

SHORT TAKES

JNU teachers' body demands Covid centre on campus

New Delhi: The Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers' Association (JNUTA), on Saturday, condemned the "non-cooperative" attitude of the JNU administration in starting a Covid care facility on the campus. In a statement, signed by JNUTA president Milap C. Sharma and secretary Moushumi Basu, it asked the university authorities to not stand on "rigidities" and be flexible to the demands that are being made by the residents. The teachers' association said it would indeed be "criminal" to keep the physical facilities locked up and not made available for use by residents in need. "JNUTA strongly condemns the non-cooperative attitude of the JNU administration in responding to the suggestions made for opening of Covid management facilities within the campus—as per the guidelines for gated residential complexes desirous of setting up small Covid care facility — issued by the Delhi government on April 18, 2021," it said. The association said that from the medical information made available by the government, it is also imperative to create facilities for oxygen concentrators on campus to aid any person in a state of acute distress till a hospital bed can be made available. The JNUTA, in a letter to the assistant district magistrate of New Delhi, has also made the suggestion of using guest houses located on campus, namely the Aravali, which has not been in use since April 2020; the HDRC; and the JNIAS facilities, for residents to isolate themselves. Based on the request made by the JNUTA, a team headed by the sub-divisional magistrate visited the campus on Friday afternoon. — PTI

Customs clears O2 consignment on priority basis

New Delhi: Delhi air cargo customs has cleared consignments of oxygen concentrators and pulse oximeters on priority basis, the CBIC said on Sunday. The government has directed customs officials to clear all import consignments, including life-saving drugs and oxygen equipment, used in the treatment of Covid-19, on the highest priority. The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in a tweet stated: "Air Cargo Customs, @Delhicustoms working 24*7 to facilitate clearance of COVID19 material. Seven consignments of oxygen concentrators and five consignments of pulse oximeters cleared on priority." Appreciating the CBIC, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted: "To facilitate clearance of Covid-19 materials so required to fight the virus is the need of the hour. Critical in the fight against the pandemic. Keep the good work going." The government on Saturday waived customs duty on import of Covid vaccines as well as medical grade oxygen and related equipment as the nation battled its worst health crisis with a "tsunami" of infections setting a new world record for cases. In a review meeting on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also directed the Revenue Department to ensure seamless and quick custom clearance of such equipment. — PTI

■ Treat the request as SOS as the national capital is falling woefully short of oxygen: CM

Kejri urges industrialists to provide oxygen, cryogenic tankers to Delhi

New Delhi, April 25: Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to leading industrialists of the country to help provide oxygen and cryogenic tankers to Delhi amid an acute shortage of the life-saving gas required to save serious Covid-19 patients.

In a letter to the industrialists, he said that owing to an unprecedented rise in the number of Covid cases the national capital is falling woefully short of the required oxygen and asked them to treat his request as an SOS.

"Delhi does not produce any oxygen and as you are aware, Delhi currently faces an acute shortage of oxygen. I would be grateful if you could provide the Delhi government with oxygen along with cryogenic tankers," Mr Kejriwal wrote in his letter.

The Railways is transporting four liquid oxygen tankers from Raigarh to the national capital and has asked the Delhi government to arrange tankers for it. "While we have received help from the Central government in meeting our oxygen requirements, the ferocity of the second wave is rendering the supply inadequate," he stated.

The chief minister requested the industrialists to provide stocks of oxygen being used or manufactured by them and also sought their help in the import of cryogenic tankers.

On Sunday, Mr Kejriwal had said that the Centre and Delhi government teams were working in a coordinated manner to ensure steady supply of oxygen to hospitals in the city. The Centre has increased Delhi's daily quota of oxygen from 480 MT to 490 MT, although the city is still receiving around 330-335 MT of it every day, he had said.



Covid-19 patients receive treatment at a banquet hall converted into an isolation centre in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

While we have received help from the Central government in meeting our oxygen requirements, the ferocity of the second wave is rendering the supply inadequate

— Arvind Kejriwal
Delhi CM

The Delhi government has also set up a portal and directed the manufacturers, suppliers, and hospitals to update the figures of supply and consumption of oxygen on it every two hours. This would help the government to find out any shortage beforehand and ensure supply on time, Mr Kejriwal said.

Delhi records 22,933 Covid cases, 350 deaths; positivity rate 30.21%

New Delhi, April 25: Delhi recorded 350 Covid-19 deaths and 22,933 new cases with a positivity rate of 30.21 per cent on Sunday. This is the fourth day on the trot that Delhi has recorded over 300 deaths due to coronavirus. It had reported 357 fatalities, the highest so far since the pandemic began a year ago, on Saturday, 348 on Friday and 306 on Thursday.

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia urged hospitals in Delhi not to raise alarms unnecessarily over oxygen shortage and appealed to the media to verify claims

before reporting. Such acts hamper efforts to provide help to hospitals that really need assistance. Sisodia, who is also the nodal minister for Covid-19 management in Delhi, said.

Through the past week, hospitals across the city and its suburbs sounded the alarm about dwindling stocks on social media and other platforms. The Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital here received a supply of the life-saving gas in a cryogenic tanker around 10 am on Sunday. It came as a huge relief for the hospital, which was

running on its backup stock of oxygen.

The Jaipur Golden Hospital in Delhi continued to scramble for a continuous oxygen supply and denied admission requests from more patients on Sunday, a day after it reported 20 deaths amid shortage of the life-saving gas. The hospital currently has around 205 patients, out of which 60 are in a critical condition. Twenty-five patients need high flow oxygen. "We are having to deny SOS admission requests for Covid patients requiring hospital care," it tweeted.

— PTI

500-oxygen bed ITBP Covid centre to start in Delhi today

New Delhi, April 25: A 500-oxygen bed Covid care centre operated by the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) in south Delhi will open on Monday as coronavirus cases register a sharp rise in the national capital, officials said on Sunday. The treatment at this centre will be free of cost, they said.

"The Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel Covid Care Centre (SPCCC) will start functioning from 10 am on April 26. No walk-in admissions will be made," ITBP spokesperson Vivek Kumar Pandey said.

Admission to SPCCC will be made on reference by the district surveillance officers (DSOs) of respective Delhi districts, he said. "All medical treatment, medicines, food and other facilities will be provided free of cost," Pandey said.

A brief standard operating procedure (SOP) issued on Sunday said patients after getting reference from a DSO will

Ganga Ram Hospital receives 5 MT O2, highest in 3 days

New Delhi, April 25: After an all-night scramble for an oxygen refill, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital here received five metric tonnes of the life-saving gas in the early hours of Sunday, according to officials. The hospital had raised an alarm at 10:30 PM on Saturday, saying its oxygen stock would last only an hour. There were 130 patients in the ICU, including 30 on invasive ventilation, when the SOS was sent.

Around 12:20 am it received a tanker, with the help of local AAP MLA

report at the reception of the SPCCC and after initial documentation their physical examination will be done and subsequently they will be admitted.

"A kit will be provided to them after their admission and stress counsellors will

Raghav Chadha, which supplied one metric tonne of oxygen. "It should last two hours," a hospital spokesperson said around 12:45 pm.

According to him, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital's primary supplier in Faridabad was supposed to send a tanker before 3 am. The tanker finally arrived at 4:15 am and delivered 5 metric tonnes of medical oxygen, the highest volume that the hospital has received in the last three days in one refill, he said.

— PTI

also be deputed for the patients," Pandey said.

Meanwhile, ITBP director general S.S. Deswal on Sunday visited the Covid care centre created inside the campus of the Radha Soami Beas and met a team of doctors and

administrative personnel of the force and other organisations who will run the facility that is being reopened on the Delhi government's request in view of a sharp spike in Covid-19 cases in the city.

A team of 50 ITBP and other organisations' doctors, about 80 paramedics and nursing staff, security personnel of the border guarding force and other administrative staff will run the centre.

The ministry of home affairs (MHA) had declared on April 22 that the SPCCC, which was made operational in July last year and shut in February this year as coronavirus infections declined in the national capital, was being restarted on the Delhi government's request as the cases are rising rapidly once again.

A total of 11,657 Covid-19 patients were treated at this centre between July-February. — PTI

1st Oxygen Exp to reach Delhi tonight: Railways

New Delhi, April 25: The first Oxygen Express train for Delhi carrying around 70 tonnes of the life-saving gas will depart from Jindal Steel Works plant in Raigarh, Chhattisgarh on Sunday night, a senior official said. The train, with four tankers, will reach Delhi by Monday night, Railway Board Chairman Suneet Sharma said.

The railways has chalked out plans to transport medical oxygen from Angul, Kalinganagar, Rourkela and Raigarh to Delhi and NCR region, Sharma said, adding the Delhi government has been advised to get road tankers ready to obtain the oxygen.

"First Oxygen Express for the national capital carrying four tankers with 70 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen will depart tonight for Delhi Cantonment from Jindal Steel Works, Raigarh. It will reach Delhi by Monday night," the railway board chairman said.

Every few hours, as it has been for the last days, hospitals across the national capital and its suburbs have been sending out desperate messages seeking help on social media and other platforms, flagging their dwindling stocks of oxygen.

In view of the high demand for oxygen in the country following a record spike in coronavirus cases, the railways has decided to run Oxygen Express trains to transport liquid medical oxygen and oxygen cylinders across the country.

Tankers are being transported on flat wagons by trains for quick supply of medical oxygen.

"We have carried 150 tonnes of oxygen to Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra till now and

► **THE RAILWAYS** has chalked out plans to transport medical oxygen from Angul, Kalinganagar, Rourkela and Raigarh to Delhi-NCR region, Railway Board chairman Suneet Sharma said, adding the Delhi government has been advised to get road tankers ready to obtain the oxygen

by tonight we will move 150 tonnes more. About Delhi, we are readying four tankers from Jindal Steel Plant in Raigarh, Sharma said.

"Plans are ready to move oxygen for Delhi and NCR region from plants in Angul, Raigarh, Kalinganagar and Rourkela. We have asked the state government to keep their trucks ready," the official said, adding that wagons are ready for the movement of oxygen containers on container wagons from Durgapur to Delhi.

Officials said the Delhi government in its letter to the railways has asked it to load liquid medical oxygen from nine locations. "These have been examined and the feasibility analysed after which the state government was informed that oxygen can be transported from seven out of these nine locations. The other two sites were not feasible due to technical reasons, an official said.

"They were also requested to arrange tankers and place indent at stations. The assistant divisional railway manager, Delhi is being nominated as nodal officer for the purpose," the official said. Sharma said encouraged by the response of the first two Oxygen Express trains, the railways has moved four tankers from Lucknow to Bokaro and they have been loaded. — PTI



Family members mourn the death of Covid-19 victim at a mortuary in New Delhi on Sunday.

— PTI

Blackmarketing, duping in the name of Remdesivir

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

With the massive rise in Covid-19 cases in Delhi and other parts of the country, the demand for Remdesivir injection has also shot up resulting in rise of various gangs who are duping people on the pretext of providing the much-needed injection. Several such cases have surfaced in recent times wherein these gangs took hefty money from the victims and later vanished.

A bogus company namely Global Suppliers at Delhi's Badli allegedly duped Chhavi Methi, a Noida resident, to the tune of ₹200,000 in the name of 200 mg vial of Tocilizumab. The supplier had rate of 400mg of Tocilizumab for ₹40,000 and ₹5,000 for Remdesivir.

The alleged accused Doran Joy asked Ms. Methi to transfer ₹20,000 in the company's account at Dhanalaxmi Bank. However, later she transferred the amount via UPI

at mobile number "7628008059" with name 'Headline 20202' which was shared by the alleged accused Joy.

After transferring, the accused started ignoring the messages from the lady. Later when she asked about the delivery, he said that they need another ₹10,000 in the name of express delivery.

When she said that her driver will come and pick it up from Badli then the accused said that they still have to pay ₹10,000 in the name of insurance. That's when Ms Methi realised that there is something fishy going on.

After that when she confronted him, she stopped getting any reverts from the accused and he didn't even pick up the call.

This is not the only case wherein some people are taking advantage of the crisis situation. In another such incident, Shubham Kanodia was duped to the tune of ₹10,000 in the name of Remdesivir injection. He received a number

from someone stating that if you need Remdesivir you can contact '9609971243' which was illegally using the name of Cipla company. Kanodia contacted the person who asked him to transfer the amount through Paytm to get the vial.

Having urgent need of it, Kanodia immediately transferred the amount after which they stopped taking any call and messages.

Both the cases took place on Saturday and the victims are yet to register any police complaint. However, the cops are cracking down hard on black marketers. On Sunday, three people were arrested for blackmarketing of Remdesivir.

They were selling the injection at ₹40,000 per piece. Police seized ₹1,20,000 cash and 3 injections from them. 100 oxymeters and 48 small-sized oxygen cylinders were found in their vehicle. A case has been registered and further investigation is on.

Gambhir's foundation to distribute Fabiflu, oxygen cylinders in Delhi

New Delhi, April 25: BJP MP and former cricketer Gautam Gambhir on Sunday said that his foundation would distribute anti-viral drug Fabiflu and oxygen cylinders to Covid-19 patients across the national capital which is seeing a surge in Covid-19 infections that has pushed its medical infrastructure to the limits.

The medicines and cylinders were earlier being distributed to Covid-19 patients in his East Delhi constituency only. A doctor's prescription and Aadhaar card would be required for getting the medicines and oxygen cylinders to be given from Gambhir's offices in Pusa road and Jagriti Enclave.

"Delhi is my home and I will keep serving the people till my last breath. With many requests for beds, oxygen and medicines, we are helping as



Gautam Gambhir

many as we can. These are really tough times and every help in this gloom comes as a ray of hope," the MP was quoted as saying in a statement from his office. The Gautam Gambhir Foundation has got a donation of ₹1 crore from Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar, according to the statement.

Gambhir also accused Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal of spending ₹Rs 600

► **THE MEDICINES** and cylinders were earlier being distributed to Covid-19 patients in his East Delhi constituency only. A doctor's prescription and Aadhaar card would be required for getting the medicines and oxygen cylinders to be given from Gambhir's offices in Pusa road and Jagriti Enclave.

crore on advertisements in the last six months but not enough on health infrastructure in the last six years. "He is probably the only chief minister in the country who is obsessed with himself. What has he done for the health infrastructure in Delhi? He has been here for the last six years. It is an absolute shame that we have a CM who lies about everything," he alleged.

— PTI

Ex-JNU student Umar Khalid tests Covid-19 +ve, isolated within jail

New Delhi, April 25: Former JNU student Umar Khalid, arrested in connection with the 2020 Delhi riot cases, has tested positive for Covid-19, and has been isolated within the Tihar Jail premises here, officials said on Sunday.

A senior official said the 33-year-old Khalid had developed symptoms of



Umar Khalid

the diseases following which he was tested for the coronavirus infection. Khalid's RT-PCR test report came

on Saturday as positive, the official said, adding he has been isolated within the jail premises. — PTI



A patient facing breathing problem takes oxygen support sitting inside a car in Ghaziabad on Sunday.

— G. N. JHA

SHORT TAKES

C'garh: Lockdown extended in 20 dist

Bhopal: The Bhupesh government on Sunday announced to extend lockdown in 20 districts amid surge in coronavirus cases in Chhattisgarh. While lockdown has been extended from April 26 to May five in the districts of Rajnandgaon, Dhamtari, Kanker, Kondagaon, Jashpur, Surajpur, Bemetra, Balrampur, Ambikapur and Narayanpur, total shutdown has been extended from April 26 to May six in the districts of Raipur, Durg, Mahasamund, Balod, Bilashpur, Jagdalpur, Raigarh, Kawardha and Sukma. Meanwhile, Chhattisgarh has reported more than 16,000 coronavirus positive cases for the second day on Saturday in the last three days. While the state reported 16,731 coronavirus positive cases on Saturday, 16,750 positive cases were reported on April 22. The state recorded 203 deaths on Saturday and 219 deaths on Friday. "The infection rate has increased by four times in the last four weeks in Chhattisgarh", Chhattisgarh health minister T.S. Singhdeo said. The tally of positive cases in the state has reached 6,396,96 and the tally of toll due to the virus increased to 7111.

Odisha sees 7 deaths, 6,115 cases in a day

Bhubaneswar: The Covid-19 surge in Odisha continued unabated on Sunday as the state recorded 6,116 new cases while seven patients succumbed to the disease. The fresh surge pushed the state's coronavirus positive tally to 4,07,457 while the death toll climbed to 1,988. The active cases in the state stood at 45,949 while 3,59,467 patients have recovered so far. According to state health and family welfare department data, of the fresh cases spread across 30 districts, 3,546 were detected among people in quarantine and 2,570 were local infections. Two fatalities were reported from Rayagada. One death each was reported from Ganjam, Kalahandi, Khordha, Puri and Sundargarh districts. As per the data released by the state health department, Khurda recorded the highest 875 cases while Sundargarh registered 785 positives. Districts which detected cases over 100 included Nuapada (430), Cuttack (343), Jajpur (324), Kalahandi (321), Nabarangpur (318), Sambalpur (280), Bargarh (262), Jharsuguda (254), Balangir (189), Puri (180), Mayurbhanj (158), Angul (151), Ganjam (134), Keonjhar (118), Rayagada (104) and Balasore (102). Similarly, Nayagarh (99), Bhadrak (87), Gajapati (78), Jagatsinghpur (73), Koraput (71), Kendrapada (46), Deogarh (39), Kandhamal (36), Malkangiri (32), Boudh (32), Dhenkanal (8), Sonepur (8) are the other districts which saw less than 100 cases.

COVID +VE YOUTH IN ODISHA DIES WITHOUT OXYGEN

Bhubaneswar: A 38-year-old Covid-19 patient of Angul district died on Saturday evening after being carried to hospital in an ambulance which allegedly did not have an oxygen cylinder. The deceased was identified as Tapan Sahu of Tulasipala village under Banarpal block of the district. As per the family members of Tapan, he was suffering from fever and later tested positive for Covid-19 on April 21. As advised by the doctor, he was under home isolation. As his condition deteriorated and he complained of breathlessness on Saturday, his family members called the helpline, following which an ambulance arrived to shift him to the Angul District Headquarters Hospital (DHH). Though the patient sought oxygen while being on the way to the hospital in the ambulance, lack of oxygen cylinder in the emergency vehicle worsened his condition. The deceased's family members further alleged that he was attended by a doctor at the hospital around 40 minutes after reaching the DHH. He was then declared dead on arrival by the doctor. A pall of gloom descended on the village after the demise of Tapan, who was running a grocery shop in the locality.

India records 3,49,691 cases & 2,767 deaths

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka are the top three states to contribute to the record daily rise

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

India today reported 3,49,691 new Covid cases, 2,767 deaths and 2,17,113 discharges in the last 24 hours, as per Union health ministry. India's total tally of Covid cases has climbed to 1,69,60,172, while active cases have crossed the 26-lakh mark. The death toll has increased to 1,92,311. The active cases have increased to 26,82,751, this comprises 15.82 per cent of the total infections. The national recovery rate has dropped to 83.05 per cent. The number of people who have recuperated from the disease has surged to 1,40,85,110, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.13 per cent.

West Bengal registers the highest single-day spike of 15,889 Covid cases, 57 more fatalities. Kolkata alone accounted for 2,970. One of two persons undergoing RT-PCR tests in Kolkata and its suburbs is turning out to be Covid-positive. In the rest of the state, one of four RT-PCR reports is Covid positive. That is a five-fold jump from the beginning of the month.

Maharashtra reports 66,191 Covid cases, 61,450 discharges, and 832 deaths in 24 hours. Active cases: 6,98,354. Total discharges: 35,30,060. Death toll: 64,760.

Mumbai recorded 5,542 cases on Sunday, its lowest single-day rise in infection so far this month. This took the city's Covid tally to 6,27,651. On Saturday, it recorded 5,888 cases, which declined further on Sunday.

Karnataka has reported another biggest single-day spike of 34,804 new Covid cases, taking the total case-load to 13.39 lakh, while 143 related fatalities pushed the toll to 14,426, the Health department said on Sunday. The state had previously reported its biggest single-day spike of 29,438 cases on Saturday. Bengaluru Urban alone accounted for 20,733 cases. The day also saw 6,982 patients getting discharged after recovery. Cumulatively 13,39,201 Covid positive cases have been confirmed in the state, which includes 14,426 deaths and 10,62,594 discharges, the health department said in a bulletin.

MAHA FIRE TRAGEDY: VIRAR HOSPITAL'S CEO, CAO ARRESTED

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, APRIL 25

Police on Sunday arrested the chief executive officer and the chief administrative officer of a hospital near Mumbai where a fire killed 15 Covid patients two days back. The two were held for alleged negligence and violation of the fire safety norms.

Arrested persons have been identified as Dr Dilip Bastimal Shah (56), the CEO, and Dr Shailesh Dharamadev Pathak (47), the CAO of Vijay Vallabh Hospital at Virar in Maharashtra's Palghar district. Both the persons have been remanded to custody of police for a day by a local court. An officer from the Mira-Bhayander Vasai-Virar police's crime branch said that the arrests were made when the probe revealed that the hospital allegedly violated several norms and guidelines of the state government and the Supreme Court.

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, APRIL 25

A crematorium here, on Saturday, witnessed cremation of a record number of bodies of Covid victims amid a spike in coronavirus cases in Madhya Pradesh.

A record number of 118 bodies were cremated in the Bhadbhada Ghat crematorium on the outskirts of Bhopal on Saturday. Of



Workers make protective suits for essential service workers during 'break the transmission chain in Covid-19' at Dharavi in Mumbai.

ment said in a bulletin. Out of 2,62,162 active cases, 2,60,670 patients are stable and in isolation at designated hospitals, while 1,492 are in Intensive Care Units.

Uttar Pradesh on Sunday recorded 38,055 fresh coronavirus cases and 223 fatalities, pushing the virus tally to 10,86,625 and toll to 11,165, according to an official statement. The state had on Saturday recorded 223 new Covid deaths and 38,055 fresh coronavirus cases — the highest since the outbreak of the pandemic. Of the 208 fresh Covid deaths, Kanpur recorded the highest (19), followed by Varanasi (15), Lucknow (14), Gautam Buddh Nagar (11), Allahabad and Ghaziabad (10 each), the statement said. Of the 35,614 new Covid-19 cases, Lucknow recorded 5,187 fresh cases followed by Kanpur (2,153), Varanasi (2,057), Meerut (1,625), Allahabad (1,395), Gautam Buddh Nagar (1,310), Bareilly (1,084) and Jhansi (1,021).

Bihar reports 12,795 fresh Covid cases and 7,533 discharges in the last 24 hours. Active cases: 87,154. Total discharges: 3,14,286. Death toll: 2,155.

Maha to give corona vaccines to all its citizens for free: Malik

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, APRIL 25

The Maharashtra government on Sunday announced that it will administer the Coronavirus vaccine to all its citizens for free at government hospitals. The state joins a list of state governments including Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Sikkim and Goa that have already announced free vaccination for citizens.

Maharashtra minister Nawab Malik said that the state government will float a global tender and purchase affordable and quality Covid vaccines for providing free vaccines to the citizens above 18 years. Referring to the prices of the Covaxin and Covishield, the cabinet minister said that the Serum Institute has announced the prices of the Covishield vaccine for private persons at ₹600 per dose, states at ₹400 per dose and ₹150 for the Centre, while Bharat Biotech, manufacturer of Covaxin, has also set the

Medical facilities of DPSUs, OFB to treat civilian Covid-19 patients

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) are extending all possible assistance to the civil administration and state governments in the fight against the recent spike in Covid-19 cases across the country.

In this hour of crisis, they are catering to the civilian population from their existing services in coordination with the state governments, as directed by defence minister Rajnath Singh in the recently held review meetings. A 180-bed Covid care centre with ICU, oxygen, and ventilator support set up by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is functional at Bengaluru in Karnataka.

The DPSU has also prepared a 250-bed facility in Bengaluru and handed it over to the municipal

authorities under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). A 70-bed facility at Koraput in Odisha and a 40-bed hospital at Nasik in Maharashtra are also operational.

Work has also been undertaken by HAL to set up a 250-bed Covid care facility at Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh. It is expected to be operational in the first week of May.

Further, HAL is planning to provide more ventilators and oxygen points at Bengaluru and Lucknow. The OFB is providing

Covid care services, including oxygen beds, at their facilities in 25 places in Maharashtra, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, and Uttarakhand.

It has earmarked nearly 60 per cent of its existing strength for Covid-19 care. Precisely, 813 beds out of a total strength of 1,405 are now reserved for Covid patients. These facilities are in Maharashtra and in West Bengal.

Several DPSUs have also fast-tracked procurement of oxygen plants to deliver to the local government hospitals in different states under CSR.

Meanwhile, the Indian Navy under Headquarters, Southern Naval Command at Kochi has started 'oxygen express' in order to render support to the local administration of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep (UTL).

Supriyo tests +ve, TMC candidate dies of Covid-19

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, APRIL 25

The fresh wave of Covid-19 has claimed the life of the third Assembly election candidate: Kajal Sinha of the Trinamul Congress. While the virus has also infected Babul Supriyo of the BJP in West Bengal as the daily spike in cases crossed the 15,000 mark in the state with 57 fresh deaths in the last 24 hours.

According to the state health department, 15,889 persons have contracted Covid-19 in an all-time high during the second spell of the pandemic since Saturday when the figure of fresh infection stood at 14,281. Out of 15,889 new cases, 3,774 alone are in Kolkata.

Sinha, who contested from Khardah in North 24 Parganas was admitted to Infectious Diseases Hospital in Beliaghata on April 21 after he tested positive for the deadly virus. Two days later he was put on a ventilator as his condition worsened. At around 9.45 am the 58-year-old died there.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted, "Very, very sad. Shocked. Kajal Sinha, our candidate from Khardaha, succumbed to Covid. He dedicated his life to serving people & just fought a tireless campaign. He was a long-serving committed member of @AITCofficial. We will miss him. My condolences to his family & his admirers."

Calling Sinha "brave" and "young" the TMC chief later said in Murshidabad that though he sacrificed his life by working hard in the polls, his name would surely emerge as the winner at Khardah. She also asked her party candidates and workers to maintain



Kajal Sinha



Babul Supriyo

● **TMC CANDIDATE** Kajal Sinha, who contested from Khardah in North 24 Parganas was admitted to Infectious Diseases Hospital in Beliaghata on April 21 after he tested positive for the deadly virus. Two days later he was put on a ventilator as his condition worsened. At around 9.45 am the 58-year-old died there.

social distancing in the campaign. Earlier Rejaul Haque Biswas, the Congress candidate at Shamshegunj and Pradip Nandi, the RSP candidate at Jangipur died of Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Mr Supriyo, who contested at Tollygunge in South Kolkata, has been infected by Covid-19 again. On Facebook, the Union minister posted during the day, "Both me & my wife have tested positive. Me for the 2nd time!! V Sad that I won't be able to vote in Asansol." Asansol, of which he is also the MP will go to the polls on Monday.

Country needs a new Manmohan Singh to revive economy: Sena

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, APRIL 25

The Shiv Sena has taken a jibe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying the country needs a new Manmohan Singh to revive the economy, which has collapsed due to Covid.

"India's economy is in doldrums and the recession wave is likely to severely affect all. If the rulers are complacent and self-obsessed, it was bound to happen," said senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday in his weekly column 'Rokhtok' (fortnight) in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana.'

Due to corona, the share market in the country has been going down daily. The national production has plummeted by two-third percent and 60 per cent labourers have become jobless. But Nirmala Sitharaman is seen nowhere. Both she and the PM are unable to tell what exactly they are doing to revive the economy. There is a need to find a new Manmohan Singh and

● **SANJAY RAUT** said the PM needs to come out of his image of Tagore and don the role of former USA president Theodore Roosevelt, who worked hard to revive his country's economy

hand over the economy in his hands during this crisis, he said.

Calling Mr Modi 'a political figure', Mr Raut said that several renowned economists have left him. The PM needs to come out of his image of Rabindranath Tagore and don the role of former USA president Theodore Roosevelt, who worked hard to revive his country's economy after the 1929 recession, he added.

"Roosevelt cut down the government cost and increasing the production. He also undertook several big government projects, which led to rise in jobs and production. Due to his efforts, the recession turned into a vibrant economy. India now needs such positive energy," he said.

BANGLADESH CLOSES LAND BORDERS WITH INDIA

Dhaka, April 25: Bangladesh will close its land borders with India for the next 14 days due to the unprecedented surge of coronavirus cases in the neighbouring nation, foreign minister A K Abdul Momen announced here on Sunday.

India logged a record of 3,49,691 new coronavirus infections in a day on Sunday, taking its total tally of Covid cases to 1,69,60,172. The death toll increased to 1,92,311 with a record 2,767 daily new fatalities, according to the Union health ministry data.

Passenger travel from India to Bangladesh via land will remain closed from Monday for 14 days, Ms Momen told reporters here.

"The decision was taken in view of the rapid increase of coronavirus cases in India...We are closing the land routes for passengers for the time being," he said.

The minister, however, said the trade between the two countries would continue.

There would be no ban on the movement of cargo vehicles, Momen said.

Air travel between India and Bangladesh has already been suspended since April 14 with the rise in infections.

Home minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal also said that the authorities have decided to close the borders with India for two weeks.

— PTI

CRISIS | NUMBERS

118 bodies were cremated in Bhadbhada Ghat crematorium on Saturday

Bhopal crematorium records highest 1-day cremation

them, 100 bodies were cremated with corona guidelines, according to the records of the crematorium.

"So many bodies have never been cremated in a single day in the history of Bhadbhada Ghat crematorium," Mamtesh Sharma, the secretary of the crematorium told this newspaper on Sunday.

He described how pyres were lighted in both the phase one and phase two

sections of the crematorium literally round-the-clock from 6.00 am till past midnight on Saturday.

"The horrific sight will shake even a hard soul. I have never seen such a mass funeral of bodies going almost round-the-clock in a crematorium," Mr Sharma, who was serving in the position for the last four decades, said.

Bodies cremated with corona guidelines were brought in hearses to the

crematorium by the Bhopal Municipal Corporation and different hospitals in the capital city. The bodies were wrapped in polythene sheets.

Incidentally, the official bulletin circulated by the MP health department confirmed the death of 10 people due to the virus on Saturday.

According to the records of the crematorium, a total of 1,222 bodies were

cremated with corona guidelines in the crematorium by Saturday since April 1.

However, the official toll figure in Bhopal during the period has been put at 86, indicating that the official toll figure has been grossly undercounted.

Meanwhile, state health minister Prabhuram Choudhary, on Sunday, said steps have already been taken to set up oxygen generation plants in 45

out of the total 52 districts to tackle the oxygen crisis currently being faced by hospitals treating Covid-19 patients in the state.

The state government has also initiated the process of establishing a 1,000-bed Covid care centre at a sprawling ground in Bhopal.

Madhya Pradesh has reported 12,918 fresh cases of coronavirus in the last 24 hours, taking the tally of cases to 4,85,703.

SHORT TAKES

EC REBUTS DIDI'S CLAIM OF ARREST OF TRINAMUL MEN

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, APRIL 25

A day after West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee threatened to drag the Election Commission to the Supreme Court after accusing it of arresting her party workers during the Assembly Election, the central poll panel refuted the Trinamul Congress supremo's charges as "baseless, false and misleading."

On Sunday the EC stated, "A section of the media have reported about allegations made by Hon'ble Chairperson AITC and CM West Bengal that instructions have been given by some officers of ECI and Observers to arrest 'TMC goons'. Such statements supposedly attributed to ECI Officers and Observers are absolutely baseless, false and misleading. No such instructions have been given by any Observer, Chief Electoral Officer or Officer of the Commission to act against workers of any Party (ies)."

It said, "It has also been reported that CM would be taking the matter to the honourable Court (s). No court case has so far been reported to CEO, WB's office or the Commission where any instance of preventive action against a non-criminal has come to the notice. Misleading narratives apart, leave alone any court case, no specific instance of illegal preventive action against any worker of party has been reported till 25.4.21."

According to the EC, conduct of free, fair, intimidation free and violence free election requires close monitoring of all miscreants and history sheeters who have the potential to vitiate the polls.

U.S. TO RUSH RAW MATERIALS FOR COVID VACCINES

■ Continued From Page 1

adding his country is "working around the clock to deploy available resources and supplies". The US NSA said the US Development Finance Corporation (DFC) is funding a substantial expansion of manufacturing capability for BioE, the vaccine manufacturer in India, "enabling BioE to ramp up to produce at least one billion doses of Covid-19 vaccines by the end of 2022".

The hugely supportive tone of Washington on Sunday came after severe criticism from several quarters over its earlier "America First" statement in response to India's request for the supply of vaccine raw materials.

US secretary of state Antony J. Blinken tweeted Sunday: "Our hearts go out to the Indian people in the midst of the horrific Covid-19 outbreak. We are working closely with our partners in the Indian government, and we will rapidly deploy additional support to the people of India and India's healthcare heroes."

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan tweeted: "The US is deeply concerned by the severe Covid outbreak in India. We are working around the clock to deploy more supplies and support to our friends and partners in India as they bravely battle this pandemic. More very soon."

India is now being battered by a second deadly wave of Covid-19 and is now desperate to vaccinate its huge 1.3 billion population as quickly as possible against the deadly virus and its mutant strains that are wreaking havoc.

The US state department spokesperson had said at a recent briefing in Washington that the US government is "first and foremost engaged in an ambitious and effective and, so far, successful effort to vaccinate the American people", and the administration has a "special responsibility to the American people". This was after external affairs minister S. Jaishankar had last week spoken to his American counterpart.

Covid crisis: UK, EU respond to India's call for urgent help

First package of assistance from Britain is due to arrive in Delhi early tomorrow

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

Both Britain and the European Union (EU) on Sunday responded to India's urgent calls for help against the Covid storm ravaging the country, with Britain saying that "ventilators and oxygen concentrator devices due to leave UK today" for India and that the "first package is due to arrive in Delhi early on Tuesday, with further shipments later this week". Britain said "nine airline container loads of supplies, including 495 oxygen concentrators, 120 non-invasive ventilators and 20 manual ventilators" are being sent to India this week and that "the support follows a request from India". British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said, "We stand side by side with India as a friend and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against Covid-19."

Sources meanwhile said India is "looking to source oxygen generators, oxygen concentrators, liquid oxygen tanks, oxygen cylinders, key medicines", while the Indian High Commission in London tweeted that "India needs empty refillable oxygen cylinders with 10 litres and 45 litres LMO, oxygen concentrators, in situ oxygen manufacturing plants for hospitals, and Remdesivir".

The EU on Sunday too said that India had requested it for assistance in the battle against Covid, adding that it is "pooling resources to respond rapidly to India's request for assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism" including Oxygen and medicines. The EU also said it is "alarmed by the epidemiological situation in India" and that it "stands in full solidarity with the Indian people".

Janez Lenaric, the European Commissioner for Crisis Management, in charge of European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid, the European Emergency Response Coordinator, said, "Upon request for assistance by #India, we have activated the #EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The EU will do its utmost to mobilise assistance to support people of India. Our #ERCC is already coordinating EU MS that are ready to provide urgently needed #oxygen & medicine rapidly."

President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen tweeted, "Alarmed by the epidemiological situation in India. We are ready to support. The EU is pooling resources to respond rapidly to India's request for assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. We stand in full solidarity with the Indian people!" EU Ambassador to India Ugo Astuto said, "The EU together with its Member States will do its utmost to support India. We stand in full solidarity with India in



Newly-wed couple distributing sweets to police officials during the lockdown in Kochi n Sunday.

— PTI

Nadda slams Didi for skipping every meeting of PM with CMs

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
AND PRANMOY
BRAHMACHARI
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,
APRIL 25

BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday came down heavily on West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for her frequent cry of foul play by the Centre in its initiatives to tackle Covid-19 pandemic after skipping meetings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with other CMs to discuss measures.

"We are seeing how Mamataji has been trying to trigger a confusion and spreading wrong information amid the pandemic. Despite being the CM, she claims of lack of vaccines. If there is a dearth of vaccines, how are the



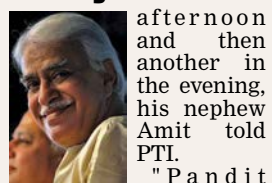
J.P. Nadda

total number of vaccine doses getting increased daily here? How can it be that you do not have any information about it though you have been in power for the last 10 years?" Mr Nadda asked the Trinamul Congress supremo while addressing the BJP workers at Cossipore-Belgachhia in North Kolkata in a virtual mode of his Assembly Election campaign.

Noted vocalist Pt Rajan Mishra dies of Covid

New Delhi, April 25: Renowned Hindustani classical vocalist Pt Rajan Mishra died due to Covid-19 complications at a hospital here on Sunday evening, his nephew said. He was 70.

Mishra, one of the foremost exponents of khayal gayaki along with his brother Sajjan Mishra, had a heart attack in the Indian people!" EU Ambassador to India Ugo Astuto said, "The EU together with its Member States will do its utmost to support India. We stand in full solidarity with India in



Rajan Mishra

afternoon and then another in the evening, his nephew Amit told PTL.

"P and it R a j a n Mishra ji passed away around 6.30 pm in Delhi's St Stephen hospital. He

this difficult moment." In a statement meanwhile, the British high commission in New Delhi said, "More than 600 pieces of vital medical equipment will be sent to

The BJP chief alleged, "While the PM has been tirelessly working to serve the country by holding meetings with the CMs of other states, Mamataji does not attend the meetings. On March 17 when the meeting with the CMs was held to discuss the quantity and distribution of vaccines by the Centre, she showed no care for the people of the state by skipping it. Why didn't she attend it? The reason is that she feels her ego more important to her than the people of the state. Thus she deprives them of their rights."

Mr Nadda's attack on the two-time CM about her lack of coordination with the Centre was evident also in his two previous virtual addresses at

Burwan in Murshidabad and Manikchak in Malda during the day as Ms Banerjee has been up in arms against the latest Covid-19 policy of the Narendra Modi government and raising it before the public almost in her every poll rally to corner the BJP.

At Burwan the BJP president claimed, "Skipping the centre-state meetings Mamataji always bypassed her responsibility as a CM but remains busy in blame game only." On the pathetic law and order situation in the state, he pointed out that the TMC government did not even send the last year's data on crimes to the National Crime Records Bureau for compilation to cover up its misrule.

India to support the country in its fight against Covid-19, the UK Government has announced. ... In total, nine airline container loads of supplies, including 495 oxy-

Mamata...

■ Continued From Page 1 seeking his re-election at Kolkata Port, from where he has also won twice.

Besides, nine seats each in Murshidabad and Burdwan West and six each in South Dinajpur and Malda will go to the polls.

The TMC supremo also accused the Election Commission of becoming a "mirror" of the BJP and intimidating her party workers

through Central paramilitary forces and state police personnel. She promised to provide them relief from the EC's actions, including cases against them, after the polls.

Ms Banerjee alleged: "A retired officer, Vivek Dube, as EC special police observer, is controlling serving ones. Our state police personnel also feel shaky, fearing action. This is illegal and unconstitutional. But the EC is not paying heed as it has become a mirror of the

BJP. Only a day before I learnt the EC sent police personnel to all homes, including those of our polling agents in Burdwan West, where polling will be held tomorrow. They ordered them to stay at home during the voting."

She told the TMC rank and file: "Why should they not step out of their homes? They should, for the peaceful conduct of the polls. If any case is filed against you, we will take care of it since we will return to power."

Yogi threat to invoke NSA for 'rumours' on Covid and oxygen

■ Continued From Page 1 since April 13 while in isolation".

As the UP chief minister planned to tackle the oxygen crisis, reports indicated the country during the last 24 hours recorded 3,49,391 new Covid-19 cases and 2,767 deaths. According to the Union health ministry, five states -- Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Kerala -- contributed 54 per cent of the cases.

Reports of oxygen crisis in Delhi's hospitals continued to pour in. A private hospital indicated it had "barely an hour's supply". A TV channel reported that New Delhi's Fortis Escort Heart Institute, "which has at least 100 patients on oxygen support, said it would not admit any more patients". The oxygen situation remained grim at Lok Nayak Hospital, the largest Covid-19 facility in Delhi.

CBI may conduct a lie-detector test on Anil Deshmukh

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

Noose seems to be tightening around former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh as the CBI is contemplating conducting lie-detection test on him in connection with its investigation into the alleged corruption case against the former.

"During the course of the investigation into the preliminary enquiry (PE) pertaining to the corruption charges levelled against Deshmukh, the former Home Minister gave conflicting statements. Now, after registering a corruption case against him, investigators may conduct lie-detection test on him", sources said.

"The investigation agency will first seek his consent as legal provisions entail that such a test cannot be conducted without the permission of the person concerned. After that the agency will have to seek permission from the competent court for conducting this scientific test", sources said.

The central probe agency on Saturday registered a case against Deshmukh over allegations of corruption levelled by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh. The agency invoked the Prevention of Corruption Act and 120 B (criminal conspiracy) in filing the FIR and also raided his residence along with three other places in Mumbai in connection with the case. The former



Anil Deshmukh

minister was summoned by the probe agency for questioning into the matter on April 14 after Param Bir Singh, in a letter to chief minister Uddhav Thackeray, accused him of directing his subordinates to collect money from bars, restaurants and hotels in Mumbai.

According to Singh, Deshmukh told police officer Sachin Vaze, now suspended and arrested in connection with Mukesh Ambani security threat case, to collect Rs100 crore a month from these sources. As part of its investigation into the PE, the CBI also questioned Anil Deshmukh's personal assistants Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde, former cop Sachin Vaze's two drivers, bar owners, Mumbai Police officers, and people close to the former minister in connection with the alleged corruption case. The investigation was taken up by the CBI after the High Court of Bombay directed it on April 5 to conduct a preliminary investigation into the case within 15 days.

Pawar has surgery to remove mouth ulcer

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, APRIL 25

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Sunday underwent a surgery to remove a mouth ulcer. NCP spokesman Nawab Malik informed that Mr Pawar is fine and will resume his work soon.

In a tweet, Mr Malik said, "Post Gall Bladder surgery of our president Sharad Pawar saheb, a follow up visit & check up at hospital revealed an ulcer in his mouth which has been removed. He is well & resting in hospital. Saheb is tak-



Sharad Pawar

ing stock of the pandemic situation daily & will resume his activities soon (sic)." Earlier this month, the NCP president

underwent a gall bladder surgery at the Breach Candy Hospital.

On March 30, Mr Pawar had undergone an emergency endoscopy for the removal of a stone from his bile duct at the same hospital.

Lockdown in Delhi extended till May 3

■ Continued From Page 1

subsided even as the government imposed a six-day lockdown as the last weapon in its arsenal.

"Public opinion is in favour of an extension of lockdown. The positivity rate reached up to 36-37 per cent in past few days although it has slightly dipped now. It is around 29 per cent today," he said.

To keep a close watch on oxygen availability, the Delhi government has decided that manufacturers, suppliers and hospitals will update the supply and consumption data every two hours on a portal set up by it.

"This is to ensure the Delhi government knows where a shortage might be felt and is able to divert resources in that direction in time," he said.

He said the Centre had further increased Delhi's oxygen quota by 10 MT per day and hoped the chaotic situation due to the oxygen crisis in Delhi will end in a few days. "The Centre has increased Delhi's quota from 490 MT to 490 MT per day. But we are yet to receive the full quota. Currently only 330-335 tonnes per day supply is being received by us," he said.

The CM said his government is getting a lot of support from the Centre and both are properly coordinating to solve the oxygen supply problem. Mr Kejriwal, who had written letters to the chief ministers of several states for helping Delhi with spare oxygen and tankers, added: "Negotiations have begun with some states and I will update you about any positive results as and when they come."

Noting that the ministers and officers of his government were working overnight to ensure steady oxygen supplies to hospitals, he said: "I do not claim all our efforts have reaped successful results. In

some cases, we have failed, and in others we have managed to ensure oxygen supply to their destinations."

Delhi recorded its highest single-day rise in Covid-19 deaths, with 357 more people succumbing to the viral disease on Saturday, as well as over 24,000 fresh cases. The city has reported nearly 2,500 deaths due to the deadly virus in a 12-day period.

India, meanwhile, logged a record 3,49,691 new coronavirus infections in a day, taking the total Covid-19 cases to 1,69,60,172, as active cases crossed the 26-lakh mark, the health ministry's data updated on Sunday showed. The death toll rose to 1,92,311 with a record 2,767 new fatalities in the past 24 hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase, the country's active cases have gone up to 26,82,751 comprising 15.82 per cent of total infections, as the nationwide Covid-19 recovery rate has further dropped to 83.05 per cent. Several hospitals in Delhi are now grappling with a severe shortage of medical oxygen. The DDMA in its order on Sunday said the Covid-19 situation in Delhi has again been reviewed and it was observed that both positive cases as well as the positivity rate was still very high.

"Therefore, in order to contain the spread of virus and to further break the transmission chain, the curfew needs to be extended for a further period of one week in Delhi (except for essential activities and services), as an emergency measure."

In the order, chief secretary Vijay Dev, the DDMA executive committee chairman, directed the extension of curfew (lockdown) on the movement of individuals, except for essential activities and services, in Delhi till 5 am on May 3 or till further orders.

PM: 2nd wave has shaken India, but we will beat it

■ Continued From Page 1

said: "In line with Prime Minister's direction of boosting availability of oxygen to hospitals, the PM Cares Fund has given in principle approval for allocation of funds for installation of 551 dedicated Pressure Swing Adsorption Medical Oxygen Generation Plants inside public health facilities in the country. The PM has directed that these plants should be made functional as soon as possible. He said these plants will serve as a major boost to oxygen availability at district level."

The PMO added: "These dedicated plants will be established in identified government hospitals in district

headquarters in various States/UTs. The procurement will be done through ministry of health and family welfare. The PM Cares Fund had earlier this year allocated ₹201.58 crores for installation of additional 162 dedicated Pressure Swing Adsorption Medical Oxygen Generation Plants inside public health facilities in the country. The basic aim behind establishing PSA Oxygen Generation Plants at government hospitals in the district headquarters is to further strengthen the public health system and ensure that each of these hospitals has a captive oxygen generation facility."

The PMO further said: "Such an in-house captive

oxygen generation facility would address the day-to-day medical oxygen needs of these hospitals and the district. In addition, the liquid medical oxygen would serve as a "top up" to the captive oxygen generation. Such a system will go a long way in ensuring that government hospitals in the districts do not face sudden disruption of oxygen supplies and have access to adequate uninterrupted oxygen supply to manage the Covid-19 patients and other patients needing such support."

In his Mann Ki Baat address, Mr Modi said: "I am expressing Mann Ki Baat at a time when corona is testing our patience; it is testing the limits of all of us

at enduring misery. Many of our near and dear ones have left us untimely. After successfully confronting the first wave of corona, the country was full of enthusiasm, full of self-confidence, but this storm has shaken the country. In the days gone by, to tide over this crisis, I had long deliberations with experts from myriad sectors. People from our pharmaceutical industry, vaccine manufacturers, those connected with oxygen production, experts from the medical field have put forth their valuable suggestions to the government. This time, for emerging victorious in this battle, we have to accord priority to expert and scientific advice.



THE ASIAN AGE

26 APRIL 2021

CJI should make judiciary kinder, faster, transparent

A new chapter in Indian judiciary starts with Justice N.V. Ramana having taken oath as the 48th Chief Justice of India (CJI) on April 24, which can and should be glorious. Till his tenure ends on August 26, 2022, CJI Ramana must focus on addressing three crucial issues — humaneness of judicial processes and systems, especially in the criminal side of law and justice, with great stress on speed and efficiency, and openness and transparency.

The absolutely first area to priority is administrative. The CJI must ensure all the pending vacancies in the judiciary, especially in the higher echelons of the Supreme Court and the various high courts, must be filled within the first 90 days of his term on a war footing. This numbers-led priority is to ensure the judiciary is operating at maximum mandated capacity and to a full strength to focus on the next area of priority — speedy delivery.

Justice delayed is justice denied. Time gap has been an underlying weakness and area of concern with our judicial system for a long while now. Systems need to be created to ensure timely dismissal of cases and the recent suggestive directive empowering high courts to hire retired justices to dispose pending cases is welcome and must be taken to a logical conclusion under stern supervision. There can be suggestions made to the government, a mandated litigator, to withdraw a large number of cases through a matrix of stake involved versus the time since the case has stretched. Automatic disposal of petty and routine cases can also go a long way in unburdening the judicial load.

The expectation from CJI Ramana is that he will strive hard to humanise criminal justice and focus on ensuring higher regard for law and human rights amongst the law enforcement agencies

The CJI will hearten the citizenry by ensuring the implementation of faster and timely disposal of criminal cases against politicians and bureaucracy and give them punishment. A lesson that no one is too mighty to get away from the clutches of the law is an expectation that has waited long enough to be delivered with urgency, and who better than the author of this extraordinary hope-giving judgment to ensure its implementation? The highest expectation from CJI Ramana is that he will strive hard to humanise criminal justice systems and focus on ensuring higher regard for law and human rights amongst the law enforcement agencies, particularly the lathi-happy police.

Fake encounters too can and will likely become a thing of the past, if his record is anything to go by — with strongest action likely in custodial death cases. Ensuring police respond to sensitise their departments and officers regarding human rights would be a great achievement. A larger effort is needed to make it clear to the government and officials that they cannot ignore judicial pronouncements, which could be one of the most significant contributions of this tenure.

Finally, the judiciary must make itself even more open and transparent in coming out with unambiguous guidelines to dealing with grievances and complaints against itself. A judicial ombudsman is needed, comprising members of the bar, and of different states in composition at state-level and representatives of the government. Brothers and sisters of the judiciary must be able to handle all such instances in a way as to raise the respect for the blindfolded lady with a balance even higher.

At the start of CJI Ramana's tenure, history might well ask — if not here — where; if not now — when; if not you — who?

We're safe when all are safe

It is in the DNA of every pandemic that it is global, all the more so in a truly globalised world. It hardly makes sense for a nation to think that it can fight the pandemic all alone and be safe; it will not be long before it realises that the microorganism that causes the pandemic has reached its shores by means it can hardly block. Eliminating the virus from the face of the earth is an economic priority, too, as it would bring productive people back in action and the global economy back into black; not to forget the humanitarian angle as a pandemic devastates lives and often extinguishes them on a mass scale.

The US government's fight against pandemic Covid-19 has entered a decisive phase with close to 70 per cent of its population having been vaccinated. The country has the capacity to manufacture more as the vaccination programme advances and hence the demand in the country to help countries such as India where people have started dying in their thousands every day. The US has spare vaccines which are part of the Indian vaccination programme and hence can be put in the logistics chain on arrival. There are also redundant quantities of anti-viral drugs such as Remdisivir, as well as oxygen, which could save lives in India.

It's not just in the case of the ready-to-serve products that Indian wants the US to take a global view. The Serum Institute of India which makes the Covishield vaccine had recently appealed to US President Joe Biden to relax the ban on the export of the raw materials for the vaccine but to no avail. One cannot fault the US administration's policy that "it is not only in the US's interest to see Americans vaccinated; but it is in the interests of the rest of the world to see Americans vaccinated". The point of difference is that we will all be safe when we all are vaccinated; nationality hardly counts.

THE ASIAN AGE

T. VENKATRAM REDDY
Editor in Chief

Printer & Publisher: K. SUBHAKAR

The Asian Age office is located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for

Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.

London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Kishwar Desai
London Diary



A fitting farewell for Prince Philip; Cameron, Carrie graft entertains

The headlines here lately, about India, have been worrying. Many of them are about the Indian Covid crisis, and it is sad to see the terrifying predictions that are doing the rounds. While Boris Johnson thinks about sending respirators to India, many are wondering what happened to the great advantage India had last year. Now all we see are the burning pyres, and an ever-expanding body count. The question everyone asks is how could this have happened when India was doing so well? Yes, there had been a harsh lockdown earlier — but then that was the only way to deal with the enemy, who was unknown at the time. But now the bonds between the two countries are being sealed, ironically, by the "Indian" strain in the UK, and "British" mutant in India. The alarming difference is that while the UK is slowly opening up, India seems to be in the midst of a severe medical tsunami. Could it be also because the UK had vaccinated such a large proportion of its population?

The big event of the past fortnight has, of course, been the Royal funeral. The Monarchy is perfect-

ly adept at staging the most spectacular coronation (not seen, happily, since 1952), weddings (the most recent, of Harry and Meghan, was beautiful but is proving unforgettable for other reasons) and, of course, funerals. There has not been a Royal funeral since Elizabeth the Queen Mother died at the ripe old age of 101 a while ago.

The funeral for the Duke was planned well in advance and indeed he had participated in its arrangements, choosing the carriage specially designed by himself for the occasion. But as luck would have it, the Duke's funeral became unique because of Covid. And this brought to the fore the discipline maintained by the Royalty as it abides by the laws it is formally responsible for promulgating through it is the civilian government which thinks them up. For example, even through the Second World War, the Royal Family ate only the rations permitted to their subjects.

The sparseness of numbers at the funeral, the lack of street crowds, the location at Windsor rather than London gave the occasion its own special magic. He was after all 99, just one week short of his centenary. The Queen is, more or

less, universally respected and much loved by all but a few diehard Republicans. The Duke had to earn the respect given to him. The Press delighted in his more acerbic and "politically incorrect" views. He himself had joked about his "foot in the mouth" problem. But the sheer length of his presence on the public platform, discreetly walking a few steps behind his wife, won people over.

Most watched the ceremony on TV where the BBC yet again turned up trumps as it does on such occasions. It was a sombre but a beautifully staged occasion. Even so, it was the Queen sitting by herself in the chapel, which was the most dramatic sight. She had already placed her own written farewell into the coffin and then she sat quietly, the picture of dignity in grief. While the media wanted to make a fuss about Harry and William, the Palace managed to make them all behave themselves. And the emotion of the moment almost made everyone forget THAT interview.

In a mundane world, politics provides the entertainment. Not a week goes by without another corruption scandal. David Cameron, the former Prime Minister, has been caught lobbying for a company Greensill where he is the director. His text messages to Rishi Sunak, the Chancellor, asking for financial help, have been revealed. (When will these "leaders" learn what every teenager knows — that if you use your smartphone, there is no secrecy?) The Prime Minister himself is under attack by his former chosen Special Adviser Dominic Cummings (who had to be let go after he had antagonised everyone including Carrie Symonds, the PM's fiancée). He has now leaked more ammunition against his old friend alleging that Boris stopped a public inquiry when government rules were broken. Par for the course. But the target, more and more, seems to be the Prime Minister's fiancée — about whom stories are churned out every week. And now, under media scrutiny, Boris has had to pay 58,000 pounds for the redecoration of his residence at Downing Street, already undertaken by the young Ms Symonds. Yes,

the Prime Minister in the UK cannot use taxpayers' money to re-do the official home in London. Can such a rule ever work in India, hmmm?

But Boris has retained his amazing luck. While he has presided over the shambles of Covid mismanagement, he is doing very well thanks to the widely successful vaccination programme. The UK has become the envy of EU, if not the world, for its vaccination performance. Even Brexit has been forgotten for the while.

Actually Boris was supposed to be in Delhi today, on April 26. His earlier trip to Delhi for the Republic Day on January 26 had to be postponed due to Covid. But the two Prime Ministers seem to be fated never to meet in India (especially not if the date is the 26th) and the British PM has once again cancelled his trip. Call the astrologer!

Kishwar Desai's latest book, The Longest Kiss: The Life And Times of Devika Rani, has just been published and she is the Chair of the Trust that set up the world's first Partition Museum in Amritsar

Subhani



Mishandling elections in the time of a pandemic

Shikha Mukerjee

For voters and contestants, every election is necessarily different, because the ways in which the thousands of acts of omission, commission, violation and bad faith by the incumbent government or the challenger are in a constant state of change. For the Election Commission, tasked with conducting the process through which the voter chooses a representative who is adequate to fulfil the aspirations and expectations he or she has, every election is both different and the same.

The context in which an election is held is certainly material to the way the Election Commission undertakes the exercise of holding free and fair polls so that the people's sovereign will is exercised without obstruction or violation. If the EC fails to comprehend the context, then what follows is a super-spreader event of terrifying proportions in the state that has been victim of the whims of the poll panel in its refusal to recognise that the Covid-19 crisis could turn into a catastrophe.

Dismissive of the pleas of West Bengal's ruling party and the state government, of all other Opposition parties barring the BJP that the eight-phase six-week poll schedule would be seriously risky at a time when new mutant strains of the coronavirus were detected and whose impact had pushed Britain and Europe to declare new lockdowns, new protocols and manage a new crisis, the EC maintained it had no power to alter the schedule after it was announced or notified. It insisted it was entirely capable of ensuring its strict guidelines on how campaigning and voting should be done in Covid times were followed by all candidates and of course

their parties. Having announced its guidelines, mobilised the largest force of security personnel drawn from every Central paramilitary force imaginable, adding up to over 1.5 lakh jawans and officers and innumerable support personnel, brought in over 200 general observers, added to the original 54 appointed as police observers, the EC flooded West Bengal with the paraphernalia necessary to do two things simultaneously — hold peaceful, free and fair polls over eight phases and ensure adherence to its Covid guidelines. It failed on both counts at an incredibly high cost to the public exchequer.

Citizens exposed to the virus through super-spreader events and shoddy observance of Covid protocols are paying twice over for the EC's failures and its outrageously unrealistic assessment of its own capacity to deliver a flawless election process. The death of two candidates from the virus, a large number of candidates ill or critically ill because of the infection and the final humiliating confirmation of its inadequacy as the order from the Calcutta high court lashed out that the role of the EC cannot be just "issuing circulars" and "holding meetings".

It took a searing indictment from the high court to get the commission to implement its own guidelines. It took a threat from the high court to ensure that big rallies were banned.

The Calcutta high court last week said the judiciary would step in and "act like T.N. Seshan", the legendary tough chief election commissioner, who had postponed and threatened to cancel elections in Bihar and West Bengal if political parties failed to follow the rules.

Through the weeks of disastrous mismanagement by the EC that has cost lives and skyrocketing state public health expenditure to cope with the outfall of the speed of the spread of the deadly virus, the then chief election commissioner Sunil Arora and current CEC Sushil Chandra said they were powerless to listen to reason and heed the context of this election in West Bengal, namely the danger of an even greater surge of the evolving virus.

The Election Commission dismissed the plea by Mamata Banerjee that the eight-phase election was very risky. It seemed to pay more attention to the BJP's jeers that the eight-phase election was necessary to ensure peaceful, free and fair elections. The Election Commission rejected the April 16 appeal by all political parties in the fray in West Bengal, besides the BJP, that the remaining three phases should be clubbed together. Defending the eight-phase polls, BJP candidate Swapan Dasgupta said anything else would affect the "democratic spirit" of the process. His assurance and that of his party that all Covid protocols would be maintained cut no ice with the Calcutta high court, as its indictment reveals.

In declaring that it couldn't change the schedule once it was notified, the Election Commission forgot that it has the power to do so and there is a precedent. In 1984, the Lok Sabha elections were held in all states, except Punjab and Assam. Elections there were held in 1985 because the circumstances called for it. In 1991, the EC decided that the Lok Sabha elections would be

rescheduled with new dates because after some states had voted, Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated and there was turmoil. The Representation of the People Act is rigid, but the law isn't stupid. It does admit there can be an obstruction to the polling process after a natural calamity or any other sufficient cause.

As a result, West Bengal saw an unprecedented number of public rallies and meetings organised on a mega scale for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah, at least a dozen or more star campaigners from the BJP's very large and varied pool of leaders, including defence minister Rajnath Singh and UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath. A comparison of one day of campaigning by the BJP and Ms Banerjee is revealing; the BJP held at least nine major rallies, roadshows and meetings on one day while Mamata Banerjee managed only four.

As the challenger in West Bengal, the BJP's capacity to spread havoc without being restrained by the EC, outdid all other political parties on a daily basis. Can it be a mere coincidence that Prime Minister Modi cancelled his final four rallies, out of a total of 18, minutes before the commission announced the ban on rallies?

A pandemic on the scale of Covid-19 is unprecedented. If the EC failed to grasp this simple fact, so did the Prime Minister. Not till the nationwide oxygen shortage began killing patients in hospitals across India, ICU beds ran short and private hospitals went to court did the magnitude of the calamity impress itself on Mr Modi, whose office had earlier reportedly turned away Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray's desperate SOS for help. Can the democratic spirit freely exercise its franchise if disease and death stalk the voter? The EC will eventually have to answer this question.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

FRIEND IN NEED

Amidst the terror of Covid-19 pandemic, in a very encouraging development Pakistan has offered to provide relief support to India including ventilators, Bi PAP, digital X-ray machines, PPEs and related items. At a time when several Asian and European countries have banned flights or travellers from India, Pakistan's expression of solidarity with the people of India and offer of relief support has opened a new chapter in our bilateral relations.

M.C. Joshi
Lucknow

MERCHANTS OF DEATH

FOR THEIR GROSS mismanagement of the Covid-19 second wave, the Prime Minister and his deputy have earned the epithet, Merchants of Death. They were inconspicuous by their absence when the surge came and the case count across the nation skyrocketed culminating in the oxygen and vaccine crises nationwide. The Maharashtra CM's repeated pleas fell on deaf ears as winning elections was the priority for the ruling party in the Centre at that stage. For the negligence shown by Narendra Modi and his team towards protecting the citizenry from the coronavirus, adequate recompense would come in the form of the BJP being routed in the Bengal elections which, hopefully, will be a lesson learnt.

S. Kamat
Alto St Cruz, Goa

LET MITHALI PLAY

INDIAN WOMEN'S cricket captain Mithali Raj has taken the right decision to call it quits after the 50-over World Cup in 2022. There is no doubt that after Shantha Rangaswamy's retirement, Raj has been the torchbearer of women's cricket. She has some enviable records and it would be nice if she is allowed to play the World Cup. So is the case with pace bowler Jhulan Goswami, who is also hitting the business end of her career. These old warhorses would be an asset to our team. We wish them all success in coming months.

Kavitha Srikanth
Chennai

₹500 for the best letter of the week goes to Bidyut Chatterjee (April 22). Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.



IN BRIEF

Five held over France attack

Paris, April 25: French authorities detained a fifth person on Sunday in an anti-terrorism investigation seeking to identify potential accomplices and motives after a police official was fatally stabbed.

French police killed the 37-year-old Tunisian attacker shortly after he stabbed the unarmed employee on Friday at the entrance of her police station in Rambouillet. Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said police are questioning a cousin of the suspect. The suspect's father, a couple who had provided him with an address for mail and administration, and another cousin were also being questioned, Ricard said.

China: 3 ships commissioned

Beijing, April 25: China has commissioned three main battle warships, including a nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, a large destroyer and the country's largest amphibious assault ship that can carry around 30 helicopters and hundreds of troops.

The ships were commissioned at a ceremony on Saturday attended by President Xi Jinping at Sanya, China's main naval base in the disputed South China Sea in Hainan province.

The vessels commissioned included the Type 075 amphibious assault ships, which can carry an estimated 30 helicopters and hundreds of troops. It is China's largest amphibious assault ship.

European gear on China moon probe

Beijing, April 25: China will launch its next robot lunar lander in 2024, and it will carry equipment from France, Sweden, Russia and Italy, the official news agency reported.

Plans call for Chang'e 6 to land near the lunar south pole and collect samples for return to Earth, the programme's chief designer, Hu Hao, said at a conference Saturday, according to the *Xinhua News Agency*. The Chang'e landers are part of Chinese space exploration efforts that also include a probe that is preparing to land a robot rover on Mars. There are also plans for a crewed orbital station, landing a human on the moon and retrieving soil from an asteroid.

Fashion designer Elbaz dies at 59

Paris, April 25: Israeli fashion designer Alber Elbaz, best known for being at the helm of Lanvin from 2001 to 2015, has died at the age of 59, luxury conglomerate Richemont said.

In a statement released on Sunday, Richemont's chairman Johann Rupert said "it was with shock and enormous sadness that I heard of Alber's sudden passing."

Alber had a richly deserved reputation as one of the industry's brightest and most beloved figures.

"I was always taken by his intelligence, sensitivity, generosity and unbridled creativity. He was a man of exceptional warmth and talent, and his singular vision, sense of beauty and empathy leave an indelible impression," Rupert said.

PRO-TRUMP FILM 'ABSOLUTE PROOF' WORST AT RAZZIES

Los Angeles, April 25: The election-fraud film "Absolute Proof", singer Sia's heavily panned directorial debut "Music" and Rudy Giuliani, former New York City mayor, were the top winners at the 2021 Razzie Awards, given to the worst movies and performances of the year. The Golden Raspberry Awards, popularly known as the Razzies, were held a day before the Oscars night, as is the tradition.

"Absolute Proof", directed by My Pillow CEO Mike Lindell, which claimed that the 2020 presidential election was stolen from former President Donald Trump, was named the worst picture at the ceremony, reported *Entertainment Weekly*. The pro-Donald Trump film also bagged the worst acting title for Lindell for his appearance in the film as himself.

Sia's "Music", which was heavily criticised for its depiction of autism, took home three awards, including worst director, worst actress for Kate Hudson, and worst supporting actress for Maddie Ziegler.

Actor-filmmaker Sacha Baron Cohen starred "Borat Subsequent Moviefilm" won two Razzie awards, both for Giuliani for his infamous cameo in the film. The film is nominated in two categories at the Oscars.

82 killed in Baghdad hospital fire

Initial reports suggest oxygen cylinder blast caused death of the Coronavirus patients

Baghdad, April 25: Iraq's Interior Ministry said Sunday that 82 people died and 110 were injured in a catastrophic fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe Coronavirus patients.

Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the Saturday night fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital.

Iraq's prime minister fired key hospital officials hours after the catastrophic incident. Among the dead were at least 28 patients on ventilators battling severe symptoms of the virus, tweeted Ali al-Bayati, a spokesman of the country's independent Human Rights Commission.

The commission is a semi-official body. Firefighters rushed to battle the flames that raged across the second floor of the hospital. Civil defence teams put out flames until the early hours of the morning. Ambulances transported dozens of wounded.

The Health Ministry said at least 200 people were rescued from the scene. Doctors at the scene were frazzled by the chaos unfolding around them. They said numerous burned bodies were carried out by paramedics from the hospital floor. The fire came as Iraq grapples with a severe second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic. Daily virus cases now average around 8,000, the highest since Iraq began recording infection rates early last year. At least 15,200 people have died of Coronavirus in Iraq among a total of at least 100,000 confirmed cases.

In response to the fire, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi fired the director-general of the Baghdad Health Department in the al-Rusafa area, where the hospital is located. He also fired the director of Ibn al-Khatib Hospital and its director of engineering and maintenance, according to a statement from the Health Ministry and his office. After the fire first broke out, Al-Kadhimi held an emergency meeting at the headquarters of the Baghdad Operations Command, which coordinates Iraqi security forces, according to a statement on his Twitter account. In the meeting he said the incident amounted to negligence.

"Negligence in such matters is not a mistake, but a crime for which all negligent parties must bear responsibility," he said. He gave Iraqi authorities 24 hours to present the results of an investigation. — AP



Iraqis wait for their relatives who are patients with Covid-19 in front of the Al-Khatib Hospital in Baghdad, on Sunday, after a fire erupted in the medical facility reserved for the most severe Coronavirus cases.

— AFP

UK, EU respond to India's call for help to fight Covid

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

Both Britain and the European Union (EU) on Sunday responded to India's urgent calls for help against the Covid storm ravaging the country, with Britain saying that "ventilators and oxygen concentrator devices due to leave UK today" for India and that the "first package is due to arrive in Delhi

early on Tuesday, with further shipments later this week".

Britain said "nine airline container loads of supplies, including 495 oxygen concentrators, 120 non-invasive ventilators and 20 manual ventilators" are being sent to India this week and that "the support follows a request from India".

British PM Boris Johnson said, "We stand side by side with India as a friend

and partner during what is a deeply concerning time in the fight against Covid-19."

The EU too said that India had requested it for assistance, adding that it is "pooling resources to respond rapidly to India's request for assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism", including Oxygen and medicines. The EU also said it "stands in full solidarity with the Indian people".

BANGLADESH

DHAKA SHUTS LAND BORDERS WITH INDIA

Dhaka, April 25: Bangladesh will close its land borders with India for the next 14 days due to the unprecedented surge of Coronavirus cases in the neighbouring nation, Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen announced here on Sunday.

India logged a record of 3,49,691 new Coronavirus infections in a day on Sunday, taking its total tally of Covid-19 cases to 1,69,60,172. The death toll increased to 1,92,311 with a record 2,767 daily new fatalities, according to the Union Health Ministry data. Passenger travel from India to Bangladesh via land will remain closed from Monday. — PTI

Merkel: Preparing 'support' for India

Berlin, April 25: German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Sunday her government was preparing emergency aid for India as the country struggles to cope with an explosion in Coronavirus infections.

"To the people of India I want to express my sympathy on the terrible suffering that Covid-19 has again brought over your communities," Merkel said in a message shared on Twitter by her spokesman Steffen Seibert.

"The fight against the pandemic is our common fight. Germany stands in solidarity with India and is urgently preparing a mission of support." There were no immedi-

ate details about the kind of aid Germany would offer. But *Der Spiegel* weekly, citing unnamed sources, on Saturday said Germany's armed forces had received a request to help organise oxygen supplies.

With a new Coronavirus variant spreading through its 1.3 billion people, India has become the world's top Coronavirus hotspot in recent days, reporting 349,691 new cases on Sunday alone.

Germany will from Monday impose new travel restrictions on passengers coming from India in a bid to curb in the spread of the new variant. — AFP

GERMANY

SAUDI ARABIA

RIYADH TO SHIP 80MT OF OXYGEN TO NEW DELHI

Dubai, April 25: Saudi Arabia is shipping 80 metric tonnes of liquid oxygen to India as the country is running low on supplies due to an unprecedented spike in Covid cases. It is being undertaken in cooperation with the Adani group and Linde company. "Embassy of India is proud to partner with Adani group and M/s Linde in shipping much-needed 80MT liquid oxygen to India. Our heartfelt thanks to the Ministry of Health," the Indian mission tweeted. — PTI

PAKISTAN

ISLAMABAD'S RELIEF OFFER TO NEW DELHI

Islamabad, April 25: Pakistan has offered to provide relief support, including ventilators, to India to help the country fight the deadly wave of Covid-19 and said the two countries can explore possible ways of further cooperation to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The Foreign Office in a statement late Saturday night said Pakistan was ready to send specific items quickly once the modalities were worked out. — PTI

Indonesia: Sub wreckage found

Banyuwangi (Indonesia), April 25: Indonesia's military on Sunday officially said all 53 crew members from a submarine that sank and broke apart last week are dead, and that search teams had located the vessel's wreckage on the ocean floor.

The grim announcement comes a day after Indonesia said the submarine was considered sunk, not merely missing, but did not explicitly say whether the crew was dead. Officials had also said the KRI Nanggala 402's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday, three days after vessel went missing off the resort island of Bali. "We received underwater pictures that are confirmed as the parts of the

● **AN UNDERWATER robot equipped with cameras found the lost submarine was lying in at least three pieces on the ocean floor at a depth of 838 metres (2,750 feet), said Adm. Yudo Margono, the navy's chief of staff.**

submarine, including its rear vertical rudder, anchors, outer pressure body, embossed dive rudder and other ship parts," military chief Hadi Tjahjanto told reporters in Bali on Sunday. "With this authentic evidence, we can declare that KRI Nanggala 402 has sunk and all the crew members are dead," Tjahjanto said.

An underwater robot equipped with cameras found the lost submarine was lying in at least three pieces on the ocean floor at a depth of 838 metres (2,750 feet), said Adm. Yudo Margono, the navy's chief of staff. That's much deeper than the KRI Nanggala 402's collapse depth of 200 metres (655 feet), at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand, according to earlier navy statements. The wreckage is located 1,500 metres (yards) to the south of the site where the submarine last dove Wednesday, off Bali's northern coast, Margono said. The underwater robot was deployed by Singaporean vessel MV Swift Rescue provided the images,

while the Indonesian vessel KRI Rigel had scanned the area where the submarine was believed to have sank using multibeam sonar and a magnetometre, Tjahjanto said. The cause of the disappearance was still uncertain.

The navy had previously said an electrical failure could have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface. An American reconnaissance plane, a P-8 Poseidon, landed Saturday and had been set to join the search, along with 20 Indonesian ships, four aircraft and a sonar-equipped Australian warship. The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 had been in service in Indonesia since 1981. — AP

INTENSE | BIDDING

1st \$ coins prototype auctioned for \$8.4L

Washington, April 25: A piece of copper that was struck by the US Mint in Philadelphia in 1794 and was a prototype for the fledgling nation's money was auctioned off for \$840,000, considerably more than expected, an official said.

Heritage auctions spokesman Eric Bradley said the "No Stars Flowing Hair Dollar" opened at \$312,000 when it was put up Friday evening but "in

less than a minute, intense bidding quickly pushed the coin to its final auction price of \$840,000."

The coin, formerly owned by businessman and Texas Rangers co-chairman Bob Simpson, was expected to sell for \$350,000 to \$500,000, Bradley said. While it closely resembles silver dollars that were later minted in Philadelphia, it gets its name because it is missing stars.

Jacob Lipson of Heritage Auctions said earlier that starless coins are considered by collectors and institutions as "one-of-a-kind prototypes for the silver examples that would follow." Known as a pattern, the front features the flowing hair portrait of Liberty and the date 1794, while the reverse side shows a small eagle on a rock with a wreath. Similar starless exampl-

es are part of the Smithsonian Institution's National Numismatic Collection. The pattern was forgotten as the Mint continued the process of creating the nation's first silver dollars. "Coin collecting lore states the unique rarity was excavated from the site of the first Philadelphia Mint before 1876," Lipson said. That was how the coin's first owner described its history at its first auction

appearance in 1890. The pattern is corroded and not in perfect condition, Lipson said, likely because it was buried at the site of the original Mint.

There are some scratches and other marks on its brown surfaces. It has traded hands eight times, according to the auction house. Simpson, 73, purchased it along with other patterns in 2008 to add to his large collection. — AP

Putin-Biden meet may be held in June

Moscow, April 25: A top aide to Vladimir Putin said Sunday that a possible summit between the Russian leader and his US counterpart Joe Biden could take place in June.

Biden earlier this month offered a meeting between the two leaders in a neutral country, as tensions between Russia and the West escalated sharply over the conflict in Ukraine, new sanctions

on Moscow and the health of jailed Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

The Kremlin has said it is still considering the offer, but on Sunday, Putin's top foreign policy aide, Yuri Ushakov, said that planning is underway.

"June is being named, there are even concrete dates," Ushakov said on state-run television channel Rossiya-1. — AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	47,878.45 -0.42
Nifty 50	14,341.40 -0.45
S&P 500*	4,180.17 1.09
Dollar (₹)	75.02 -0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	104.13 0.07
Euro (₹)	90.46 -0.24
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,273▼24 0.05
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	65.76 0.55
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.035 0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.574 0.018

Steel companies produce 3,474 t medi-oxygen/day

The steel industry produced 3,474 tonne of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) on Saturday, higher than its daily production capacity to meet the shortage of the life-saving gas. A steel ministry statement said on Sunday, there are 33 oxygen plants in the steel sector, of which 29 are tapped regularly. The total daily oxygen production capacity of steel plants is 2,834 tonne. The production of LMO was 3,474tonne on April 24.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Indian ops boost US giant's profit Flipkart to get \$1 bn more from Walmart

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, APRIL 25

Walmart has decided to pump in around \$1 billion more to support the operations of Flipkart. Walmart said its international segment's cash and cash equivalents of \$2.8 billion may not be freely transferable to the US due to local laws or other restrictions. Of this, approximately \$1 billion can only be accessed through dividends or inter-company financing arrangements, subject to approval of the Flipkart minority shareholders. This cash is expected to be utilised to fund the operations of Flipkart, Walmart said in its annual report. Walmart's gross profit rate increased 50 basis points in financial year



2021 primarily due to Flipkart's improved margin mix and reduced fuel sales in the UK. This is against a 136-points reduction in gross profit in FY20 primarily due to Flipkart, as well as a change in merchandise mix. Walmart finalised the valuation of assets and liabilities of Flipkart in the second quarter of FY20. As per this, Flipkart

has assets of \$24.1 billion, which comprise primarily of \$2.2 billion in cash and cash equivalents, \$2.8 billion in other current assets, \$5 billion in intangible assets and \$13.5 billion in goodwill. Of the intangible assets, \$4.7 billion represents the fair value of trade names. The remaining \$0.3 billion of intangible assets primarily relate to acquired technology with a life of three years. Flipkart has liabilities of \$3.7 billion, which comprise primarily of \$1.8 billion of current liabilities and \$1.7 billion of deferred income taxes and non-controlling interest of \$4.3 billion. The company began consolidating the financial statements of Flipkart in the third quarter of FY19, using a one-month lag.

BHARAT BIOTECH SEEKS NOD TO EXTEND SHELF LIFE OF COVAXIN

New Delhi, April 25: Bharat Biotech has written to the drug regulator, seeking extension of the shelf life of its indigenously developed vaccine, Covaxin, from six to 24 months, sources said on Sunday.

Bharat Biotech was given permission for sale and distribution of Covaxin with a shelf life of six months when stored at two to eight degrees Celsius. "Now, we are herewith applying for the extension of shelf life from six months to 24 months when stored at 2-8 degrees Celsius," the firm said in its application to the Drugs Controller General of India. Bharat Biotech has submitted updated accelerated and real-time stability data of Coaxin, in support of its claim. — PTI

Mkt momentum to be tested in event-heavy week

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, APRIL 25

The equity market is lacking foreign and domestic institutional investors support, as the Covid-19 cases saw almost a vertical rise to above 3 lakh infections daily, leading to caution. The Indian currency has also weakened against the US dollar to the levels seen during the market crash last year. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net sellers of equities worth Rs 8,674 crore in April so far. The previous six months have been good for the market, as after September 2020 FPIs had turned net buyers in a big way. Mutual funds also reduced equity buying in April so far to just Rs 1,251.72 crore against Rs 2,476.45 crore net buying in March. But domestic institutional investors, including mutual funds, insurance, banks and pension funds, were net buyers by Rs 7,960.71 crore. With the rupee expected to weaken further this year, FPIs may not resume buying in a big way unless the currency stabilises. "The Indian rupee, Asia's best-performing currency in March, is going to slide right back to levels last seen in the depths of the pandemic meltdown; the currency will drop toward 76.5 to a dollar by the end of the year," according to Parul Mittal Sinha, head of macro trading, India and South Asia financial markets, Standard Chartered. "We do not see the



volatility easing out in the coming week too, thanks to scheduled data and events," said Ajit Mishra, VP-research, Religare Broking. "The monthly expiry of April month derivatives contracts will keep the traders on their toes. On the data front, core sector data will be unveiled on April 30. The recent proposal by the US President to raise capital gains tax has started showing its impact in US markets which may cascade to others in the coming week. Needless to say, the Covid-related updates will remain on the participants' radar," Mishra said. "Details of US President Joe Biden's proposed wealth tax will start emerging next week. Biden wants to raise the federal capital gains tax to 43.4 per cent for the richest of individuals, bringing combined state and federal rates in places such as New York and California to well above 50 per cent—the highest ever in US history. Expect volatility whenever these details emerge," said an analyst tracking Indian market. The market will also react to earnings of many blue chips this week.

CHIP SHORTAGE: VW WARNS OF WORSENING SITUATION

April 25: Volkswagen AG has warned managers to prepare for a bigger production hit in the second quarter than the first due to a global chip shortage, the Financial Times reported.

"We are being told from the suppliers and within the Volkswagen Group that we need to face considerable challenges in the second quarter, probably more challenging than the first quarter," Wayne Griffiths, president of Volkswagen's Spanish brand Seat, said. Griffiths called the shortage the "biggest challenge" the company faces at the moment. He said production at Seat's Martorell plant outside Barcelona was currently "hand to mouth", with the brand deciding what cars to build only after it receives chips from suppliers, the report said. Volkswagen has said it expects chip supply to remain tight in the coming months, adding it could not provide visibility for the full year. The company has been unable to build 100,000 cars due to the shortage, CEO Herbert Diess said last month, adding the group would not be able to make up for the shortfall in 2021. "The situation has been exacerbated i.e. by the blizzards that have occurred in Texas, as the large chip manufacturers based there had to stop or reduce their production. For that reason further adjustments to production cannot be ruled out", Volkswagen said in an emailed statement. — Reuters

GAMES

SHORT TAKES

Amit settles for bronze in Russia

New Delhi: Olympic-bound Indian boxer Amit Panghal (52kg) settled for a bronze medal at the Governor's Cup in St Petersburg, Russia after going down to world champion and familiar foe Shakhobidin Zoirov in the semifinals. Amit, a world championships silver-medallist, lost 5-0 to the Uzbek, who is also the reigning Olympic champion. This was the Indian's second loss to Zoirov after the 2019 world championships. In that event, he had lost to Zoirov in the finals. Both the boxers are bound for the Tokyo Games, to be held in July-August. Amit was the lone Indian to make the medal round. — PTI

Barty survives early scare to win title

Stuttgart, Germany: World number one Ashleigh Barty earned her third WTA title this year by beating Aryna Sabalenka in the final of Stuttgart's clay-court tournament on Sunday. After winning in Miami and a pre-Australian Open event in Melbourne on hard court, Barty added the Stuttgart title, her first tournament on clay this season. A day after her 25th birthday, the Australian rallied from losing the first set to claim a 3-6, 6-0, 6-3 win over Sabalenka, who needed a medical time-out after the second set for an adductor injury. — AFP

Nadal sets up final date with Tsitsipas

Barcelona: Rafael Nadal will face a red-hot Stefanos Tsitsipas in the Barcelona Open final after the 11-time champion eased past fellow Spaniard Pablo Carreno 6-3, 6-2 on Saturday. Nadal roared out to a 5-1 lead before Carreno pulled back a break. Carreno then had three break chances on Nadal's next service game, but the latter saved them all and closed out the set. The top-seeded Nadal improved to an 8-0 career record against Carreno. The second-seeded Tsitsipas advanced after beating Janik Sinner 6-3, 6-3 for his eighth consecutive straight-set victory including last week's title run at Monte Carlo. — AP

Red Devils' lacklustre roadshow Man United held goal-less by lowly Leeds as Burnley pull clear of danger

London, April 25: Manchester United drew 0-0 with Leeds on Sunday to stay on track for a second-place finish in the Premier League after Burnley took a giant step towards survival.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's men beat their bitter rivals 6-2 at Old Trafford in December but both sides looked short of energy and imagination in a lacklustre encounter at Elland Road. The result takes United to 67 points after 33 games, 10 points behind champions-elect Manchester City but eight points clear of third-placed Leicester. Solskjaer rested Paul Pogba and Edinson Cavani with one eye on Thursday's Europa League semi-final first leg against Roma and they lacked fluidity, especially in the first half. Manchester City, Manchester United, Leicester and Chelsea currently occupy the top-four spots in the Premier League but just seven points separate Leicester from eighth-placed Everton. Most of the teams have just five games to play.



Leeds United's Jack Harrison (left) vies for the ball with Aaron Wan-Bissaka of Manchester United in an English Premier League in Leeds on Sunday. — AFP

Earlier, Chris Wood scored a first-half hat-trick as Burnley pummelled Wolves 4-0 to lift themselves nine points clear of the Premier League relegation zone.

BLUES STRENGTHEN HOLD ON TOP FOUR Chelsea took control of the battle to secure

Champions League football next season as Timo Werner's goal earned a 1-0 win over West Ham on Saturday, while Liverpool conceded a stoppage time equaliser to draw 1-1 with Newcastle. The Blues are now in pole position as just a second Premier League goal in 22 games for Werner

opened up a three-point advantage over the Hammers in fifth. Liverpool are now four points adrift of the top four after throwing away a late lead against Newcastle, leading manager Jurgen Klopp to say they do not deserve a place in the Champions League. — AFP

LEAGUES IN UK SET TO BOYCOTT SOCIAL MEDIA

London, April 25: English football is uniting to boycott social media for four days in response to relentless online abuse of players. The blackout of Facebook, Twitter and Instagram will begin next Friday and last until Monday, covering a full round of games in the men's and women's professional leagues. It will be undertaken by the FA, Premier League, English Football League, Women's Super League, Women's Championship as well as player, manager and referee bodies. The boycott shows English football coming together to emphasize that social media companies must do more to eradicate online hate, a joint statement read, while highlighting the importance of educating people in the ongoing fight against discrimination. — AP

Bess hated game after bubble pain

London, April 25: England off-spinner Dom Bess has revealed that he had started "hating cricket" after his prolonged stay inside a bio-bubble during the Test tour of India earlier this year.

Bess got just five wickets from two Tests in the fourth-match series which India won 3-1. He was dropped after helping England to victory in the first Test in Chennai, only to return for the final match in Ahmedabad, where he went wicket-less during an innings defeat. After spending around seven weeks inside the bio-bubble in India, the 23-year-old Bess is currently involved in the county season, looking to rediscover his form with Yorkshire. "After India I had a good break away from it, because I really did start hating cricket," Bess was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "It got too much at times, certainly in that bubble in India, there's a lot of pressure going on and it was really important for me to come back and get away from it," he said. On returning from India, Bess had "two or three weeks off", getting to know his new home in Leeds and spending time with his girlfriend and the



Dom Bess

puppy they have adopted. "It was nice to see them and get away from it, because in India, in the bubble, everything was about cricket. And it's fine when you're going well, but when things aren't going well it is very tough," he said. "But I only see what I had in India as a great positive. It's been a tough time really, but one hell of a learning curve for me. And it terms of where I see my game, I know what I've got to do. That's so exciting, knowing that I've still got so much work to do, when I'm so close as well, at times." Bess said he learnt some really tough lessons in India and felt that should improve his chances of achieving success with England in the long run. — PTI

AZAM FASTEST TO REACH 2000 RUNS AS PAK WIN

Harare, April 25: Pakistan captain Babar Azam became the fastest batsman to reach 2,000 Twenty20 international runs Sunday, achieving the feat in 52 innings, four fewer than India skipper Virat Kohli. Azam lifted his T20 total to 2,035 runs by making 52 as Pakistan defeated Zimbabwe by 24 runs to win a T20 series 2-1 at Harare Sports Club. Kohli has scored 3,159 runs in the 20-over format, but it took him 56 innings to pass the 2,000-run landmark. Azam won the toss, opted to bat and the tourists made 165-3 in 20 overs as they sought redemption after a shock 19-run loss two days ago. The batting of Mohammad Rizwan (91 not out) and Azam (52) and career-best bowling from Hasan Ali (4-18) ultimately ensured Pakistan would not suffer the humiliation of losing the series. — AFP Brief scores: Pakistan 163/3 in 20 overs (Mohammad Rizwan 91 not out, Babar Azam 52; L. Jongwe 3-37) bt Zimbabwe 141/7 in 20 overs (Madhevere 59, Marumani 35, Hasan 4-18, Rauf 2-34).

Zidane's men slip in title race after draw at home

Madrid, April 25: Real Madrid handed the initiative back to Atletico Madrid in La Liga on Saturday by drawing at home to Real Betis, a result that raises doubts about the team's condition ahead of Tuesday's Champions League semi-final against Chelsea. Eden Hazard was thrown on for the last 15 minutes of the 0-0 draw at Vallebebas in what was only the Belgian's second appearance in three months but Madrid could not find a way through. Atletico are now two points clear at the top of La Liga and can extend



that advantage to five by winning away at Athletic Bilbao on Sunday. Barcelona could pull level on points with Real Madrid if they overcome Villarreal. Real Madrid struggled for chances and the concern will be that numerous injuries and fatigue are catching up with Zinedine Zidane's side at a crucial moment in the season. "It's two points dropped, that's obvious, we lacked a lot going forward, especially at the start of the game," said Zidane. "We weren't sharp but that can happen. We have

to go again on Tuesday." They play Chelsea at home on Tuesday in the first leg of the Champions League semi-finals and it is possible none of Toni Kroos, Sergio Ramos, Ferland Mendy, Fede Valverde or Lucas Vazquez, all absent due to injury, will return. Hazard could feature against his former club after coming on for the final quarter of an hour but the fact Zidane waited so long to introduce him suggests he is still not considered match fit, having now played 30 minutes since the end of January. — AFP

REAL PREZ SAYS SUPER LEAGUE CLUBS 'CANNOT LEAVE' PLAN

Madrid, April 25: Real Madrid's president insists all 12 clubs that signed up for the ill-fated Super League are still bound by contract to launching the controversial breakaway of Europe's elite soccer teams. In an interview with Spanish sports daily AS on Saturday, Madrid president Florentino Perez said the clubs can't back out like some have announced. "The fact is, the clubs can't leave," Perez said. "Some, because of the pressure, have had to say they'll leave. But this project, or something very similar, will happen, and I hope it's in the near future."

All six English clubs — Arsenal, Chelsea, Liverpool, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham — backed away from the proposal within 48 hours of its unveiling last weekend because of a backlash by fans and authorities. Atletico Madrid and Inter Milan followed suit a day later. Italian heavyweights Juventus and AC Milan admitted the project was going nowhere immediately, while leaving open the possibility of joining a Super League at a later date. Perez denied reports that U.S. financier JP Morgan Chase had also deserted the project. — AP

ORANGE	
Shikhar Dhawan, DC	259
KL Rahul, PBKS	221
Faf du Plessis, CSK	214
PURPLE	
Harshal Patel, RCB	15
Avesh Khan, DC	11
Rahul Chahar, MI	9

Off the field



Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma arrives in New Delhi with his daughter. — MI

Tye pulls out due to personal reason

Rajasthan Royals' Australian pacer Andrew Tye on Sunday flew back home due to "personal reasons" making him the fourth overseas recruit of the franchise to pull out of the ongoing Indian Premier League. Earlier, Englishmen Jofra Archer (hand surgery), Ben Stokes (finger fracture) and Liam Livingstone (bubble fatigue) had opted out. "AJ Tye flew back to Australia earlier today due to personal reasons. We will continue to offer any support he may need," Royals tweeted on Sunday.

The 34-year-old Tye hasn't yet got a game in this edition of the tournament.

Kohli fined ₹12L for slow over-rate

Royal Challengers Bangalore skipper Virat Kohli was fined ₹12 lakh for his team's slow over-rate against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL game on Sunday. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Mr Kohli was fined ₹12 lakh," a press release said.

Hussey backs Gill to fire again for KKR

Backing the out-of form Shubman Gill, Kolkata Knight Riders team mentor David Hussey said the opener is a "class act" who will be among the highest-scoring batsmen by the end of the IPL. The highly talented 21-year-old has not been at his best this season, managing 80 runs from five matches.

"He is a star player, he took the Test match arena by storm in Australia. He is very specific and he has a great work ethic," said Hussey.

"All I can say is that form will come and go, class is always permanent. He is one class individual, both on and off the field. Mark my words, he will be one of the highest-scoring batsmen by the end of the tournament. He is an absolute class act," Hussey added.

Asked why Kiwi speedster Lockie Ferguson has not got a game yet, Hussey said the team management will be going back to the drawing board in terms of strategies.

SUPER DELHIVERY

Axar does star turn as Capitals edge Sunrisers in Super Over

Chennai, April 25: Delhi Capitals beat Sunrisers Hyderabad in a thrilling Super Over contest in the Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

Batting first, Delhi Capitals managed to score 159 for 4 with opener Prithvi Shaw back in form with a 53 off 39 balls. Skipper Rishabh Pant scored 37 off 27 balls. Steve Smith remained not out on 34 off 25 balls. For SRH, pacer Siddarth Kaul took 2 for 31 in 4 overs.

In reply, SRH scored 159 for 7 with Kane Williamson contributing 66 nt off 51 balls as the match went into Super Over.

In the Super Over, SRH managed only 7 off Axar Patel while DC scored the runs of the last delivery. SRH skipper David Warner said: "I thought the way the bowlers came back after the powerplay was fantastic. Vijay is not one of our strike bowlers, but he was fantastic. Johnny at the top and Kane batted deep but we couldn't make it. They bowled fantastically in the middle and brought it back. If you hit the ball to a world-class fielder, you get run-out nine times out of ten."

Earlier, Prithvi Shaw hit a sparkling fifty but Delhi Capitals frittered away a bright start to settle for 159 for four.

The 81-run stand between openers Shaw (53) and Shikhar Dhawan (28) had set a perfect platform for DC for a huge total but Hyderabad spinners Rashid Khan (1/31 in 4 overs) and Jagadeesha Suchith changed the course of the innings with their tight spells.

Skipper Rishabh Pant (37) and Steve Smith (34 not out) raised a 58-run stand for the fourth wicket to ensure a fighting total after electing to bat. Shaw began with a hat-trick of fours off pacer Khaleel Ahmed. Those were breathtaking strokes, straight out of text book.

There was sheer elegance in his cover drives, both along the ground and the ones played over the



Delhi Capitals spinner Axar Patel celebrates after taking a Sunrisers Hyderabad wicket in an IPL game on Sunday. — IPL

field as Shaw backed his timing with precision and power.

His six off pacer Siddarth Kaul over long on and the ramp shot over short third-man off the same bowler bore testimony to his supreme touch.

Dhawan was happy playing the second fiddle as the Capitals put on board 51 without loss in

Powerplay overs.

Left-arm spinner Suchith, playing his first game for SRH, did a decent job, giving away only 21 runs in his four-over quota. He consistently troubled Dhawan.

Suchith bowled in tandem with Khan, SRH's best spinner over the years, as the two bowlers put brakes on the run flow.

Rashid also provided his side with first breakthrough when he found stumps of Dhawan, ending DC's 81-run opening stand.

Shaw's splendid knock ended in a run out after a mix-up with skipper Pant.

Pant and former Australia captain Steve Smith were now two new batsmen at the crease.

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw run out (Ahmed/Suchith) 53, Shikhar Dhawan b Rashid Khan 28, Rishabh Pant c Suchith b Kaul 37, Steven Smith (not out) 34, Shimron Hetmyer c Williamson b Kaul 1, Marcus Stoinis (not out) 2. **Extras (b 1, nb 1, w 2) 4. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 159.**

FoW: 1-81, 2-84, 3-142, 4-145.

Bowling: Khaleel Ahmed 4-0-42-0, Abhishek Sharma 1-0-14-0, Siddarth Kaul 4-0-31-2, Jagadeesha Suchith 4-0-21-0, Vijay Shankar 3-0-19-0, Rashid Khan 4-0-31-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner run out (Rabada/Pant) 6, Jonny Bairstow c Dhawan b Avesh Khan 38, Kane Williamson (not out) 66, Virat Singh c Stoinis b Avesh Khan 4, Kedar Jadhav st Pant b Mishra 9, Abhishek Sharma lbw b Patel 5, Rashid Khan lbw b Patel 0, Vijay Shankar b Avesh Khan 8, Jagadeesha Suchith (not out) 15. **Extras (b 2, lb 1, w 5) 8. Total (for seven wickets in 20 overs) 159.**

FoW: 1-28, 2-56, 3-84, 4-104, 5-117, 6-117, 7-136.

Bowling: Kagiso Rabada 3-0-26-0, R. Ashwin 4-0-27-0, Marcus Stoinis 1-0-12-0, Axar Patel 4-0-26-2, Avesh Khan 4-0-34-3, Amit Mishra 4-0-31-1.

Delhi Capitals won the Super Over.

They kept the scoreboard moving.

Smith was dropped on 14 by Kaul off Vijay Shankar. Khaleel had also missed out on a chance offered by Pant a few balls ago off Rashid.

The duo managed to get a few boundaries but SRH bowlers largely controlled the proceedings.

— Agencies

POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Points	Net RR
CSK	5	4	1	0	8	+1.612
DC	5	4	1	0	8	+0.334
RCB	5	4	1	0	8	+0.096
MI	5	2	3	0	4	-0.032
PBKS	5	2	3	0	4	-0.428
RR	5	2	3	0	4	-0.681
SRH	5	1	4	0	2	-0.180
KKR	5	1	4	0	2	-0.675

Can Knights end miserable slump?

Ahmedabad, April 25: Their three-match losing streak finally over, Punjab Kings would seek to build a winning momentum when they face the struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL match here on Monday. Punjab made a winning start but then slumped to three straight losses before producing a clinical show to beat defending champions Mumbai by nine wickets on Friday, and they would look to notch up another triumph against KKR which have suffered four defeats on the trot.

Captain KL Rahul has been one of the few consistent performers in the formidable-looking Punjab batting unit and he once again led by example against MI with an unbeaten 60, his third fifty in five games.

Mayank Agarwal has been the other main performer and the return to form of 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle against MI with a 43 not out should be good news for Punjab.

But Deepak Hooda, who has not done much after one impressive innings, will have to step up if Punjab want to perform consistently.

The place of Nicholas Pooran, who has scored 0, 0, 0, in the playing XI is expected to be under review though his turn did not come in the last match.

The Punjab bowlers, who have been pedestrian in earlier matches, came good in their last match with the talented Ravi Bishnoi (2/21) and senior India pacer Mohammad Shami (2/21) leading the charge.

Young Arshdeep Singh has been a consistent bowler with six wickets from five matches.

On the other hand, KKR, led by England's World Cup

Live on TV

Punjab Kings vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

HEAD to HEAD

Matches 27

KKR 18 PBKS 9

FOR THE RECORD

● Eoin Morgan with 6,957 runs at an average of 27.07 in 300 innings needs 43 runs to become the fourth Englishman and 23rd batsman overall to complete 7,000 runs in T20.

● Chris Gayle has scored 700 runs at an average of 46.66 in 18 innings against Kolkata Knight Riders in IPL.

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

● KKR beat Punjab by two runs at Abu Dhabi.

● Punjab beat KKR by 8 wickets at Sharjah.

STATS: S. PERVEZ KAISER

winning skipper Eoin Morgan, continued to slide after losing to Rajasthan Royals by six wickets in their last match.

Their batting unit need a complete turnaround in form if KKR has to snap their losing streak.

The top-five batsmen continued to struggle with only Nitish Rana — two half centuries — and Dinesh Karthik doing anything of worth.

Pacer Pat Cummins played an incredible innings — 66 not out — for a losing cause against Chennai Super Kings but KKR would like their specialist batsmen to deliver consistently instead of relying on the lower order.

Gill and Morgan have been in woeful form and they desperately need big scores to make themselves count.

— PTI

High sir! Jadeja puts CSK on top

Mumbai, April 25: The irrepressible Ravindra Jadeja blasted an IPL record-equalling 37 runs in one over and then grabbed three big wickets in an outstanding all-round display as Chennai Super Kings crushed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 69 runs here on Sunday.

Jadeja pummelled 62 off 28 balls and lifted CSK to 191 for four after skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni opted to bat in a top-of-the-table clash.

Then, with his slow-left arm spin bowling, the star all-rounder picked up the important wickets of AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell to derail RCB's run chase on a sluggish Wankhede pitch.

After a cracking start that saw them cross 50 in five overs, RCB were stopped at 122 for nine in 20 overs. The immensely-talented Devdutt Padikkal top-scored with a blazing 34 off just 15 balls.

Veteran South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir (2/16) picked up two wickets for CSK while giving away very few runs.

Jadeja began the final over of CSK innings by clobbering four consecutive sixes off Harshal Patel before adding another off the fifth ball.

He smashed the last ball over square leg for four as Harshal, who had figures of 3 for 14 going into the final over, finished with 4-0-51-3.

Jadeja, batting at No.5, was yet to open his account when he was dropped by Dan Christian off Washington Sundar.

Playing for RCB, Chris Gayle had also scored 37



Ravindra Jadeja celebrates an RCB wicket. — IPL

SCORECARD

Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad c Jamieson b Chahal 33, Faf du Plessis c Christian b Patel 50, Suresh Raina c Padikkal b Patel 24, Ambati Rayudu c Jamieson b Patel 14, Ravindra Jadeja (not out) 62, MS Dhoni (not out) 2. **Extras (lb 1, nb 2, w 3) 6. Total (for four wickets in 20 overs) 191.**

FoW: 1-74, 2-111, 3-111, 4-142.

Bowling: Mohammed Siraj 4-0-32-0, Kyle Jamieson 3-0-31-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 3-0-24-1, Navdeep Saini 2-0-27-0, Harshal Patel 4-0-51-3, Dan Christian 2-0-12-0, Washington Sundar 2-0-13-0.

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli c Dhoni b Curran 8, Devdutt Padikkal c Raina b Thakur 34, Washington Sundar c Gaikwad b Jadeja 7, Glenn Maxwell b Jadeja 22, AB de Villiers b Jadeja 4, Dan Christian run out (Jadeja) 1, Kyle Jamieson run out (Imran Tahir) 16, Harshal Patel b Imran Tahir 0, Navdeep Saini c Raina b Imran Tahir 2, Yuzvendra Chahal (not out) 8, Mohammed Siraj (not out) 12. **Extras (lb 3, w 5) 8. Total (for nine wickets in 20 overs) 122.**

FoW: 1-44, 2-54, 3-65, 4-79, 5-81, 6-83, 7-89, 8-94, 9-103.

Bowling: Deepak Chahar 2-0-25-0, Sam Curran 4-0-35-1, Shardul Thakur 4-0-11-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-1-13-3, Imran Tahir 4-0-16-2, Dwayne Bravo 2-0-19-0.

runs, against Kochi Tuskers Kerala in the 2011 edition, the bowler being Prasanth Parameswaran on that occasion.

The left-handed Jadeja made full use of the reprieve to ruin what was turning out to be an excellent outing for purple cap holder Harshal, Patel, with his brutal last over onslaught.

With CSK placed at 154/4 when Harshal was handed the ball, Jadeja hit the first four balls for towering sixes and followed them with another maximum and a boundary in the seven-ball final over.

Skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni remained not out on 2.

Jadeja's assault came after the RCB bowlers — Patel and Mohd Siraj (0/32) — had kept CSK in check.

Earlier, a second straight half-century for Faf du Plessis (50 off 41 balls) propelled CSK before Harshal delivered a double blow for RCB in the 14th over, getting rid of Suresh Raina (24) and the former South African captain off successive deliveries.

Raina belted three sixes during his 18-ball knock which gave CSK the move-on after the openers had set up a good platform with a 74-run partnership.

Ambati Rayudu, who came in at No.4, hit a huge six in his 14 and looked good for more before he holed out off Harshal's bowling a few deliveries after appearing to have hurt himself while stretching to get back to the crease. — PTI

RAVINDRA CAN TURN MATCH ON HIS OWN: DHONI

Mumbai, April 25: All-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's significant improvement in batting has convinced his Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni to give him "those extra deliveries" that can change the complexion of a game.

"Jaddu is somebody who can change the game on his own. In the last few years, we've seen significant change in batting and it's worth it to give him that extra bit of time, extra deliveries," Dhoni said.

"The bowlers have found it difficult to contain left-handers, and that helps as well," Dhoni said.

— PTI

KOHLI HAPPY TO SEE JADDU FIRE AHEAD OF T20 CUP

Mumbai, April 25: Premier all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja's brilliance may have ruined the Virat Kohli-led Royal Challengers Bangalore's plans in the IPL here on Sunday but with one eye on this year's T20 World Cup, the India captain was not complaining. In fact, Kohli seemed delighted to see his India teammate make an excellent return after a long injury layoff.

"His (Jadeja) ability has been there for everyone to see. I am very happy to see him perform with the bat, ball and on the field," Kohli said at the post-match presentation ceremony. — PTI



KKR players leave for Ahmedabad where the next leg of IPL begins from Monday. — KKR

OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KEEP PEOPLE HAPPY, SAYS MORRIS

Mumbai, April 25: Rajasthan Royals all-rounder Chris Morris says the COVID-19 catastrophe in India has been discussed in his team multiple times and the players can feel the pain that the pandemic is causing in its deadly second wave here.

India is reeling under the second wave of the pandemic with cases rising by over 3 lakh everyday, a crisis compounded by shortage of some crucial medicines and oxygen supplies. Morris said it is "difficult to comprehend" what is happening.

"As a team, we have been talking about it quite a lot over the last couple of days. We have seen how badly this pandemic has taken over the specific parts, if not all of India," Morris said at the post-match press conference after his side defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by six wickets here on Saturday.

"It is quite difficult to comprehend what is happening. It is a responsibility for us to play with smiles on our faces because we have a reason to smile and that we are healthy and get to play cricket.

"We hopefully get to keep people happy on the other side of the screen. Whether we winning or losing, it is an opportunity to keep people smiling, if that gives people a reason to smile, then we are doing well as a sport," he added.

— PTI