissi exponent Monalisa Ghosh, brought together aspirants and veterans**



feel the nostalgia evoked by traditional Bengali folk songs. Ghosh, along with senior disciples of the institute, presented perfectly coordinated choreographies. She paid tribute to Bharat Mata with the presentation of a *shloka* penned by philosopher and poet Sri Aurobindo.

As a part of the year-long festival, the institute had also organised a unique workshop on *Nrityabhinay*, which was conducted by professor Omprakash Bharti, head of the department, performing arts, Mahatma Gandhi Antarrashtriya Hindi Vishwavidyalaya, Wardha.

National and international veterans were present on a virtual platform. Kathakali exponent Kalamandalam Gopi, Kuchipudi dancer Meenu Thakur and Odissi performer Vani Madhav were honoured at the programme.

Kalamandal is the institute's exclusive theatre, built within its premises. Their sylvan surroundings covered with lush green trees and abounding in flowering plants is a feast for the eyes. Situated in the outskirts of Kolkata, it offers a much needed bliss to art lovers. The guests present at the festival were Odissi dancer Aloka Kanungo; Sangeet Natak Akademi recipient Malabika Mitra; Arunava Roy,

programme head, Doordarshan, and RN Goswami, regional director, Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

Students of the institution chanted the *Ganapati Vandana*, setting a holy mood for the programme which followed. Lighting of lamp, motivating speeches and felicitations of the guests of honour were backed up with excellent solo, duet and group dance presentations by the disciples of Ghosh.

Ghosh's direction and presentation of *Lalita Labanga Lata*, an *astapadi* from poet Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* was a remarkable choreographic piece. While Ghosh aced the lead role, Jit

Ghosh played Lord Krishna. Other performers included Tanusree Mullick, Sayantani Roy, Suchetan Das, Samiksha Howly, Atasi Biswas and Suvojita Dutta. It was a graceful portrayal of the eternal love story of Radha and Krishna. Immersed in the joyful celebration of Holi, Radha and Krishna danced with *sakhis*, and as the presentation came to a close, the infectious chant of *Hari bol* filled the ambience.

*Maneekya Veena*, a *Saraswati Vandana* composed by legendary Odissi exponent Kelucharan Mohapatra, describing the fine qualities of the Goddess of learning and arts was pre-

The writer is a senior dance critic



sented by the institute. Jit Ghosh's performance of *Hamsadhwani Pallavi* proved his immense capabilities in dance.

Among the guest performers, Jayati Basu and Pradyumna Kumar Mohanta indulged the audience in the style of Pankaj Charan Das, the "father of Odissi dance". Their duet performance on *Radharani Sange Nache* was once again a theme that dealt with the concept of the immortal love of Radha and Krishna.

*Astapadis* from *Gita Govinda* feature frequently across all forms of Indian classical dance, especially Odissi. Odissi dancer Rajib Bhattacharya played the role of Krishna trying to pacify an angry Radha in one such *astapadi* titled *Priye Charusheela*.

Kanungo's disciples Subhra Maity Ghosh and Sumanjali Chakraborty gave marvellous presentations. Maity Ghosh performed *Shankaravarṇam Pallavi* while Chakraborty manifested Goddess Durga identified as *Parashakti*, a dance composition by Mohapatra. The music for this number was composed by the late Debasish Sarkar.

It was heartening to see Ghosh providing performance space not only to Odissi dancers but also to practitioners of other dance forms. There were several Kathak exponents of renown who regaled the audience with their flawless renditions, which is proof of their rigorous training and practice under accomplished gurus. Among them, Sandip Mallick, Ustad Bismillah Khan Yuva Puraskar recipient Sourav Chakraborty and Mitra's disciple Sourav Roy were breathtaking in their presentations.

Suchismita Aditya Sarkar, a disciple of Bharatanatyam and Mohiniattam exponent Thankamani Kutty, grabbed the audience's attention through her performance, as did Raja Dutta, student of Bharatanatyam dancer CV Chandrasekhar, with his team. His choreography of *Devi Stuti in ragi Ranjani* showed promise.

On the concluding day, *Batu Nritya* and *Shiva Panchakshara Stotra* were performed by the disciples of Ghosh.

The two-day programme marked its conclusion by felicitating all participants and backstage assistants. It witnessed a full house with responsive audience on both days.

The writer is a senior dance critic

## A HELPING HAND



Former India and Bengal all-rounder Laxmi Ratan Shukla (in photo, left) has donated his earnings from commentary stint at the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2021 for Covid-19 relief. "Today, 6th May 2021, on my Birthday, am humbly donating my entire #IPL2021 commentary fees, to the #westbengal #CHIEFMINISTERRELIEF FUND. A small contribution to fight this disastrous 2nd wave Corona Situation, from my end for my people [Emoticon: Folded hands] WinCorona #COVID19 #StaySafe #India #LRS," he tweeted.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS

**Monetary help:** Hockey India (HI) on Thursday said it will transfer Rs five lakh to help in the treatment of former India player and coach M K Kaushik who is fighting the battle against COVID-19 in a city nursing home in Delhi. The 66-year-old Kaushik, a member of the 1980 Moscow Olympics gold-medal winning Indian team, had tested positive for the dreaded virus last month.

**Online shooting:** Austria's Martin Stremphi beat Lucas Kozeniesky of USA 2-1 to enter the final of the TOP-GUN online shooting competition after an intense battle. Martin, an Olympic quota winner, awaits the shooter who will prevail in the second semifinal between reigning Olympic champion Ginny Thrasher of USA and Serbia's Milenko Sebic on Thursday.

**Cricket statistician Dinar Gupte dies:** One of India's well-known cricket statistician, Dinar Gupte died on Thursday after battling COVID-19, the Saurashtra Cricket Association said. He was 76. Gupte was with Team India as official scorer during the World Cup in 1999. "Everyone at SCA is deeply sadden on sad demise of Dinar Gupte," the SCA said in a media statement.

**Vaccines for Olympic athletes:** Vaccine developers Pfizer and BioNTech will donate doses to inoculate athletes and officials preparing for the Tokyo Olympics, the IOC said Thursday. Delivery of doses is set to begin this month to give Olympic delegations time to be fully vaccinated with a second shot before arriving in Tokyo for the games, which open on 23 July.

**India withdraw from Malaysia Open:** Kidambi Srikanth and Saina Nehwal's chances of making it to this year's Tokyo Olympics are all but over after the Indian contingent withdrew from the Malaysian Open on Thursday. Malaysia has imposed a ban on travellers from India, which is witnessing a massive surge in Covid-19 cases during the second wave.

**Australian players return:** The IPL's Australian participants, except for a COVID-19 positive Mike Hussey, left for Maldives on Thursday to serve out the waiting period before they can board a flight to Australia after the T20 league's indefinite suspension. Cricket Australia issued a statement to confirm the development.

**Recruit archers fail to get visa:** The eight-member Indian recurve archery team, including four in the women's category, will not compete in the Lausanne World Cup starting May 17 due to failure to get visas. "The European nations are denying visas due to the second wave of Covid-19 in India. With time running out, the best option was to skip the competition and focus on the Paris edition of the World Cup in June," Pramod Chanderkar, secretary general of Archery Association of India (AAI), told IANS.

## AGENCIES

LONDON, 6 MAY

Chelsea's decision to fire a club legend suddenly doesn't seem so callous after all.

While Frank Lampard's name has hardly been forgotten by the Chelsea fans - there were chants outside Stamford Bridge before kick-off on Wednesday - new manager Thomas Tuchel (in photo) is quickly creating his own legacy after leading the London club into the Champions League final against Manchester City.

Chelsea even made record 13-time European Cup champions Real Madrid look ordinary as goals from Timo Werner and Mason Mount sealed a 2-0 victory that ousted Madrid 3-1 on aggregate.

# India hopes to complete tournament ahead of WC

The International Cricket Council has lined up the United Arab Emirates as the back-up T20 venue in case there is no improvement but Dharmal was confident there would be no need.

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 6 MAY

India's cricket board is hoping it might be able to squeeze the remainder of its lucrative Indian Premier League into a crowded calendar and is still confident of hosting the T20 World Cup later this year, a top official said on Thursday.

Already looking at a \$270 million revenue loss following the suspension of the IPL, the board faces a second financial hammer blow if the Covid-19 pandemic prevents India staging the ICC tournament in October and November.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India, however, has not given up hope of cramming the 31 remaining IPL matches into the season, despite the tight demands of cricket's international schedule, known as the Future Tours Programme.

"We'll see if the situation improves," BCCI treasurer Arun Singh Dharmal (in photo) said by telephone.

"We have the FTP and the T20 World Cup lined up this year. If there's any window available, we'll try and see if we can complete the league."



The eight-team league with an estimated brand value of \$6.19 billion was postponed indefinitely on Tuesday after personnel from four franchises had tested positive for Covid-19 amid a rampant second-wave of the virus.

Bhairav Shanth, the managing director of global sport consulting firm ITW, said the BCCI could still salvage a large portion of their financial losses if they can find a window.

"In that case, I think the hit on revenues will be marginal as the sponsorship deals and ad campaigns will have a chance to be completed," Shanth said.

India are scheduled to play the five-day World Test Championship final against New Zealand in Southampton next month, and a five-Test series in

England in August and September.

Resuming the IPL in India would depend on the worst of the pandemic subsiding, of course, with the health crisis also threatening the short-form Twenty20 World Cup. The International Cricket Council has lined up the United Arab Emirates as the back-up T20 venue in case there is no improvement but Dharmal was confident there would be no need.

"We will keep monitoring the situation but as of now we are going ahead as per our original plan," he said.

"Hopefully things will get better and we'll be able to organise it in India. Given the experience in other countries, (the coronavirus surge is) likely to come down."

"As of now, we are not even thinking of it being held elsewhere. The ICC is, unsurprisingly, also keeping a close eye on the pandemic in India, which on Thursday reported more than 400,000 coronavirus infections over the previous 24 hours. Epidemiologist Giridhar Babu believes Dharmal's optimism might be misplaced, telling Reuters he expected a third wave in India later this year. "I don't know whether we can afford to have superspread events in the winter or before winter," he said by telephone from Bengaluru.

"We should avoid any kind of superspread events, including the World Cup." Even if it went ahead, he said, the tournament would have to be played behind closed doors, as the IPL was in its last two seasons.

According to ESPN Cricinfo, Lord's, Oval (both London), Edgbaston (Birmingham) and Emirates Old Trafford (Manchester) are understood to be part of the group who wrote to the ECB expressing their interest. "The plans would see the tournament completed in around two weeks in the second half of September," according to the report. BCCI is ideally looking at a 20-day window with multiple double headers in order to complete the tournament. It is expected that at the ICC Chief Executives Meeting scheduled later on Thursday, the representatives of the BCCI and the ECB may discuss the matter.

With India anticipating a third wave of the pandemic later during the year, BCCI is exploring a window in September after the conclusion of India's England tour to complete the tournament. India's tour of England ends on September 14.

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"We're all hoping that the situation (in India) improves," CA interim chief executive Nick Hockley told reporters in Sydney when asked if Australia might step in as emergency hosts. "I know that the ICC is looking at contingency options as we speak, but I think we're preparing to host the postponed 2020 version in October and November 2022."

BCCI officials have said 2021 T20 World Cup would remain their tournament even if it had to be staged in the UAE.

## Hussey and Balaji flown to Chennai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, 6 MAY



Chennai Super Kings' batting coach Mike Hussey (in photo) and bowling coach LB Balaji have been flown into the city from New Delhi in an air ambulance as they recover from Covid-19, a top franchise official said on Thursday.

Hussey and Balaji were among the prominent non-playing staff to test positive when the Indian Premier League was "indefinitely suspended" on Tuesday, following multiple Covid-19 cases inside the bio bubble.

"We decided to bring Hussey and Balaji to Chennai by an air ambulance as we have better contacts here and wanted to ensure better medical facilities in case of any need," the CSK official said. He further said the duo was "asymptomatic and doing fine."

The CSK official said Hussey would have to wait for a Covid-19 negative report to be able to leave the country. "Hussey has to wait and get a Covid-19 negative report before he can leave India. We will make arrangements for a charter

when it is safe for him to fly," the official added.

While Hussey will have to wait, the rest of the Australians participating in the IPL on Thursday left for the Maldives to serve out the waiting period before they can board a flight to Australia.

The CSK official said the franchise had made arrangements for the foreign players of the team to leave by charter planes. The official also said that CSK skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni would leave for his hometown Ranchi once all other team members had cleared out.

The 2021 edition of the IPL was suspended after four players -- SunRisers Hyderabad's

Widdhiman Saha, Delhi Capitals' spinner Amit Mishra and Kolkata Knight Riders' Varun Chakravarthy and Sandeep Warrier -- had tested positive for Covid-19 in the bio-bubble.

### New Zealand players

Four members of New Zealand's Test contingent who were in the IPL, including captain Kane Williamson, will leave India for the UK on 11 May and the rest will fly back home on Friday, the country's cricket board has announced.

New Zealand are to host England in a two-match Test series beginning on 2 June before facing India in the World Test Championships final at Southampton from 18 June.

"We've worked closely with the Board of Control for Cricket in India and IPL franchises on departure strategies and we're very appreciative of their support during what is, clearly, a very challenging time," New Zealand Cricket chief executive David White said in a statement. Skipper Williamson, paceman Kyle Jamieson and

spinner Mitchell Santner, as well as physio Tommy Simsek, will remain in a mini-bubble in New Delhi before departing for the UK, ahead of preparations for the Test series against England, and the WTC final against India. There were 17 New Zealanders in the IPL, including 10 players. "We are also very grateful to the England and Wales Cricket Board for accommodating the early arrival of the four members of the Test squad currently in India."

NZC said 11 May is the earliest date it could obtain for the team's arrival in the UK. However, pace spearhead Trent Boult will return home briefly to see his family before joining the Test squad in early June, for the second match against England and the WTC final.

### Yadav dead

Vivek Yadav, former Rajasthan leg-spinner and member of their Ranji Trophy-winning squad, died yesterday of coronavirus-related complications. He was 36-years-old. He is survived by his wife and daughter.

In the quarterfinal against Tajikistan's Rustam Iskandari,

## Malik one win away from Olympic qualification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SOFIA (BULGARIA), 6 MAY

Sumit Malik was still in contention to qualify for the Tokyo Games but it was all over for Amit Dhankar and Satyarth Kadiyan, who were ousted from the World Wrestling Olympic Qualifiers after losing at different stages of the competition, here on Thursday.

In his 125kg Qualification bout against Kyrgyzstan's Aiala Lazarev, Malik was trailing 1-2 till the last 25 seconds but got a push-out point towards the end and won on criteria, when the scores were tied at 2-2.

His next bout was against Moldova's Alexander Romanov. He trailed 0-1 after losing a point on positivity. In the second period, he lost another point when he was pushed out by his opponent but as has been his strategy - Malik attacks in the closing stage of the bout - he pulled off a two-point throw to make it even and finally won 3-2.

In the quarterfinal against Tajikistan's Rustam Iskandari,

## Rohan Bopanna makes a splash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MADRID, 6 MAY

Rohan Bopanna combined with Canadian Denis Shapovalov to stun top seeds Juan Sebastian Cabal and Robert Farah in straight sets and reach the men's doubles quarter-finals of Madrid Open Masters 1000 tournament here. This was the 41-year-old Bopanna's first win on the Association of Tennis Professionals Tour in 2021.

The duo won its round of 16 match 6-3, 6-4 on Wednesday. Bopanna and Shapovalov will take on Germans Alexander Zverev and Tim Puetz in the quarter-finals.

"A superb victory by #TOPSATHE tennis player @rohanbopanna and his partner @denis\_shapovalov who beat World #1 men's doubles pair of Robert Farah and Juan Sebastian Cabal 6-3, 6-4 to reach the quarterfinals of the @MutuaMadridOpen," the Sports Authority of India tweeted.



Chelsea's only triumph came in 2012 when the 22-year-old Mount was in the youth system. "It's going to be a stunning game," Mount said. Unlike last season's final - when Tuchel's PSG lost to Bayern Munich - fans are set to be allowed in. Chelsea supporters

have yet to see Tuchel managing their team in the flesh due to England's ongoing coronavirus restrictions. But they can't deny the impact he has made. Chelsea were five points outside the four Champions League qualification places when he was hired, but heads into the final four games of the Premier League season in fourth place with a three-point cushion.

There's a chance to pick up a trophy before the trip to Turkey, too, with an FA Cup final against Leicester on 15 May after beating City in the semi-finals.

Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane is left to focus on trying to wipe out Atletico Madrid's two-point lead in

Spain to win La Liga, rather than adding to the three Champions League titles he won from 2016 to 2018. "I think we tried, but the truth is today Chelsea were superior and we have to congratulate them," Zidane said. "It was complicated throughout the match because they had many chances to score more goals and they deserved their victory."

After conceding a costly away goal last week, Madrid lacked the attacking nous or threat to turn this semi-final around as Chelsea kept an 18th clean sheet in 24 games under Tuchel. Karim Benzema was denied by the first in a series of fine saves by

Chelsea goalkeeper Edouard Mendy before Werner

extra time. When the second half opened with Havertz heading against the crossbar and having a low shot saved it looked like the misses could prove costly. "Keep on pushing guys," Tuchel urged from the sideline.

And so they did, helped by the arrival of Christian Pulisic from the bench as Werner's replacement. The American headed to N'Golo Kante and received the ball back to feed Mount, who lifted a shot over Courtois in the 85th. "I have to go on and do my bit, Pulisic said, be creative and try to finish the game off strong and luckily I was able to do that."

Not Pulisic was satisfied waiting more than an hour to enter the game. "Very frustrated I wanted to play from the beginning, as I always do," said the forward signed in 2019 from Borussia Dortmund. I've had to continue to prove myself over and over again.... Nothing can stop me, really."

# S The Statesman Sport

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Anti-Olympic petition gains tens of thousands of signatures

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO, 6 MAY

An online petition calling for the Tokyo Olympics to be cancelled has gained tens of thousands of signatures since being launched in Japan only days ago. The rollout of the petition comes with Tokyo, Osaka and several other areas under a state of emergency with coronavirus infections rising, particularly new variants. The state of emergency is to expire on 11 May, but some reports in Japan say it is likely to be extended.

The postponed Olympics are to open in just under three months on 23 July. The petition is addressed to International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach (in photo), who has tentative plans to visit Japan later this month. He is expected to meet the Olympic torch relay on 17 May in Hiroshima, and perhaps also travel to Tokyo where small anti-Olympic protests are planned.

Organisers say the Olympics will be safe and secure, though it has been challenged by local medical specialists, and in an editorial last month in the British Medical Journal, it said mass events like the Olympics are neither safer nor secure.

The petition was organised by Kenji Utsunomiya, a lawyer who has run several times for Tokyo governor. It registered about 50,000 signatures in the first 24 hours after being launched.

Government policies are being set with the Olympics in mind, and measures to curb the coronavirus pandemic are being neglected, Utsunomiya told The Associated Press.

Hospital are stretched thin, and some people are dying at home. The headline in English over the petition reads: Cancel the Tokyo Olympics to protect our lives."



a month. Organisers say that eight people working on the relay have tested positive for the virus.

The Tokyo Olympics have become a face-saving exercise for Japan, which has officially spent \$15.4 billion to prepare them. For the IOC, the Tokyo Olympics are critical since 73 percent of its income comes from selling television rights.

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