

A CENTENNIAL TRIBUTE



'OTT PLATFORMS
AREN'T
EXPERIMENTING MUCH'

P6



POPE ALLOWS VATICAN
PROSECUTIONS

P7



WHEN DE KOCK GETS
GOING, RIVALS
GET THE JITTERS

P11



P12

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

18-plus jab roll-out to be a non-starter in Bengal, other states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 30 APRIL

will be going ahead with the roll-out, but in a restricted manner.

The Central government said that some states, which have already coordinated with manufacturers, will kick off the drive on the designated date.

According to the Union health ministry, over 2.45 crore people have registered themselves for the next phase of Covid-19 vaccination on the Co-WIN digital platform till yesterday.

Delhi, Punjab, Karnataka, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir among others, have said they would be unable to start the drive for the inoculation of people aged 18-45 years against Covid-19 on day one, citing uncertainty over supply of vaccine doses.

States such as Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat



Outside an empty Covid vaccination centre after Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation issued a notice about no vaccinations for three days in Mumbai on Friday.

it said. The vaccination process for frontline workers and adults above 45 years would continue free of cost in government hospitals. People who are waiting for their second doses would be given preference during inoculation, the statement said.

Arvind Kejriwal said the national capital will not join the national level rollout of vaccination for people aged 18-44 years, since the required vaccine doses have not been received yet.

In the next one-two days, around three lakh Covishield vaccines will be received and the drive for vaccination

ing people in the age group 18-44 years will commence, Kejriwal said in an online briefing.

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh made it clear that due to non-availability of vaccine, Phase III of vaccination of 18-45 age group cannot be started as scheduled.

He also said that all vaccinations at private health facilities will remain suspended from Saturday.

The chief minister said as the balance of unutilised vaccines had to be returned to the Central government by all private health facilities by Friday evening, these facilities would have no vaccines to administer from Friday even for the 45+ population.

Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Friday that vaccination for the age group of 18-35 can only start in September this year once the vaccination process for those above 45 is completed. This is because the demand for 39 crore vaccines can be met only in July and August. He said it will take four months to complete the vaccination of the 18-45 age group.

A senior Odisha government official said the state cannot start the vaccination drive for those aged 18 and above from tomorrow as the state does not have the required vaccine stock.

In Karnataka, chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa said vaccination for people above 18 years of age will be delayed in the state as the vaccine has not been supplied yet. In Himachal Pradesh, an offi-

cial affirmed that the vaccination for the 18-44 age group will not begin on 1 May, as announced earlier, as the vaccine supply from the manufacturer is expected only after three-four weeks.

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray said the inoculation of those above 18 years of age will start from Saturday in his state as per the availability of vaccine doses.

The Gujarat government said on Friday that the Phase III of Covid-19 vaccination would start tomorrow, but only in ten worst-affected districts. Uttar Pradesh will launch the vaccination drive for the 18-44 age group in seven districts with high Covid numbers.

(With PTI inputs)

SEE INSIDE PAGES

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 39 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 66% Min: 29%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 40.0°C (+1) Min: 23.2°C (-1)
SUN RISES 05:40 hrs SUN SETS 18:56 hrs
MOON RISES 23:51 hrs MOON SETS 10:15 hrs

THUMBNAILS



An under construction temporary Covid Care Centre at Ramila Maidan, as Covid cases surge across India, in New Delhi on Friday. AGENCIES

44 killed in stampede at festival in Israel: In one of the worst peacetime tragedies in Israel, at least 44 people were crushed to death and about 150 others injured in a stampede overnight at an overcrowded Jewish religious gathering in the country's north attended by tens of thousands of people flouting the coronavirus-related restrictions. The town is the site of the tomb of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, a 2nd-century sage, and is considered to be one of the holiest sites in the Jewish world.

P10

UAE could be back-up venue for T20 World Cup: This year's Twenty20 World Cup could be moved to the United Arab Emirates if the Covid-19 crisis does not subside in India, the country's cricket board (BCCI) said. Six months before the showpiece's scheduled start, India reported a record number of new cases on Friday, though medical experts believe actual numbers may be five to 10 times greater. The governing International Cricket Council (ICC) said this month it was sticking to hosting the event in India but had back-up plans.

P12

Jaishankar discusses Ladakh with Chinese FM: Asserting that it was necessary to complete the process of disengagement in eastern Ladakh "at the earliest", External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Friday conveyed to his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi the need for "full and sincere" implementation of an agreement on restoration of peace in the region. Jaishankar tweeted "also discussed the issue of full and sincere implementation of the Moscow Agreement of complete disengagement at all friction points along the LAC and full restoration of peace in Eastern Ladakh."

The total Covid case

count is 8,28,366, with the death toll standing at 11,344 while there are 1,13,624 active cases.

Bazaars or haats will remain open from 7 to 10 a.m. and from 3 to 5 p.m. All shopping complexes, malls, beauty parlours, cinema halls, restaurants and bars, sports complexes, gyms, spas and swimming pools will remain closed.

Home deliveries shall be permitted. Along with essential services like medical shops, medical equipment shops, groceries and other shops have been excluded from the ambit of restrictions. All social, academic, cultural and entertainment related gatherings and congregations shall remain prohibited.

With counting of votes scheduled on 2 May, the state government has come up with specific restrictions for conducting the process while adhering to the Covid protocols. All activities related to electoral counting process and victory rallies or processions

"Any violation of these orders will be liable to be proceeded against as per provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005," read the notification.

President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were among a host of leaders who condoled the passing away of the eminent jurist. The Prime Minister described him as an outstanding lawyer who was at the forefront of helping the poor and downtrodden through law. Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana also condoled the

demise of Sorabjee.

Considered one of the best Constitutional law experts, Sorabjee wrote several books on laws and justice, press censorship and the Emergency, and vehemently fought against human and fundamental rights violations. One of his recent court battles pertaining to fundamental right violations was the Shreya Singhal case in 2015 agreed to his submissions and struck down a provision in the Information Technology Act relating to restrictions on online freedom of speech and expression.

The top court held that section 66A was unconstitutional as being violative of freedom of speech guaranteed under the Constitution, the point put forth by Sorabjee. Considered close to Vajpayee, Sorabjee had led India's fight in the International Court

of Justice (ICJ) when Pakistan sought compensation from India for downing of their naval patrol aircraft Atlantic in 1999 just after the Kargil war.

The ICJ at the Hague ruled in India's favour after taking note of submissions of Sorabjee and dismissed Pakistan's claim for compensation, saying it had no jurisdiction over the matter. He also appeared and worked for the Citizen's Justice Committee which represented anti-Sikh riot victims.

Born in a Parsi family in 1930, Sorabjee enrolled at the bar in 1953 and was designated senior advocate by the Bombay High Court in 1971.

Sorabjee appeared in many important cases including the Kesavananda Bharati matter on basic structure doctrine and the S.R.Bommai matter relating to invocation of President's rule in states among others.

SEE ALSO PAGE 5

Oxygen import for personal use: The government on Friday permitted import of oxygen concentrators for personal use, through post, courier or e-commerce portals under gift category

to poll rallies amidst the Covid-19 second wave. The remark was widely reported in media which irked ECI and they approached the court with such a plea.

When Rakesh Dwivedi submitted suo moto plea for the ECI said the media should be instructed not to sensationalize anything, the bench headed by Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee said, "We will leave it at that."

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The bench, also com-

prising Justices L.Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat, said, If any action is taken against such posts by citizens in distress, we will treat it as contempt of the court.

The apex court's obser-

vations come following the recent decision of the UP administration to prosecute people under the National Security Act for allegedly raising false alarms on social media.

Twitter after the meeting.

The meeting, held virtually through video conferencing, was attended, apart from the council of ministers, by Niti Aayog member V.K. Paul.

Taking serious note of the situation, the council of ministers earlier termed the global pandemic a 'once in a century crisis'.

They called for wider participation of society in controlling the spread by adopting 'Covid appropriate' behaviour. The PM underlined the need for greater involvement of ministers in Covid management in their respective constituencies.

First consignment of US

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Emergency powers granted to Army: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday invoked special provisions and granted emergency financial powers to the armed forces to empower them and speed up their efforts to tide over Covid crisis. These powers will help formation commanders to operate quarantine facilities and undertake procurement/repair of equipments.

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Help arrives from abroad

US gifts 423 O2 cylinders with regulators and other medical supplies

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Both the Centre and the state government were unprepared

ASOK BHATTACHARYA, CPI-M LEADER, FORMER SILIGURI MAYOR

ON THE PRESENT COVID-19 SITUATION IN SILIGURI

Delhi not ready for vaccine rollout for 18-44 today: CM

City to get supply for it in 1-2 days, Kejriwal says, urging people not to queue up at vaccination centres

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

The Centre might have announced that the third phase of the Covid vaccination drive to inoculate people aged 18 years and above will roll out across the country from 1 May, but even the national capital is not prepared for it despite reeling under a coronavirus tsunami that has overwhelmed its healthcare system, hospitals, and crematoriums and graveyards.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today told an online press briefing that the Covid vaccination process for people in the 18-44 years age group, which was to begin tomorrow, would get delayed by a day or two as Delhi currently does not have vaccine supplies required for it.

The CM said the Covid vaccines might be received in a couple of days from their manufacturing com-

panies and then the exercise of vaccination of 18-44 age group — who get registered for it — will get underway.

Kejriwal said, "We are still waiting for the vaccines to start the vaccination process in the case of those who have got registered. There is a good response from people. We will first get three lakh doses of Covishield vaccine tomorrow or the day after. Then the process will begin."

The CM said that the Delhi government was constantly in touch with the vaccine supplying companies. As soon as the vaccine doses are received, the Delhi government will make an official announcement for starting vaccination covering those aged 18 years and above, he said.

Delhi has to get 67 lakh doses each of Covishield and Covaxine vaccines over the next three months. The government has sought the supply schedule from the companies concerned, he



said.

"We are trying our best so that within the next three months the entire population of Delhi gets vaccinated. We have formulated a plan and even the infrastructure needed for this is in place. Now it will depend on the two companies as to how swiftly they provide us with the vaccine. We aim to vaccinate everyone in the next three months if a sufficient quantity of vaccines is supplied by the compa-

nies," Kejriwal said.

The CM sought to assure the Delhi residents that everyone will be vaccinated, appealing to the people, especially the 18-44 age group, not to crowd outside vaccination centres for a few days. "I appeal to them not to queue up at vaccination centres before our announcement (regarding the third phase roll-out) as this might lead to violation of social distancing and create a law and order situation,"

he said.

Kejriwal urged all eligible people to get vaccinated against Covid and also encourage others to do so, adding that the vaccines are completely safe and entail no danger. He said that vaccines will be given to people free of cost in Delhi.

"We will succeed in getting everybody vaccinated in three months with people's cooperation. This will make people safe from the coronavirus infection. We want people's cooperation to successfully complete the vaccination process," he said.

The vaccination process for people aged 45 years or above is already going on, he pointed out.

Kejriwal also said the vaccine might not prevent anybody from getting infected by Covid-19, but the infection will be mild and there will be no need for hospitalisation. Those who get infected after vaccination would get cured easily while being at home, he added.

The court was hearing a

petition seeking medical facilities for lawyers.

Gupta, representing the petitioner, submitted that a private hospital has agreed to give medical treatment to lawyers but it only has oxygen beds and no ICU beds and urged the court to attach them with a hospital which can provide them critical care in case of need.

He said they do not want money, they only want that in case of any emergency, medical help be provided to lawyers and they will collect more funds from their fellow advocates.

Gupta, who broke down while addressing the court, said, "We want my lords to come to our rescue. We do not want to criticise anyone or any government. We have Rs 4.5 crore in our funds and will arrange more from lawyers. We only want my lords to help us. Sirkuch karo aap (Sir please do something)."

The bench asked the Delhi government to take instructions on the issue and inform it at 2:30 pm. During the hearing, Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi also became emotional while informing the court about a lawyer friend's demise due to COVID-19 and said daily we are losing our dear ones.

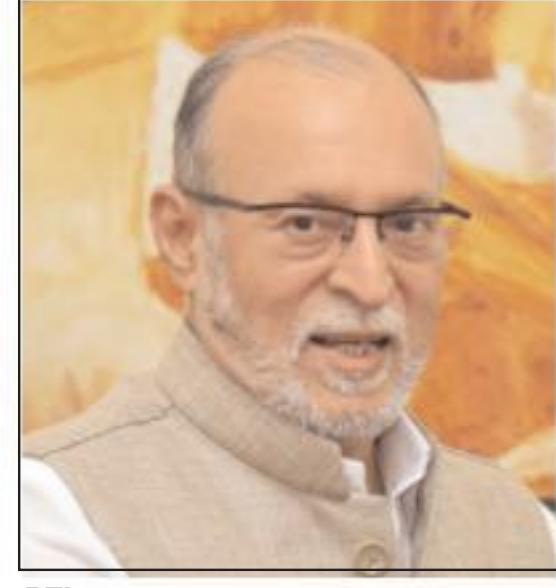
Gupta also submitted that there is a hospital in Dwarka in the name of Indira Gandhi which is under construction for last 8 years and is near completion and urged the court to arrange for 100 oxygen beds for lawyers there.

Meanwhile, an official of an oxygen refiller unit told the court that they were regularly giving their accounts to the Delhi government and were doing their best.

The court asked them to continue doing that and serve the society in these tough times.

It is a war, as a society and community, we cannot let people suffer because of other greed who are indulging in black marketing. This creates artificial scarcity. People in desperation have to buy oxygen cylinders and medicines in black. That money is of no use. We have to bring out best and not our worst at this time. This is not the time to indulge in black marketing, certainly not, the bench observed. The refiller unit's officer assured the court that they were helping in every possible manner and Delhi government officers were managing the work at their plant and Delhi police officials were managing the crowd there.

Delhi LG tests Covid positive



PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal today said that he had tested positive for coronavirus with mild symptoms.

Classified



I, REKHA Rani Biswas, widow of late Manindra Nath Biswas, resident of Vill.: Bethuadahari Govt. Colony, P.O.: Juppur Colony, Dist.: Nadia (W.B.) have changed my name from

Rekha Rani Biswas to Rekha Goswami, vide affidavit dt. 23.04.2021 before the Lt. Executive Magistrate, 1st Class at Kolkata.

I, KULDIP Rajak, S/o. Narayan Rajak, 498, Basunagar, Madhyamgram, North 24 Parganas, Kolkata-700129, hereby declare that my daughter namely Chandrima Basu Rajak and Chandrima Basu is the same and one identical person.

Charnock Hospital, Rajarhat, and her name was written as Chandrima Basu, and her name has been changed to Chandrima Basu Rajak, vide affidavit being No. 5007, dt. 07.04.2021 before the 1st Class Judicial Magistrate, Barasat.

Henceforth Chandrima Basu Rajak and Chandrima Basu is the same and one identical person.

Baijal had taken both doses of the vaccine. He took the first dose of COVID vaccine at the Tirath Ram Shah Hospital in New Delhi last month, an official said.

"I have tested positive for COVID with mild symptoms," he tweeted. "Have isolated myself since the onset of symptoms and all those who were in contact with me have been tested."

Baijal said he would continue to work and monitor the situation in Delhi while being isolated at his residence.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, his deputy Manish Sisodia and Health Minister Satyendar Jain wished for Baijal's speedy recovery.

"Praying for your speedy recovery and good health, sir," Kejriwal tweeted.

AAP MLA demands President's rule in Delhi amid Covid storm



PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

AAP MLA Shoaib Iqbal on Friday demanded imposition of President's rule in Delhi in view of the massive surge in COVID-19 cases.

The Matia Mahal MLA, who left the Congress and contested the Delhi Assembly polls last year on an AAP ticket, said neither him nor the government is able to offer any help to the people affected by the second wave of COVID-19.

No immediate reaction was available from the Aam Aadmi Party on Iqbal's demand.

"I feel embarrassed being an MLA since I cannot be of use to anyone, our government is unable to stand with the people. Despite being

BJP MP seeks imposition of President's rule

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

BJP MP Rakesh Sinha on Friday demanded the imposition of President's rule in Delhi, accusing the Arvind Kejriwal government of leaving people unsafe in the wake of the grim coronavirus situation.

a six-time MLA, there is no one to listen to (me) and I cannot contact anyone," Iqbal said in a video message.

He urged the Delhi High Court to impose the President's rule in the national capital with immediate effect for three months.

"Delhi is in a very bad situation, I request the Delhi High Court for imposition of President's rule in Delhi with immediate effect otherwise there will be dead bodies across the city," the AAP MLA said.

"I feel like crying, I have lost my sleep. People are desperate and unable to find medicines and oxygen. I cannot help even a friend who is in hospital without oxygen and medicines," Iqbal said.

The national capital on Thurs-

"Delhi is in grave crisis. The Arvind Kejriwal government has left people in a state of uncertainty, unsafe. The capital's condition sends out a message to the entire world. The Centre should take direct control of Delhi. Situation is getting worse. President's rule be imposed," the Rajya Sabha member said in a tweet.

day had recorded 395 deaths due to coronavirus, the highest since the pandemic began a year ago, and 24,353 cases with a positivity rate of 32.82 per cent, according to a bulletin issued by the city health department.

This was the eighth day in a row that Delhi had recorded over 300 deaths due to COVID-19.

Iqbal said his demand for the President's rule was not against his party.

"It's not a matter of this or that party. People are dying due to COVID-19 and saving them should be the only priority," he told PTI.

If the Centre can accept help from other nations, then why can't there be President's rule or use of the Army to save people?" the MLA asked.

Capital's Corona horrors rage on; 27,047 cases, 375 deaths logged

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 29 APRIL

itivity rate was 32.82 per cent.

The city had on Wednesday logged 25,986 Covid cases and 368 deaths, while the positivity rate was 31.76 per cent. Delhi had on Tuesday recorded 24,149 coronavirus infections and 381 deaths, while the positivity rate had stood at 32.72 per cent.

The city had on Monday reported 20,201 coronavirus cases and 380 deaths, while the positivity rate was 35.02 per cent. It had on Sunday recorded 22,933 coronavirus cases and 350 Covid-related deaths, while the positivity rate was 30.21 per cent.

Delhi had on Saturday logged 24,103 coronavirus infections and 357 fatalities, while the positivity rate was 32.27 per cent.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 24,235 Covid cases and 395 deaths - its highest single-day Covid fatalities count - while the posi-

Delhi Police busts fake Remdesivir unit in Uttarakhand, 7 arrested

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

Seven persons were arrested by Delhi Police for allegedly running a fake Remdesivir injection manufacturing unit in Kotdwara in Uttarakhand. The accused were arrested after the Delhi Police conducted raids in Kotdwara, Roorkee and Haridwar.

Police also recovered 196 fake "ready to sell fake Remdesivir injections" and 3,000 empty vials from the spot.

Moreover, police found the accused have already allegedly sold 2,000 fake Remdesivir injections, police said.

The accused used to sell fake Remdesivir injection for Rs 25,000, police said.

Delhi Police Commissioner SN Shrivastava took to Twitter to inform about the incident and urged people to be aware about fake drugs.

In all 196 ready to sell fake Remdesivir injections were seized. From the premises, packing machines, 3,000 empty vials for packing Remdesivir were recovered.

Doctor among 3 held for Remdesivir black marketing in Noida

PTI
Noida (UP), 30 APRIL

Three people, including a doctor working in a Delhi hospital, have been arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Noida for allegedly selling Remdesivir injections at black market rates to needy people amid COVID-19 crisis, officials said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Abhishek Singh said the accused were held with three vials of Remdesivir by officials of the Crime Branch and Sector 24 police stations following a tip-off on Thursday.

Accused further disclosed that he already sold 2,000 fake Remdesivir injections to desperate people, SN Shrivastava said in a tweet on Friday.

A team of police was formed to gather information about those who have been given these fake injections.

The mastermind, Aaditya Gautam, used to run the factory where medicines were manufactured.

But, in the wake of rising demand for Remdesivir drug, he started operating a unit to make fake Remdesivir injections.

Aaditya Gautam is a resident of Roorkee and has been arrested by

They would then sell it to needy people at the rate of Rs 35,000 per vial and share the profit among themselves. So far, they have sold around a dozen injections, Singh said. The accused are being further interrogated and other details being gathered from them, he added.

Police said they have impounded a Maruti Brezza being used by the trio and seized their mobile phones and three vials of Remdesivir.

An FIR has been lodged against them and legal proceedings initiated, they added.

the Delhi Police. According to police, several other people are involved in the syndicate.

Delhi police in the last few months found several cases of black marketing of Remdesivir as the demand for the drug spiked after the spike in Covid-19 cases across India.

SDMC's proposed pet crematorium to be used for Covid victims' last rites

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

With the sole crematorium located in its vicinity overburdened due to the devastating Covid storm, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) has been forced to create temporary human funeral pyre platforms on the project site meant for the first municipal dog crematorium of the city in Dwarka Sector -29.

"Temporary pyre platforms are being developed to cater to additional bodies. We are witnessing an increase of over 15-20 per cent in cremations daily," said an SDMC official.

This is despite the capacity of

has 4-acre land in Dwarka Sector 29. There is a Dog Sterilisation Centre on the right side of the plot and the left side of this plot, 150 feet away from the sterilisation centre, is shaded. There is no dog crematorium anywhere on that land.

"Just in front of the shed, pyres are being constructed so that the deceased can be given dignified last rites. This centre will be used only when capacity of all other Covid crematoriums are exhausted," said the SDMC Commissioner.

He said, "SDMC believes that all human beings have a right for respectable last rites. This work is an effort in giving dignified cre-

mation to the deceased Covid patients."

The Dwarka Sector-24 cremation ground nearby has witnessed the cremation of 413 bodies between April 19 and April 29, according to data recorded by the South Corporation. Beginning with a dedicated capacity of just 20 on April 19, the capacity was increased to 23 on April 20, reached 32 on April 22, and finally 44 on April 26.

According to records compiled by the three civic bodies, the last rites of 5,808 people took place over the last 11 days and 2,651 of these were at the nine funeral venues under the South civic body.

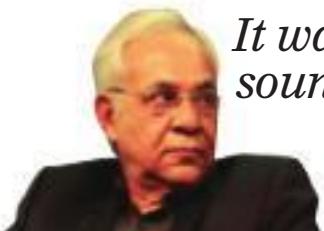
Stop political bickering, start talking to Centre on COVID reliefs: SC to Delhi govt

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

The Supreme Court Friday told the Delhi government to stop political bickering and start talking to the Centre on providing relief to COVID-19 patients in the national capital.

The top court termed the surge in cases during the second wave of COVID-19 a humanitarian crisis and told the AAP government that it has to cooperate with the Centre to save lives.

It was astonishing how deftly he handled the faders while mixing sounds for the movies. Ray was an embodiment of a renaissance man



VETERAN ACTOR DHРИTIMAN CHATTERJEE
ON THE ABILITIES OF SATYAJIT RAY, AHEAD OF HIS BIRTH CENTENARY ON 2 MAY

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 01 MAY 2021

03

Vaccine crisis hits Punjab too, 18-44 vaccination deferred

Punjab suspends Covid vaccination at private facilities from today; despite the state facing oxygen shortage, CM says it will not shut its hospitals' doors for patients from other states

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 30 APRIL

With Punjab also facing acute shortage of Covid-19 vaccines like other states, Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Friday deferred Phase III of vaccination of the 18-44 age group — which was slated to begin on 1 May — disclosing that vaccination at private health facilities in the state will remain suspended from Saturday.

Captain Amarinder made it clear that due to non-availability of vaccine, Phase III of vaccination of 18-44 age group cannot be started as scheduled.

The CM said as the balance of unutilised vaccines had to be returned to the Government of India by all private health facilities by Friday evening, these facilities would have no vaccines to administer from tomorrow for 45+ population, while they could not vaccinate 18-44 age group as they had no supplies for the same, said the CM.

Capt Amarinder said his government was pursuing the matter of vaccine shortage with the Centre, as the situation was critical. The state had received 2 lakh doses but that was not sufficient even to meet the two days requirement of the 45+ age group, said Capt Amarinder, while reviewing the Covid vaccine situation at a virtual meeting.

The state government was trying to secure supply for 45+ population from the Centre on priority, and was also trying to strategise Phase III vaccination on the basis of Dr. Gagandeep Kang expert group's interim report, said Captain Amarinder.

The meeting was informed that an order for procurement



of 30 lakh doses of Covishield for the age group of 18-45 years was placed with Serum Institute of India on 26 April, but the response received was that availability of vaccine will be known only in four weeks' time. As per the health department data, of the six worst-hit districts of Punjab, while Mohali, Jalandhar and Ludhiana were doing well in terms of vaccination, Amritsar, Bathinda, Patiala and Amritsar.

Even as health minister Balbir Sidhu expressed concern over people of Punjab not getting space due to patients coming from outside, the CM said he was not in favour of refusing hospital care to any patient from other states like Haryana and Delhi, despite the criticality of oxygen supplies.

"We must not refuse any patient who needs hospital care," he said, adding that "we will never close our doors to any patient." Stressing that "they (patients coming from other states) are our people, as India is one country," he said "they are welcome to

come and we will look after them as our own." As per estimates, one-fourth of the beds in Punjab are at present occupied by patients from outside the state, the meeting was informed.

On the issue of O2 supplies, the CM said he had spoken to the Union home minister

for additional O2 allocation and will also ask the Centre for more tankers. He further said the state government had taken up with the Centre the issue of allotment of tankers for transportation, to enable Punjab to avail its oxygen allocation from the Eastern region.

The CM directed the industries and health departments to work out a supply plan to ensure that all districts have enough oxygen and there is no loss of life.

He directed the deputy commissioners to ensure that O2 cylinders are collected and refilled in time. Every bit of oxygen has to be utilised for medical purposes, he said, adding that all district officers must keep a close watch on the situation in their districts and in case of any problem due to past contracts, requisite orders should be passed under the Disaster Management Act.

On the shortage of O2 cylinders, Amarinder said while the health department had begun procurement, only 1000 are likely to be supplied in May, necessitating some interim measures.

Noting the efforts of the industries department to re-energise old O2 plants, the CM said he was also happy to note that the state is getting approximately 200 more oxygen concentrators shortly.

Urging all good private hospitals to increase beds,

he said these would be supplied adequate oxygen by the government agencies and no punitive action will be taken in case of any mishap due to lack of O2.

The CM was chairing a virtual Covid emergency review meeting of 6 districts including Ludhiana, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Jalandhar, Bathinda, Patiala and Amritsar.

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Haryana recommends home isolation for mild, asymptomatic Covid cases under few conditions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 30 APRIL

Clinically assigned mild or asymptomatic Covid-19 patients will be recommended for home isolation in Haryana under revised guidelines for coronavirus cases.

An official spokesperson said asymptomatic cases are laboratory confirmed cases not experiencing any symptoms and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent.

He said that clinically assigned mild cases are patients with upper respiratory tract symptoms (and/or fever) without shortness of breath and having oxygen saturation at room air of more than 94 per cent. The spokesperson said that the patient should be clinically assigned a mild or asymptomatic case by the treating medical officer.

He said that such cases should have the requisite facility at their residence for self-isolation and for quarantining the family contacts.

Besides this, a caregiver should be available to provide care on 24 x 7 basis. A communication link between the caregiver and hospital is a prerequisite for the entire duration of home isolation.

The spokesperson further informed that elderly patients aged more than 60 years and those with co-morbid conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, chronic lung, liver, kidney disease, cerebro-vascular diseases etc will only be allowed home isolation after proper evaluation by the treating medical officer.

The spokesperson said that the patients suffering from immune compromised status (HIV, transplant recipients, cancer therapy etc.) are not recommended for home isolation and will only be allowed home isolation after proper evaluation by the treating medical officer.

He said that the caregiver and all close contacts of such cases should take Hydroxychloroquine prophylaxis per

the protocol and as prescribed by the treating medical officer. The spokesperson said that in addition, the guidelines on home-quarantine for other members available at <https://wwwmohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesforhomequarantine.pdf>, should be also followed. The spokesperson said a patient must isolate himself from other household members, stay in the identified room and away from other people in home, especially elderly and those with co-morbid conditions like hypertension, cardiovascular disease, renal disease etc.

The patient in home isolation should at all times use a triple layer medical mask. Discard mask after eight hours of use or earlier if they become wet or visibly soiled. In the event of caregiver entering the room, both caregiver and patient may consider using N 95 mask.

Besides this, mask should be discarded only after disinfecting it with one per cent Sodium Hypochlorite.

5 arrested for making forged Covid test reports in Capital

PTI
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

Five people have been arrested for allegedly making forged COVID-19 test reports in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar, police said on Friday.

The accused have been identified as Pragyanand Sharma (24), Himanshu Sharma (24), doctor Manish Kumar (32), Satender (26) and Nikhil (22), they said.

On Thursday, a PCR call was received at the Malviya Nagar Police Station saying that some persons at Genestrings Lab, Malviya Nagar, were making fake coronavirus test reports, police said.

According to complainant Vipul Saini, a resident of Khirki Village, he along with 45 of his relatives gave samples for COVID-19 testing to Himanshu and Pragyanand. On Sunday, Rishab Shukla, a friend of Saini, also gave his sample for testing to the accused duo. The test reports stated that Shukla was COVID-19 positive, but he did not have any symptoms.

On Wednesday, he gave his sample to another laboratory where he tested negative for the infection, police said.

On Thursday, Saini along with Himanshu and Pragyanand went to the Genestrings Lab and found that the report of Shukla was not in the records of the laboratory, police said.

Admitting to their crime, Himanshu said he along with his cousin Pragyanand, used to collect home samples and give them to Manish, working in Genestrings Lab, without making any entry in the records of the laboratory, the officer said.

Manish used to share the results with Pragyanand through excel sheets and then Pragyanand would print the results on the fake letter head of Genestrings Lab, police said.



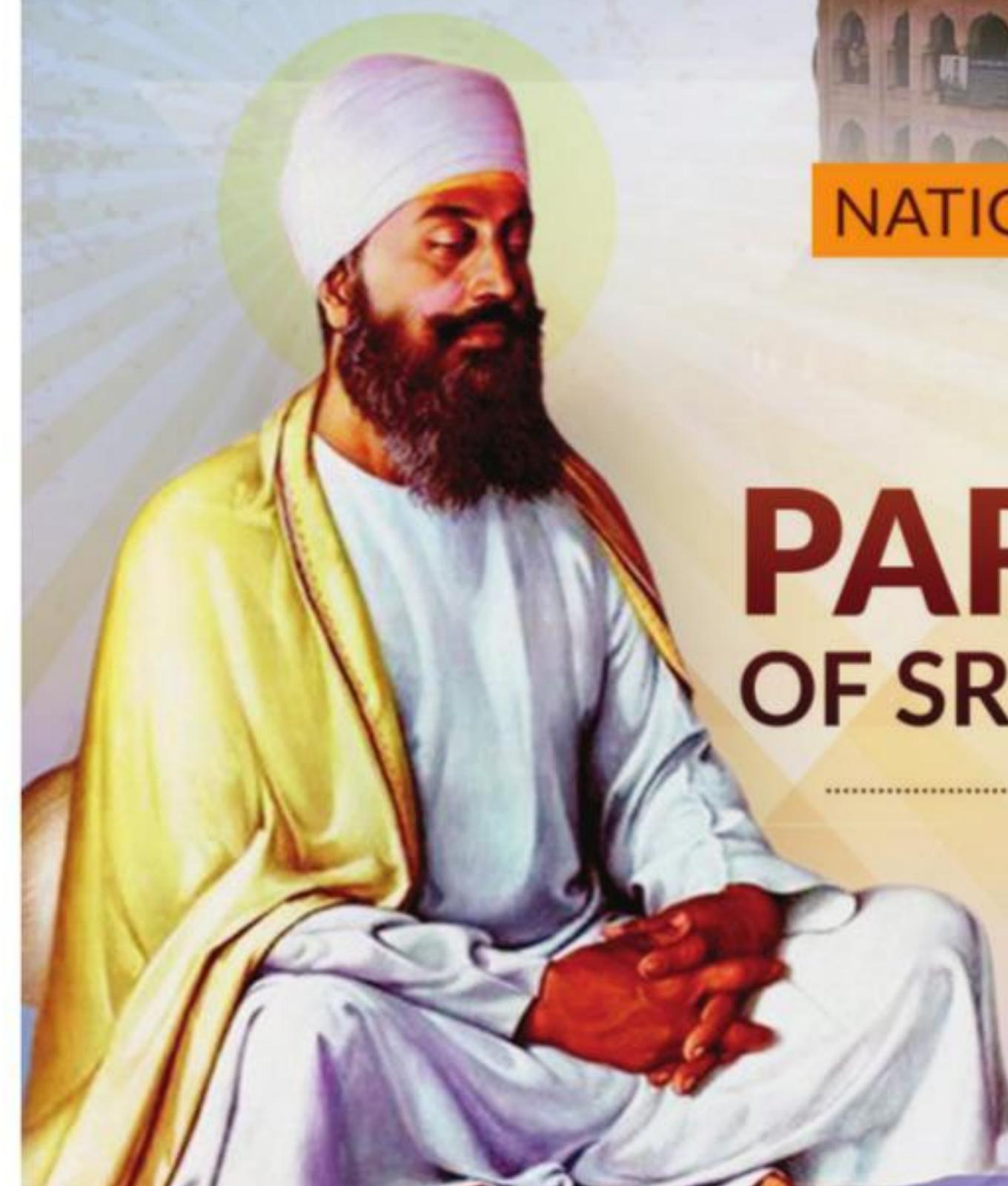
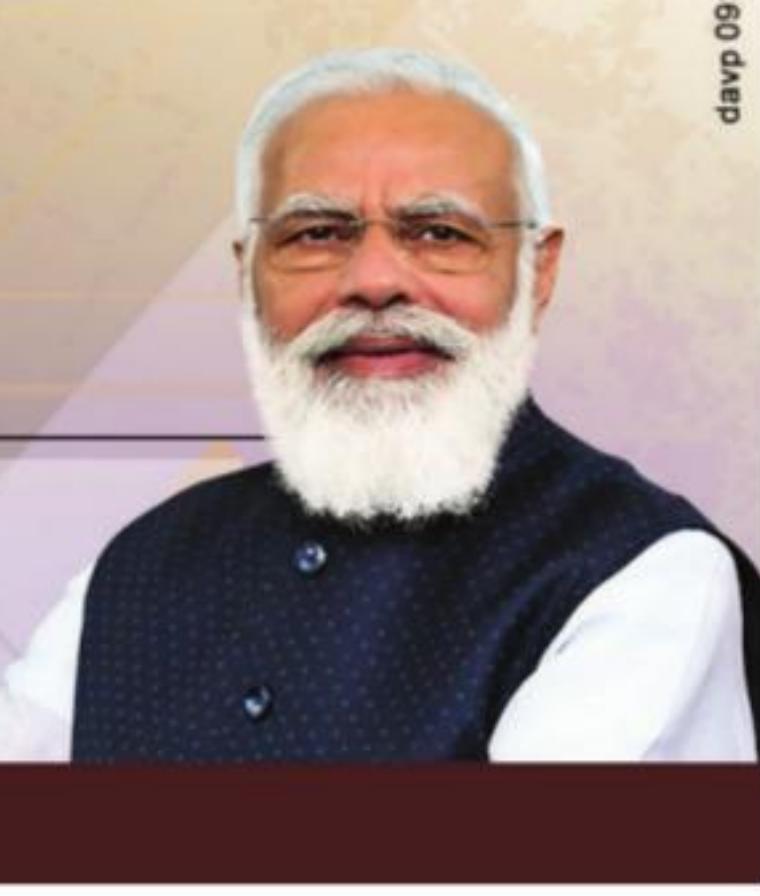
Ministry of Culture
Government of India

NATION SOLEMNLY COMMEMORATES

400th PARKASH PURAB OF SRI GURU TEG BAHADUR JI

1st May, 2021

Sri Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was blessed with utmost courage and remarkable compassion. He devoted himself to building a society that is kind, progressive, just and inclusive. People across the world are inspired by his noble ideals. We bow to him on his 400th Parkash Purab. - Narendra Modi, Prime Minister



The government should provide proper financial help to dependent family members of all such deceased employees and also give a government job to one of them

SPEAKING FOR THE EMPLOYEES WHO DIED DUE TO COVID WHILE ON PANCHAYAT POLL DUTY

BSP CHIEF MAYAWATI

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, SATURDAY 01 MAY 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Devotees at a procession to celebrate the upcoming 400th birth anniversary of Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur in Patiala on Friday. IANS

TV Journalist Sardana dies: Television journalist Rohit Sardana (41) died in Noida, of cardiac arrest on Friday, days after he tested positive, according to his channel Aaj Tak.

Dayal passes away: Communist Party of India's veteran leader Dr Joginder Dayal has passed away following a prolonged illness, the Punjab government said on Friday. He was 80.

Delhi HC to cops: Release 170 seized oxygen concentrators

NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

The Delhi High Court today directed the Delhi Police to release 170 oxygen concentrators seized by them to the Delhi government. The direction came to be passed by the bench of HMJ Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli on a plea made by Sacchin Puri, Senior Advocate while appearing in a PIL entitled Manisha Gupta Vs. GNCTD WPC No.5100/2021 filed by advocates Praveen K Sharma and Dhananjay Grover.

Puri pleaded that legal formalities can take place pursuant to the seizure of the oxygen concentrators but in the meanwhile, the oxygen concentrators are released to save lives of individuals looking at the acute shortage of such equipment in the national capital. The bench has directed the Delhi government to report compliance by 1 pm.

Treat available O2 as critical commodity: Centre to states

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

The Centre on Friday said it has asked the states to treat the available oxygen as a critical commodity and undertake an oxygen-consumption audit at all hospitals, including private ones, amid a shortage of the life-saving gas in several parts of the country. Addressing a press conference, joint secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Lav Agrawal said from the start of the pandemic, the government had identified oxygen-supported beds as major clinical interventions.

He said the government had procured 1,02,400 oxygen cylinders at the national level in April-May 2020 and distributed those among the states. "We have requested the states to treat the available oxygen as a critical commodity and also to ensure a rational use of oxygen," Agrawal added.

Listing out the steps taken by the Centre to augment the supply of oxygen, he said the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has

issued instructions for fixing the price of liquid medical oxygen.

Agrawal said 162 pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants of 154-MT capacity each have been sanctioned across the country. Of these, 52 plants are already installed, 87 have been delivered and work to commission these plants at the earliest is on. Agrawal said the states have been allotted 8,593 MT of oxygen. "An order for 1,27,000 oxygen cylinders was placed on April 21 and the deliveries are expected to start in a couple of days. These include 54,000 jumbo cylinders (D type) and 73,000 regular cylinders (B type)."

"Additionally, 551 PSA plants have been sanctioned to be implemented by the Union health ministry. These plants will be installed in different public health facilities," he added.

The states have been advised to ensure a rational use of oxygen, prohibit abnormal use by monitoring non-closure of valve during no-use, stop unnecessary oxygen administration to patients who may not require it clinically and for monitoring private health facilities that

J&K: Vaccinations on hold for 18+



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 30 APRIL

Faced with shortage of corona vaccine, the Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday put on hold the opening of vaccination from May for those in the 18-45 age group.

An official spokesman announced that "While the registration for vaccination of eligible persons in the

age group 18-45 has been opened on COVIN, the actual vaccination will not begin from May 2021. It will begin from a date to be announced later once the vaccine supply is established".

J&K administration has ordered 1.24 crores vaccines to cover the entire 18-45 age group.

This is among the highest in the country, said the spokesman.

Meanwhile, the 3-days lockdown that was earlier ordered in 11 districts of the UT has been extended to the remaining 9 districts from this evening. The administration of Ladakh has also imposed weekend curfew.

Further clarifying the matter, the spokesman said: "Vaccination will not be a walk in but only through pre-registration of slots. No slots have been opened for booking a session. Please wait for the announcement of the vaccination start date for the 18-45 age group persons who are requested not to crowd vaccination centers without booking slots."

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that the union territory administration will bear the cost of vaccine procurement from the manufacturer.

Meanwhile, the 3-days lockdown that was earlier ordered in 11 districts of the UT has been extended to the remaining 9 districts from this evening. The administration of Ladakh has also imposed weekend curfew.

US President Joe Biden has pledged sustained support to India in its fight against Covid. "Just as India sent assistance to the United States

as our hospitals were strained early in the pandemic, we are determined to help India in its time of need," Biden tweeted.

The US is delivering supplies worth more than \$100 million in the coming days to provide urgent relief to our partners in India," State Department spokesman Ned Price had said on Thursday.

Japan today announced that it would provide 300 oxygen concentrators and 300 ventilators to India in response to the current surge of Covid-19 infections. "Japan stands with India, our friend and partner, in her efforts to fight against Covid-19 pandemic through this additional emergency assistance. Japan will continue to extend further support promptly in order to contain the Covid-19 situation," the Japanese Foreign Minister said.

Meanwhile, the third shipment from the UK containing 280 oxygen concentrators and another flight with a consignment of 80 oxygen concentrators and 75 oxygen cylinders also arrived from the UK and Romania respectively.

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said that the union territory administration will bear the cost of vaccine procurement from the manufacturer.

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US President Joe Biden has pledged sustained support to India in its fight against Covid. "Just as India sent assistance to the United States

Sorabjee was champion of freedom of press: CJI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL



Chief Justice NV Ramana Friday condoled the passing away of eminent jurist and former Attorney General Soli Sorabjee saying he had deep commitment to democratic values and was a champion of freedom of press.

The CJI, in a statement, expressed shock over the demise of the legal luminary and said, In his nearly 68 year long association with the judicial world, he made immeasurable contribution in enriching the global jurisprudence of Human Rights and Fundamental Rights. Justice Ramana said the matters Sorabjee had argued before the courts, the judgments he could secure as well as the books, essays, papers of international repute and the newspaper articles that he had authored, the independent opinions he could ten-

der to the Government in his capacity as the Attorney General they all stand testimony to his deep commitment to democratic values.

Sorabjee not only lived up to the mandate of Attorney General as enshrined in the Constitution but also raised the bar in discharge of his constitutional duties, the CJI said.

The CJI further said that he personally gained immensely from reading Sorabjee's literary works, listening to his lectures and arguments and his sagacious guidance and advise.

Clevira repurposed for treating Covid patients

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

Clevira, a drug primarily developed to treat dengue, has been repurposed as supportive treatment for mild to moderate Covid cases, its manufacturer Apex Laboratories Private Limited said.

The drug is effective when taken orally and the dosage is one tablet twice daily after food for 14 days. The drug has also proved to be safe on liver and kidney parameters, it said.

Clevira, an antiviral formulation, has received regulatory approval as a supportive treatment for mild to moderate Covid cases, the Chennai-based pharmaceutical company said.

Last year, as the cases surged in the country, it was repurposed as supportive treatment for mild to moderate coronavirus symptoms. The product is available across India and is priced at Rs 11

per tablet, the company said. A clinical trial was conducted on 100 people in May-June last year and the results were promising, it said.

The control group comprised patients diagnosed with SARS-CoV-2 infection and received standard care treatment as per hospital regulation as well as the WHO/ICMR guidelines.

The test group patients also received Clevira tablets twice daily orally after food for 14 days. Besides 86 per cent of patients tested negative for the infection on (day 5) and 100 per cent of patients turned out to be Covid RT-PCR test negative on (day 10) after consuming Clevira tablets.

ER may cancel short, mid-distance trains, to take final call next week



NISHAT NIZAMI
KOLKATA, 30 APRIL

If the prevailing Covid-19 situation continues to deteriorate, the Eastern Railway might consider cancelling some of its short-distance and mid-distance trains, official sources informed today.

A section of the short-distance trains covering between 200km to 300km, according to sources, have been witnessing poor occupancy of below 20 per cent in the recent past.

Similarly, a slump in passengers was also observed in mid-distance trains covering around 400km to 500km trains with occupancy much below 20 per cent.

Some of the inter-city trains like the Coalfield Express which used to have a chock-a-block situation inside coaches, have also failed to attract

enough head counts of commuters following the surge in Covid-19 cases.

As informed by sources in the Railways, the occupancy in the long-distance trains, however, is at or above 80 percent. Therefore, the Indian Railways is in no mood to cancel the long distance trains as of now.

The crisis of guards, drivers and assistant loco-pilots has come as an additional blow to the zonal railways.

According to official sources, around 231 guards, 198 drivers and 148 assistant loco-pilots have been confirmed Covid-19 positive as on date.

"This apart, 443 drivers and 267 guards are not turning up to work with other illnesses. Their Covid-19 test reports are yet to be confirmed. Thus of the 2,200 total guards, around 500 are unavailable for duty. Similarly, of the 3,400 drivers, 641 drivers are unavailable for work," informed a Railways official.

In Eastern Railway, in which 100 per cent local train services were being operated earlier, around 160 of these suburban trains were cancelled in the past few days on a daily basis.

Considering the low occupancy and shortage of guards, drivers and assistant loco-pilots, the authorities might consider cancellation of some of the short distance and mid-distance train services.

A meeting between the officials of Railway Board and the zonal railway was also held recently.

The Eastern Railway authorities are considering monitoring the situation for a day or two and then take a final call next week.

Exploring Ray's 'French connection'

SOUMYADIP MULLICK
KOLKATA, 30 APRIL

Observing the 100th birth anniversary of the "complete film-maker" Satyajit Ray, the Alliance Francaise Du Bengale sought to explore the maestro's "French connection" while delving deeper into the works of this "renaissance man".

While BJP MLA from Bhopal, Rameshwar Sharma has announced to sit on a protest if his demand of starting covid treatment in the Civil Hospital of his constituency was not met, another BJP MLA from Satna district, Narayan Tripathi has pointed out to CM Chouhan that Covid can not be controlled by just holding virtual meetings and doing nothing about medicines and treatment of patients.

BJP MLA from Maihar constituency in Satna district, Narayan Tripathi has written a letter to CM pointing out that merely holding virtual meetings would serve no purpose.

Tripathi has sternly mentioned that saving the state from the pandemic is the duty of the chief minister.

"There are six ventilators in the Satna District hospital. All six are out of order," Tripathi told The Statesman today.

"Who is responsible for this criminal negligence?" he questioned.

BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma has leveled grave accusations on the state government and district administration alleging that patients are running helplessly from one hospital to another but not getting treatment. Sharma has also questioned why the Civil Hospital in Bairagarh town has not yet been prepared to admit and treat patients.

He added, "Manikda (Ray) once told me that the idea of the movie 'Agnantuk' came to him while reading up on the French anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss. Motivation came to him from all sorts of fields."

Eminent filmmaker and SRFTI Dean, Ashoke Viswanathan felt people looked at Ray

as a narrative artist, a story-teller.

"He had a profound understanding of non-narrative cinema and was aware of the post-modern era where narrative disjunction was the order.

His works were subtle. If this film 'Kanchanjanga' touches on the subject of alienation then 'Nayak' showed how dreams merge with reality. Ray was able to operate at different levels."

Professor Sanjay Mukhopadhyay

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Corporate Office, Burla-768017

Corrigendum to Notice Inviting Tender (NIT)

1) TPWODL/MK/SER/003 – Rate Contract for 11 KV & 1.1KV associated work (Construction / augmentation).

2) TPWODL/MK/SER/005 – Rate Contract for 33 KV associated work (Construction/augmentation)

3) TPWODL/PN/SU/006 – SCADA/ADMS system at TPWODL.

The time period is hereby extended for Submission of Tender Participation Fee and Authorization Letter through e-mail till 8th May 2021, 1500Hrs, after which link from e-Tender system shall be shared. A Corrigendum to the said notice has been uploaded in our website www.tpwesterndisha.com. Prospective bidders are requested to visit the website for detailed amendment and updated tender document.

Sd/- Chief-Contracts and Stores

SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS

For the convenience of passengers, Railways have decided to run following Summer Special fully reserved Trains (Single Side Trips) as per schedule given below:

04488 Delhi Jn. - Jaynagar Summer Spl. Exp.	1 Trip
STATIONS	
Train No. 04488	ARRIVAL DEPARTURE
DELHI JN. ---	23:00
JAYNAGAR 05:15 ---	

Days of Run: 04488 Ex. Delhi Jn. on 01.05.2021

Stoppages: Moradabad Jn., Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Hardoi, Almora, Lucknow, Barabanki, Rudauli, Faizabad Jn., Ayodhya, Goshainganj, Akbarpur, Shahganj Jn., Jaunpur Jn., Varanasi Jn., Varanasi City, Aunrihar Jn., Ghazipur City, Yusufpur, Ballia, Suraimanpur, Chhapra, Dighwara, Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn., Samastipur, Darbhanga Jn., Sakri Jn. and Madhubani Stations

Accommodation: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & Second Seating Reserved.

04490 Delhi Jn. - Saharsa Jn. Summer Spl. Exp.	2 Trips
STATIONS	
Train No. 04490	ARRIVAL DEPARTURE
DELHI JN. ---	23:00
SAHARSA JN. 02:50 ---	

Days of Run: 04490 Ex. Delhi Jn. on 02.05.21 & 05.05.21

Stoppages: Moradabad Jn., Bareilly, Shahjahanpur, Sitapur, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Kaptanganj Jn., Bagaha, Harinagar, Narkatiaganj Jn., Bettiah, Sagar Jn., Bapudham Motihari, Muzaffarpur Jn., Samastipur, Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Khagaria Jn., Mansi Jn., Naugachia, Katihar Jn., Barsi Jn., Kishanganj, New Jalpaiguri, New Cooch Behar, New Alipurduar, Kokrajhar, New Bongaigaon, Barpeta Road and Rangia Jn. Stations

Accommodation: 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & Second Seating Reserved.

04492 Delhi Jn. - Bhagalpur Jn. Summer Spl. Exp.	2 Trips </
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A national crisis

While the resurgence of the pandemic plagues the nation, the Supreme Court has very pertinently referred to the surge in Covid cases as a "national crisis", in response to which it "cannot remain a mute spectator". Last year, for instance, the praxis of treatment had been hobbled by the federal structure and differences between the Centre and the states, not to forget the short shrift accorded to the medical fraternity generally. As often as not, young District Magistrates were consulted instead of seasoned doctors. In several states, political intervention was accorded precedence over the medical. Tuesday's robust intervention by the Supreme Court is intrinsically suo motu as also to forestall any possible spin on such judicial activism. The Bench (coram: DY Chandrachud, L. Nageswara Rao and Ravindra Bhat, JJ), has made it explicit that it intends to devise a national policy on Covid management and "is not meant to supplant High Court hearings", an indirect allusion to criticism that under Chief Justice SA Bobde, the Court had sought to forestall proceedings before several High Courts. It would be pertinent to recall that the governments and the Election Commission had recently been rapped on the knuckles by Calcutta High Court and Madras High Court for their less-than-effective response, made worse in the season of elections and overcrowded political rallies and polling booths. The Apex court was largely riveted to the price structure of vaccines in the midst of the shortage and the Centre's decision to vaccinate all citizens above 18 years of age. Rightly has the apex court sought replies on how the government intends to cope with the surge in demand for the vaccines and whether it boasts the infrastructure to cope with the burgeoning crowds. The demand-and-supply construct has, in the net, assumed fatal proportions. Not wholly unrelated was the directive to the Centre to inform the court about the "modalities on distribution of oxygen as well as vaccines to states and the monitoring mechanism". Not many states can claim to have the prerequisites in place. The Supreme Court expects the Centre to come out with a national plan to tackle the surge and mortalities. In the immediate perspective, the Centre's plans are a work in progress and involve efforts to meet the scarcity of vaccines, oxygen and hospital beds. The utterly disgraceful had happened in West Bengal last year, when patients undergoing treatment were made to lie beside bodies of Covid victims. This time around, horrific scenes of patients being treated on rickshaws, on benches and on the floor have been commonplace. But perhaps the worst failure of the healthcare system has been its inability to prevent patients gasping to death, one that has shaken the conscience of the world. The Supreme Court has permitted Vedanta to resume operations at its closed oxygen plant in Tuticorin, making it clear that the order has been passed in view of the "national need for oxygen".

A divided land

The tiny African country of Chad is in crisis that is as familial as it is dramatic. The feud has intensified tensions after the death of President Idriss Déby. If this week's developments are any indication, the naming of Mahamat Idriss Déby as his father's successor may not go unchallenged. The transfer of power was executed swiftly, in itself a remarkable development. That transition now appears to be threatened by family divisions and fractures in the military that could have serious consequences. Mahamat Déby was controversially named the leader of the Transitional Military Council (CMT) in the announcement of his father's death on 20 April. He now heads a 15-member team that intends to oversee the country's transition over the next 18 months. The tension and the inhouse discord might well persist during the transitional phase. The crisis has been confounded by palace intrigue involving other members of his late father's family. This has reinforced a perception of hard times ahead for the country. The late President had strategically consolidated power during his 30-year rule by assigning senior government roles to members of his family and surrounding himself with allies from his Zaghawa ethnic group. The kerfuffle over succession has already fuelled discord at the Palais Rose, the presidential residence. There were reports of scuffles on 21 April between Mahamat Déby and his step-brother, Zakaria Idriss Déby. Reports claimed the quarrel was over their father's succession. A senior member of the Transitional Military Council rejected speculation that shots had been fired, denouncing such reports as attempts at "destabilising the system". That system, in point of fact, has been destabilised fair and square. Before Mahamat was named, Zakaria Idriss Déby is said to have been among those in line for succession. In 2017, he was appointed as Chad's ambassador to the UAE. He also served as the youth president of the ruling Patriotic Salvation Movement. Despite strenuous efforts by a section of the family to deny violence, there is considerable uncertainty over governance in Chad today, exacerbated by the sharp divisions within the ruling family. Chad's future has been rendered uncertain by what has been called the President's "battlefield death". In January 2020, when the late President was taken ill, he had left the First Lady in charge of the presidency to prevent confrontation between Mahamat and Zakaria. Idriss Déby's plan for his wife to maintain his power is an important sign because he did not choose one of his sons. This would also open the door to hostilities and arguably a war of succession. Developments in Chad over the past week are likely to have a spillover effect on the military, contending with signs of a split as well. Loyalties are divided, and prejudices are overwhelming. The death of the President has rocked the applecart of governance as well as the military, traditionally a dominant force in the region.

A Centennial Tribute

Ray was fond of the great Hollywood masters, and never encouraged the 'arty-arty' film-makers with no audience focus and scant responsibility to get the financier's money back. The director expresses himself with other's money and for him to remain creative, has to understand his primary audience and devise means within available resources, to reach that audience

Satyajit Ray is acclaimed universally for his majestic body of work. When Ritwik Ghatak hailed him as the harbinger of a new era and the only person in India who understood the medium of cinema, or when Herzog, the protagonist in Saul Bellow's novel, identifies with the mother of Apu and Durga after the latter's death in *Pather Panchali*, one understands the power of Ray's cinema to touch hearts across cultures. What characterises his unique and sustained contribution?

Having prepared himself fully to make films, Ray strove to elevate Indian cinema to his own stature. Besides the illustrious family lineage, his early association with Santiniketan when Tagore was alive, his acute observation of world cinema, his grounding in music - Western and Indian, together with his passion for photography and sketching coalesced to give him the confidence to take risk and plunge into cinema. His struggle during the years of making *Pather Panchali* is now part of filmlore. The film succeeded in Bengal before making international waves.

In the thirty-seven years thereafter, Ray would experiment with new themes and styles, rolling out over twenty-eight feature films and about seven documentaries and short films, and continually extend the frontiers of cinema till death intervened. Making films that were authentically rooted to soil and yet so artistic, he singularly ensured international recognition for Indian cinema. Behind his outpourings of a class that remained almost undimmed, was his belief that cinema is the highest form of commercial art. Ray was fond of the great Hollywood masters, and never encouraged the 'arty-arty' film-makers with no audience focus and scant responsibility to get the financier's money back.

The director expresses himself with other's money and for him to remain creative, has to understand his primary audience and devise means within available resources, to reach that audience.

Ray, therefore, exercised control over every aspect of film-making - scripting, acting, editing, scoring music and even handling the camera, while introducing new faces like Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore and Aparna Sen.

Consequently, his films ended up as finished products of art with no place for slack and shoddiness. He was criticised for not taking the narrative risks that others like Fellini, Godard or Bergman had. Keeping his audience in mind, Ray kept the story at a simple level for everyone to follow, and enriched it with layers



of psychological inflections for the more sophisticated to savour. In the process, Ray devised a model that has inspired directors of all hues - especially in India where regional richness deserves to be celebrated.

Indian cinema is said to have come of age with *Pather Panchali*, in terms of its quality and impact. Introducing fluidity of images, distinct from the type of photographed theatre, and dexterously employing various cinematic means, he developed a new language that could express his imagination in this sensuous medium. His Apu trilogy, the zamindar films, the Calcutta trilogy, the musical and children's films and most others were transformational in nature. Public taste and attitude towards movies started changing with them. Cinema suddenly attained respectability and became a subject for serious, even intellectual discourse, like sophisticated literature earlier. Literate people sought to be cinemate as well.

Talented film-makers from different regions started making their mark following Ray's footsteps. And his influence was not confined to India alone.

Ray's masterpieces are remembered for their technical brilliance, the manner of exploring human conditions, and their compassionate underpinnings.

Against the larger forces of history ordinary men and women cope with life, informs, with irony and humour, much of Ray's oeuvre. Characters like a former actor discovering that 'the throne is there... but I have been overthrown', or a retired teacher lamenting of injustice in God's dispensation, play out their daily lives while Ray weaves the complex web of relationship, between man and woman, believer and the sceptic, old and the new. Described often as an ascetic, a 'novelist with a camera' or a poet in celluloid in the best humanist tradition, Ray once described himself as a story-teller. A true but modest claim. His earlier films were pure magic, prompting Time magazine's critic to wonder 'Will Ray redeem his prodigious promise and become the Shakespeare of the screen?' Some likened them as the culmination of Neo-realism cinema.

Ray's later films charted new territories, more direct and perhaps less nuanced in tone, especially when dealing with contemporary problems.

But his criticism of authoritarianism, indictment of religious superstitions and of widespread corruption in our lives has never been propagandist. In fact, these works were significant in their departure from the earlier norms that Ray had established, but

more and with Nature'. Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana, Kolkata, 23 April.

STAKES IN MYANMAR

SIR, Please refer to your today's report 'Myanmar activists call for non-cooperation campaign'. The anti-coup activists on Monday called for civil disobedience movements in Myanmar and scattered protests took place in big cities of the country after senior General Min Aung Hlaing reached an agreement at a summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) in Indonesia on Saturday. Apparently, the five-point consensus reached by Asean group members on Myanmar is an important framework for the way forward in tackling the fallout of the February 1 military coup. India has endorsed the Asean initiative and pledged that its diplomatic engagement with Myanmar will be aimed at strengthening these efforts.

Asean's initiative envisages immediate cessation of violence, dialogue among all stakeholders in Myanmar for a peaceful solution and the appointment of a special Asean envoy to facilitate mediation. Aid to Myanmar, and a visit to the country by the envoy are the other two points. While Asean leaders acknowledged that the consensus went beyond their expectations, diplomats believe that the first step has been taken but the road towards a resolution will be tortuous. Also the Asean accord lacks any timeline for ending the crisis. Besides, the consensus is silent on the release of political prisoners including the leader of the ousted civilian government, Aung San Suu Kyi, or the future role of the National Unity government - both of which may have made it palatable to the junta. For India, the stakes are high as instability within Myanmar

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

What's with the delay?

We are losing our fellow citizens to the coronavirus every day, and we must pull out all the stops to ensure that this chain of infection and death comes to a close as soon as possible. These are extraordinary times that call for action on a war footing.

But the vaccine procurement programme seems to be suffering from the same lethargy, even helplessness, that characterises our bureaucracy and politics.

Our leaders and administrators cannot get away by feigning helplessness, as every minute of our fight against the pandemic is precious. Just as the virus is undergoing various mutations, we must constantly revise our defence mechanism, especially with regard to our procurement of the life-saving vaccines.

Even though Nepal has made payment for 2 million doses of the vaccine, the Serum Institute of India has not completed half of the deliveries yet as India has put restrictions on their export.

Though unfortunate, the Indian ban was more or less expected, as India itself has been under tremendous pressure inoculating millions of its own citizens. After a brief lull, the southern neighbour has once again witnessed a surge in the number of coronavirus infections. Hospitals are overburdened, doctors are overworked, oxygen cylinders are emptying, and patients are dying by the thousands each day. The government is under great strain, trying to inoculate more of its citizens at the earliest. So, our dependence almost exclusively on India for procurement of the vaccine was never a good idea.

The government's dependence on the vaccines to be distributed under the COVAX facility has also cost us dearly, as the programme has failed to provide them due to the ongoing cri-

THE KATHMANDU POST

sis. As of now, Nepal has received only 348,000 out of the 2.25 million doses it is eligible to receive under the programme.

The government hopes to receive additional doses by the end of May or early June, but that is too late and too little. Moreover, the government has yet to succeed in its efforts to bring in private institutions for vaccine procurement.

Since the Department of Drug Administration has granted emergency use authorisation to Covaxin developed by India's Bharat Biotech, BBIBP-CorV developed by China's Sinopharm and Sputnik V vaccine developed by Russia's Gamaleya National Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology, we already have multiple doors to knock on for procurement of vaccines.

The World Health Organisation has also vouched for the safety of the Covid-19 vaccines currently in use, so there is no point in depending only on certain vendors and institutions for procuring them. Every single life is important for us, and we cannot be lenient when it comes to procuring life-saving vaccines for the citizens by any means.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

A colossal accounting error

SIR, This is with reference to Govind Bhattacharya's incisive article 'Cost of Nature' (22 April). Most of the conspicuous developments of economics in the last six decades are in the direction of quantification, at the expense of qualitative differences. In the 19th century, John Ruskin coined a term 'illth' and used it in his book *Unto This Last* (1860).

He urged that production and possession may not constitute wealth but may instead be 'illth'. Wealth, he argued, was the 'possession of useful articles, which we can use'. Conversely, the production of useless things, or the possession of things we cannot use, can only be defined as 'illth'. Indeed, wealth is what Nature gives

us and what we can make out of the gifts of Nature.

The economist-philosopher E F Schumacher in his classical book, *Small Is Beautiful*, lamented that "Modern man does not experience himself as a part of Nature but as an outside force destined to dominate and conquer it."

This domineering attitude is reinforced by the method of accounting for natural resources, which always treat their use as income rather than withdrawals from capital. This, in the words of economist Herman Daly, is "a colossal accounting error. At least, we should put the costs and the benefits in separate accounts for comparison."

Traditional Western

economics, Schumacher argues, is bedeviled by a self-righteousness of sorts that blinds us to the fact - a fundamental fallacy that considers 'goods' as more important than people and consumption as more important than creative activity." From this stem our modern maladies.

Schumacher contrasts Western economics with a new form of economics for which he coined a term 'Buddhist Economics'. It represents a commitment to building an economy based on Buddhist spiritual values instead of material development, such as being gauged by GDP. The cardinal feature of this economics is seeing 'people interdependent with one another and with Nature'.

Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana,

Kolkata, 23 April.

DISENCHANTED

SIR, I am now over sixty years old and have been reading *The Statesman* since my childhood. During the initial days of Covid 19 people stopped taking newspapers but I stuck to my Statesman despite the fact that the paper stopped bringing out supplements, reduced pages and the print made reading difficult at times. However these days I find that the paper does not present the picture of objectivity it did earlier; there is a clear leaning towards attempts at glorifying some individuals and placing them in the limelight while undermining others. This change is more painful as it is not in the direction of bringing in a progressive, humane and liberal India. I know that one reader less will not affect the circulation of your daily but it is difficult to continue with the paper which has ceased to be impartial but which had contributed to the development of my personality through its humane, liberal, rational and empathetic reports and articles.

Yours, etc., Saswati Biswas, Siliguri, 28 April.

acknowledged that the consensus went beyond their expectations, diplomats believe that the first step has been taken but the road towards a resolution will be tortuous. Also the Asean accord lacks any timeline for ending the crisis. Besides, the consensus is silent on the release of political prisoners including the leader of the ousted civilian government, Aung San Suu Kyi, or the future role of the National Unity government - both of which may have made it palatable to the junta. For India, the stakes are high as instability within Myanmar has grave implications for the country. There are reports of guerrilla groups in Myanmar reviving their activities and any breakdown of law and order will allow militant groups in the Northeast to take advantage of the situation.

At the same time, there may be a fresh exodus of Rohingyas in India. Hence India's access to the generals in Myanmar means that it is well placed to nudge the military for acting swiftly to restore democracy and end violence.

Yours, etc., Khokan Das,

Kolkata, 27 April.



A bus that the EC missed

GAUTAM BHATTACHARYA

The Election Commission of India lost a golden opportunity! Though the most bitterly fought general election of West Bengal Assembly has finally ended, the way the election process was conducted would be remembered for decades for various wrong reasons. The pandemic brought some wonderful opportunities to the Commission to develop a new model for election: an opportunity to make the election more inclusive, to reduce the bitterness of campaigns and to make the electoral battle a little more sober. There was an opportunity to tame the political parties in organising mega mass-rallies, road-shows etc. and by doing so the Commission could have brought about a degree of reasonability in election expenses. But EC hardly applied its mind to take that challenge and instead made the process unusually prolonged, leading to complete collapse of public administration in the State, resulting in an unprecedented spread of the deadly virus, agony of millions and death of thousands.

One may argue in defense of the EC's action that when the election in Bengal was declared on 26 February, the number of Covid-positive cases reported in the State was only 199. How could the Commission know that the second wave of the pandemic would appear so fast in the State? If the election was to be blamed for faster spread of the virus, why was the second wave so deadly in Maharashtra, Delhi and Chhattisgarh where there was no election? These arguments are myopic in nature. Even during the first wave, spread of the disease was never so acute in Bengal as compared to Maharashtra, Delhi or Karnataka, whatever may be the reasons. The long drawn electoral battle this time, where not the slightest respect was shown to Covid-appropriate behaviours by recognized political parties, made the rate of spread of the virus in Bengal highest in the country in the third week of April. The number of Covid-positive cases increased



87 times in the State during this eight-week long election process.

Public health experts had repeatedly warned us that that second wave was going to be devastating if appropriate norms were not followed. What did EC do to enforce such norms amongst the political parties? Is the constitutional body so incapable, so powerless an entity? Did they believe in what they had professed? In which Western democracy is so much money spent by the parties during elections as we do in India by organizing mass rallies involving millions of people? In which democracy of the world do star campaigners lead road shows in such huge numbers, paralyzing movement of commuters on arterial roads of cities for hours together? What prevented EC from restricting election campaigns to virtual media and television? They have no answer to these questions. EC has not shown any regret for its decisions either.

The Commission organised near-

ly a lakh of Central Police forces for about eight weeks to run the all-important election to the West Bengal assembly. The force was on continuous move from one part of the State to the other as for the first time perhaps elections at the level of districts were held in two or three phases. If the Commission had taken a little more pain to organize a greater number of central forces, perhaps the span could have been brought down by four weeks. By not doing so, what did the Commission try to optimize and at what cost?

In these dark days, we are reminded of two great Chief Election Commissioners of the country, the two who by their vision and initiative defined the perimeters of the role of the Commission – Sukumar Sen, the first Chief Election Commissioner of India and T.N. Seshan who against all odds made a paradigm shift of electioneering in India in the 1990s. Sukumar Sen faced the task of organizing

the first general election of the country in 1952 based on universal adult franchise, at a time when more than 85 per cent of the voters were illiterate.

Prime Minister Nehru was in a hurry to hold the election under the newly adopted constitution of India but Sen, a prudent civil servant, made the Prime Minister realize the stupendous task he was to carry out and requested him to wait. The Prime Minister appreciated his position and that made Sen organize a system of conducting elections which remained a model to third world countries for many decades to come.

Gradually the system decayed. Impersonation of voters, intimidation by party musclemen, mass rigging, massive use of wrong money almost derailed the Indian election system towards the end of 1980s, at a time when Seshan took the reins. Introduction of Voter's Photo Identity Card, utilizing central police force to support the state force, deploying

independent observers to oversee the election were some wonderful innovations of Seshan. For the first time the political parties felt the might of the constitutional body during his tenure. But in the last two and half decades, there has not been any qualitative improvement and of late the Commission has developed the habit of applying the old practices almost mechanically.

To hold the Assembly election of West Bengal in an unprecedented eight phases at the time of pandemic is a clear case of lack of application of mind and establishes complete lack of concern on the well-being of the citizens.

The amount of suspect cash that has been seized by the Commission during the Bengal election this time is also unprecedented. The amount exceeded Rs. 300 crore by the end of 5th phase. If campaigns are allowed for a two-month stretch, inflow of suspect cash is inevitable as there will be a greater number of mega-rallies, unending number of road shows and more expenditure in organizing such shows. The acts of EC have, therefore, besides contributing to a public health emergency in the State, indirectly contributed to unprecedented expenses on the election campaign. The Commission pretends to be completely powerless in reigning in the expenditure of political parties.

Did the Commission make any effort to make our election process more inclusive? Pandemic was an opportunity to do so. About 46 per cent of the US electorate in the last Presidential election opted for absentee voting or mail-in-ballot just six months back. What efforts did the Commission make in India to ensure that migrant laborers can exercise their franchise? Did the commission make any worthwhile recommendation to the Government to make mobilization of funds by political parties more transparent? No such initiative is visible.

The writer is a former civil servant who retired in the grade of Additional Secretary to the Government of India.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The last thing which could be imputed to Sir Rabindranath Tagore is a lack of imagination; but has he, or those who think with him, so soon forgotten the import of the Great War that he should speak as he did in his address to Indian students in London the other day, - as reported in our Mail telegram? A visit to the battlefields of France should surely have brought vividly to his mind the sacrifice of the hundreds of thousands who there died for their country and the freedom of the world. The "awful calm of desolation," however, brought before his mind the "vision of a huge demon." Nothing more? There are many amongst us today who have come out of that Valley of the Shadow of Death, and in whose memories the impress of unspeakable horror is illumined by the recollection of heroism and devotion surpassing anything before known. The Allied armies in the field and their fellow-countrymen and countrywomen who could only "do their bit" at home were inspired by high ideals, of patriotism, freedom, the defence of home, country, and civilisation; and without these ideals the Titanic conflict could never have been won. Are they forgotten? The battlefields may conjure up the vision of a "huge demon" but they also enshrine the memories of those by whom Apollyon was vanquished.

NEWS ITEMS

RAILWAY STRIKE AT PEGU

Rangoon, Apr 30

Mr. I.R. Das recently had an interview with the Commissioner of Pegu regarding arbitration by Government. The Commissioner referred the matter to the Lieutenant-Governor, and the local Government replied stating that owing to insufficient particulars and the absence of figures from the strikers' memorial, it was impossible for Government to ask the Railway Company to accept arbitration. The reply added that if the strikers were prepared to return to work Government would order the Director of Industries to enquire into conditions in their service, with a view to obtaining redress for any grievances which such enquiry might show to exist. If the strikers were unwilling to accept that proposition the Lieutenant-Governor considered that those men who occupied railway quarters must be ejected after seven days' full notice.

CITIZENS' DUTY TO HELP GOVERNMENT

Lucknow, Apr 30

At a representative meeting at Moti Mahal, Mr. A.P. Sen pointed out the necessity of having an organisation at the present moment which would tend to promote peace and order. He said that it was the duty of every peaceful citizen to assist the Government in the task of preventing disorder and lawlessness by all legitimate means. The aim of the organisation which they intended to inaugurate that evening was to counteract any attempt leading to disorder and lawlessness, by means of persuasion and conciliation, and not by taking any hostile attitude, or by having recourse to repression. They intended to approach the people in a sympathetic and friendly manner and to warn them against the dangers of anarchy and revolution.

REVOLVER SHOTS IN PARIS CLUB

London, Apr 30

A Paris telegram states that Juanita Monssaeif, wife of a Persian diamond merchant, created a scuffle in a famous jewellers' club today by entering with a revolver in her hand. Seeing her husband seated in a corner, she fired two shots at him, wounding him slightly. In the confusion which followed tables were overturned and precious stones were scattered about the floor. The woman was taken to the police station, where she declared that she was married in Persia at the age of sixteen and went to Jerusalem, where her husband abandoned her and her five children, and she saved up enough money to come to Paris to shoot him.

NATIONAL SECURITY LEAGUE

Agra, Apr 30

A national security League, or Amar Sabha, has been formed here with Mr. Berkeley Smith, District Magistrate, as president. The objects of the league are to secure for all classes of persons free citizenship and peaceful enjoyment of life, to oppose by all legitimate means those who disturb public tranquility and seek to create disorder, to try to remove grievances of the people against the Government or of one class against another, to communicate the views of the people to Government, and of Government to the people, so that all classes may join together in working for the uplift, freedom, and prosperity of India. Members have to sign a declaration of membership, and the league is supported from all parts of the district.

SATURDAY INTERVIEW

'OTT platforms aren't experimenting much'

Eminent filmmaker and Dean of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute (SRFTI), ASHOKA VISWANATHAN in a conversation with SOUMYADIP MULLICK says OTT platforms are not being able to bring out creative and quality content since the powers that be are trying to play God without having any know-how of the medium.



objecting to movie content that they feel is not fit for the Indian audience. Should viewers be allowed to judge for themselves instead of someone else making the decisions for them?

A. The Censor Board is in the habit of going overboard at times. I feel there should be a regulatory authority but not one that will impose restrictions on creativity. The necessity of a regulatory body arises in the wake of concerns that one could come up with "dangerous content" that has the potential to cause a conflict by enraged a certain community that might feel vilified. However, that said the body must also understand or possess the capability to understand why a scene from Jean Luc Godard's 'Prenom Carmen' cannot be removed. To speak the truth, Sharmila Tagore was one of the best examples of someone who effectively led such a regulatory body as she possesses a deep

understanding of cinema.

Q. Do you feel that contemporary filmmakers are overestimating the choices of Indian viewers in their course of experimentation with cinema?

A. A vast amount of the audience is waiting to watch experimental cinema. This lockdown has created immense opportunity for good content for OTT platforms and has further sharpened the choices of viewers. If this can be put to good use, the same old stuff that we see on television and in Hindi cinema will be instantly rejected by viewers. But unfortunately, the same stuff is being shown on such online platforms. A lot of money is being spent but content quality remains unimproved. It's a cause for worry.

Q. Wouldn't you agree that some of the shows featuring on OTT

platforms are quite fresh in their approach, especially where certain things are shown exactly how they might occur in real life but were not allowed previously for reel due to objection by the censor board?

A. I would say that is a superficial reality. What matters is whether a filmmaker is being able to scratch below the surface. Two things - one is the appearance of reality and the other, perception of reality; what things are. It's not only we who are wearing masks due to the Covid virus but in the last few years, many organizations and conglomerates are wearing masks and under whose cover they are operating and controlling the cinema industry. We are being controlled and watched in some kind of a panopticon where we are under surveillance. In such a world, we must be subversive. We are not being allowed to highlight or deliberate on subjects that are otherwise active but invisible in society.

Q. The whole event of the central government and the apex court willing to introduce stringent rules to monitor OTT content surrounds a recent political thriller - a web series that seems to have touched a raw nerve somewhere. Previously too there have been films based on political personalities and they too had drawn flak from ruling powers. Can politics and cinema go hand in hand?

A. Depends. If you use the word politics in a very generic sense then every cinema or work of art is political, though not in the traditional dictionary sense of politics - being the art of government - but anything that

relates to society and the people that constitute it. But it is not necessary to present it in the perverse form as it might appear in reality. One can make a film about human endurance, relationships, etc; there are politics there too but the approach in presenting it is different.

Q. What is wrong if a filmmaker shows a corrupt politician on screen when in real life there are ample examples of it?

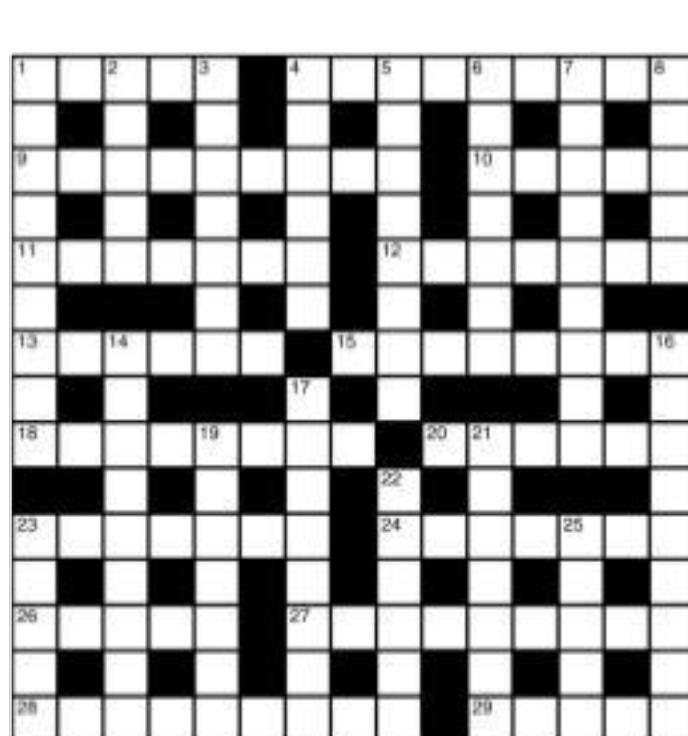
A. There have been great political films like 'Z' by Costa Gavras, that marked the beginning of what is termed a political thriller. It showed the corruption in French politics and was made with an absurdist approach. It was a very interesting film which reminds me of the brilliant performance of Yves Montand, who was eventually murdered on-screen. Filmmaker Dibakar Banerjee later made an interesting film, 'Shanghai' based on 'Z'. Bengal also has seen films like 'Grihajuddho' while 'New Delhi Times' by Ramesh Sharma, and shot by Subrata Mitra, brought to the fore the kind of intensifying politics present in political parties where self-preservation is the name of the game.

Q. Lot of contemporary Bengal and Hindi films on the OTT platforms are being borrowed from South Indian content. Would you agree there is a lack of originality?

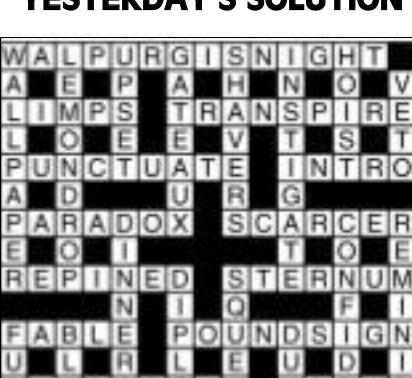
A. I think so. Several adaptations or copies of South Indian content, especially Tamil cinema is becoming apparent. Films like 'Vada Chennai' by Vetrimaran, or 'Super Deluxe' by Thiagarajan Kumararaja are indeed excellent Southern films. Bengal, unfortunately, is falling short of ideas; even the filmmakers at the national level are awfully mediocre.

NO 28900

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



SOLUTION FOR 24 APRIL

ACROSS

- 1 Expert solver will do this (5)
- 4 Radiation damage in red wines (5,4)
- 9 Some European is turned on wearing pants (9)
- 10 Sew? Mean to go round end of skirt (5)
- 11 Jazzy felt hat: nothing to make you jump here (5,4)
- 12 What's no longer grown in rocky area? (7)
- 13 Piece in G sharp (6)
- 15 Remaining ill, ignoring a new headache (8)
- 18 Cut first of details from verdict about Times (8)
- 20 Thirst? Number tapping into big river (6)
- 23 Offered to wrap big bird in silky fabric (7)
- 24 Article craftily ignoring Liberal chaos (7)
- 26 Some trouble I routinely encountered back in college (5)
- 27 Eastern philosophy recalled in the past with US actress ignoring a Western (5,4)
- 28 What is red, swirling? Not usually this kitchen sight (9)
- 29 Planet core that's hot ultimately? (5)
- 31 Study enduring artist (9)
- 32 Get on? Get on after accommodating soldiers (5)
- 33 Merlin working to support King in fortress? (7)
- 34 Rope binding one officer that's convicted (6)
- 35 Chat to blow away, though carrying large stringed instrument (8)
- 36 Judge's arrival about to take effect (7)

DOWN

- 1 Study enduring artist (9)
- 2 Get on? Get on after accommodating soldiers (5)
- 3 Merlin working to support King in fortress? (7)
- 4 Rope binding one officer that's convicted (6)
- 5 Chat to blow away, though carrying large stringed instrument (8)
- 6 Judge's arrival about to take effect (7)
- 7 Very interesting sailor to celebrate circling globe (9)
- 8 Congregation notice Priest around hospital (5)
- 14 Detectives receiving boost, source of a big shift (9)
- 16 Sadly hear about lately gutted cricketer's unwanted departure from game? (5,4)
- 17 Does it matter about me? Rather (8)
- 19 Superficial broadcast about manor-house? (7)
- 21 Ignorant article in Le Monde is about a conflict? (7)
- 22 One who dislikes stocking line offering backless dress (6)
- 23 Lineage's length included in startling comment supported by daughter (5)
- 25 A lot of work evident around one church feature (5)

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

Odisha logs record surge in Covid cases

8681 new cases, 14 deaths, positivity rate almost 20 percent

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

The wave of COVID-19 cases kept mounting in Odisha with yet another record surge of 8,681 positive cases on Friday and a high Test Positivity Rate (TPR) of 19.09 percent while 14 more deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 2,043.

The state today recorded a massive 24.04% jump in COVID-19 cases, with close to 9,000 persons testing positive—the highest ever surge since the outbreak of the disease in mid-March, 2020.

As many as 17 of the 30 districts in the state slipped to the red zone.

It is the second occasion when the State's daily COVID caseload surpassed the 8,000-mark, much to the worry for the government and its COVID managers.

While on 5 April the State accounted for 573 new cases, today's fresh cases are more than fifteen times more than the daily cases reported three weeks back.

Three coronavirus-positive patients each died in Koraput and Sundargarh, while two each succumbed to the disease in Khordha and Rayagada and one each in Ganjam, Kalahandi, Nabarang-

Odisha gets 1st lot of Covaxin from Bharat Biotech

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

The first consignment of state procured Covaxin reached Odisha on Friday night.

The consignment of 1.5 lakh doses of Covaxin for persons in the age group of 18 to 44 arrived informed health department officers.

This vaccine will be used in Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation limits for which slots will be opened on

pur and Sambalpur.

Khurda district, which comprises the state capital Bhubaneswar, recorded the maximum number of new cases at 1,408, followed by Sundargarh (745), Cuttack (570), and Puri (514). Nineteen other districts reported more than 100 fresh cases.

State capital Bhubaneswar reported 1119 new cases. The total number of active cases in the city is 7588.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today provided Rs 10 crore to the Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation for Covid management.

With today's addition of

COWIN for sessions to be held from Monday, 3rd May onwards.

A trial, symbolic commencement of 18-44 years age-group vaccination, with vaccination of a token few beneficiaries will start tomorrow, they added.

It may be noted that Odisha has placed an order of 377 lakh doses and 10.47 lakh doses to SII and Bharat Biotech. The state has a population of two crore in the 18 to 44 age group.

infected persons, the active cases have jumped to 61,698 while the State's cumulative caseload mounted to 4,44,194 on Friday.

While the number of daily infections breached the 8000-mark twice in the last 72 hours, the public health experts sounded warning of a rapid rise in the caseload for the three weeks back.

The State's recovery rate currently stands at 85.63% with 3,80,400 cured of the disease so far. Odisha currently has 61,698 active cases.

Meanwhile, the authorities have shut the Nanaknagar Zoological Park,

'No shortage of Remdesivir in Odisha'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Odisha additional chief secretary P.K. Mahapatra allayed fears of a shortage of Remdesivir or medical oxygen and said there is no shortage in the state which has a stock of the injection.

He said the state has ramped up testing with a target of 18,000 RT PCR and 50,000 RAT daily.

There is sufficient stock of PPE kits, masks, gloves. To date 843 general beds, 2063 ICU beds and more than 700 ventilators have been kept ready, he informed.

Collectors and Authorities of Municipal Corporations have been ordered to gear up Covid Care facilities, he added.

on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar for 15 days from 1 May to 15 May in view of the rapid rise in COVID-19 cases in the capital city. The district courts and judicial complexes in the pilgrim town of Puri were also closed with a spurt in positive cases.

CM announces 5 kg free rice

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Odisha. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik today announced that Food Security Act beneficiaries in the state will get an additional 5 kg rice free of cost in May and June. At least 12 lakh people will stand to benefit, said official sources.

Shops in Odisha to be shut after 2 PM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Following the footsteps of several traders and merchants associations in districts of Kalahandi, Ganjam, Balasgir, the Odisha Traders' Association several districts today announced that shops will remain closed after 2 pm in the state.

The suo-motto move by merchants associations in some of the districts had

been appreciated by the state government as it helped in crowd control and in curbing the rising coronavirus graph. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik had welcomed the move.

The traders were, as such impacted by the night curfew and weekend shutdown. Further limiting the business hours to half a day is bound to hit the income of shopkeepers.

The sharp rise in Covid

cases in the state has however prompted the traders body to help in flattening the graph of the pandemic.

"The shops and commercial centres will stop functioning after 2 pm from 3 May. The restriction of this nature will remain in force till 15 May. The general body meeting of the traders' body unanimously adopted a resolution on Friday in this regard," said OTA Secretary Sudhakar Panda.

Infected with COVID-19, couple ends life

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Deeply traumatized over multiple coronavirus infection in the family, a couple in Odisha's Nayagarh district committed suicide by hanging.

The deceased persons

Tata Steel BSL Bags Golden Peacock Award 2020

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

tracted COVID-19 infection, the husband had influenza-like illness. The couple's son infected with coronavirus is battling for life with oxygen support at a hospital in Puri, police officials said.

"The couple—Bhikari Patra and wife Jyoshna Patra—was undergoing severe mental stress after their son had tested positive. His serious health condition had left them shattered. Later the wife tested positive. It might

CJ Odisha inaugurates court digitization centres

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Chief Justice of Orissa High Court, Dr. Justice S. Muralidhar, inaugurated the District Court Digitization Centres in the four major District Courts of Cuttack, Ganjam, Sambalpur and Balasore in the presence of Judges of the High Court and other dignitaries in virtual mode.

These four District Court Digitization Centres have been established to carry out scanning and digitization of case records in disposed of matters.

After the Chief Justice took charge in January this year, the process of scanning and digitization of Court's records has been expedited.

A number of digitization hubs have been established in



a task that has been in the pipeline for long.

Justice Satrughna Puja-hari, Chairman of the High Court Computer Committee provided details on the process of digitization and its future prospects.

The event was also attended by Manoj Kumar Patnaik, CEO of OCAC, Bhubaneswar which has provided the technological backbone to this endeavour.

Later, Dr. Justice Muralidhar in the presence of Justice B.R. Sarangi, the Administrative Judge for the District of Sambalpur inaugurated the Extension Building, the Court of Senior Civil Judge (LR & LTV) and the Senior Civil Judge (Commercial Court) of Sambalpur through video conferencing.

Scrabble® Brand Conceptis Sudoku

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 30 APRIL:

Mr Subodh Pandey, COO, Tata Steel BSL, Dhenkanal district bagged the golden peacock award for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) for the year 2020 in the steel industry category. The award is the recognition of the excellent work in the CSR spheres by the steel major, as claimed by the company.

The company was adjudged as the winner by the New Delhi based Golden Peacock Awards Jury under the Chairmanship of Justice M. N. Venkatachaliyah, former Chief Justice of India and former Chairman, National Human Rights Commission

of India, it said.

Mr Subodh Pandey, COO,

Tata Steel BSL, said,

"We are committed to bringing transformation in the life of the people around our operating units across locations and promote inclusive growth through innovative sustainable socio-economic interventions".

The company has been pro-

viding support to the com-

munity in the field of edu-

cation, health care, rural in-

frastructure, sports, Green

School Project and tou-

ched the lives of more than

40,000 people across its op-

erating locations, said the release issued by the company.

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886,

54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

Haryana Roads 23861262

Himachal Roadways

2371473, 23325320

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838,

18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 1800103838

JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373737

AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry 25656421, 25656431 Reservation 41528181

AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 1800103838

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Our assistance, we hope, will have a catalytic effect on society more broadly here and around the world to come to the aid of the Indian people

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESPERSON NED PRICE

ON COVID-19 OUTBREAK IN INDIA

WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	29	25 H
HONG KONG	31	23 H
TOKYO	24	13 C
LONDON	12	03 S
DUBAI	32	25 S
SAN FRANCISCO	18	09 H
NEW YORK	17	12 H
MOSCOW	13	12 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Russian military vehicles prepare to roll along Tverskaya street toward Red Square during a rehearsal for the Victory Day military parade in Moscow, Russia. ■AGENCIES

Boris Johnson's mobile number: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has had the same mobile phone number for 15 years and it has been freely available since it was published in a press release in 2006, several UK media reports claimed on Friday. While Downing Street has declined to comment, some media outlets tried dialling the number in question but it appeared to be switched off. ■AP

Man charged for Islamic State membership: German prosecutors have charged an Iraqi immigrant with membership in a terrorist organisation on allegations that he raised thousands of dollars for the Islamic State group. The man was arrested in early January on Germany's border with Switzerland as he allegedly was headed to Syria. ■AP

US Embassy limits consular services after Russia ban

MOSCOW, 30 APRIL

The US Embassy said Friday it will sharply limit its consular activities due to a Russian ban on hiring local staff.

The Embassy said in a statement that starting from 12 May, it will reduce consular services offered to include only emergency US citizen services and a very limited number of immigrant visas such as life-or-death emergencies.

It noted that non-immigrant visa processing for non-diplomatic travel will cease and it will stop offering routine notarial services, consular reports of birth abroad or passport renewal services for the foreseeable future. Moscow has moved to ban the US Embassy and consular offices from hiring Russian and third-country nationals as part of its retaliation to a set of new United States sanctions imposed over Russian interference in the 2020 US presidential election and involvement in the Solar-Wind hack of federal agencies activities Moscow has denied.

Mike Pence, in his first post-office speech, lays down marker for 2024

ASSOCIATED PRESS

COLUMBIA (US), 30 APRIL

In his first public address since the end of the Trump administration, former Vice President Mike Pence on Thursday put down a marker for a potential return to elected office, telling an audience in early-voting South Carolina that he will use the coming months pushing back on the liberal agenda he says is wrong for the country.

We've got to guard our values ... by offering a positive agenda to the American people, grounded in our highest ideals, Pence told an audience of several hundred at a Columbia dinner sponsored by a conservative Christian nonprofit that lobbies for what it considers to be biblical values, such as heterosexual marriage.

v. Wade. Palmetto Family most recently helped push through a ban on most South Carolina abortions, a law now being challenged in federal court.

The state holds the first presidential primaries in the South, and candidates of both major parties typically spend more than a year in the state ahead of those votes, introducing themselves and trying to secure support.

Republican candidates use South Carolina as a proving ground to test their anti-abortion rights mettle.

Thursday's event, hosted by Palmetto Family Council, also gave Pence a backdrop for some of the issues for which he long advocated as an Indiana congressman-turned-governor, such as restrictions on abortion and support for the overturn of Roe

Palmer. As vice president, he made numerous trips to South Carolina, meeting several times with Gov. Henry McMaster for coronavirus-related forums and campaigning in the state for U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham and U.S. Rep. Nancy Mace.

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No system can cope if we allow the disease to spread rapidly. May Allah be with us and protect us

GIVING INSIGHT ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF OXYGEN PRODUCTION, SUPPLY AND AVAILABILITY IN PAKISTAN

THUMBNAILS



Ultra-Orthodox Jewish youths stand next to a bonfire in Jerusalem on Friday. During the Lag Ba'Omer holiday, marking the end of a plague said to have decimated Jews during Roman times.

Thailand Covid cases drop: Thailand reported fewer than 2,000 new Covid-19 cases for the second day in a row, as the country has toughened restrictions to curb the outbreak. The country confirmed 1,583 new Covid-19 cases and 15 deaths on Friday

IANS

Car bomb kills 30: A huge car bomb blast killed at least 30 people and injured dozens more in Afghanistan's eastern Logar province on Friday, officials said. It was not immediately clear who was behind the blast.

IANS

New Covid community infections: There were 24 new coronavirus cases confirmed as at Friday noon, taking Singapore's total to 61,145. Among them are nine from the community. Of the nine, eight are linked to previous cases, including four who are linked to the cluster at Tan Tock Seng Hospital, which now has 13 cases.

AP

Pakistan to restrict inbound flights: Pakistan's National Command and Operation Centre (NCOC) has recommended a reduction in inbound international flights in order to curtail the spread of Covid-19. It was decided to curtail international flights from 5 May to 20.

AP

Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan try to end cross-border clashes

A large part of Tajik-Kyrgyz border remained unmarked, fueling disputes over water, land & pastures

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 30 APRIL

A cease-fire on the border between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan largely held Friday following a day of intense clashes that killed more than 20 people and wounded over 100 in a conflict over water supply between the two ex-Soviet Central Asian neighbors.

More than 7,000 Kyrgyz residents have been evacuated from the area engulfed by the fighting as troops from the two countries exchanged gunfire around a water supply facility near the village of Kok-Tash in western Kyrgyzstan on the border with Tajikistan.

Early Friday, Kyrgyz officials reported the firing on the border but later said that the truce is being observed.

Kyrgyzstan's Health Ministry said 13 people died and 134 others were injured in the clashes that marked the worst outbreak of hostilities



A Kyrgyz serviceman carries mattresses for citizens who were evacuated from districts bordering Tajikistan following fighting along the Kyrgyz-Tajik disputed border on Friday. ■ AGENCIES

between the two countries since they gained independence in the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

Local officials in the city of Isfara in Tajikistan reported eight dead and over 30 wounded.

A large part of the Tajik-Kyrgyz border has remained unmarked, fueling fierce dis-

putes over water, land and pastures. Kyrgyz and Tajik delegations have held several rounds of talks in recent years but have failed to end the border controversy.

Both nations have claimed the area around the water supply facility in Kok-Tash, a dispute dating back decades to when they were both part

of the Soviet Union.

The latest conflict erupted Wednesday when Tajik officials attempted to mount surveillance cameras to monitor the water supply facility amid the tensions over water distribution, and the Kyrgyz residents opposed the move.

The Kyrgyz and the Tajiks began hurling stones at each

other and troops quickly entered the fray.

Amidst the clashes, Kyrgyz President Sadyr Zhamarov met with top officials on Thursday to discuss the situation.

Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are both members of the Russia-dominated Collective Security Treaty Organization.

The Russian Foreign Ministry on Friday voiced concern about the conflict and urged them to negotiate a lasting settlement.

The European Union on Friday welcomed the cease-fire deal and emphasized the need for a lasting and peaceful solution.

Both sides will need to undertake all the necessary steps to avoid any conflict in the future, EU spokesman Peter Stano said in a statement, adding that the EU stands ready to provide technical assistance on border and water management as well as political support.

Sri Lanka police arrest man for protesting road closure

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, 30 APRIL

Police in Sri Lanka on Friday arrested a 31-year-old man for protesting the closure of a road for the passage of visiting Chinese Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe's convoy, posing a threat to the VIP fleet.

Police Spokesman Ajith Rohana said the man was arrested for interfering in police duties and forming an unlawful assembly while encouraging the others to protest.

In a social media post, the man was seen encouraging the motorists to honk in protest when the police closed the road for the vehicular movement of the Chinese minister on Tuesday night at a busy junction in Colombo. He was heard shouting against the police action to

close the road and instigating others to object to the road being closed, posing a threat to the Chinese minister's convoy, the official said.

Rohana said that in accordance with the Vienna Convention, the state of Sri Lanka was obliged to provide facilities to a visiting VIP representing a state.

The arrestee would be produced in court, the official said. The road was closed at night and it is the responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government to give the defence minister protection. Rohana said it is also the responsibility of Sri Lanka to provide security to a defence minister from a powerful country like China. The road was closed at night and it is the responsibility of the Sri Lankan Government to give the defence minister protection, he said.

It was the first time the vigil had been banned in the global financial hub, with police citing, as it did for all demonstrations last year, coronavirus restrictions on group gatherings. It is expected to face a similar fate this year.

Hong Kong activist Joshua Wong pleads guilty over Tiananmen vigil

THE STRAIT TIMES/ANN
HONG KONG, 30 APRIL

Hong Kong democracy activist Joshua Wong was among four people who pleaded guilty on Friday of participating in an illegal assembly on 4 June last year to commemorate the 1989 crackdown on protesters in and around Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

It was the first time the vigil had been banned in the global financial hub, with police citing, as it did for all demonstrations last year, coronavirus restrictions on group gatherings. It is expected to face a similar fate this year.

Still, tens of thousands of people lit candles across the city in what was largely a peaceful event last June, barring a brief skirmish with riot police in one neighbourhood.

Wong, already in prison after he was found guilty of participating and organising an unauthorised assembly during the mass 2019 pro-democracy protests, pleaded guilty in the District Court.

The other activists who pleaded guilty were Lester Shum, Jannelle Leung and Tiffany Yuen. Another activist, Eddie Chu, asked for an adjournment and his case will be heard on June 11, with 19 others facing similar charges.

The 4 June anniversary struck an especially sensitive nerve in the former British colony last year, falling just as Beijing prepared to introduce new security legislation which punishes anything China sees as subversion, secession, terrorism or collusion with foreign forces with up to life in prison.

While in prison, Wong was arrested in January on suspicion of breaking the new law, which was introduced in July 2020, by taking part in an unofficial vote to pick opposition candidates for a since-postponed election, which the authorities described as a "vicious plot" to "overthrow" the government.

Pope Francis facilitates Vatican prosecutions for cardinals, bishops

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 30 APRIL

Pope Francis has sent another message to Vatican-based cardinals and bishops about his intent to hold them accountable for criminal misconduct. He removed the procedural obstacles that had spared them from being prosecuted by the Vatican's criminal tribunal.

A new law published Friday makes clear that Vatican city-state prosecutors have jurisdiction over cardinals and bishops and need only the pope's consent to proceed with investigations against them.

The law abrogated a regulation, upheld as recently as last year, that said only the tribunal's highest appeals court, which is composed of three cardinal judges, could assess



the actions of cardinals and bishops accused of criminal offenses.

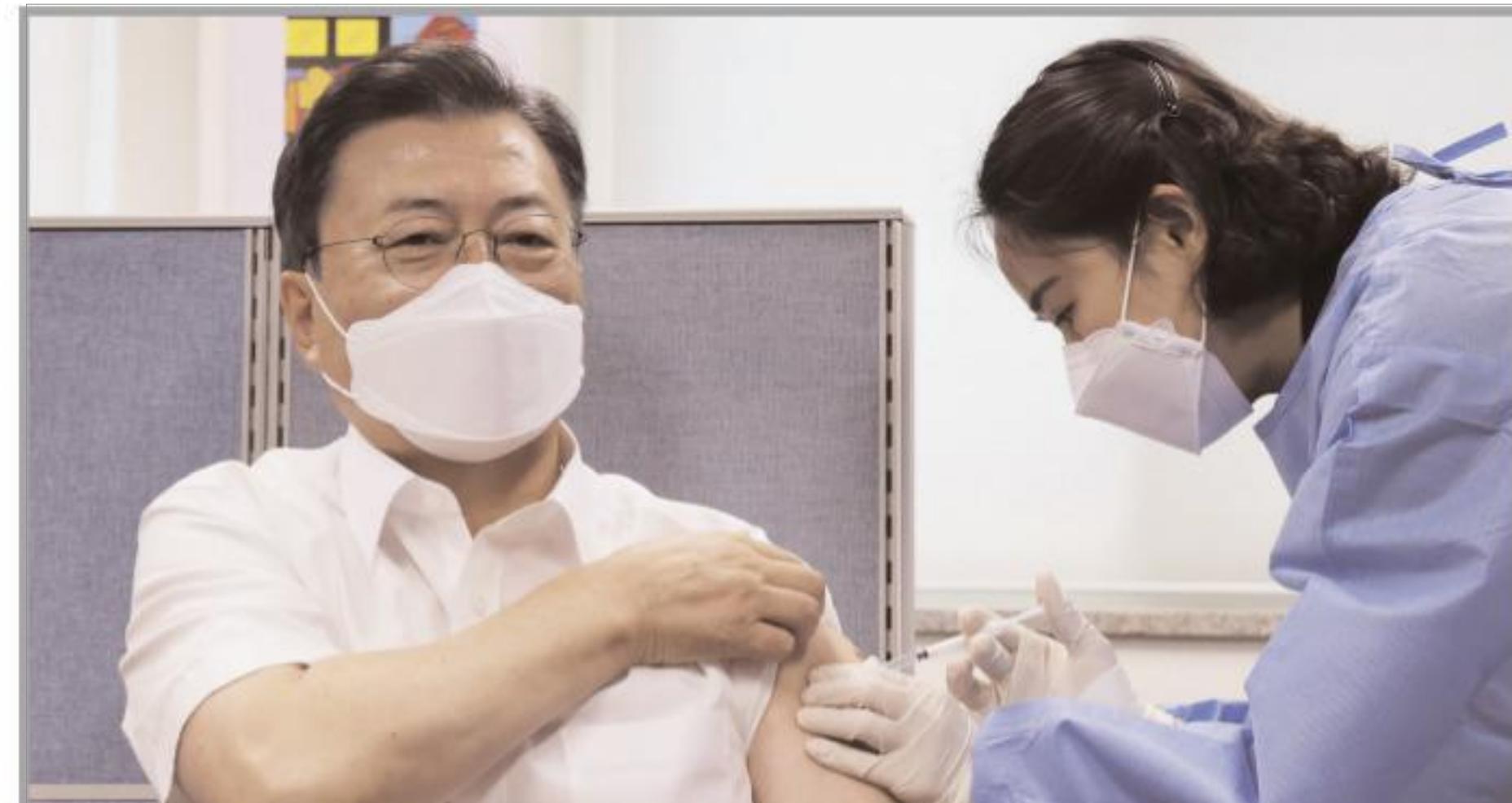
The reform is the latest sign that after eight years of preaching about ending corruption and other criminal activity in the Holy See, Francis is taking concrete steps to hold his own cardinals and bishops accountable.

On Thursday, he passed a different law forcing Vatican superiors to declare their finances are clean, and set a 40-euro (\$48) cap on work-related personal gifts received by any Vatican employee.

The gift cap was seen as a way to cut down on the rampant practice of financial gift-giving to Holy See clerics and the chance that such money could grease favours.

Friday's reform follows Francis' decision last year to strip a senior Vatican official, Cardinal Angelo Becciu, of his rights and privileges as a cardinal in a move seen as laying the groundwork for Becciu to possibly be put on trial. The allegations against him aren't clear, however, and Becciu hasn't been charged with any crime.

TAKE THE JAB



South Korean President Moon Jae-in, left, receives his second dose of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine at a health care center in Seoul, South Korea, on Friday. ■ AP

Pentagon preparing for Taliban attacks during US withdrawal

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 30 APRIL

The Pentagon is preparing for possible Taliban attacks on US and coalition forces as they withdraw from Afghanistan, a prospect that complicates the outlook for winding down America's longest war.

May 1 was the date all US and other foreign forces were to have departed Afghanistan under a February 2020 deal between the Taliban and the Trump administration.

As part of that agreement, the Taliban halted attacks on US troops, and none has been killed since then. But the Taliban said it will consider the United States to be in violation of the agreement for missing the deadline for full withdrawal. Their representatives have been vague about whether they intend to attack starting 1 May.

President Joe Biden's decision to proceed with a final but delayed withdrawal adds a new element of security risk



as the remaining 2,500 to 3,500 American troops, along with about 7,000 coalition troops and thousands of contractors, begin departing.

Biden has said all will be gone by 11 September, the date of the 2001 terrorist attacks that prompted the US to invade Afghanistan in the first place.

We have to assume that this drawdown will be opposed, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby added.

Gen Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters traveling with him Thursday that the pull-out is complex and not without risk. The military typically plans for worst-case scenarios to try to avoid being caught by surprise. The withdrawal from Afghanistan involves ground and air movements of troops, supplies and equipment that could be vulnerable to attack. For security reasons, with-

drawal details are not being made public, but the White House and several defense officials confirmed Thursday that the drawdown has begun.

Defence officials, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive movements, said that in recent days some troops described as dozens of military equipment have left the country.

The State Department also is taking precautions. On Tuesday, it instructed all embassy personnel in Kabul to depart unless their jobs require them to be in Afghanistan. The order went well beyond the usual curtailment of staffers for security and safety reasons.

Even the most seasoned American analysts of the Afghan conflict are unsure what to expect of the Taliban.

Bruce Riedel, a Middle East analyst at the Brookings Institution and former CIA analyst, wrote this week that it's unclear whether the insurgents will attempt to disrupt the withdrawal, but he says they may escalate the war.

Record of Chinese travelling over Labour Day breaks, but many will stick close to home

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN
BEIJING, 30 APRIL

A record-breaking wave of Chinese tourists will hit the road for the Labour Day break. With borders still shut, many will be travelling domestically, to more remote locations and for longer, giving China's economy a powerful short-term boost.

The holiday will be China's first long break in largely Covid-19-free conditions, and will unleash months of pent-up yearning for travel.

Millions had missed the chance to go out earlier this year during the long Lunar New Year break due to a domestic coronavirus outbreak.

Up to 200 million trips will be made by tourists domestically, exceeding the 195 million in 2019 before Covid-19, according to data from online travel giant Trip.com Group, setting a new all-time high for the holiday.



That is in stark contrast to the rest of the world where many countries are still struggling to bring the virus under control, let alone open up domestic or even international travel.

"This May Day holiday will see greater enthusiasm for long-distance travel across provinces in mainland China," Trip.com told Reuters.

Before the pandemic, the Labour Day holiday was a peak period for international trips, with Thailand, Japan and Singapore the hottest destinations.

But strict quarantine measures and reduced flights have roadblocked Chinese travellers for over a year.



FOUL!

Athletes using new running shoe technology to set records are "cheating," Kenya's former marathon world record-holder Tegla Loroupe (photo, left) has said as debate continues to rage over whether high-tech footwear can give runners an unfair advantage. Bespoke footwear played a role in some distance-running achievements of 2019.

For more updates

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THUMBNAILS

Estonian donation: The apparently large-hearted Estonian Cricket Association, despite its limited resources, has given the Board of Control for Cricket in India a donation of Rs 1 lakh to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, which though has not stopped India's Twenty20 league.

Orange cap: Shikhar Dhawan returned to the top of the Orange cap table after scoring 46 in Delhi Capitals' seven-wicket win over Kolkata Knight Riders in the Indian Premier League on Thursday. Dhawan played the perfect foil to his opening partner Prithvi Shaw.

Streak's denial: Former Zimbabwe captain Heath Streak, who was given an eight-year ban by the global authorities for corruption, on Thursday apologised and took full responsibility for his actions, but said he had never been involved in any attempts to fix matches.

Barca beaten: Barcelona spurned the chance to go top of the table on Thursday as a shock 2-1 defeat by Granada added another twist to La Liga's most unpredictable title race in years. Barca could have been at the top by moving a point ahead of Atletico Madrid.

Protest planned: A social media boycott was gathering strength on Thursday with many organisations joining England's soccer leagues in a show of solidarity against online abuse. Uefa will join this weekend's boycott, as will England Rugby and British Cycling.

Quintet out: Executives from five of the six English clubs involved in the controversial breakaway European Super League have resigned from their posts on various Premier League committees. Tottenham Hotspur do not have representation on the committees.

Damages claimed: Ex-model Kathryn Mayorga, who had accused footballer Cristiano Ronaldo of rape in 2009, is claiming £56 million in damages. "She wants £18m for past pain and suffering, £18m for future pain and suffering and £18m in punitive damages."

Tokyo Olympics: The Olympics must not be a burden on regional medical systems, Japan's government spokesman said on Friday amid worries that daily athlete testing would tax health resources already stressed in fighting a rebound of Covid-19 cases.



Hamilton's plan: Lewis Hamilton said on Thursday he planned to be in Formula One next season, was enjoying this year's title battle and had already been laying the groundwork for 2022. He tested Pirelli's 18-inch 2022 tyre compounds at Imola this month.

Asian league: FC Goa were beaten 2-0 by Al Wahda in their final Asian Champions League match at Nehru Stadium, Margao, on Thursday night. Owing to the Covid-19 situation in the land, FC Goa were without all their foreign players as well as the head coach.

Club turmoil: Sources in the club said on Friday that Mohanned Sporting had been placed under receivership in accordance with a court order following an allegedly protracted period of administrative inaction amid turmoil resulting from faction feuds.

FOUL! Athletes using new running shoe technology to set records are "cheating," Kenya's former marathon world record-holder Tegla Loroupe (photo, left) has said as debate continues to rage over whether high-tech footwear can give runners an unfair advantage. Bespoke footwear played a role in some distance-running achievements of 2019.

www.thestatesman.com



AGENCIES
MANCHESTER, 30 APRIL

Bruno Fernandes and Edinson Cavani (in photo) scored a brace each as Manchester United came from behind with five second-half goals to thrash Roma 6-2 in the first leg their Europa League semi-final engagement.

Fernandes opened the scoring for United in the ninth minute but Lorenzo Pellegrino levelled with a

penalty and Edin Dzeko put Roma ahead in the 34th. Cavani struck in the 48th and 64th minutes to turn matters around, and Fernandes' penalty in the 71st, Paul Pogba in the 75th and substitute Mason Greenwood in the 86th ensured a big win for United.

The result leaves the 2017 champions United well-placed for next Thursday's second leg in Roma and a place in the 26 May final in Gdansk, Poland.

"The result is positive but it's not finished. We are going to have to stay focused and play the second leg with the same mentality," Pogba told BT Sport.

The other English side, 2019 runners-up Arsenal, lost 2-1 at Spain's Villarreal in a game both sides ended with 10 men. Villarreal claimed a narrow advantage with a 2-1 home victory in the first leg, although they would feel frustrated at letting the Lon-

don club off the hook.

First-half goals by Manu Trigueros and Raul Albilo put the Spanish club in command and it looked bleak for the visitors when Dani Ceballos was sent off just before the hour mark. Arse-

nal were rocking and needed goalkeeper Bernd Leno to avoid them slipping further behind but they were thrown a lifeline when Nicolas Pepe converted a 73rd-minute penalty.

A chaotic game took another twist as Villarreal were also reduced to 10 men when former Tottenham Hotspur player Etienne Capoue received a second yellow card. Villarreal, coached by former Arsenal manager and Europe League specialist Unai Emery, maintained their 100 per cent home record in the competition this season. But the tie remains delicately balanced ahead of next week's return in London.

Mancunians win, Gunners go down in Europa League semi-finals



AGENCIES
MANCHESTER, 30 APRIL

Varied styles in clash of heavyweights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL



Rohit Sharma's elegance and Suryakumar Yadav's flamboyance will be on show along with the brute power of Faf du Plessis and the grace of Ruturaj Gaikwad when Mumbai Indians meet Chennai Super Kings in the Indian Premier League here tomorrow.

MI and CSK go into it after seven-wicket wins over Rajasthan Royals and SunRisers Hyderabad, respectively, keen to continue their winning runs. The biggest positive for Mumbai has been the return to form of opener Quinton de Kock (117 runs, in photo), who made a blistering, unbeaten 70 against Rajasthan here.

The faltering Mumbai middle order also clicked in the previous game, on an easier track compared with the one at Chepauk. Yadav (170 runs) would need to build on his decent starts while a big knock should bolster Krunal Pandya's confidence further. Kieron Pollard (81 runs) displayed his hard-hitting skills last night and would be raring to go once again, apart from fellow all-rounder Hardik Pandya.

Pacemen Jasprit Bumrah and Trent Boult have been

exceptional, particularly at the "death," and would need to perform well again. Leggie Rahul Chahar, with 11 scalps, has been MI's leading wicket-taker. He would, however, need support from Krunal and the season's off-spinner Jayant Yadav, who was a little expensive in the previous game.

It remains to be seen whether Mumbai persist with Nathan Coulter-Nile or get Ishan Kishan back in the playing XI, which could mean Pollard would have to chip in with the ball, if needed. Table-toppers CSK have been a force to reckon with

in this season, having won five of their six games.

Openers du Plessis (270 runs) and Gaikwad (192 runs) have been in top form and would be keen to provide the team with another strong start. Their middle order has also been among the runs. Moeen Ali (148 runs) has got used to the role of the pinch-hitter, and the presence of Suresh Raina (121 runs) gives the team a certain confidence. Then there are Ambati Rayudu (64 runs) and Ravindra Jadeja (109 runs), who has improved as a batsman and can plunder sixes at will,

apart from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (37 runs), playing second fiddle these days.

Add Sam Curran and CSK can take any attack apart when in form. CSK bowlers led by Deepak Chahar (eight wickets) and Curran (six) have done a splendid job, while Shardul Thakur, with four scalps, could be useful in terms of breaking partnerships.

Jadeja has also shone with the ball, taking five wickets, while Ali has four, and all of them would be hoping to be at their best against Mumbai.

Match starts at 7.30 pm

World T20 venues could be curtailed from 9 to 5 but too early to contemplate UAE shift: BCCI

NEW DELHI, 30 APRIL

The BCCI is confident that India will host the World T20 in October as per schedule despite a surge in COVID-19 cases in the country but the marquee ICC event could be held in five cities instead of originally nine short-listed venues.

As per convention, ICC keeps a back-up country ready and it's been the UAE for the past one year.

The IPL is currently on at different venues in separate bio-secure environments but BCCI will face perhaps its biggest test of managing a big-ticket ICC tournament in adverse circumstances.

"We are still hopeful that with

five months left and significant population being vaccinated, we will be in a position to host World T20. Yes, one of the options could be curtailing the nine venues to a maximum four or five," a senior BCCI office bearer said.

An ICC rescue team was supposed to reach Delhi on April 26 to inspect the bio-secure arrangements for the IPL, keeping in mind the World T20 but the travel bans imposed on India led to the postponement of the trip. Yes, the team was supposed to arrive earlier this week but with travel bans in place, they will come later once situation returns to normalcy, the office bearer said.

Usually, when ICC World T20 has been held in other countries the event has always been confined to three or four venues but it hasn't been a case in India due to board politics. PTI

opponent) Dhiraj Malhotra was on Friday quoted as saying by the BBC that "UAE is the back up venue".

However an office bearer said that UAE was always the second option as per rules.

"You always have a back up venue and UAE has been the venue after it was passed at ICC meeting last year. There's nothing new in what Dhiraj had said. Obviously, if the situation remains same after five months, you will have to have Plan B," the office bearer said.

Usually, when ICC World T20 has been held in other countries the event has always been confined to three or four venues but it hasn't been a case in India due to board politics. PTI

Skipper KL Rahul scored a combative unbeaten 91 to lead Punjab Kings to a competitive 179 for five against Royal Challengers Bangalore in their IPL match here on Friday.

Rahul and Chris Gayle (46 off 24) shared 80 runs but Punjab's middle order collapsed as Harpreet Brar, batting at number seven, was the only other batsman to manage a double-digit score.

Rahul and Brar added 61 runs for the unbeaten eighth wicket to rescue the side after the RCB bowlers seized the initiative once Gayle was sent back in the 11th over.

Rahul hit seven fours and

five sixes in his 57-ball knock, while Brar took 17 balls for his 25 that had two sixes and a four.

The pace duo of Daniel Sams and Mohammed Siraj bowled tight spells initially to keep the Punjab batsmen on a tight leash, not letting them open their arms.

Prabhraj Singh, who played in place of injured Mayank Agarwal, could not contribute much, scoring a run-a-ball 7.

Rahul looked in good touch, driving the ball elegantly but runs did not come at a good pace for the side until Gayle exploded.

The West Indian creamed five fours, including four in a row, in the last over of the Powerplay, bowled by Jamieson.

He followed that up with two sixes off Yuzvendra Chahal in the next over with the first one being a flat maximum.

Runs came thick and fast, boosting the run rate but Gayle could not convert that into a big knock.

Jamieson got rid of the Caribbean marauder, getting him caught behind. It was a soft dismissal as the sharp short ball touched Gayle's gloves and reached into the hands of AB de Villiers.

The tall Kiwi bowler also got rid of Nicholas Pooran (0) while Deepak Hooda (5) and Shahrukh Khan (0) also made their way back to pavilion in a jiffy.

Rahul, who was losing one partner after another, com-

pleted his half-century with a single as big shots dried up again.

The last over fetched Pun-

jab 22 runs with Rahul hitting Harshal Patel for two fours and a six before Brar closed the innings with another six.

SCOREBOARD

PUNJAB KINGS INNINGS		91
KL Rahul (c† not out)		
P Singh c Kohli b Jameson		7
C Gayle c de Villiers b Sams		46
N Pooran c Ahmed b Jameson 0		
D Hooda c Patidar b Ahmed		5
Shahrukh Khan b Chahal		0
Harpreet Brar not out		25
Extras: (lb 1, w 4)		5
TOTAL: (20 Ov, RR: 8.95)		179/5
BOWLING: D Sams 4,0,24,1		
M Siraj 3,0,24,0		
K Jamieson 3,0,32,2		
Y Chahal 4,0,34,1		
H Patel 4,0,53,0		
S Ahmed 2,0,11,1		

Show continues in lucrative silence as India screams

VITHUSHAN EHANTHARAJAH

The Indian Premier League is the biggest cricket competition in the world. As an entity, it prides itself on being a billion-dollar operation, unstoppable in its heft and glory.

That muscle has never been more defined than it is right now. India is being ravaged by a vicious wave of coronavirus that has a proud country on its knees. Meanwhile, the IPL continues in its ivory bubbles, as owners and hangers-on crowd the dignitaries' enclosure in otherwise empty stadia.

Perhaps it's worth taking a few pages out of the IPL's book to outline the situation.

Speak to anyone associated with the franchise competition and they'll tell you all about its uniqueness, much like the Covid variant sweeping through India, known as B.1.617: the result of two mutations making it more transmissible and harder to combat. Some are calling

it "the double mutant." How's that for innovation?

They're going big on numbers, so here are a few to pop in a neat little graphic. India has now recorded more than 210,000 coronavirus deaths in the last 14 months, the fourth-highest toll globally behind the USA, Brazil and Mexico. There are close to 18 million cases, more positive tests over the last seven days than any other nation. And even so, there are strong claims that both metrics have been drastically under-reported.

Social media, usually a battleground for lurid hashtag wars, is instead now filled with the pleas of millions for medicines, oxygen tanks, and hospital beds. The cricketers themselves have gone off their usual scripts to preach caution and relay distress.

And what of the optics? The streets of Delhi, the city in which the IPL is currently taking place, normally packed with fans trying to get a glimpse of their stars are now littered with

people taking their final breaths, as dark smoke from makeshift funeral pyres fills the air usually reserved for the residue of fireworks.

A competition that raves about the memories it makes is a third of the way through a 14th edition no one will ever forget, and some may never forgive. Of course, this is not the IPL's issue alone. The vested interests of board directors, tentacles spread wide across the nation's most high-powered rooms, make this cricket's sproblem. Assuch, the game finds itself in a corner where inconsistency and contradiction meet.

In the last few days, it was announced domestic IPL players would be privy to precious vaccinations from Saturday. The moral dilemma for those within arguably the safest place in the world becomes whether or not they take them. To do so will be at odds with the altruism that has underscored cricket since March of last year. That by playing

through a crisis, it offers relief without adding to the burden. Players across a number of sports have vocalised the belief they are at least providing a distraction. And even with the mitigation of a professional athlete's mind geared more towards positives than negatives, countless fans have cited the continuation of sport as having a helpful impact on their mental health. But what of those workers in the luxury hotels, those behind the scenes for broadcasters and ground staff whose own well-being is part of the cost? Even the players who feel an obligation to continue on and keep quiet?

The England and Wales Cricket Board is in constant dialogue with its 11 players still in the IPL hotels. While there are no further withdrawals imminent after Liam Livingstone pulled out a week ago, there is collective anxiety and a growing sense of guilt. Those feelings are not restricted to the English contingent.