



Govt. extends deadline for NGOs to open SBI bank accounts in Delhi
page 8



Calcutta HC hears petitions relating to arrests in Narada case
page 9



Biden dials Israel PM, seeks 'significant de-escalation'
page 13

Jhulan looking forward to the red-ball challenge in England
page 15

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Rajasthan govt. declares mucormycosis epidemic

JAIPUR
Amid the increasing instances of mucormycosis or black fungus, the Rajasthan government on Wednesday declared it an epidemic and a notifiable disease. It will be mandatory for the health facilities to report every case of the disease in the State.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Conspiracy behind NRC reverification plea: AIUDF

GUWAHATI
A key member of the Opposition grand alliance in Assam has sniffed a conspiracy behind the move for the reverification of the National Register of Citizens. The AIUDF has also slammed State NRC Coordinator Hitesh Dev Sarma for exceeding his authority in filing an interlocutory application in the Supreme Court.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

ALL INDIA GS PRELIMS TEST SERIES - 65 TESTS

Topicwise test, exclusive current affairs test, followed by subjective & comprehensive tests.

Undergo rigorous training for Prelims, crack IAS
Call - 921-7070707
Visit - crackIAS.com

26 bodies recovered from barge off Mumbai, 49 remain missing

Modi conducts aerial survey of cyclone-hit areas in Gujarat; announces ex gratia

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Twenty-six bodies have been recovered and 49 are still missing from Barge P-305, which sank 35 nautical miles (NM) off the Mumbai coast due to cyclone Tauktae.

"As of now, 186 crew members of accommodation barge P-305 and two from tug 'Varapradha' have been rescued by naval ships and aircraft," a Navy spokesperson said on Wednesday.

INS Kochi, which entered the Mumbai harbour in the day to disembark 125 survivors and mortal remains of four crew members, was immediately sailed out in the evening again to continue the search effort, the spokesperson said. *INS Kolkata* is scheduled to enter the Mumbai harbour to disembark the survivors rescued from barge P-305 and 'Varapradha' as well as the mortal remains of 18 crew members, he added.

The names of those rescued have been conveyed to the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Afcons. Naval ships INS Teg, Betwa, Beas, P-81 aircraft and Seaking helicopters are



Harrowing ordeal: People rescued by the Navy walking out of INS Kochi in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

continuing with the search and rescue operations.

Three construction barges of Afcons, working on a project of the ONGC, and one drilling rig of the ONGC deployed for exploration purpose in Bombay High off the coast of Mumbai, were impacted by cyclone Tauktae, which hit the Arabian Sea off the coast of Mumbai on May 17.

Assistance for Gujarat

The cyclone, which made landfall between Diu and Una town of Gir-Somnath

district in Gujarat on Monday night after barreling along the west coast, left a trail of devastation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who conducted an aerial survey of areas hit by the cyclone in Gujarat, on Wednesday approved an assistance of ₹1,000 crore for "immediate relief activities" in the State, a release said. According to the Gujarat government, 46 persons lost their lives in cyclone-related incidents in the State.

The Nationalist Congress Party and the Shiv Sena have

Storm likely in Bay of Bengal

A low pressure area – a precursor to cyclonic storm – is likely to form in the eastern Bay of Bengal and the Northern Andaman Sea by May 22, the IMD said on Wednesday. "It is very likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm during subsequent 72 hours and reach Odisha and West Bengal coast by May 26," it said. ▶ PAGE 8

criticised Mr. Modi for not conducting the aerial survey in Maharashtra, also hit by the cyclone.

Mr. Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹ 2 lakh for the kin of those killed due to the cyclone in all affected States.

Immediate financial assistance for the other affected States would be given after the respective State governments shared assessment of the damage with the Centre, a Press Information Bureau release said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

COVID-19 affected should defer shots by 3 months

Ministry recommends vaccination for nursing mothers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vaccination should be deferred by three months after recovery in individuals having lab test proven SARS-CoV-2 COVID-19 illness, said the Health Ministry in a statement issued on Wednesday.

COVID-19 patients who have been given anti-SARS-CoV-2 monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma should also defer vaccination by three months from the date of discharge from the hospital. The Ministry also recommended COVID-19 vaccination for all nursing mothers.



Battle continues: A health worker administering vaccine to a youth in Bhopal on Wednesday. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

second dose after clinical recovery from COVID-19.

Blood donation

"Persons with any other serious general illness requiring hospitalisation or ICU care should also wait for 4-8 weeks before getting the COVID-19 vaccine," it noted. Also an individual could donate blood after 14 days of either receipt of COVID-19 vaccine or testing RT-PCR negative, if suffering from COVID-19.

It is recommended that individuals who have received at least the first dose of the vaccine and got the infection before the completion of the dosing schedule should also defer by three months the

vaccination. The matter of vaccination of pregnant women was under discussion and further deliberation by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI).

"The Health Ministry has written to States and UTs to direct the concerned officials to take note of these recommendations and undertake necessary action for their effective implementation. States have also been advised to undertake training of the vaccination staff at all levels," said the release.

COVID-19 REPORTS ▶ PAGE 10

COVID-19 cases found in a third of villages: U.P.

Efforts on to protect unaffected areas'

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Thirty-two per cent of villages in Uttar Pradesh have reported positive cases of COVID-19, a senior State official said on Wednesday.

So far, 28,742 villages in the State reported positive cases during a testing drive in 89,512 villages, said Amit Mohan Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary, Health. There was no COVID-19 in 68% of these villages, said the official, implying that cases were in the remaining 32%. "Sixty-eight per cent of our villages are still safe. It is our effort to ensure that the

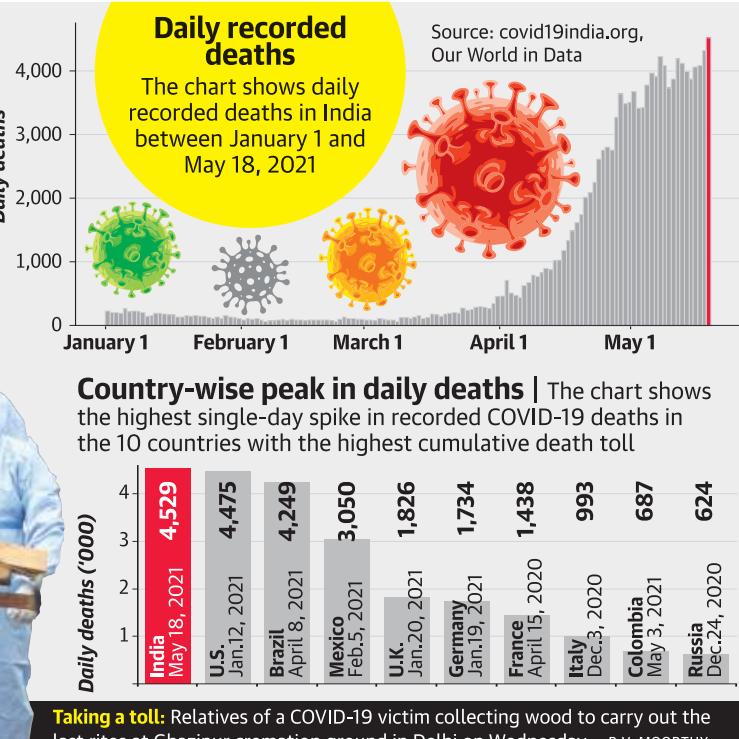
infection does not reach there," he said.

The State, meanwhile, continued to see a drop in fresh cases – it recorded 7,336 new cases on Wednesday – but the daily death count continued to linger over 280. U.P. recorded 282 new deaths, according to the State Health Department. The State's focus on rural areas coincides with the discovery of floating bodies, suspected by many to be of COVID-19 victims but still officially unverified, in the Ganga and other rivers.

TESTING GETS FOCUS ▶ PAGE 10

India tops in single-day fatalities

As many as 4,529 COVID-19 deaths were recorded in India on Tuesday, the highest single-day spike in fatalities for any country since the beginning of the pandemic. The previous highest single-day death toll was registered in the U.S. in January 2021, when 4,475 people died.



Scrap new privacy policy, Centre tells WhatsApp

Govt. seeks response from firm in 7 days

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

The government of India has sent a notice to WhatsApp asking it to withdraw the controversial update to its privacy policy and sought a response from the company within seven days. It has also warned the Facebook-owned firm that the failure to give a satisfactory response may result in steps "in consonance with law".

The Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) in the May 18 notice, has told WhatsApp that deferring the May 15 implementation deadline does not absolve it from "respecting the values of informational privacy, data security and user choice for Indian users," a Ministry source said. The Ministry highlighted how the new policy violated several provisions of Indian laws, the source said.

When contacted, a WhatsApp spokesperson said, "We reaffirm what we said before that this update does not impact the privacy of personal messages for anyone."

The MeitY notice directs WhatsApp to withdraw its Privacy Policy 2021 as the

changes and the manner of introducing these changes "undermine the sacrosanct values of informational privacy, data security and user choice for Indian users and harms the rights and interests of Indian citizens."

CPI(M) insiders were skittish about revealing the details of portfolio allocation. However, two (LDF) leaders gave the media an inkling of the confabulations behind closed doors at the AKG Centre here on Wednesday.

K. Krishnankutty of the Janata Dal (Secular) said he would get the Power portfolio.

Indian National League legislator Ahammad Devarkovi said his party had settled for the Ports and Museum, Zoo and Archaeology department.

Guessing game

The responsibilities of the 12 CPI(M) Minister-designates remained largely in the realm of conjecture. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had said he would make a statement only after meeting Governor Arif Muhammad Khan on Thursday.

Nevertheless, speculation

continues about the future Ministers in the media.

Notably, Veena George was touted as the successor to former Health Minister K.K. Shailaja.

By some accounts, DYFI national president P.A. Muhammed Riyaz is likely to land the Tourism and Public Works Ministry. He is Mr. Vijayan's son-in-law.

Higher and General Education departments could go to R. Bindu and V. Sivankutty, respectively. Ms. Bindu is the wife of CPI(M) acting secretary A. Vijayaraghavan. Both Minister-designates are former Mayors.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

In Kerala, CPI(M) finalises portfolios of Ministers

Pinarayi to meet Governor today

Veena George is likely to get Health Ministry, handled by K.K. Shailaja in the last term.

about future Ministers is ripe in the media.

Notably, Veena George was touted as the successor to former Health Minister K.K. Shailaja.

By some accounts, DYFI national president P.A. Muhammed Riyaz is likely to land the Tourism and Public Works Ministry. He is Mr. Vijayan's son-in-law.

Higher and General Education departments could go to R. Bindu and V. Sivankutty, respectively. Ms. Bindu is the wife of CPI(M) acting secretary A. Vijayaraghavan. Both Minister-designates are former Mayors.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Tejashwi's residence turns mini hospital

RJD leader makes arrangements for 50 beds

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Wednesday said he had converted his official residence into a COVID-19 care centre, with 50 beds for patients and all necessary medical equipment.

Mr. Yadav, who is the Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, has set up the centre at his 1 Polo Road residence in Patna in his personal capacity. "But I cannot run the centre as it is a government bungalow," he said in a video message.

"I urge the State government to take over my official residence where I've provided all facilities of beds, oxygen cylinders, medicines, free food and all medical equipment for COVID-19 patients, to convert into isolation wards or quarantine centres as people are not getting beds, medicines or other necessary help in government hospitals," Mr. Yadav said in the video, with photographs of the arrangements made at his residence.



Urgent care: The COVID-19 facility set up by Tejashwi Yadav at his official residence in Patna. ■ ANI

areas. I want to visit those areas and hospitals to assess the initiatives taken by my party for COVID-19 patients," he said in the letter.

Drama, says JD(U)

However, Janata Dal (U) leader Suheli Mehta said, "Tejashwi Yadav is indulging in drama."

Bharatiya Janata Party leader and party spokesperson Nikhil Anand said, "Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav wants to do politics while sitting in Delhi to hog the limelight. He has neither seriousness over COVID, nor does he have a positive mindset. When everything in Bihar is under control and the State go-

vernment has made all the necessary arrangements to face the pandemic, Tejashwi is seeking permission to come to the State. I want to ask him with whose permission he went to Delhi that he is seeking permission to come back." Mr. Yadav has been in New Delhi for the past few days.

Bihar, on May 18, recorded 111 COVID-19 fatalities, the highest in a single day. The State's death toll due to COVID-19 has gone up to 4,039, with a total of 6,64,115 positive cases. The number of active cases in the State, so far, is 64,698, with an 89.65% recovery rate. So far, 93.1 lakh people have been vaccinated in Bihar.



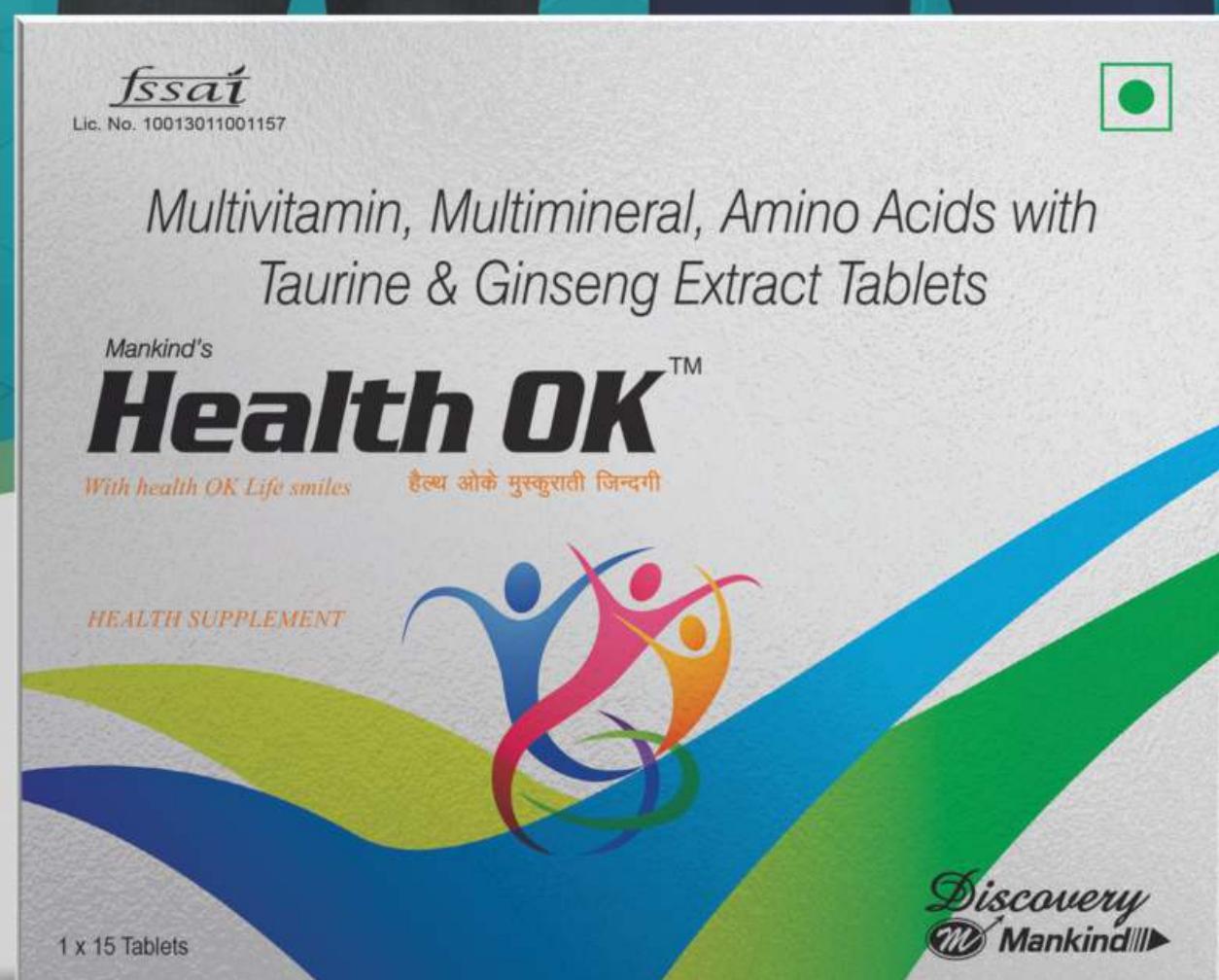
Mankind's **Health OKTM** TABLETS

**365 DAYS OF IMPROVED
IMMUNITY
AND ENERGY**

ZINC + VITAMIN C & D
Help build immunity

NATURAL GINSENG + TAURINE
Help maintain energy

20 MULTIVITAMINS & MINERALS
For overall health



Toll Free No.: 1800 103 4400

Visit us at: www.mankindhealthok.com

Follow us on:

Timings

DELHI

THURSDAY, MAY. 20

RISE 05:29 SET 19:08

RISE 12:35 SET 01:21

FRIDAY, MAY. 21

RISE 05:28 SET 19:09

RISE 13:37 SET 01:58

SATURDAY, MAY. 22

RISE 05:28 SET 19:09

RISE 14:39 SET 02:33

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 24 21
Safdarjung 24 21
Palam 26 20

Delhi Palam Today
32°C A pleasant morning and comfortable day. Rain with cloudy sky would continue till morning and improve gradually.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Mainly dry weather and rise in day temperature likely. Day would turn very warm and mainly sunny.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU

DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any statement or representation made by any published in this newspaper. The PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the truth of any statement or representation or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printed Edition, Director, Editor, Staff, or any other representative or company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

Man arrested for selling donated O₂ concentrators

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 47-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly selling oxygen concentrators, which his Indian friends in China had sent as charity, at high prices.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said that the accused has been identified as Harmander Singh, resident of Tilak Nagar.

The police said that an information was received about a person indulging in selling of oxygen concentrators which were actually meant for charity.

According to the information, he was to come near a hotel in Paschim Vihar. The police said that a trap was laid. A head constable posed as customer to whom the accused asked for ₹1 lakh for the machine. The accused was then arrested.

During interrogation, the accused allegedly told the police that he is in the business of fabrics and has friends in China who had sent oxygen concentrators to him to donate them to needy individuals and organisations. However, he gave only 16 in charity and kept six for selling purposes. "He wanted to make up for losses incurred by him in his own business," Mr. Singh said.

JNU seeks alumni help to set up COVID care centre

It plans to upgrade its health centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar on Wednesday asked its alumni to donate one day's salary or larger amounts to the university for upgradation of its health centre to a COVID care centre.

The Delhi High Court had asked the university to start a COVID care centre with availability of oxygen after the JNUSU and JNTUA approached it saying that the administration had not responded to proposals sent by them to start a facility after a number of students, teachers fell ill and needed such facilities.

The Vice-Chancellor said that JNU makes an appeal to the alumni to contribute to "JNU Alumni Endowment Fund" and help their alma mater to achieve its objective to provide good healthcare to its students, staffers

Rain lashes city under 'weak' Tauktae impact

Day temperature 16°C below normal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Incessant showers lashed the Capital on Wednesday under the influence of the remnant of the extremely severe cyclonic Storm "Tauktae" which is over east Rajasthan interacting with a western disturbance that lies as a cyclonic circulation over Jammu & Kashmir.

The meteorological department, in its bulletin, said moderate rainfall/thundershower that Delhi is experiencing is "very likely" to decrease from May 20.

The IMD said that Delhi received moderate rainfall on Wednesday with Safdarjung, which is the official weather station of the Capital, receiving 31.3 mm of rainfall till 5.30 p.m.

Weather stations at Palam, Ayanagar and Lodhi Road received 27.8, 25.1 and 30.4 mm respectively.



A cyclist protects himself with a cloth during rain on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

The rain reduced temperatures drastically, with the maximum settling at 23.8 degrees Celsius, which is 16 degrees cooler than normal for this time of the season.

The minimum temperature was 21.4 degrees Celsius, five notches below normal. While the city received the entire average rainfall for the season in a day, the lockdown ensured that there were no major waterlogging complaints or jams.

The SKM said that farmers have been managing in extreme situations and will continue to do so. "Don't test the patience of farmers: Initiate talks and accept the demands, or face intensified social boycotts," they added.

Tents, food at farmers' stir site damaged

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Protesting farmers at the borders asked the government to initiate talks as rain damaged their tents and food on Wednesday.

"Since this morning, heavy rains are causing a great deal of disruption and losses in the protest sites at Delhi borders, in the ongoing farmers' movement. It has been a chaotic situation with regard to food and accommodation, due to the rains. Roads and several parts of the protest sites have been filled up with rainwater," Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said in a statement.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh said that three judicial officers have already died after contracting the virus in the Capital. The Bench asked the government whether the judicial officers in the subordinate courts could be treated akin to front-line workers.

"In Supreme Court and High Court, we hold constitutional positions. Our protocols are different but that is

Politicians, bureaucrats find it difficult to accept failure: HC

Court expresses concern over risks faced by district court judicial officers

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said politicians and bureaucrats find it very difficult to accept their failure and inability as it is not in their veins, while expressing concerns over the condition of District Court's judicial officers who are at risk of contracting COVID-19 owing to the nature of duties.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh said that three judicial officers have already died after contracting the virus in the Capital. The Bench asked the government whether the judicial officers in the subordinate courts could be treated akin to front-line workers.

"In Supreme Court and



not the case of subordinate judiciary.. You should take steps for good reason. We don't have to thrust... If administration is satisfied that judicial officers are discharging front-line duties, you can record in your order and provide facilities," the High Court told the city government.

The court was hearing a plea filed by the Delhi Judicial Officers Association with

respect to the health facilities in view of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Facilities an eyewash

Senior advocate Dayan Krishnan, representing the association, said that the facilities on ground for judicial officers are an eyewash. The association asked for creation of a district-wise attachment of hospitals for judicial officers and appointment of a centralised nodal officer to assist the judicial officer when help is sought.

The association said that 852 judicial officers and staff have already been infected with the virus. During the hearing, Delhi government standing counsel Santosh Kumar Tripathi submitted the facilities for judicial officers have been put in place as per the

court's direction.

To this, the Bench reacted, "That has not delivered. They are here because it didn't bring about any satisfactory results. It is very difficult for bureaucracy and political leaders to accept their failure or inability."

Front-line workers

The High Court has ordered the Delhi government to come up with a status report on the issue by May 26, the next date of hearing.

The court also noted the submissions of senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing Delhi government, that the government will decide on declaring judicial officers as "front-line workers".

Mr. Mehra also said that the association may also submit their representation to the Delhi Chief Secretary.

Kalra quizzed about faulty oxygen concentrators

Crime Branch seizes two phones allegedly used by accused to contact customers

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Wednesday took Navneet Kalra, arrested for alleged hoarding and black marketing of oxygen concentrators, to the farmhouse in Gurugram where he was hiding while evading arrest. The police also questioned him about the poor quality of oxygen concentrators that was supplied to customers by him.

"We asked them what ac-

tion he had taken when buyers raised questions over the quality of oxygen concentrators, did he initiated any refund. He remained reluctant to answers these questions," said a police officer.

The Crime Branch probing the case has seized two mobile phones from Kalra which have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory for further examination. He has used these phone to approach customers while sell-

ing oxygen concentrators," the sources said.

As part of the investigation, the Crime Branch took Mr. Kalra to three restaurants in Delhi in connection with the case on Tuesday.

An officer said Mr. Kalra was taken to Khan Chacha, Townhall, and Nege Ju restaurants from where the concentrators were recovered. He was also taken for the mandatory medical examination, the police said.

Anti-Modi posters: AAP leader joins investigation

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party Sitapuri Councillor Praveen Kumar has joined the investigation into posters that were pasted across the city critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the COVID-19 vaccination drive.

The development comes days after Delhi Police arrested 25 people for allegedly pasting them on walls during the lockdown.

"While patrolling and enforcing the lockdown, the police noticed walls in several areas defaced by posters. On questioning, the accused said AAP president of ward 47, Arvind Gautam was behind it in Mangolpuri. He is absconding," the police tweeted.

One last rite



Relatives of a COVID-19 victim collect firewood for performing the last rites at the Ghazipur cremation ground on Wednesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

4 held for duping people on pretext of giving aid

They are members of a Bihar-based gang

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have arrested four members of a Nalanda-based gang in Bihar for allegedly duping people on the pretext of providing oxygen cylinders, concentrators etc. across the country, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused have been identified as Deepak (21), Pankaj (26), Sarvan (35) and Mithlesh (36).

The accused have cheated more than 300 people in the name of COVID aid. The police have seized three bank accounts where transaction of over ₹1.30 crore was done.

Over 500 cheating cases

have been registered and investigation is being done by district Cyber units, CyPAD and Crime Branch.

On one such case, the complainant, who was in

need of oxygen cylinder, contacted one Sachin after getting his number from social media. Sachin offered him two cylinders for ₹23,950. The complainant did not receive the cylinders even after transferring money through e-wallet, officials said.

"During investigation, it was found that the money was transferred to a bank account in Mumbai. Later, the accused were zeroed in Nalanda. A raid was conducted and Mithlesh was apprehended. On his instance, three other accused were then arrested," Additional Commissioner of Police (Crime) Shibesh Singh said.

Probe revealed that they are the members of Chhote Chaudhary gang operating from Nalanda in Bihar. Chaudhary has been operating the gang for 2-3 years.

Black fungus: HC asks Delhi, Centre about drug stock

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the Centre and Delhi government to respond to the issue of shortage of medicine used for treating black fungus, which is affecting people recovering from COVID-19.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Jasmeet Singh asked the government to explain by Thursday the details of the stock of the medicine and if there was any bottleneck in its distribution.

Advocate Rakesh Malhotra, who has filed a petition on the management of COVID-19 pandemic in the Capital, raised the issue of shortage of medicine Amphotericin B which is used for treating Mucormycosis (black fungus).

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi government, admitted that there is a shortage of the medicine and the State has requisitioned the drug from the Centre.

The court asked both the governments to get details by Thursday, when the court hears the case again.

It may hurt health of 2-18 age group'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday issued notice to the Centre on a petition challenging the permission given by the Drugs Controller General of India to Bharat Biotech for conducting the phase II/III clinical trial of its Covaxin COVID-19 vaccine on minors.

It pointed out that the term 'volunteer' cannot be used for these minor children between the age of 2 to 18 as they cannot comprehend the consequences of such clinical trials.

The plea argued that the clinical trial on Covaxin on minors will in all likelihood have adverse effect on their health, both mental and physical. "These children might even lose their life," the plea said.

In order for a person to become a subject matter of clinical trial, his or her consent is a pre-requisite. The volunteer is also required to enter into a contract with the institute carrying the clinical trial on various issues.

Court notice to Centre on plea against clinical trials

The eatery also violated curfew norms

plaint despite request to

make a written complaint so

as to act against the restau-

rant, but she did not want

any action, he said.

According to police, on

Monday, a few more com-

plainants came forward with

allegations that they had suf-

fered stomach problem after

having food items from AL

Chand Foods.

On May 16, the police re-

ceived a call from a woman

who alleged that she suf-

'CM is the sole reason for oxygen crisis'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi BJP on Wednesday accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of being the sole reason for the oxygen crisis in the Capital.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged that the oxygen distribution policy of the Delhi government was faulty right from the beginning, which led to people losing their dear ones.

North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari alleged that the Centre allocated oxygen in line with the Delhi government's demand but it neither had tankers nor other arrangements to store it.

CLASSIFIEDS MART
TO ADVERTISE:
www.thehinduads.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client Sh. Raj Kumar Verma S/o Shri Om Prakash Verma R/o WZ-36B, Chawkhandi Village, Tilak Nagar, S.O. West Delhi-110018, have debarred and disownned his son namely Mr Mahesh Verma, from all the movable and immovable properties due to his disrespectful and cruel behavior. General public is hereby informed that if any one deals with him, shall be doing at his/her/their own risk. My clients shall not be held liable or responsible for the same in any manner.

DEEPAK SHARMA (Advocate)

Ch. No. 732, Dwarka Court, New Delhi-75

PUBLIC NOTICE

COMMANDER REALTORS
PRIVATE LIMITED
C-4, 1st Floor, Malviya Nagar,
New Delhi - 110017 India. (CIN No.
U70101DL2005PTC139529); website:
www.commanderrealtorsprivtltd.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Whereas, Commander Realtors Private Limited (in short "Company") has applied for migration of part of licence no. 63 of 2009 (13.0278 acres), Licence no. 107 of 2010 (2.0125 acres), Licence no. 60 of 2012 (1.41875 acres) and Licence no. 26 of 2009 (1.63125 acres) along with fresh applied area measuring 2.51875 acres, for development of an Affordable Plotted Colony (in short "Said Colony") in Sector-61 Gurugram-Manesar Urban Complex, Gurugram, Haryana over an area ad-measuring 20.60902 acres (8.340174496 hectare) and for the change of developer in favour of Suposha Realcon Private Limited for the said area.

Whereas, the Letter of Intent for migration of the above said licences area and in-principle approval for change of developer has been granted by the Office of Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana (in short "DTPC") vide memo no. LC-4339-JE(VA)/2021/11869 dated 17.05.2021.

And Whereas, the migration of the part these licences will result in revision of the originally approved layout plan of the complete colony and several individuals/persons (in short "Existing Allottees") have done conveyance deeds / made bookings/entered into purchase agreements/ buyer agreements for allotment and purchase of the properties in this said area till date.

Whereas, according to the above said Letter to Intent and in-principle approval, DTPC has directed the Company for seeking objections / consent against the said migration and in-principle approval for change of developer as a pre-condition before granting final approval for change of developer and migration of part of licenses.

Accordingly, vide this Public Notice, consent/objection, if any, are hereby invited from the Existing Allottees on the above said Revision of Layout, Migration of Part of Licenses and approval for Change of Developer. For this purpose, the earlier approved Layout Plan and Proposed Layout Plan due to carving out of DDJAY Colony and the proposed layout plan of the DDJAY Colony is made available on:

(a) Company's website www.commanderrealtorsprivtltd.com; (b) in the office of the undersigned at C-4, 1st Floor, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110017; (c) at the project site office in Sector-61, Gurugram, Haryana & (d) in the office of Senior Town Planner, Town & Country Planning Department, Haryana, HUDA Complex, Sector-14, Gurugram, Haryana (in short "STP").

Any existing allottee, having any objection on / to above said Revision of Layout, Migration of Part of Licenses and for Change of Developer, may file his/her/their objection / consent in the office of the STP and in the office of the undersigned within thirty (30) days from the date of publication of this Public Notice, failing which it shall be assumed that there are no objections to above said Revision of Layout, Migration of Part of Licenses and approval for Change of Developer.

Place: Gurugram
Rampal
Date: 20.05.2021 Authorized Signatory
For & on behalf of Commander Realtors Private Limited

6th sero survey stopped due to virus surge: official

Govt. has not commented on issue

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The sixth serological survey, which was started in April, has not yet been completed and was stopped due to the surge in COVID-19 cases, a Delhi government official said.

COVID-19

The survey, which is done to understand how much percentage of the population has developed antibodies against the virus, was started by the Delhi government on April 12.

The government has not officially commented on the survey not being completed.

Stopped after 6-7 days
The sample collection was scheduled to go on till April 25 and 28,000 samples were to be collected.

"The government collected about 11,000 samples and it was stopped after six-seven days as the COVID situation was really bad. A decision has to be taken on whether to continue the survey or to declare the results of the collected samples," the official said.

Surge weakening, but getting a free COVID-19 test still difficult

Some centres in Delhi not taking samples, others are putting a limit on testing

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 situation in Delhi is improving, but getting a free COVID-19 test is still a difficult task for many as some government testing centres are not conducting tests. Hence, people are queuing up at some functional centres as early as 5 a.m. to get a test. The window for testing too is small – from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

At Gautampuri Awas in Sarita Vihar, 30 people lined up outside the government-run testing centre at around 8 a.m. on Wednesday.

Less crowd
"We came here around 5 a.m. Earlier, there was testing in Badarpur, but now it is not functioning. I had tested positive and now I have come to get tested again after my recovery. Compared to the last time, the crowd is less," said Chetram Singh (48), a CISF personnel, who was the first



People waiting for RT-PCR test at a centre in Jahangirpuri on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

person in the queue.

Soti Paswan, who works as a cook at a restaurant, said he had gone to his village in Bihar and needed test result before joining work. "Others who work with me and got tested here said I will have to come at 5 a.m. to get the token. I walked from the place where I am staying with a friend, who also wants to take a test. It is drizzling and we have been sitting outside the gate. There is no tent or any other facility," said Mr.

Around 9 a.m., there were nine people waiting outside the gate of Nehru Homoeopathic Medical College in Defence Colony, which has a COVID-19 testing centre. Some were waiting for more than half an hour and the testing has yet to start. At Old Delhi, government dispensaries in Gali Guliani and Dujana House were not conducting tests, though their names are on the list of test-

ing centres. At Kasturba Hospital near Jama Masjid, healthcare workers at the testing counter said they do only 15 RT-PCR tests a day. "We conduct only 15 RT-PCR a day, but we do rapid antigen testing. We sit here till noon. So far, five people have been tested," a health worker at the counter said.

"Yesterday [Tuesday] I came here and filled the form. After that, I reached the testing window around 12.30 p.m., but they said testing slots were over and asked me to come the next day," said Bahadur Paswan, who lives in Chandni Chowk.

Inderpal Singh, who is in-charge of the government dispensary at Suiyalan in Old Delhi, said: "We are doing tests, but there is no crowd here. Due to the lockdown and Ramzan, a few people have been coming for tests also. But still, we are testing around 30-40 people a day."

Don't reduce RT-PCR testing: L-G

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal on Wednesday stressed that RT-PCR testing in the Capital should not be reduced like rapid antigen testing, which had decreased as a result of lockdown. He also emphasised that the guard should not be lowered in the fight against the pandemic and measures and preparedness to deal with any eventuality should be undertaken.

The L-G reviewed the management of COVID-19 situation in the Capital with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, municipal corporation Commissioners and senior officers of Delhi Police, where he expressed satisfaction at the improvement in the overall situation.

According to sources, Mr. Baijal told to ensure that distributors and retailers of drugs and equipment related to COVID are made to mandatorily display their stocks and prices.

Call for walk-in registrations for non-ration cardholders

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Rozi Roti Adhikar Abhiyan (DRRAA) wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday demanding the setting up of help desks and facilitating walk-in registrations for non-ration cardholders, who require foodgrains. It also said that there should be decentralised distribution points across the city so that people can reach easily.

Highlighting issues to be taken into consideration while formulating the scheme to distribute grains among non-ration cardholders, the DRRAA in its letter said: "The government must set up help desks in low income areas and at distribution points to facilitate registration. To prevent delay in providing ration, walk-in registration must be allowed."

The new form of novel co-

beds and oxygen allocation as well as the creation of a Special Task Force to protect children from the third wave.

He also directed the officials to work on the advance preparation of sufficient oxygen tankers and ensure the proper functioning of oxygen plants for an optimum supply of oxygen to hospitals.

Nodal Minister Manish Sisodia and Health Minister S-

tyendar Jain were also present in the meeting along with officials of the Delhi government.

The third wave, the government stated, may require Delhi to be prepared with 40,000 oxygen beds, and the government is preparing to install 10,000 ICU beds.

Along with beds and oxygen management, manage-

Vaccine stock low, says govt.; new cases dip below 4,000

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi reported 3,846 new COVID-19 cases over the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 14,06,719, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Wednesday. This is the lowest number of daily new cases in nearly 45 days. The last time new cases were less than this was on April 5, when 3,548 cases were reported.

A total of 235 deaths were also reported in a single day, pushing the toll to 22,346. Also, 66,573 tests were done in the same period and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 5.78%. The last time the TPR was less than this was on April 6, when it was 4.93%. The TPR was 36.2% on April 22, but since then, it has stayed below it. A decrease in positivity is a good sign, as per experts. TPR should be ideally below 5%.

Of the total cases, 13,39,326 people have recovered and there are now 45,047 active cases.

Out of the total 24,305 beds, 44.9% were free as on Wednesday evening.

Treatment expense

In a related development, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said the Delhi government will bear all treatment-related expenses of Amit Gupta, a doctor who works at a Delhi government hospital and has been undergoing treatment for COVID-19 at a private hospital.

Centres may close

Vaccination for 18-44 age group will be halted two days from now as Covishield stock will last only for two days and Covaxin stock is already over, said AAP leader Atishi.

"Will have to temporarily shut down nearly 350 centres administering Covishield to 18-44 age group after two days from now. For those above 45 and healthcare, frontline workers, Covaxin stock is left for one day and Covishield stock for 3 days," she said.

Himachal Pradesh Public Works Department e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No. I, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Starting Date for down-loading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	Construction of road from Nariqa to Piran km. 0/00 to 1/660 (SH- M/T of road between RD. 0/00 to 1/660).	2609579/-	30-05-2021	52200/-	10-06-2021
2.	Digging Road by IPH Department on Shoghi Mehti Junga Sadhpur road km. 0/00 to 1/100 (SH- Providing and laying Bituminous concrete 30mm thick in km. 10/00 to 11/00 in old Kasumti Junga road).	1348819/-	30-05-2021	27000/-	10-06-2021
3.	Restoration of road Due to Digging by Bharti Airtel Ltd from Panchayati Raj Training Institute Hostel gate Mashobra Craignano (SH- M/T of Baldeyan Craignao road km.1/415 to 2/315).	1200825/-	30-05-2021	112100/-	10-06-2021

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptender.gov.in

The Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

HP / 0858/21-22

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

Civil Engg. ■ E-TENDER NOTICE ■ No. W.623/15, Dt. 18.05.2021

Sr. Divisional Engineer (Coordination), West Central Railway, Kota, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites following open E-Tenders:

Tender No. 43/2021- Description of Work: Nagda-Kota Section: Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 17 & 24 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/SGZ. Approx. Cost: ₹ 7,96,70,385.59. **Tender No. 44/2021- Description of Work: Nagda-Kota Section:** Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 25 & 77 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/SGZ & ADEN/MA. Approx. Cost: ₹ 7,88,94,145.53. **Tender No. 45/2021- Description of Work: Nagda-Kota Section:** Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 84 & 85 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/RMA. Approx. Cost: ₹ 7,79,15,076.10. **Tender No. 46/2021- Description of Work: Kota-Gangapur Section:** Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 112 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/C/Kota. Approx. Cost: ₹ 3,96,04,921.45. **Tender No. 47/2021- Description of Work: Kota-Gangapur Section:** Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 131 & 134 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/SWM. Approx. Cost: ₹ 7,66,92,481.97. **Tender No. 48/2021- Description of Work: Kota-Gangapur Section:** Provision of limited height subway in lieu of LC No.: 146 & 149 under the jurisdiction of ADEN/SWM. Approx. Cost: ₹ 8,10,44,602.62. **Tender No. 49/2021 R- Description of Work: Sawaimadhopur-Supply of clean potable water per day (122 days). Approx. Cost: ₹ 3,19,591.20.**

For all the above Tenders:- Last Date & Time of submission of Tender:- 15.30 hrs. on 11.06.2021. Bidders are required to submit bid security declaration in lieu of Bid Security / Earnest Money. Complete details are available in the E-Tender Notice uploaded on the Railway website www.reps.gov.in and also placed on the notice board of the Sr. Divisional Engineer (Coordination), DRM Office, West Central Railway, Kota's Office. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only.

RailMadad Helpline 139

EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender is invited by Chief Works Manager, Eastern Railway, Kanchrapara Workshop through website www.reps.gov.in from reputed contractors with sufficient experience and financial capability who have executed similar nature of work in the past preferably with Railway/CPWD/ PWD/MES/Irrigation or any other public sector undertakings for the following work: **Tender No.: 08/21-22. Description of works:** KPAW: Automation of Loco wheel shop to cater the enhanced POH capacity & upgradation of system & upliftment of wheel shop inside Loco Complex of Kanchrapara Workshop. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,67,20,437. **Earnest Money:** Nil. **Tender will be closed on:** 23.06.

IN BRIEF



P.C. Chacko expects exodus from Congress

KOCHI An exodus of a large number of disillusioned Congress workers to the Nationalist Congress Party may happen in the coming weeks, party Kerala president-elect P.C. Chacko has said. The Congress has failed to fight the BJP. The NCP will try to unite all Opposition parties and put up a fight against the BJP, he said.

'Restrict numbers for swearing-in ceremony'

KOCHI A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court led by the Chief Justice on Wednesday asked the State government to restrict the number of persons attending the swearing-in ceremony of the new Left Democratic Front government, to avoid the spread of COVID-19.

Probe under way into explosion at CPO's house

KOZHIKODE The police have launched a comprehensive investigation into an explosion which took place at the house of a senior Civil Police Officer (CPO) at Vadakara in Kozhikode district on Tuesday. Though no one sustained serious injuries in the incident, the house was damaged in the powerful explosion of two LPG cylinders.

Telangana Public Service panel gets new team

HYDERABAD The government has appointed a new team for the Telangana State Public Service Commission with senior IAS officer B. Janardhan Reddy as the Chairman and seven other members. Dr. Reddy is presently serving as the Principal Secretary, Agriculture. As of now the TSPSC was functioning with just one member.

My focus is COVID-19, not Jaggi: Minister

Thiagarajan says appropriate Ministers will deal with the issues as they see fit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister P.T.R. Palanivel Thiagarajan on Wednesday said he would focus on COVID-19 related work instead of commenting any further on Isha Foundation founder Jaggi Vasudev and the demand to "privatise" control of Hindu temples.

Against the backdrop of his media interviews, where he answered questions that were brought up on the topics 'Privatise HR&CE temples' and Jaggi Vasudev 'violations', he said, "I must state neither of these is relevant to my portfolio, and therefore I have no intention of diluting my focus."

In a four-page statement to the media, Mr. Thiagarajan said the appropriate Ministers and departments would deal with the issues as they see fit. "As a colleague and teammate, I will of course offer inputs and support as requested by them," he added.

Mr. Thiagarajan said since most of the substantive things worth saying have already been covered in recent interactions, he had "decided to decline all press interactions till the end of the month, to better focus on my COVID-19 related work."

The Minister, whose ancestors were involved in construction and renovation of many temples currently under the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments (HR&CE) department, said: "...people like us, who made



Though I may have mentioned the violations in public statements, I certainly do not have any personal agenda to take further action. It is not my official responsibility and hence not my intent, to focus on investigation and prosecution of Jaggi Vasudev

P.T.R. PALANIVEL THIAGARAJAN, TAMIL NADU FINANCE MINISTER

significant contributions to these temples, are very clear that the government must retain administration, while most of the warriors for privatising the temples have negligible contribution, if any at all."

Mr. Thiagarajan said he first became aware of Jaggi Vasudev and Isha Foundation as a member of the 15th Legislative Assembly of Tamil Nadu's Public Accounts Committee, where he came across an audit paragraph.

"This spurred me to research the issue further, and I became aware of many other potential violations," he explained.

However, prosecuting the audit finding was not his highest personal priority among many other responsibilities in his public service, he said.

"Though I may have mentioned the violations in public statements, I certainly do not have any personal agenda to take further action," he said.

tion. It is not my official responsibility and hence not my intent, to focus on investigation and prosecution of Jaggi Vasudev," he further said.

"The evidence in my possession (some public and some not) which I will share with all relevant authorities (as just a dutiful citizen), convinces me beyond all probable doubt that Jaggi Vasudev has repeatedly, consistently and continuously violated multiple laws and statutes," he claimed.

Under the rule of law, he said, the relevant authorities in India and the United States must conduct their independent investigations, without interference from anyone, including himself.

"I will make no comments related to Isha Foundation founder Jaggi Vasudev until any new information or further new development come to light," he said.

₹1,111 cr. package for farmers, unorganised sector workers

Karnataka CM chairs meeting with his Cabinet colleagues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has announced a ₹1,111.82 crore package to provide relief to workers in the unorganised sectors and farmers impacted by the month-long lockdown owing to the spike in COVID-19 cases.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa chaired a meeting with his Cabinet colleagues on Wednesday.

Lockdown is in force in Karnataka till May 24, barring a small window to buy essentials. A decision on extending the lockdown further would be taken on May 23, the Chief Minister said.

Among the compensation announced was ₹10,000 per hectare to each farmer growing flowers, fruits and vegetables.

A compensation of ₹3,000 each would be given to licensed and registered drivers of autorickshaw, maxi-cab and taxi. Construc-

tion workers registered with the Karnataka Building and Other Constructions Workers Welfare Board would get ₹3,000 each.

Barbers, dhobis, hamalis, rag pickers, pottery-makers, incense stick makers, goldsmiths, mechanics, blacksmiths, domestic workers, and cobblers would get a relief of ₹2,000 each and about 3.5 lakh workers would benefit, announced the Chief Minister.

Street vendors selling fruits and vegetables would be paid ₹2,000 each. The Chief Minister declared people supplying LPG cylinders, teachers and electricity linemen as frontline workers.

Contempt proceedings against CID officials

MP's medical exam not done, says HC

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

A Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court comprising Justices C. Praveen Kumar and K. Lalitha on Wednesday ordered that contempt proceedings be initiated against the Additional Director-General of Police and the CID's Mangalagiri Station House Officer for not sending Narasapuram MP K. Raghu Ramakrishna Raju to Ramesh Hospital for a check-up on May 17, even when the Supreme Court was hearing the Special Leave Petition filed by him for bail.

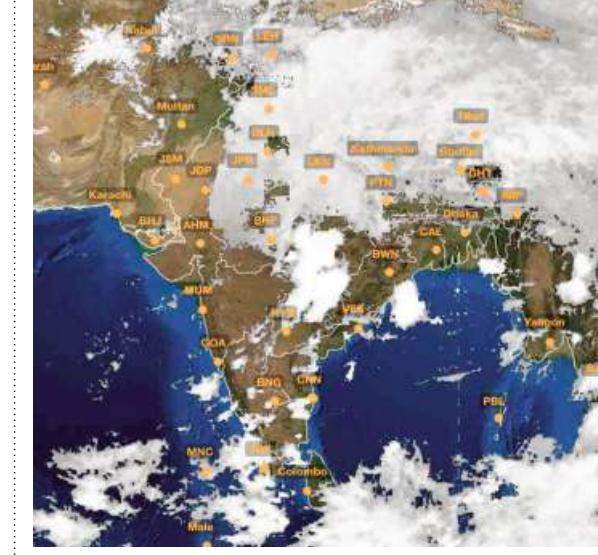
According to official sources, on May 15, the VI additional junior civil judge in Guntur, before whom the

MP was produced, ordered that he be examined physically in Ramesh Hospital and the Government General Hospital, Guntur. This order was passed under Section 54 of the Cr.P.C. When the matter came up for hearing in the High Court on Wednesday, the Judges said there has been a contempt of their order dated May 15.

Additional Advocate General P. Sudhakar Reddy told the court that the order copy was received only at 11 p.m. and that Mr. Raju could not be sent for an examination at that time since the jail authorities would not allow it. Besides, the Supreme Court had started hearing the matter on May 17 and passed its order.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty wind likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, coastal Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.3...	36.2...	26.9	Kozhikode	14...	32.0...	24.6
Ahmedabad	14...	31.7...	22.2	Kurnool	...	38.6...	28.2
Aizawl	0.3...	27.6...	18.3	Lucknow	9.2...	28.6...	22.2
Aligarh	5.3...	29.4...	23.9	Madurai	...	40.4...	26.6
Bengaluru	...	33.4...	21.6	Mangaluru	5.6...	28.8...	24.0
Bhopal	2.1...	35.2...	24.4	Mumbai	6...	32.7...	24.4
Bhubaneswar	...	39.0...	28.5	Mysuru	...	33.0...	21.0
Chandigarh	...	28.7...	25.1	New Delhi	2...	28.8...	21.4
Chennai	...	37.7...	28.6	Patna	0.4...	32.4...	23.0
Coimbatore	...	34.9...	25.1	Port Blair	0.5...	33.1...	25.6
Dehradoon	0.4...	25.3...	22.6	Puducherry	...	35.7...	27.0
Gangtok	6...	20.0...	16.7	Pune	...	32.4...	24.7
Goa	10.1...	30.5...	25.7	Raipur	...	39.6...	29.0
Guwahati	5...	33.2...	23.0	Ranchi	2...	34.4...	22.6
Hubballi	...	28.0...	23.0	Shillong	7...	25.9...	18.0
Hyderabad	0.1...	37.0...	22.0	Shimla	...	20.5...	17.2
Imphal	5...	27.3...	19.5	Srinagar	...	24.6...	12.8
Jaipur	38.5...	23.4...	20.4	Thiruvananthapuram	18...	32.1...	24.8
Kochi	1...	32.2...	25.6	Tiruchi	0.4...	39.3...	26.6
Kohima	2...	26.0...	14.0	Vijayawada	...	38.2...	28.2
Kolkata	0.2...	36.4...	26.1	Visakhapatnam	...	37.0...	28.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	21	33	40
Bengaluru	...	7	60	28	12	...
Chennai	16	3.3	7	9	158	...
Delhi	...	1.1	24	22	40	245
Hyderabad	...	74	17	14	23	...
Kolkata	10	19	18	43	52	...
Lucknow	...	39	72	88	107	...
Mumbai	...	8	7	73	42	91
Pune	...	6	12	56	36	48
Visakhapatnam	14	40	36	23	52	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 130, indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Danoor, Madhya Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

AQI Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.
NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

They enthuse healthcare workers with quick recovery and vaccine promotion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two nonagenarians 230 km apart have become the temple of positivity for health-care and frontline workers for overcoming the COVID-19 gloom in Assam.

On May 18, Snehalata Dutta went home after recovering from COVID-19 at a Covid Care Centre (CCC) in Tinsukia district's Mohkuli Model Hospital, about 5 km from Tinsukia town.

She had no comorbidities but was very weak due to a persistent cough and fever when she was wheeled in about a fortnight ago from her village, Bisphutia.

"She could not eat and had trouble remembering, but was adamant about staying put in the Mohkuli facil-



ity when we referred her to a bigger hospital because of her condition," sub-divisional medical and health officer Chandrakala Saikia told *The Hindu*.

Ms. Dutta referred to the Mohkuli centre as "our hospital" as most villagers in the vicinity do.

A few days before, 98-year-old Deepson Das of

Bhakatgaon village in Golaghat district became the 'poster boy' of the vaccination drive by the local authorities.

Appeal to villagers
"Apart from ambling in confidence, he appealed to the villagers to get themselves vaccinated as a preventive step," a healthcare official at the Kamarbandha Ali public health centre said.

Superstitions and a social media-driven theory that vaccines cause infertility have made many in the northeast sceptical about taking the vaccine.

Assam on Tuesday recorded 5,835 fresh cases and 73 deaths, down from 6,394 cases and 92 deaths on Monday.

Deepson Das of

Haryana Deputy CM cautions against Tauktae

'High-speed wind likely to sweep State'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana Deputy Chief



Flashing lights

As inflation threatens economy's consumptive capacity, cash transfers can boost demand

The RBI's latest monthly bulletin has just confirmed what many economists and anecdotal evidence have been pointing to – a sharp backslide in economic momentum. In an article on the State of the Economy, RBI officials including Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra have flagged the 'demand shock' inflicted by the ferocious second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, they have cited the loss of mobility, impact on discretionary spending and increase in unemployment as clear signs that demand is in the doldrums. Several high-frequency indicators for April have captured the reversal in momentum. GST e-way bills, an indicator of the health of domestic trade, contracted 17.5% month-on-month, while automobile fuel consumption, commercial vehicle sales and domestic air passenger traffic all shrank from the preceding month. And the previously relatively unscathed rural economy too saw demand begin to dry up as new infections spread wider and deeper into the countryside, a trend reflected in a 33.5% contraction in the dispatches of two wheelers and a palpable weakening in demand for tractors. Also, unemployment, which hit a four-month high of 8% in April as per a survey by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, was at 9.5% on May 18 based on a 30-day moving average. Crucially, rural unemployment captured by the moving average has risen to 8.6%, and this at a time when the pandemic's grip and higher spending on health are likely to be pushing up precarity among households in the hinterland.

Looking ahead, the critical risk to the economy even as it tries to recover from the last fiscal year's crippling contraction is posed by the speed at which the virus continues to spread in the country. With the pace of vaccinations having slowed nationwide, more so in rural and semi-rural areas, the agriculture sector is likely to face challenges in the coming months when sowing for the *kharif* crop will need to be done. The reports on the infections and deaths linked to the disease from the villages and towns portray a grim picture and it is hard to see rural demand for anything other than the barest of essentials including food and medicines reviving any time soon. Add to this the rising cost of transport fuels, and the sharp increases in commodity prices, cutting across agricultural and industrial raw-materials segments and one sees 'a worsening of domestic cost conditions' as the RBI officials warn. Accelerating inflation threatens the economy's overall consumptive capacity and policy makers need to be wary of the real danger of stagflation. The shrinking fiscal space notwithstanding, authorities need to spend more on an expedited nationwide vaccine roll-out and must seriously consider direct cash transfers to boost demand.

Fresh start

The Left must guard against the concentration of power in the hands of CM Pinarayi Vijayan

By choosing 17 fresh faces in the new Council of Ministers of 21, the Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala is trying to signal a continuing willingness to evolve as a responsive political organisation. Barring Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the CPI(M) has not nominated any of its Ministers from the previous term. All four Ministers of the CPI are new. Eight Ministers are first time MLAs, as is the Speaker nominee, M.B. Rajesh. The composition of the Council broadly reflects the State's social diversity; and there are three women, the highest in history. The CPI(M) has reconfigured its social base in Kerala, at significant cost to the Congress, and it is reinforcing those trends through the selection of Ministers. Veena George and Saji Cherian are being rewarded for leading a shift of Christian voters in Central Travancore to the party. A judicious mix of youth and experience, the Council is an attempt at messaging to the electorate a fresh resolve of the LDF, particularly the CPI(M). But the exclusion of K.K. Shailaja, who has been in the spotlight for her role as Health Minister, has set off criticism against the CPI(M) from many quarters, including its own support base. After having won with a huge margin, she was expected to provide continuity to the State's fight against the pandemic. Her exclusion does seem like changing horses midstream. K.N. Balagopal and P. Rajeev have proven their mettle as parliamentarians and in the organisation. P.A. Muhammad Riyas happens to be Mr. Vijayan's son-in-law, and R. Bindu the wife of CPI(M) Acting State Secretary A. Vijayaraghavan. Both merit inclusion in their own right.

The crowd of 500 expected at the swearing-in ceremony today is, however, bad optics, in the midst of a pandemic which remains untamed in the State that is in lockdown. The new government has more challenges – a cyclone rained misery in the coastal areas this week, and fears of floods loom along with the monsoon clouds. The State's finances are in a shambles. The CPI (M) had replaced 22 sitting MLAs who had finished two terms with new candidates in the election. Several senior leaders were already benched by this criterion. The party subsequently decided to nominate only fresh faces to the Council by way of reiterating the primacy of the organisation over individuals. Ironically, the choices also raise valid concerns of the increasing concentration of power in the hands of Mr. Vijayan. In a Council packed with newcomers, the CM will command such authority that an open discussion on any topic could be difficult. Given his complete sway over the party and the government, the onus is on him to empower the Ministers. Officials whom he trusted put him and the party in a spot many times during the first term. By restoring political consultations, including within the CPI(M), and keeping the bureaucracy disciplined, Mr. Vijayan could make his second term better than the first.

Interpretations which impede a just social order

The Maratha reservation case also shows that divesting States of the power to determine backwardness hits federalism



SUHRITH PARTHASARATHY

On May 5, the Supreme Court of India declared as unconstitutional a Maharashtra law which provided for reservation to the Maratha community in education and public employment in the State. Four judges of the five-judge Bench wrote separate opinions, from which three primary findings emanated.

First, the Court held that the Maratha community did not constitute a socially and educationally backward class. Second, the judges discovered that the law was in breach of a rule previously set by the Court disallowing reservations made in excess of 50% of the total available positions. Third – and on this finding, two judges on the Bench dissented – the Court held that State governments had no independent power to declare a group as a backward class. The latter two findings run sharply athwart values of equality and federalism, which the Court has long regarded – in rhetoric if nothing else – as integral to India's democracy.

Not from the Constitution

The idea that reservations ought to be restricted to 50% does not stem from the Constitution. The text of Articles 16(4) and 15(4) which confer power on the government to make reservations contains no such limitation. Originally, however, these clauses were seen by the Supreme Court as exceptions to a broad rule of formal equality that was thought to be envisioned by the Constitution. To that end, the Court held that to allow reserva-

tion in excess of 50% would lead to an exception overriding a rule.

But a seven-judge Bench, in *State of Kerala vs N.M. Thomas* (1975), laid this theory to rest. There, the Court held that a programme of reservation was inherent in the Constitution's basic guarantee of equal treatment, and that affirmative action by the state was compelled by an objective of attaining substantive equality. With that, the rule requiring that reservations stay under 50% ought to have been deemed incongruous. But when the Court sat as a nine-judge Bench in *Indra Sawhney vs Union of India* (1992) it sustained a paradox. The majority on the Bench ruled, on the one hand, that *N.M. Thomas* was correct in seeing reservations as embedded in a constitutional vision of substantive equality, and, on the other hand, that reservation made in excess of 50%, barring exceptional circumstances, was harmful to that very vision. As the lawyer Gautam Bhatia has pointed out, this is an incompatible position. Yet, efforts to have the verdict in *Indra Sawhney* reconsidered have failed. The upshot: a mathematical formula with no basis in the Constitution's text is retained, even as the Court pays symbolic obeisance to the ideals of substantive equality.

Court stand on listings

These limitations are made worse by the Court's present ruling on the power of State governments to declare groups as backward. Until now, the central government and each of the State governments produced separate lists declaring communities as socially and educationally backward. Following the Supreme Court's judgment in *Indra Sawhney*, the determination of backward classes was made by the National Commission for the Backward Classes, at the level of



the Centre, and by regional commissions at the level of the State governments. As a result, backward communities that were kept out of the central list were entitled to reservation at least for those posts and seats under the control of the State government. For example, 25 different groups categorised as backward in Tamil Nadu do not find place in the central list (<https://bit.ly/3ot6x7c>).

This division in power, which gave States autonomy to classify groups as backward, stood in contrast to the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the case of those lists, right from the Constitution's inception, the power to prepare them vested solely with the Union government. But the Supreme Court has now held that this distinction no longer holds good.

The 102nd Amendment (2018), which forms the basis for the Court's ruling, granted constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes. In addition, it introduced Article 342A, through which it stipulated that the President of India may, after consultation with the State government, notify groups of persons within such a State who are deemed to be socially and educationally backward. Any such "Central List", the clause clarified, could only be altered by Parliament. Article 366(26C) was also added, and "socially and educationally backward classes" was defined as "such backward classes as

are so deemed under Article 342A for the purposes of this Constitution".

Term and interpretations

In interpreting these changes, a majority on the Bench concluded that the Constitution had now created a structure for determination of other backward classes identical to that in place for the preparation of the lists of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. The verdict, which was controlled predominantly by Justice S. Ravindra Bhat's opinion, relied on the plain meaning of Articles 342A and 366(26C). But it overlooked, at least, two essential factors: first, the term "Central List" – which is used in Article 342A – has always been understood in contradistinction to the term "state list", in that it refers to the categorisation of groups as backward for the purposes of reservation to posts and seats under the Union government. Second, when State governments objected to the 102nd Amendment on the ground that their power was being divested, the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment, Thaawarchand Gehlot, assayed their concerns and pointed out that the proposed changes did no such thing. The "right to include or remove in the States List...will remain as it is and it will not be violated in any manner," he said in Parliament.

It is an acceptable proposition of constitutional interpretation to hold that external aids, such as parliamentary debates, are useful only when the plain meaning of a provision is unclear. However, here, the term "Central List" in Article 342A (unlike Articles 341 and 342, which concern the preparation of a list of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes respectively) shows that, if anything, the Constitution recognises the power

of State government to frame lists of their own. Any other interpretation of the term "Central List" would only impinge on the plain meaning of the term. On the other hand, if one were to concede that two interpretations to the amendments were plausible, then one would have thought that the Court would have adopted the interpretation that allows for a more equitable division of power between the central and State governments.

If the majority's interpretation of the 102nd Amendment is correct, then the changes altogether dispossess States from exercising a time-honoured authority. But yet the amendment, in the Court's belief, did not violate the Constitution's basic structure. This was because, according to the majority, the alterations neither took away "the very essence of federalism" nor denuded the States of their effective power to legislate. But it is hard to see how divesting states of a power this critical, to classify groups as backward, entitling many communities to protection under Articles 15(4) and 16(4), can be seen as anything but offensive to the "essence" of federalism. The changes, as interpreted by the Court, are by no means superficial; they directly impede the ability of States to secure a just social order.

The Union government has already filed a petition to review the judgment insofar as it limits the power of State governments.

Should the Court refuse the plea, it is imperative that Parliament amends the Constitution and grants to States an express power to determine backwardness. Any other result will offend the delicate balance at the heart of Indian federalism.

Suhirth Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

A collage of laws that leaves the worker out in the cold

The universalisation of social security remains an unfulfilled aspiration in the new code on social security



SANTOSH MEHROTRA &
KINGSHUK SARKAR

As COVID-19 destroys lives and livelihoods, an unprepared government has rendered low-paid, informal workers, who constitute 91% of the workforce, totally hapless, pushing them further into poverty. Imagine if these same informal workers had social security (including free basic curative care in public clinics and hospitals, the elderly had old age pensions, the dying had death/disability insurance or life insurance). Imagine also that they had at least a minimum income guarantee, which prevented them from falling into debt; debt is currently exploding among the poor as their incomes collapsed.

Gaps in the code

India's Parliament in September 2020 passed a Social Security Code (SS Code 2020; <https://bit.ly/3bVsUOf>). Does this law even attempt to provide these, let alone guarantee them? That is what we examine here. We shall set aside the issue of free basic curative health care, since the SS Code does not have that in its scope. Fair enough, but has the Government of India ensured that at least in a year of a nation-wide pandemic, the health Budget for FY 2021-22 is higher than the pathetic just over 1% of GDP that it has been for decades (making all past central/State governments complicit)? If we leave out the allocation for the COVID-19 vaccine (still mostly unused), then the Health Budget is actually lower.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Kerala cabinet

There has been much chatter about the non-inclusion in the new Kerala cabinet of K.K. Shailaja, former Kerala Health Minister, who has done commendable work during the COVID-19 period and also secured a massive majority in the recent Assembly elections. Her non-inclusion has been juxtaposed with the inclusion of P.A. Muhammad Riyas, who is the son-in-law of Chief

Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, in the Cabinet. On the face of it, this comparison is unjust. Mr. Riyas had been a party worker and leader for long and it would have been unjust not to consider him on his own merit. In Cuba, after Fidel Castro demitted office on account of his health, his brother Raul Castro was asked to step in. None could take exception as it was on his own track record that he came to succeed his brother and lead the

country. In fact, Raul Castro had been a member of the party earlier to Fidel Castro. Now, in Ms. Shailaja's case, she has said gracefully that she goes by the party's decision. Her new role as chief whip of the LDF party in the Assembly is an acknowledgement of her good work. That apart, the leadership might have thought that she could be utilised for party work, which is equally challenging, and serve the

people in a different capacity. Ultimately, it is important to note that it is the collective decision of the party.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
Chennai

Cost of redevelopment
At a time when the health-care structure in the country has been hit hard, spending crores of money on the Central Vista project seems vulgar. The project has led many to question the definition of

'development' that the Centre would like to present to us but there is a glaring dichotomy between the government's short-sighted effort to maintain the facade of 'development' versus the crucial need of ensuring the welfare of its citizens. The entire process

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS

In a Sports page report titled "Received death threats after 2011 World Cup exit: du Plessis" (May 19, 2021), the reference in the opening paragraph to the 2011 World Cup semifinal should be corrected to read as 2011 World Cup quarterfinal.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in



of remodelling this legacy of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

of Indian democracy is an attempt at erasing history as well as an instance of the destruction of heritage. It is gross financial wastage too.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

The basics of an effective vaccine policy

Prioritising groups, addressing hesitancy and rethinking the distribution plan is the way forward

GEORGE THOMAS
GAGANDEEP KANG
JAYAPRAKASH MULIYIL

Over a year after the SARS-CoV-2 struck the world, it is now clear that the virus is not going away any time soon and breaking the chain of transmission seems unlikely. The best policy against COVID-19, thus, appears to be to ensure that the infection is mild in most people, and that in those in whom the disease might be more severe, it can be pushed towards a milder form by vaccination. Therefore, it is important to vaccinate as many people as possible.

Unfortunately, the number of vaccine doses available is limited at present. Technicalities of vaccine production make it likely that indigenous manufacturers will require three to six months from now to increase capacity significantly. The whole virion vaccine from the National Institute of Virology, Pune, currently being manufactured by Bharat Biotech, is produced in facilities where biological safety requirements are essential and will take time to be upscaled.

The mRNA vaccine technology is new. Though the Moderna vaccine does not have intellectual property constraints and Gennova is making its own mRNA vaccine based on science from HDT in the United States, it is unrealistic to expect Indian manufacturers to be able to embrace this new technology without handholding through the process.

Difficult choices

Import of vaccines in quantities that can make a difference will be possible perhaps from August, when wealthy nations would have made substantial progress in the immunisation of their populations.

India is thus faced with the unpleasant reality of having to decide the priority in which it is going to vaccinate its population, i.e., the order in which the different groups should be vaccinated. However, it can take comfort in the fact that all countries were forced to make this decision, and nowhere in the world has it been possible to vaccinate the entire population at one go.

The experience of vaccine hesi-



A huge undertaking: People waiting in queue to get a shot of COVID-19 vaccine in Bengaluru on Wednesday. ■ AP

tancy should not distract us from the goal of inoculating as many people as quickly as possible. The speed with which the vaccines were developed, the introduction of new technology, reports of a few serious adverse events, the decision of certain wealthy countries to halt using the AstraZeneca shot due to concerns over blood clots and because they had other vaccines, contributed to doubts about the safety of vaccines in India.

But it is now clear that vaccines are highly effective and the risks are extremely low. Indeed, vaccines are the only way that we can stay ahead of the virus. It is, hence, important to draw in behavioural scientists to address vaccine hesitancy and ensure that the population is covered.

Careful planning

Should we vaccinate the most vulnerable, i.e., those who are most likely to succumb to the disease if they get infected, or should we vaccinate some combination of the elderly vulnerable and the working popula-

most to the economy? This is a stark and perhaps unpalatable way to delineate the choice, but it is a factual position. Should we first vaccinate the elderly who are at high risk of serious illness and death, or should we vaccinate the working population so that we can open workplaces and revive the economy? Wealthy countries with small populations went with the first option, but India must design a vaccine policy carefully because breaking the chain of transmission is not an option currently. Repeated lockdowns do not break the chain of transmission of the infection. They only slow the spread of the virus for a period, and when they are lifted, as they must be, the virus surfaces again.

Transparent decision-making

The ethical and humane choice would be to vaccinate the most vulnerable first. If this is impractical, then the choice would be to vaccinate some combination of the elderly vulnerable and the working popula-

tion in every tranche. This should be worked out using data and the basis of the decision should be made public. Opaque decision-making leads to a loss of trust in governance and social discord.

Access to all

Leaving the vaccination policy to market forces is neither ethical nor practical. Allowing all adults to access the vaccine at the same time introduces ethical distortions, which no humane society should face. Those with the resources to get vaccinated early are the least vulnerable because they also have the ability to protect themselves.

Attempts to make vaccination more accessible through technology, as is being done with the Co-WIN app, are failing at the moment. Many States have declared that they will bear the cost for all their citizens, but this is a decision that they should not have been forced to make; the approach also does not address the dilemma of who will get the vaccine and in which order, given the very limited supply.

Governments are elected to represent the will of the people. In a civilised society, when a life-saving resource is in short supply, the government must take it upon itself to both enhance the supply and formulate a policy to allocate the resource. In India, the Centre should desist from being opaque in its decisions, abdicating its responsibility, transferring expenses to State governments, and allowing market forces to decide on vaccine access for a substantial part of the population.

Given our current circumstances, the State governments are struggling to find a way forward amid the scramble for vaccines. There are many options for distribution, and as a society, we ought to make decisions that are based on science and fairness. The logical basis of the decision should be explained.

Dr. George Thomas is the former editor of The Indian Journal of Medical Ethics; Dr. Gagandeep Kang is Professor Wellcome Trust Research Laboratory at the Christian Medical College, Vellore; Dr. Jayaprakash Mulyil is former Principal of the Christian Medical College, Vellore.

A thaw in India-Pakistan trade relations?

Latest data give a reason to push for revival of dialogue



NISHA TANEJA & SAMRIDHI BIMAL

The rejection by the Pakistan government of the recent proposal made to it by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) to import sugar, cotton and cotton yarn from India was disappointing, but at the same time indicative of a possibility of resumption of trade relations between the two countries. In 2019, India and Pakistan undertook trade-restrictive measures against each other, which were perhaps the most severe in several decades. After the Pulwama terror attack in Kashmir in February 2019 and cross-border air strikes, India withdrew the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status of Pakistan and imposed a customs duty hike of 200% on imports. Later, when India revoked the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan suspended bilateral trade.

Despite the trade ban setback, the Indo-Pak history suggests that there are reasons for having cautious optimism towards reviving the trade dialogue. Even though trade curbs have been applied several times in the past, such measures have been reversed to create a trade enhancing environment. Most notable is the protocol on resumption of trade in 1974 after a hiatus of nine years following the India-Pakistan war in 1965. The two countries agreed to trade in a list of items, including essential agricultural commodities, which could stabilise domestic prices and take care of seasonal shortages and food security in the home country. Both countries worked on positive lists for some years, which expanded over the years.

We can see parallels emerging in the current context. Within a month of suspending bilateral trade with India, the Pakistan government lifted the ban on the import of medicines and raw material from India to avert any crises and ensure that there is no shortage of essential drugs. A year and a half later, there is a demand for the inclusion of three more items, namely sugar, cotton and yarn. A deeper examination of the trade measures and data indicate that there is more concrete evidence of trade between the two countries even after the imposition of restrictions. A key difference between In-

dia and Pakistan is that while India imposed a 200% import duty and no ban on export, Pakistan banned both export and import. Hence, Indian trade data are likely to reflect trends better. Not only has trade been recorded in the first eleven months of the financial year 2020-21, but a sizeable number of items have been traded between the two countries. During 2020-21 (April-February), the recorded bilateral trade was \$280 million, of which India's exports to Pakistan were \$278 million and imports were \$2 million. Nearly 77% of India's exports comprised vaccines, pharmaceutical products and products of chemical and allied industries. Interestingly, despite the trade ban, sugar was already being exported to Pakistan and was the second most important item, accounting for 15% of India's total exports. Dates were the most important item being imported from Pakistan, accounting for 31% of total imports, followed by ethyl alcohol, which accounted for 17% of total imports.

Significant costs

While the overall value of trade with Pakistan may not be significant, the number of items traded certainly is. A closer look at the trade data reveals that India exported 357 products (at HS-6 digit level classification) to Pakistan and imported 25 products from the country. This is despite the complete ban on trade by Pakistan on both exports and imports. Thus, even under restrictive trade conditions, there are interdependencies between India and Pakistan.

The trade measures impacted several important domestic and export industries, even though the volume of trade was small at \$2.56 billion in 2018-19. Governments of both countries need to recognise that there are significant costs of non-cooperation. Restrictions also shift trade to informal channels, which have functioned for decades and are a ready option for traders from both countries. Initiating a positive list for trade is the right move towards normalisation. The recent data provide an indicative list of products that can be included. Business organisations and chambers of commerce can play an important role in creating a strong lobby that could build momentum in opening channels and influence the shaping of the India-Pakistan trade policy.

Nisha Taneja is Professor at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi. Samridhi Bimal is an Independent Consultant

+ Overstepping the norm

The Centre's blanket decision to provide security cover to 77 MLAs raises a slew of questions

M.P. NATHANAEL

The recent order by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for providing security cover to 77 MLAs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) who were elected earlier this month after the West Bengal Assembly poll is not only unprecedented but appears politically motivated. It is rare for such a blanket order for deployment of forces to protect individuals to be issued. While 16 of these MLAs already have security cover of different levels, 61 of them will now be under the X-category umbrella.

In practice, decisions to provide security to persons under threat is taken by a committee in the MHA, which comprises officials from the Ministry, the Intelligence Bureau, Delhi Police and senior officials of the Central Armed Police Forces, that is, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and the National Security Guard (NSG). While the Intelligence Bureau prepares the list of persons under threat and the degree of threat, the committee decides on the force to be deployed depending upon the place where the person is located. The deployment is done after the recommendations of the committee are approved by the competent authority. In these meetings, the threat perception of each of the person to be secured is discussed one by one and not collectively for any group as such.

A State subject
That the decision to deploy CAPF personnel for the 77 MLAs might have stemmed from political motivation can be inferred from the fact that the threat perception for each of the persons was not discussed.

In the past, such deployment of central forces for the protection of individuals was done in Punjab and in Jammu and Kashmir, when these regions were rocked by unrest. Since militants tried to sabotage the process of elections, poll candidates were generally targeted. The Central government, therefore, took blanket decisions to provide security to every candidate till the elections got over.

Law and order being a State subject, West Bengal is duty-bound to protect every citizen of the State,

more so the MLAs. In the absence of the Central government's decision to deploy CAPFs, the West Bengal government should have shouldered the responsibility. But by deploying central forces, the Centre has sent a clear signal that it does not rely upon the State government to provide foolproof security to the BJP MLAs. This is hardly a healthy sign for Centre-State relations.

The Central government's distrust of officers who are considered close to a State's ruling dispensation does not bode well for police officers across the country. On the State governments devolves the onerous responsibility of maintaining law and order at all costs and it is their sacred duty to protect every MLA, irrespective of political affiliation.

The number of protected persons has increased in recent years to such an extent that in 2019, as many as 66,043 police and CAPF personnel were deployed to protect 19,467 Ministers, Members of Parliament, judges and bureaucrats, against the sanctioned strength of 43,556 personnel, as per the Data on Police Organisations. The Prime Minister has a strength of over 3,000 CAPF personnel on deputation to Special Protection Group (SPG) under the SPG Act, protecting him round the clock.

Constant deployment of CAPF personnel on protection duties impacts their training schedule. After the initial eight-week training for VIP protection, the personnel have to undergo a two-week refresher training periodically to hone their skills.

To curb the tendency of demanding security personnel around themselves, leaders and prominent persons should be asked to bear the expenditure, as is being done for an industrialist who pays ₹16 lakh per month for the security cover provided to him. Similarly, Members of Parliament and leaders with criminal records should be charged a fee for the security personnel deployed to protect them.

Having security cover has now become a status symbol and the growing clamour by people for personnel to escort them will be curbed to a large extent if they are made to pay for the security.

M.P. Nathanael is a retired Inspector-General of Police, CRPF



DATA POINT

Rural India's mounting concerns

is on the wane, the share of cases in rural districts has started to increase. However, this rural surge was not uniform across all States and is more pronounced in U.P., Rajasthan and Maharashtra. The rural-urban asymmetry also exists in vaccination coverage, with the rural population having relatively lower numbers for vaccinations in each State analysed. Though rural infrastructure to administer vaccines is in place, the supply of doses is still skewed towards urban areas. The analysis is restricted to States where relevant data were available. **By Sumanth Sen and Vignesh Radhakrishnan**

■ RURAL SHARE

The rise in rural cases was more pronounced in U.P., Rajasthan and Maharashtra.

■ FULL VACCINATIONS

Though the rural population has received relatively fewer double doses in every State, the disparities were more pronounced in Maharashtra and M.P.

■ INOCULATION SITES

Though rural districts had relatively fewer vaccinations, most States had better rural infrastructure to deliver the shot. However, the supply was skewed towards urban districts.

State	Rural/semi-rural	Urban/semi-urban	Rural-urban
U.P.	69.1	70.4	58.9
Rajasthan	69.4	64	72.3
Maharashtra	40.7	48.9	46.4
M.P.	47	37.2	38.4
Karnataka	45.7	41.7	34.8
Gujarat	48.2	49.8	34.6
W.B.	41.7	35.9	32.7
Kerala	48.8	48.7	44.6
Tamil Nadu	36.5	36.2	35.5

State	Rural/semi-rural	Urban/semi-urban	Rural-urban
Maharashtra	72.5	64.9	-4.39
M.P.	4.96	3.12	-3.84
Karnataka	5.82	4.24	-1.58
Tamil Nadu	3.71	1.95	-1.76
U.P.	3.07	1.63	-1.44
W.B.	5.24	4.57	-0.67
Kerala	6.09	5.56	-0.53
Gujarat	6.43	5.13	-1.30
Rajasthan	4.4	0.11	-4.29

■ FIRST DOSES | Though the rural population has received relatively fewer doses in every State, the disparities were more pronounced in Maharashtra and M.P.

■ AT LEAST ONE DOSE RECEIVED PER 100 PERSONS

State	Rural/semi-rural	Urban/semi-urban	Rural-urban
Maharashtra	14.71	32.47	-17.76
M.P.	10.86	23.18	-12.32
U.P.	6.81	13.62	-6.81
W.B.	12.42	18.83	-6.41
Tamil Nadu	6.96	13.34	-6.38
Karnataka	17.17	23.44	-6.27
Rajasthan	21.43	24.28	-2.85
Kerala	23.17	25.88	-2.71
Gujarat	24.53	25.43	-0.9

■ INOCULATION SITES

Though rural districts had better rural infrastructure to deliver the shot. However, the supply was skewed towards urban districts.

FROM PAGE ONE

26 bodies recovered from barge off Mumbai

Commodore Manoj Jha, who is overseeing the effort for the last two days off the Mumbai coast, said, "Operations can be challenging but our work is to ensure that we prepare for contingency. We've been able to save another 300 lives at sea. Two other vessels were in distress, they were about to abandon ship and we assured them support."

The rescue operations were continuing and naval ships and aircraft were at work. "Not only the Navy, Coast Guard and ONGC ships are working. It is a joint operation. Others are also helping us," Commodore Jha pointed out.

Referring to the relief efforts under way 15-20 NM South East of the Pipavav Port off the coast of Gujarat, the Navy spokesperson asserted that Support Station 3 and drill ship Sagar Bhushan were now being safely towed back to Mumbai by ONGC support vessels.

"Food and water to the 300-odd crew members of these vessels were also provided by the naval helicopters from Mumbai earlier in the day," he stated.

On completion of opera-

tions off the Gujarat coast, the Navy has diverted INS Talwar to join the other three naval ships searching for the missing crew of Barge P-305, off Mumbai.

According to the Coast Guard, Sagar Bhushan, with 101 personnel onboard, reported the loss of all eight anchors 63 NM North West of Mumbai and was adrift while barge SS-3, with 202 personnel on board, was adrift 58 NM West of the city. The Coast Guard has diverted several ships to join the Navy and the ONGC in the rescue efforts.

Ex gratia announced

Mr. Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹ 2 lakh for the kin of those killed due to the cyclone in all affected States.

The announcement was made after Mr. Modi held a review meeting in Ahmedabad with Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and top officials to assess the damage.

Gujarat will get additional assistance after an inter-ministerial team, which will visit soon, submits its assessment, a Press Information Bureau release said.

(With inputs from PTI)

Delhi CM does not speak for India: Jaishankar

"Singapore and India have been solid partners in the fight against COVID-19. Appreciate Singapore's role as logistics hub and oxygen supplier. Their gesture of deploying military aircraft to help us speaks of our exceptional relationship. However, irresponsible comments from those who should know better can damage long-standing partnerships. So, let me clarify – the Delhi CM does not speak for India," said Mr. Jaishankar after Singapore summoned the Indian envoy to protest Mr. Kejriwal's remarks.

Mr. Jaishankar's comment was appreciated by Simon Wong, High Commissioner of Singapore, who maintained that Singapore

was satisfied with "crystal clear" response from the Government of India. "In Singapore, we have Protection from Online Falsehoods & Manipulation Act (POFMA) to mitigate misinformation and we reserve the right to invoke POFMA relating to assertions made by the CM of Delhi. However, we are satisfied with the Government of India's clarification," Mr. Wong said.

In a rather unusual diplomatic gesture, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) announced that the Indian High Commissioner was summoned by the Singapore government on Wednesday "to convey strong objection to the Delhi CM's tweet on the 'Singapore variant'.

CPI(M) finalises portfolios in Kerala

An LDF member said the next government would have a Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe community member as Devaswom Minister, after a hiatus of 40 years. He said M.K. Krishnan of the CPI(M) had last held the post in 1981. By most accounts, the CPI(M) had chosen the party's Central Committee member K. Radhakrishnan for the post. The former Speaker may also hold the Parliamentary Affairs portfolio.

The other names doing the rounds are V.N. Vasavan (Cooperation and Registration), Saji Cherian (Fisheries and Culture) and V. Abdu Rahman (Minority Welfare and Non-Resident Keralite Affairs).

BJP MP accuses Sunni Waqf Board of grabbing land

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW
BJP's Barabanki MP Upendra Rawat wrote to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday, supporting the demolition of a mosque in the district and accusing the Sunni Waqf Board of grabbing government land.

"The Waqf Board has grabbed government land in the name of mosques and got them registered illegally," Mr. Rawat said, demanding a probe in the matter.

The Barabanki administration had on Monday night pulled down the mosque in the Ram Sanehi Ghat tehsil, claiming that the con-

CPI(M) State secretariat members K.N. Balagopal and P. Rajeev for Finance and Industries and Law, respectively.

An LDF source said Roshy Augustine of the Kerala Congress (M) could get the Water Resources Ministry. At the same time, Nationalist Congress Party leader A.K. Saseendran has purportedly settled for the Forest department portfolio.

The other names doing the rounds are V.N. Vasavan (Cooperation and Registration), Saji Cherian (Fisheries and Culture) and V. Abdu Rahman (Minority Welfare and Non-Resident Keralite Affairs).

struction was illegal and being demolished on court orders.

"I request the Chief Minister to probe the illegal grabbing of land by the Sunni Waqf Board and take strict action against those found guilty," Mr. Rawat wrote. Speaking to PTI, he questioned the Waqf Board stand that if the mosque was 100-year-old, why was it re-gistered in 2018.

Waqf Board chairman Zulfur Farooqui, meanwhile, said the board was ready for any probe in this matter. Asked about the Ram Sanehi Ghat mosque, he said it was registered in 1968 as a religious place.

NGOs can open Delhi accounts till June 30

10 of them have petitioned Delhi High Court seeking a longer extension of 6 months

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry on Tuesday extended the deadline for non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to activate accounts with the State Bank of India main branch in Delhi (NDMB), a compulsory requirement to receive foreign funds, from March 31 to June 30.

However, 10 NGOs petitioned the Delhi High Court the same day, seeking a longer extension of six months and seeking the court's intervention in operationalising their foreign contribution accounts.

The Ministry granted the extension, a day before the petition is to be heard by the court on Thursday.

The 10 NGOs are part of a group of 490 NGOs that had made a representation to the

Ministry seeking an extension as their funds were blocked due to various administrative lapses on the part of the bank and the Ministry.

The SBI, in a press release on May 17, said that "out of the total 22,598 active FCRA [Foreign Contribution Regulation Act] associations, 17,611 entities (NGOs and Associations) approached SBI for opening of FCRA accounts."

Bank's claim

The bank claimed that it had opened accounts of 78% of the applicants. "The rest of the accounts shall also be initiated once their pending documentation formalities are completed," it said.

An NGO functionary, however, said that even though documents were submitted to the bank much before



March 31, the accounts could not be operated as a form sent by the SBI making the NGO eligible to receive foreign funds was yet to be authorised by the FCRA division of the Ministry.

According to the amended provisions of the FCRA enacted in September 2020, NGOs were asked to open accounts with the NDMB by March 31, failing which they

will not be able to receive any fresh funds.

At least five NGOs moved the Delhi and Gauhati High Courts, arguing that even though they had applied to open FCRA accounts at the bank before March 31, administrative delays on the part of the SBI and the Ministry severely restricted their activities, including providing COVID-19 related relief and paying urgent salaries of staff.

HC directive

Last week, the Delhi High Court asked the MHA to consider if the deadline can be extended in view of the pandemic.

The Ministry issued an order on May 18, where it said that "keeping in view the exigencies arising out of the COVID-19 situation and to en-

sure smooth transition to the amended FCRA regime" the Central government, under section 50 of the FCRA, 2010 was making an amendment to allow NGOs to open an account with the SBI up to June 30 or earlier. "After that date, they shall not be eligible to receive foreign contribution in any other account other than the FCRA account opened in the NDMB," the order said.

Registration relief

The MHA has also given a relief up to September 30 to the NGOs whose registration was expiring between September 29, 2020-May 31, 2021. The NGOs had to apply for renewal of certificates or registration by May 31, which has now been extended to September 30, the Ministry said in an order.

Tarun Tejal verdict put off till May 21

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Mapusa District and Sessions Court in Goa on Wednesday adjourned the verdict in the 2013 sexual harassment case against journalist Tarun Tejal to May 21 because of a power outage in the State following Cyclone Tauktae.

On May 12, the court postponed the ruling to May 19 due to a shortage of staff following the pandemic. Advocate Shrikant Shinde representing Mr. Tejal told *The Hindu*, "There is no electricity due to the cyclone for two days and the hearing is adjourned to May 21."

Mr. Tejal is accused of raping his colleague in the elevator of a five-star hotel. He was arrested on November 30, 2013.

New storm likely in Bay of Bengal

Low pressure area is likely to form by May 22, says IMD

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

Though Cyclone Tauktae is yet to entirely abate, a new storm may be in the works, this time, however, in the Bay of Bengal. The India Meteorological Department said in a statement on Wednesday that a "low pressure area" – a precursor to a cyclonic storm – was likely to form in the eastern Bay and the Northern Andaman Sea by May 22. "It is very likely to gradually intensify into a cyclonic storm during the subsequent 72 hours and reach the Odisha and West Bengal coast by May 26," according to the statement.

There are relatively more cyclonic storms in May and November, particularly in the Bay of Bengal – coinciding with the arrival and exit of the monsoon – than in the rest of the year because of elevated ocean tempera-

tures. However, the IMD has also forecast the arrival of the monsoon over Kerala on May 31 and that is premised on the monsoon's arrival over the South Andaman Sea by May 21.

M. Mohapatra, Director-General, India Meteorological Department (IMD), told *The Hindu* that the formation of a low pressure at this time would be favourable for the monsoon onset. "This strengthens the cross-equatorial flow and would give a

push to the monsoon over the Andaman Sea. However it's early to say what specific trajectory [the nascent cyclone] will take and how strong it is likely to become. Only after a few days, when there is more confidence, can we say if it will obstruct or aid the monsoon onset," he said.

Significant rain
Cyclone Tauktae, the first extremely severe cyclonic storm in the Arabian Sea to

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form, will be called Yaas, a name proposed by Oman. Last May, Cyclone Amphan in the Bay of Bengal ravaged West Bengal as a 'super cyclonic storm', the most powerful in the IMD's intensity measuring scale. This year, the IMD has forecast a 'normal monsoon.'

make landfall in Gujarat in 130 years, brought significant rain and caused considerable infrastructure damage in several coastal States. The current cyclone, were it to fully form

Plea in SC for President's Rule in Bengal

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A lawyer has asked the Supreme Court to "direct" the Centre to advise President's Rule in West Bengal on the ground of failure of the constitutional machinery, following reports about post-poll murders of BJP workers and wanton destruction of property allegedly by ruling Trinamool Congress "goons".

Advocate Ghanshyam Upadhyay said the apex court should "direct/request" the West Bengal Governor to give a detailed report on the "law and order situation in the State of West Bengal and failure of constitutional machinery in the State".

The petition also urged the apex court to direct the West Bengal government to immediately transfer the "killing" of 16 "perceived" BJP workers to a Special Investigation Team (SIT) for an investigation monitored by the Supreme Court.

Shift Babu to private hospital: HC

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Wednesday directed the shifting of Hany Babu, accused in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case, to the Breach Candy Hospital for treatment of his undiagnosed eye infection after his family agreed to foot the bill.

The direction came after doctors at the GT Hospital, where Mr. Babu was admitted on testing positive for COVID-19, said they did not have an MRI machine to test the ophthalmic artery.

A Division Bench was hearing a plea filed by Jenny Rowena, wife of Mr. Babu, urging the court to grant him medical bail.

Narada hearing inconclusive, four leaders remain in custody

Police file case against the CBI; agency files plea to move matter out of Bengal

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The hearing at the Calcutta High Court in connection with the Narada case remained inconclusive on Wednesday and will continue on Thursday.

The development implies that the four heavyweight political leaders – Ministers Subrata Mukherjee and Firhad Hakim, MLA Madan Mitra and former Minister Sovan Chatterjee – who were arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday, will have to spend Wednesday night in judicial custody.

Three of the four arrested, except Minister Firhad Hakim, were admitted to the State-run SSKM Hospital.

In another development, the Kolkata police filed a case against CBI personnel under Section 51(B) of the Disaster Management Act.



On duty: Police personnel at the High Court premises during the hearing of the Narada case in Kolkata on Wednesday. ■ PTI

The case was filed at the Gariahat police station in the city for violation of the restrictions imposed during the pandemic while arresting one of the accused. The CBI, along with personnel from the Central forces, had picked up all the accused on Monday morning from their respective residences.

The CBI on Wednesday also filed a transfer petition to move the matter involving the case out of West Bengal and also made Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, Law Minister Moloy Ghatak and Trinamool Congress MP Kalyan Banerjee party to the case.

The hearing in the Calcutta High Court before a Division Bench of Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal and Justice Arijit Banerjee continued for over two hours, with senior counsel Abhishek Manu Singhvi representing

the four leaders arrested by the CBI and Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta appearing for the agency.

Mr. Singhvi raised questions on the manner in which the stay order on the bail was granted to the four accused, stating that no court could give an order cancelling bail without notice to the accused. On Monday, a special court had granted bail to the accused, which was stayed by the High Court.

Acting Chief Justice raised questions about the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for six hours at the CBI office. In response, Mr. Singhvi said it was a "Gandhian protest". Mr. Mehta said the developments outside the CBI office on Monday were attempts to "frustrate justice".

The case will come up for hearing on Thursday.

Centre raises subsidy on DAP fertilizers; no hike for farmers

Move follows a review meeting on fertilizer prices by PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central government has enhanced the subsidy on diammonium phosphate, or DAP fertilizers, in order to retain the selling price for farmers at the current level of ₹1,200 per bag, following a review meeting on fertilizer prices chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday.

The move, which entails raising the subsidy from ₹500 per bag to ₹1,200 per bag of DAP, will raise India's annual fertilizer subsidy bill of about ₹80,000 crore by ₹14,775 crore as subsidy in the Kharif season, a state-



Farmers harvesting wheat crop in a field in Jammu earlier this month. ■ PTI

ment said. While international prices of phosphoric acid and ammonia used for producing DAP have gone up by 60%-70%, the actual price of a DAP bag is now

₹2,400, the government said. With the existing subsidy, the price would have to be pegged at ₹1,900 per bag, but it has been retained at ₹1,200 per bag.

In April, India's largest fertilizer producer, IFFCO, had announced a 58.33% hike in DAP prices, but later said farmers would continue to get old stocks at existing prices and the hiked prices were "only tentative".

"The PM stressed that farmers should get fertilizers at old rates despite the international rise in prices," the official statement said, calling this an unprecedented subsidy hike.

Mr. Moily cited the wrong selection of an alliance for the "wipe-out" in the State.

'Should have aligned with Trinamool'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU

Senior Congress leader M. Veerappa Moily on Wednesday said his party should have struck an alliance with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress in the West Bengal election, even as he expressed anguish over "ad hocism" in the grand old outfit.

The former Union Minister also sought action against West Bengal Pradesh Congress Committee President Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury for the poll debacle in the State, describing him as a "weak leader".

Mr. Moily cited the wrong selection of an alliance for the "wipe-out" in the State.

AAP blows hot and cold about its political course

Opposition members unsure of its stand on various issues

SOBHANA K. NAIR

On Monday, the Aam Aadmi Party's official Twitter account listed out the Muslim-majority countries to which Indian-made vaccines had been sent by the Narendra Modi government as part of the 'Vaccine Maitri' programme. Pakistan was top on the list, and the party said Mr. Modi sought votes from Indians but sent vaccines abroad.

Mr. Singhvi raised questions on the manner in which the stay order on the bail was granted to the four accused, stating that no court could give an order cancelling bail without notice to the accused. On Monday, a special court had granted bail to the accused, which was stayed by the High Court.

Acting Chief Justice raised questions about the presence of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for six hours at the CBI office. In response, Mr. Singhvi said it was a "Gandhian protest". Mr. Mehta said the developments outside the CBI office on Monday were attempts to "frustrate justice".

The case will come up for hearing on Thursday.



Not taking a stand: The AAP confronts the BJP on some issues, but does not question it on Hindutva. ■ PTI

acted against BJP leaders accused in the same case.

Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

The AAP was among the parties that supported the government on August 5, 2019, when Parliament passed the J&K Reorganisation Bill, while the Congress, the Left, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and the Samajwadi Party (SP), among other Opposition parties, staunchly opposed it.

A section of the Opposition holds the Congress primarily responsible for keeping the AAP out.

"The Congress is allergic towards the AAP," an Oppo-

NEWS ANALYSIS

sition leader said. Sources said on the issue of the pandemic, the AAP was approached, but it was reluctant to participate.

It is unclear whether it is the AAP's reluctance or the Congress's reservation that is keeping the AAP from being a signatory to these joint letters, but what is clear is the reluctance of the AAP to question the BJP on Hindutva issues.

On Monday, when the rest of the Opposition was criticising the "high-handedness" of the Narendra Modi government for the CBI action against Trinamool leaders in the Narada case, the AAP was silent. Mr. Kejriwal did not make any public comment.

In March, the entire Opposition had rallied behind the AAP against the Modi government for bringing in the CPI general secretary D. Raja said.

Class 12 exams necessary, says teacher in SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Kerala-based Mathematics teacher has opposed in the Supreme Court a petition filed by an advocate to cancel the Class 12 examinations due to COVID-19.

Idukki resident Tony Joseph, who teaches Mathematics for Class 12, said students had been preparing for the examinations since December. Instead of cancellation, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations should either postpone or hold it online. Mr. Joseph, represented by advocate Jose Abraham, said the second wave was already on a downward curve. "The Class 12 exam is career-defining... Admission to higher education institutions hinges on the result of this exam," Mr. Joseph argued.

'BJP raising fake toolkit issue to divert attention'

Trying to divert from its failures: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday accused the BJP of trying to raise a "fake toolkit" issue to divert attention from the "failures" of the Narendra Modi government in handling the second wave of COVID-19. It claimed that the basic data of a document related to the Central Vista project was "forged" as the Congress toolkit on COVID-19.

Addressing an online press conference, Randeep Surjewala, the party's chief spokesperson, rubbished BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra's claim that metadata – data containing basic information such as author, creation date, file size – had clearly proven that a person working in the All India Congress Committee (AICC) Research Department was behind the controversial

document that called for "destroying the Prime Minister's image".

"The apparent forgery and its use to divert agenda and agenda setting has been exposed. I understand that Dr. Sambit Patra will have to go to jail and he is jittery because of that... And this metadata nonsense that he is doing, we clearly said yesterday that the Central Vista document is our document," Mr. Surjewala said, adding that the metadata of a real document cannot be used to justify a forged document.

On Tuesday, the Congress party had filed an email complaint with the Delhi police naming BJP president J.P. Nadda, Union Minister Smriti Irani, Mr. Patra and party organising secretary B.L. Santosh for sharing "a forged and fake document" on social media platforms.

Gadkari wins Uddhav praise on COVID fight

Minister had to take back his word on licensing domestic vaccine manufacturers to produce vaccines

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The BJP and the Opposition parties and the Centre and various State governments may be at daggers drawn with regard to the handling of the pandemic, but Roads and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari has managed to find synergy with the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA)-led government in Maharashtra.

NEWS ANALYSIS



Taking samples: A health worker collecting samples for testing in Nagpur on Wednesday. ■ PTI

Mr. Gadkari has been proactive in Nagpur, home of his Lok Sabha constituency and one that was the site of a major upsurge in COVID-19 cases in the massive second wave that has hit India. Whatever the reason, Mr. Gadkari's interventions have been well received.

While he has had to clarify that he advocated licensing domestic vaccine manufacturers to produce anti-COVID-19 vaccines to boost supply in India without realising that it had in fact been done by the Government of India, his point was well taken.

While State governments scrambled for oxygen as cases and demand for the medical oxygen went up, Mr. Gadkari's emergency call to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

secured 300 ventilators for Maharashtra.

Mr. Gadkari said in a tweet: "I had called the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh and requested him to provide support to Maharashtra which is facing a grim situation due to COVID-19. Acting swiftly on the request, the AP government sent 300 ventilators to the state. At

this crucial time, it will be instrumental in saving precious lives. On behalf of the citizens of the state, I heartily thank him for his swift action."

This was appreciated by Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, too. As Nagpur scrambled around for medical resources like the rest of the country, State administration and officials realised that Mr. Gadkari could be the leverage they needed at the national level.

New scourge

So it was that as a new scourge, black fungus, or Mucormycosis, hit COVID-19 patients, the injection required to treat it, Amphotericin B, has been in very short supply. Mr. Gadkari got the State drug authority clearance for Genentech Life Sciences, a Wardha-based company, to produce the injection, and also helped the

company source raw materials for the same. The first batch of injections are supposed to be out in 10 days time.

Close aides of Mr. Gadkari said the local administration has been cooperative with regard to his initiatives to increase capacities in Nagpur, whether for hospital beds, Remdesivir injections and now Amphotericin B. "It is an unusual occurrence that we are getting the same cooperation as the ruling alliance MLAs," said a source. This could also be because the other big leader in Vidarbha and an MLA from Nagpur is former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who has been scathing in his criticism of the MVA government's handling of the COVID-19 crisis.

Amid the politics surrounding the handling of the pandemic, the Nagpur model has stood out.

2,67,115 fresh COVID-19 cases, 3,666 deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

India recorded 2,67,115 new COVID-19 cases and 3,666 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday. The country has reported 2,57,62,461 cases and 2,86,946 deaths.

Tamil Nadu reported 34,875 new infections, followed by Karnataka (34,281) and Maharashtra (34,031). Maharashtra recorded 594 new casualties on the day, followed by Karnataka (468) and Tamil Nadu (365).

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh, Andaman



OPTCL E-Tender Notice No. CPC-02/2021-22

Engineering, Supply, Erection and Commissioning of 2x20 MVA, 132/33 KV AIS S/S with SAS at Tarbha & associated 132 KV LILO Transmission line (Approx. Line Length-3.0KM) on 132 KV New-Bolangir-Sonepur DC line at an estimated cost of Rs.29.50 Crore.

For details please visit: www.optcl.co.in & www.tenderwizard.com/OPTCL

CAD-314 OIPR-04011/11/0013/2122 HPR-05/2021-22

DTP-05.06.2021

STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMIL NADU LIMITED

19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMI PATH ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 008

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice NIT.No.16/CW/T.No.16/2021-22

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited under "Two Cover System" for the following work from Class – I State level Civil / Electrical Contractors registered in PWD/Highways/Any Department of Government of Tamilnadu, Central Government Department, Tamilnadu State Government undertaking having experience in similar nature of works. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 PM on 23.06.2021 and the same will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM.

Name of Work Approx. value of work EMD

Relaying of Roads, Construction of RCC Side drains, Culverts and street light system in Phase-I & II at SIPOT Industrial Park, Ranipet. Rs.1388.30 lakhs (including GST @12%) Rs.7,04,150/-

* in the form of Demand Draft drawn in favour of SIPOT Ltd., payable at Chennai. (In the tenderer's Name only)

The tender Schedule

IN BRIEF



Health Minister flags spike in smaller States

NEW DELHI Smaller States are showing an upward trend in new COVID-19 cases and there is a need to be cautious about this, said Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Wednesday. He was interacting with Health Ministers and Principal Secretaries/ Additional Chief Secretaries of West Bengal and the eight States of the north-eastern region. He said the government aimed to provide COVID-19 vaccines to all adults by end of the year.

Transgender community to get financial aid

NEW DELHI The Social Justice Ministry would give transgender persons a one-time financial assistance of ₹1,500 at a time that livelihoods have been affected due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Department of Social Justice secretary R. Subrahmanyam said on Wednesday. Social Justice Minister Thawarchand Gehlot added in a tweet that the "immediate subsistence assistance" to trans persons would be given through direct benefit transfer, for which beneficiaries can register with the National Institute of Social Defence.

233 Assam prisoners test positive for COVID-19

GUWAHATI The sudden detection of COVID-19 infections among 105 inmates of the Dibrugarh and Sivasagar jails in eastern Assam has taken the current positive count among prisoners to 233. Officials said there were 128 cases across 16 of Assam's 31 jails till May 17, including six facilities that also serve as detention centres for declared foreigners. "But 54 prisoners in Dibrugarh Central Jail and 51 in the Sivasagar jail tested positive over the past couple of days, after some 400 of them were tested," Inspector-General of Prisons Barnali Sarma told *The Hindu*.

Rajasthan MLA dies of COVID-19 infection

JAIPUR Gautam Lal Meena, Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Dhariawad in Rajasthan's Pratappur district, died of COVID-19 infection on Wednesday. He was admitted to Maharan Bhupal Government Hospital in Udaipur on May 16 and was put on ventilator support when his condition deteriorated rapidly over the last two days. Mr. Meena, 55, was elected an MLA thrice from Dhariawad in 2003, 2013 and 2018. He was earlier the Pradhan of Dhariawad Panchayat Samiti. He was actively looking after the arrangements for treatment of patients during the pandemic in his tribal-dominated constituency and extending relief to the poor.

U.P. govt. to focus on testing in rural areas

20 lakh medicine kits distributed in three days

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

The focus of the Uttar Pradesh government is on testing for fresh COVID-19 cases in rural areas of the State to arrest the spread of the virus in the villages, said Amit Mohan Prasad, Additional Chief Secretary, Health.

The State government tested 2.99 lakh samples in the last 24 hours, its highest single-day figure.

Mr. Prasad stated that the recovery rate in the State had gone up to 91.4% while the active cases had been reduced to 1.23 lakh.

About 20 lakh medicine kits had been distributed across districts in the last three days, he said.

The U.P. police, mean-

Rural cases surge | In May, 78% of all cases in Uttar Pradesh were recorded in the rural districts. This is the highest such proportion, for any month, in the past year

Month	% SHARE OF NEW CASES	
	Rural/semi-rural	Urban/semi-urban
April 2020	73	27
May 2020	83	17
June 2020	74	26
July 2020	76	24
August 2020	77	23
Sep. 2020	73	27
Oct. 2020	74	26
Nov. 2020	66	34
Dec. 2020	68	32
Jan. 2021	69	31
Feb. 2021	70	30
March 2021	59	41
April 2021	70	30
May 2021	78	22

while, said that it was carrying out 24-hour patrols of the rivers to prevent people from disposing bodies in them.

So far, police have re-

covered 16 bodies floating in the river in Ghazipur, 11 in Ballia, eight in Chandauli, seven in Varanasi and one each in Kanpur and Hamirpur.

U.P. counters claim on teachers' deaths

Union said 1,621 who were on polling duty died

OMAR RASHID LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has said that only three teachers died of COVID-19 while on duty during the recently concluded panchayat poll, dismissing the figure of over 1,600 deaths claimed by teacher unions.

Satya Prakash, Under-secretary of the Basic Education Department, Uttar Pradesh, said on Tuesday that so far District Magistrates had provided the State Election Commission a list of only three confirmed deaths of teachers.

The State government's statement stands in stark contrast to the claim made by the Uttar Pradesh Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, a union for primary teachers. The

union earlier this week released a list of 1,621 teachers and staff of the Basic Education Department who allegedly died of COVID-19 after being assigned duty in the panchayat polls and control rooms for the pandemic.

The SEC recently informed the Allahabad High Court that 77 polling officers and agents in 28 districts had died while on duty as polling in the panchayat polls. Data from other districts was

awaited, the SEC told the court on May 7.

Reacting to the claim of only three deaths, Dinesh Chandra Sharma, president of the Uttar Pradesh Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, said the government statement was "insensitive, irresponsible and far from reality".

"We won't let them kill the rights of the children of the teachers who died. We will fight for their families at all levels," he said.

Reacting to the claim of only three deaths, Dinesh Chandra Sharma, president of the Uttar Pradesh Prathmik Shikshak Sangh, said the government statement was "insensitive, irresponsible and far from reality".

"We won't let them kill the rights of the children of the teachers who died. We will fight for their families at all levels," he said.

Mumbai gets three bids for supply of Sputnik V

It hopes to procure other vaccines too

SONAM SAIGAL MUMBAI

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has received three bids for three crore doses of the Russian vaccine for COVID-19, Sputnik V, civic body Commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal said.

Talking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Chahal said, "We got three proposals on Tuesday, but we still extended the date till May 25. Now we have three bids of one crore Sputnik V doses each."

This comes a day after the BMC received three incomplete proposals from three firms. The first dose of Sputnik V was given in Hyderabad last week and around three lakh doses are believed to be delivered in India. The price of one dose of Sputnik V has been fixed at ₹995.

On May 12, the BMC issued an expression of interest for purchase of one

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation had invited bids on May 12.

crore COVID-19 vaccine doses, which was extended till May 18.

One of the conditions in the bid said, "Companies sharing land borders with India will not be admitted and the firm will have to provide its own storage space and equipment if it requires anything different from what is available."

Apart from Sputnik V, the municipal corporation is trying to get Moderna, Pfizer, and Johnson and John-

Rajasthan govt. declares mucormycosis an epidemic

State has more than 100 black fungus disease patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

Amid the increasing instances of mucormycosis or black fungus, which is primarily affecting people recovering from COVID-19, the Rajasthan government on Wednesday declared it an epidemic and a notifiable disease. It will be mandatory for the health facilities to report every case of the disease in the State.

The State has at present more than 100 black fungus patients, for whom a special ward has been established at the Sawai Man Singh Government Hospital here. More of these cases are being reported from Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sirohi and Kota districts.

Principal Health Secretary Akhil Arora said the declaration of mucormycosis as an epidemic would ensure its "integrated and

coordinated" treatment along with the treatment for COVID-19. The notification was issued under the Rajasthan Epidemic Act, 2020.

Mucormycosis appears as a side effect among COVID-19 patients who are put on oxygen support through liquid medical oxygen cylinders or oxygen concentrators. The State government has also given instructions for procurement of oxygen concentrators of good quality and ensure strict compliance with safety measures while using them.

On watch: Once a disease is declared notifiable, it is mandatory for hospitals to report every case. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA



On watch: Once a disease is declared notifiable, it is mandatory for hospitals to report every case. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13251

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

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

FAITH

Lord Krishna's leela

Devaki was the daughter of Devaka. Devaka was the younger brother of King Ugrasena, and Kansa was the son of the latter. Kansa was very fond of his cousin Devaki, and when Devaki married Vasudeva, Kansa decided to drive them in the royal chariot to their palace. But as the chariot was on the way to Vasudeva's palace, a voice was heard that warned that the eighth child of Devaki would kill Kansa.

Why did the Lord arrange for such an announcement to be made? When He took the Rama avatara, Ravana had no warning of what was in store for him, although poet Kalidasa gives a hint. Kalidasa says that the moment Rama was born in Ayodhya, Ravana's crown dropped from his head. But even Kalidasa says nothing of any explicit warning to Ravana. The Krishna avatara was exceptional in this sense, said V.S. Karunakarachariar, in a discourse. Even before Krishna was born, what He was going to do was spoken about. Was this not a leela of Krishna? To be killed suddenly is far preferable to knowing that danger awaits, but not knowing when it will strike. Kansa had to undergo the torment of not knowing when and how Krishna was going to kill him. Krishna wanted to show the world that he who rejected Him and hated Him would suffer the agony of Kansa. Killing Kansa was no big deal for Krishna, for Kansa was not such a great opponent. Ravana was the recipient of many boons. Hiranyakashipu was mighty, and Madhu and Kaitabha were all strong. And the Lord had destroyed them all. Comparatively, Kansa was not a difficult person to vanquish, Koaratazhvan points this out. And yet, why do we celebrate every deed of Krishna the way we do? It is because of Krishna's style of doing things. Daring his enemy, giving him hints of his death, and then crushing him – that was Krishna's leela.

Conspiracy behind NRC reverification plea: AIUDF

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI A key member of the Congress-led Opposition grand alliance in Assam has sniffed a conspiracy behind the move for the reverification of the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) has also slammed State NRC Coordinator Hitesh Dev Sarma for exceeding his authority in filing an interlocutory application in the Supreme Court seeking "complete, comprehensive and time-bound reverification" of the NRC.

"How can a State government officer file an application when the Supreme Court had rejected similar review petitions of the Central and State governments in 2019," AIUDF general secretary Md. Aminul Islam told journalists on Tuesday.

"We want to know the reason behind the latest move, whether or not the Centre and the Assam governments were aware of it," Mr. Islam said.

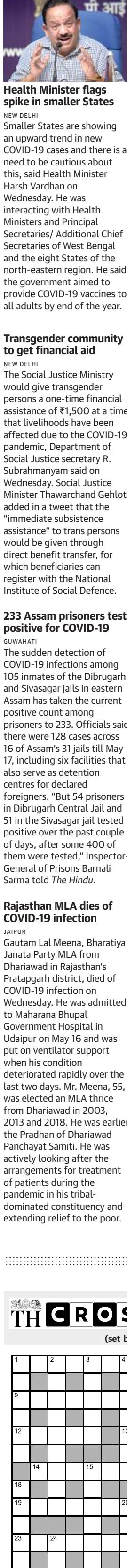
He also found a flaw in Mr. Sarma's claim that the published citizens' list was a "draft" NRC.

"How can he say that

when the Supreme Court,

the Registrar General of India and the Union Home Ministry have already made it clear that the NRC

published in August 2019 is the final document," he said.



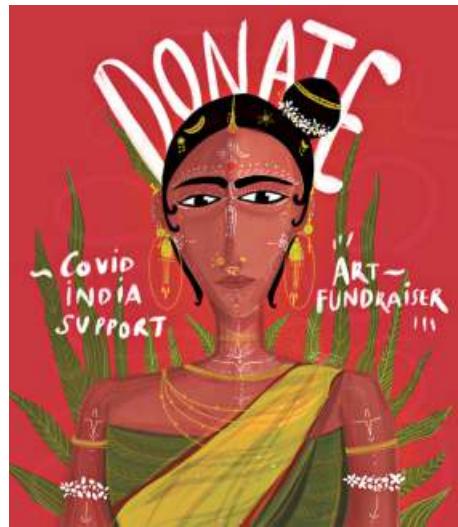
ACROSS

- 1 Biased aspirant at fault (8)
- 5 I am returning to gobble top third of snack with drink (6)
- 9 Mockery aside, left to go to dirty place (8)
- 10 Road prop two engineers replaced for all to see (6)
- 12 The Spanish doctor moving ahead – very bright one (5)
- 13 Move rector with his persuasive speeches (9)
- 14 Light source oddly placed on stairs with oxygen, perhaps? (6)

CM YK

www.mgfeatures.com

Power of art
(Clockwise from right) Artworks by Devangana Dash; by The Big Fat Bao; postcards by Shreya Parasrampuria and team; Devangana; and a photograph donated by Avani Rai to Chennai Photo Biennale
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



SWETA AKUNDI

A couple of weeks ago, as Arshmeen Baveja was rewatching *Rang De Basanti*, the 2006 Hindi film by Rakesh Omprakash Mehra, she struck upon a wild idea.

She let AR Rahman's soundtrack wash over her, as she painted away her feelings – 10 songs, 10 digital artworks. Put up for sale on her Instagram, the prints have brought in around ₹36,000 so far, all of which she is diverting to the Migrant Workers Solidarity Network.

"*Rang De Basanti* resonated with me, given the scale of the crisis we have at hand right now, and the mismanagement by the Government. We are stuck in a situation where we only have each other to help," says the 25-year-old from Delhi.

Arshmeen's contribution to COVID-19 relief is a drop in the ocean of fundraising campaigns being led by Indian artists at an individual level. Prints – both digital and physical – of visual art are being used as incentive for buyers, who can obtain them after showing proof of donation to a charity. Alternatively, they can send money directly to artists, who then pass it on to the organisations they have partnered with.

In just three days since the launch of Photo Solidarity, Chennai Photo Biennale has raised ₹3.6 lakh to be split equally between Khalsa Aid, providing medical resources, and Protsahan India Foundation, which takes care of children who have lost their parents to the pandemic. It was made possible, believes director of education at CPB, Gayatri Nair, because works by photographers such as Raghu Rai, Ronny Sen, Kannagi Khanna and Suresh Pun-



jabi sold out immediately.

"A Raghu Rai photo could sell for a minimum of ₹50,000 to up to ₹2 lakh depending on the print size and the work. But here, you are getting it for just ₹5,000, plus your money is going towards a good cause. That is the main attraction, I think," says Gayatri.

The other draw is the limited nature of the prints. "When the artistes donate their work to the CPB, we are allowed to print only three of them. This is generally work that has not been a part of a sale before, so the value of the work goes up because it is limited," she says.

Big names aside, CPB is also partnering with many young and upcoming photographers, to offer a variety of prints. While the funds go completely towards the charities and the printing cost, there may be another incentive for the young artistes. "I have noticed that many of the people interested are art buyers, gallerists and collectors. When they buy a young artist's work, that increases

Canvassing support

Buy a limited edition Raghu Rai, postcards of women in solitude, and portraits by Indian artistes – and help donate to fundraising campaigns for COVID-19 relief

its value, which will help them next time they professionally approach a gallery with their work." So far, Photo Solidarity has over 60 photographers on board.

Young guns blazing

It was a collaboration of a similar scale that artist Devangana Dash pulled together in the beginning of May. "If the world wasn't burning right now, I would truly call it the collaboration of my dreams!" quips Devangana. Within the first 24 hours of her fundraiser, she found support from 26 of her artist friends; the colourful mix of styles, voices and palettes raised

₹11 lakh in five days.

"I started the campaign by uploading one of my own artworks to sense the engagement on Instagram, which turned out to be decent. I knew I won't be able to gather concrete funds sufficient to make any difference, alone. This needs community work to be done well, and compassion brings people together," says Devangana.

Most of the artists, including Devangana, had no prior experience in fundraising. Finding a verified campaign or organisation to donate to, while at the same time amplifying the call for dona-



Mr Potter heads to the e-market

Rivaayat, an initiative by three 19-year-olds, aims to bridge the gap between traditional artisans and the online market

GOWRI S

Twenty two-year-old Ghanesham Prajapati from Moliya, Alwar in Rajasthan, laid his hands on clay for the first time when he was all of eight.

His elder brother, father and grandfather are all traditional terracotta potters. Day after day, while the women in the family prepare the sand for each pot, Ghanesham and crew lend it shape and girth.

When public exhibitions, which were steady sources of income, came to a sudden halt owing to the pandemic, Ghanesham and his family were hit by a slump.

But now, everything from water pots to decorative tea sets that adorn his collection are shipped across the globe thanks to three 19-year-olds and their start-up, Rivaayat.

It all began with a social entrepreneurship project that three friends had to lead, as part of their curriculum at Sri Ram College of Commerce in

and trials to understand the artisans' challenges, they decided to move forward with a platform that could bridge the gap between these potters and potential markets.

The team first identifies crafts and art forms that are struggling, then reaches out to clusters that practise those art forms. "Generally, in India, art forms are practised in clusters. We go on-ground surveys to these communities to identify and map their problems," explains Rohan.

He adds, "The basic framework we identified was to create a direct market linkage, be it through websites like Amazon or our own website. The next step was to introduce them to logistics and good packaging."

Terracotta's fragility makes packaging a major component of a successful business model.

So far, Rivaayat is working with 17 terracotta artisans in Haryana, Rajasthan and Delhi. Products have been listed in over 20 online platforms, apart from their own website.

The trio and its team of 20 have now expanded to baskets woven using water hyacinth. The little known craft uses water reeds that aggravate water pollution to make utility baskets. "By employing a cluster of 35 women in Uttarakhand, and keeping in mind the environmental hazards the raw material poses, we are promoting this art form," adds Tania.

The works can be purchased from rivaayathome.com

Changing landscape

(Above) Members of the team with a terracotta potter; (right) the final product
• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



After many surveys, visits

to 100 villages, and a lot of trial and error, the team has come up with a packaging system that protects the fragile pieces without adding too much weight. The products are now available on various e-commerce platforms, and the team is looking to expand to more states and countries.

For more information, visit rivaayathome.com

Venba, a narrative cooking game with South Indian cuisine and immigrants at its centre, has players discussing love and identity

The diaspora taste test

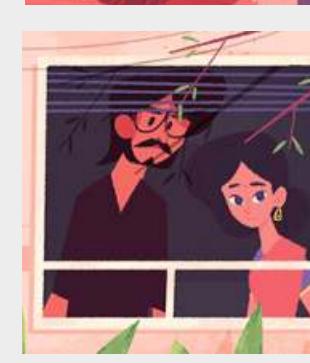
GOWRI S

Fluffy white *paniyarams*, steaming *biryani*, grated coconut and an incomplete recipe chart with instructions to grind rice, sit between the scenes to a foot-tapping folk rhythm. A woman is at the centre of it all, meticulously chopping, grinding and frying. The 40-second, animated short gives a glimpse into the day-to-day of a family of three – a couple and their child. Food is almost a character, here.

The short, which has already grabbed eyeballs on social media, is the teaser of a narrative cooking game, Venba, that has South Indian cuisine at its centre. Revolving around an Indian family based in Toronto, it weaves a tale of love, loss and identity. The two to three hours-long gameplay takes one through incomplete or damaged recipes that need to be solved like a puzzle, where the player is expected to guess the steps.

Originally from Chennai, 27-year-old Abhi, the creator of Venba, moved to Toronto when he was 12. Despite migrating as a child, he never felt assimilated to the Canadian culture, and often feels his Chennai roots are stronger. "I very much see myself more rooted in Chennai. I grew up strongly connected to that culture and would visit often. I can also speak in Tamil very easily," he says over a Zoom call. But having said that, he adds that Venba is not entirely autobiographical.

"The story we see here was more inspired by the families that I see around me, that came here [Toronto] much earlier, in



A piece of home Stills from the game • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the 1980s," says Abhi, adding, "There is a lot of media about immigrants: the line most of them pursue is about kids and how hard it is for them to handle two cultures. But I always thought the more interesting story is that of parents. As they come to this country and grow, they grow farther apart from their kids. I have seen some parents who find it really difficult to interact with their own children due to the level of cultural differences." Which, sometimes, he states, even makes them regret their decision to move.

Abhi wanted to focus on this aspect of immigration in Venba. This sentiment was also shared by Sam Elakana, his colleague

from Indonesia. Together, they developed the concept in January 2020. While Abhi is the designer and programmer, Sam is responsible for the visual character of the game, as art director.

"In a game, you can't just tell a story, you need something to play with. The game has a series of days and each day happens at different points in their lifetime. So, I thought it would be interesting if we tell the story of what happened each day, through food. No matter what happens, whether there is a fight or not in the family, the kitchen is still on," adds Abhi.

But focussing on food, especially South Indian cuisine, does come with its own set of challenges. "For any given recipe, there are thousands of variations. So I need to do a lot of research, pre-production almost, before I finalise on a recipe," says Abhi. The recipes concentrate on making everything from scratch; for instance, the game talks about how rice flour is prepared for different dishes. "When I commun-

icate these dishes to people who are not of Indian origin – like Sam to draw it – a lot more references are needed," he adds.

However, the biggest challenge is the realisation that people of Indian origin are likely to find the gameplay easy, because the ingredients and recipes are familiar.

Venba is now at its "polishing stage" and is expected to reach the market by the winter of 2021 or early 2022. However, those who wish to pre-order the game can do so by wishlist on the gaming platform, Steam.

"It was supposed to be a hobby game. We did not expect the level of reception we are getting!" says Abhi. After the trailer was released, patrons from across the world, especially North America, seem to have taken note. The duo wants to bring Venba to PC and all three major consoles. "But bringing it to those platforms (Like PS5 or Nintendo Switch) requires deals and partnerships with those companies which we are in the midst of right now," Abhi says.

A career in games has always been Abhi's plan. After graduating from the University of Toronto, he started working in a mobile games studio as a programmer, in downtown Toronto. "We make Venba on the weekend and the nights after my day job," he adds.

For Sam and Abhi, Venba will always remain as something they created for themselves. "But, we do hope that people would come for the cooking and stay for the story!" concludes Abhi.

For details, visit venbagame.com

ONGOING CAMPAIGNS

DIVERSIFY PHOTOS: By a team of BIPOC visual artistes. ₹4,500 for one print. Funds go to Adivasi Lives Matter, Hemkunt Foundation, Indian Red Cross Society, Khaana Chahiye, Last Wilderness Foundation, Goonj and Creative Dignity.

CHENNAI PHOTO BIENNALE: Limited edition work by over 60 photographers. ₹5,000 for one print. Funds go to Khalsa Aid and Protsahan.

ODE TO INDIA: Homage to the country by India-born artists. Funds go to Mission Oxygen.

THE BIG FAT BAO: A3 size portraits of Dalit icons. ₹1,350 for one. Funds go to Swabhiman Society.

tions, and keeping a regular account of the money flowing in, can be challenging for a first timer. Platforms such as Mutual Aid India help.

The website curates a list of urgent COVID-19 relief campaigns, verified in-house. "They were highlighting organisations/individuals doing on-ground relief work with the affected groups and communities at the grassroots areas that often get overshadowed. Their research was a key force, as their team of volunteers is constantly vetting the campaigns and identifying underfunded spaces," says Devangana.

Happy themes in a sad world

In Jaipur, Shreya Parasrampuria, along with five other artistes, is also encouraging others to donate a minimum of ₹1,500 to any of Mutual Aid's featured campaigns, to get a set of six postcards. The theme for these postcards is 'soliditude', interpreted by each of them in their own styles. "All of us find catharsis in drawing alone, and have done so a lot over the past year," says Shreya.

From a girl staring at a fish bowl in the warm yellow glow of her room, to one leaning

against a fortress of mattresses – there is serenity to the postcards. Meanwhile Anjali Chandrashekhar and Nidhi Singh Rathore from the US, aiming to get the Indian diaspora around the world to contribute to Mission Oxygen, say their theme revolved around an Ode to India. They write, "it is a collection that represented what artists outside India were missing – the small moments of joy, calm, and strength of their motherland, India."

Artist MS, who goes by the name The Big Fat Bao, says, "There is a lot of artwork out there focussing on the pandemic, the lack of governance and so on, but I wanted to give people things they could remember other than this chaos."

She is donating her sales to the Swabhiman Society and The Blue Dawn, both working towards supporting the Dalit community in accessing healthcare. Her artwork then, features icons such as BR Ambedkar, Savitribai Phule and tribal activist Kuni Sikaka.

"Savitri mai was one of the key figures in handling the 1897 plague in Pune," she says, adding "It is a reminder for us to stay strong and help each other out."

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Every morning, Paroma Verma fills the heavy silence of lockdown with voices from audiobooks.

Last week it was Meryl Streep narrating *Charlotte's Web*, today it is Pene Herman Smith reading out *A Cosy Christmas in Cornwall* – stirring up festive winter feels bang in the middle of the Delhi summer. On Monday it will probably be Benedict Cumberbatch reading *Sherlock Holmes*.

"I am used to having breakfast with my parents. But because of the pandemic we are stuck in different cities. Having these voices for company takes away the misery of starting the day in an empty house and eating by myself," says the 36-year-old.

There are many like her.

Ever since the pandemic-induced lockdown came into effect last March, the concentrated listening of audiobooks that usually took place during morning and evening commutes began to spread across the day. People now listen to them while cooking, exercising or simply relaxing, says Shailesh Sawlani, country head, Audible India.

"Night time in particular remains popular, with people wanting to listen to a book before they turn in for the day," he observes. (Audible's subscription is priced at ₹199 where the member gets one credit to tune into a book.)

Rahul Dixit, sales director of Harper Collins India, says he finished listening to *Like a Monk* by Jay Shetty while washing vessels. "I didn't realise I was doing chores," he says. Harper Collins, a US-based publishing house got into audiobook territory around seven years back.

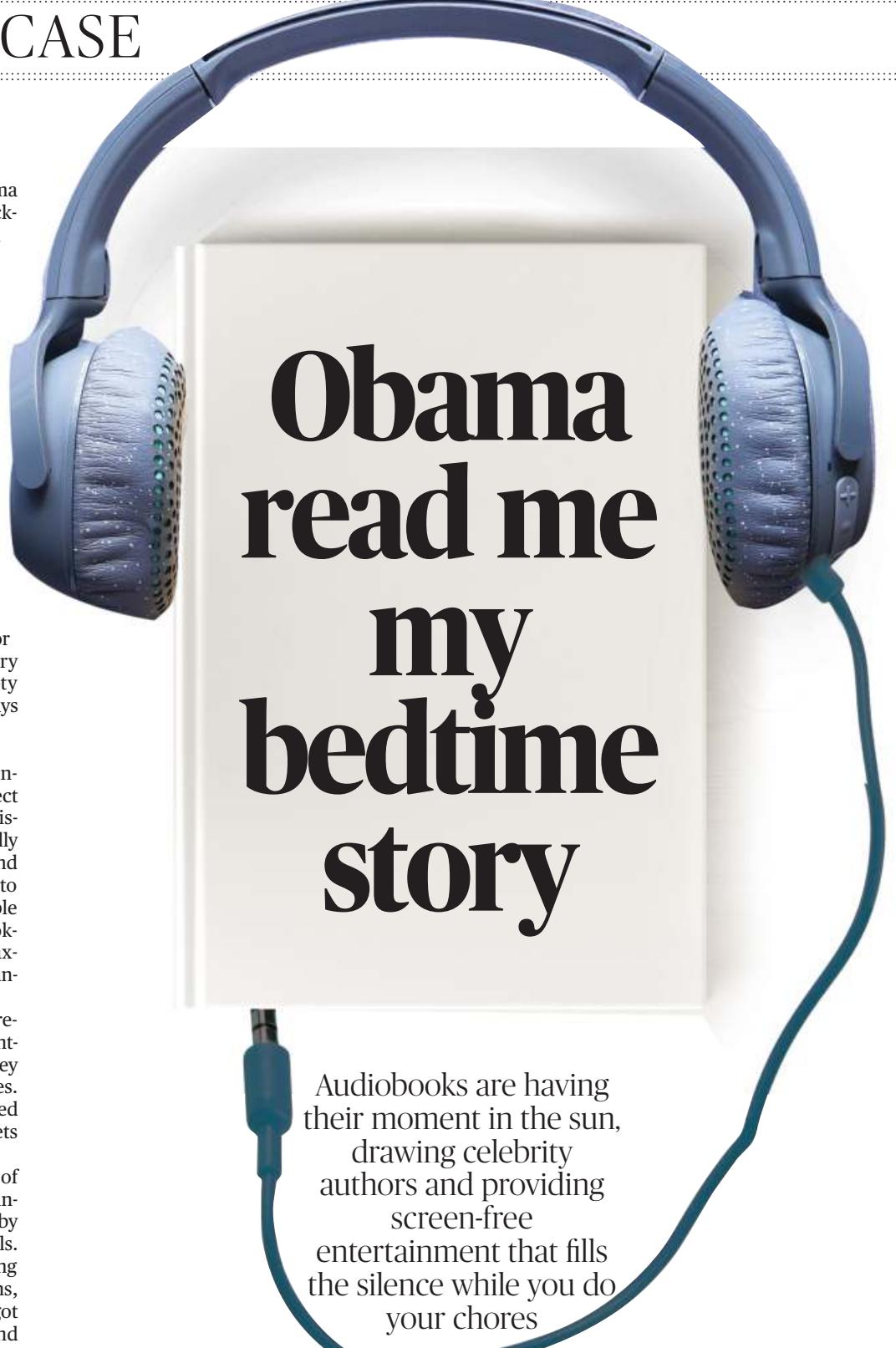
In 2018, the trend caught on in India, says Rahul adding that India has always been a promising market. "Look at our history, a *panditji* would preach and everybody would sit around and listen. So India was a natural market for audio," he adds.

Even though print sales are way ahead, he says digital sales amount to 5% of the overall consumption. "In terms of audio, the global revenue of publishers has significantly gone up. In India, the revenue has doubled."

Readers too have grown three times in number and India is not an exception. Harper Collins India, which publishes 250 print books in a year, has so far brought out 50 in audiobook format and, in the future, plans to make more new titles available simultaneously in audio, ebook and print format.

Yogesh Dashrath, country manager Storytel India, provides additional figures. (Headquartered in Sweden, this northern Europe-based entity launched in India in 2017). "Globally it is estimated that the audiobook market is approximately \$4 billion in 2020. And it is expected to grow to \$20 billion in the next 10 years," he says.

Yogesh is bullish about the future. "At present, the trade book market (exclusive educational titles) in India is estimated to be anywhere from \$500 million to \$750 million. And if we imagine that even if 10% of the users also get used to audiobooks, we are looking for audio to add 10%-20% to the industry," he explains.



Audiobooks are having their moment in the sun, drawing celebrity authors and providing screen-free entertainment that fills the silence while you do your chores

Powerful voices

The idea is to also delight the customer with the story format, says Rahul. The voice, style, intonation of the person reading out the book adds to the experience. Stories with diverse characters may also have as many people reading them out. There are big names such as Barack Obama who reads aloud his own memoir *A Promised Land* on Audible. A host of celebrities such as Anupam Kher, Konkona Sen Sharma, Prakash Raj, Rahul Bose, Soha Ali Khan, and Annu Aggarwal have also lent their voice to recording, using their skills to make the story come alive.

This novelty factor of having a well-known personality reading out bedtime stories, or a daily



TRENDING NOW

- TAMIL:** Ponniyin Selvan, Magamul
- ENGLISH:** The Power of Your Subconscious Mind; How to Talk to Anybody, Anytime, Anywhere; Ikigai
- HINDI:** Mrtyunjay, Sudha Murthy (Storytel original)
- MARATHI:** Yugandhar, Chhava Prakaran



Listen to me (Clockwise from above) A professional gets his chores done while listening to an audiobook; author Ravinder Singh in the process of writing; and Soha Ali Khan lends her voice to a book

■ AUDIBLE, SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND STORYTEL

dose of inspiration, is a bonus for this segment.

"The hands-free nature adds to the appeal as one does not have to set aside time for it. You can discover a new story on the go," adds Yogesh, who has noticed more people signing up for trials with them. "Storytel has seen a doubling of subscriptions," he says.

With people stuck within the confines of four walls and with more time in hand, the last year has been about catching up on books that they missed out on over the years.

"Listening to books has be-

come a good way to relax and reduce anxiety," says Yogesh.

Additionally, with screen time at an all-time high, screen fatigue has become common and people are proactively exploring audio content and turning to audiobooks, offers Shailesh. Plus, it is more inclusive as it makes it easier on those with dyslexia or reading difficulties to enjoy literature.

Regional reigns

While Shailesh sees an increase in the Hindi-speaking audience lapping up their growing selection of Hindi content that features top authors such as Devdutt Patnaik, Amish Tripathi; chefs such as Sanjeev Kapoor; and television personalities like Neelesh Mishra, Yogesh notices a sharp rise in consumption of regional content especially in Marathi, Tamil and Malayalam. "There is a sizeable number of young adults who consume regional content via OTT or television but still struggle when it comes to reading a book in a regional language. That's where audiobooks come into the picture," he says.

Spiralling demands for regional language content has led Storytel to come up with Select, a new subscription plan starting today (May 20). "Customers can access unlimited audiobooks and e-books in 11 regional languages including Hindi, Marathi, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Assamese, Gujarati, Odia and Kannada at ₹149 per month," he says.

In terms of what rules consumption across genres, Yogesh says, in English personal development, business and biographies rule the roost. In regional languages, classics and thrillers are most popular, while there is an increasing consumption of crime and romance across all languages.

To match the voracious listener's appetite, platforms are constantly creating original content, across languages and categories. "These are written exclusively to be made into audio, unlike the books, which makes the narration much more interesting and gripping," says Yogesh.

A recent and positive trend to this effect is the interest shown by authors in writing exclusive audio content. The progressive list includes Anita Nair, Shobha De, Ravinder Singh and Nikita Singh.

Ravinder Singh, sees a demand for audio and short content that is around 45 minutes to an hour. Keeping that in mind, over the last year, he worked on half a dozen stories for Storytel that were released in the audio format first and then were adapted into ebooks. Around the same time, he too started listening to books, more of non fiction.

As an author, Ravinder wants readers to consume his books in every available form. "I can adapt," he says, adding, "I think of myself as a content curator. It's a good thing that more formats are coming up for my content." He believes that in the audio format, the writer has the narrator's voice to play with and convey to the reader.

"[In the future] I imagine there will be books with theatrical music and drama in the background," says Ravinder adding, "The only negative from a reader's perspective is I cannot mark a brilliant line (as one would in a physical book)."



Meals to heal A chef at work in his hotel kitchen preparing food to be delivered to medical staff at Government hospitals

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

World Central Kitchen kicks off across seven States in India, linking chefs with Government hospitals to provide free, healthy meals for the medical fraternity

Doctor, your lunch is ready

PRABALIKA M BORAH

started with 250 meals per day at Kasturba Gandhi Hospital, serving roti, rice, dal, vegetables, fruits, juice and a sweet. "As word spread, we started getting calls from other smaller hospitals to provide food for their staff. Soon, we were providing healthy and balanced meals to most of the hospital, for free."

Chef Kapoor says the hotels and team of chefs were thankful for the initiative as it made them feel helpful in the crisis. This year he joined hands with Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL), which is the Taj Hotels group and Taj flight kitchen.

Ian Dubier, area director, Hyderabad and Taj Santacruz Mumbai says the company started serving meals and hosting the medical fraternity last year, at the beginning of this pandemic. He adds, "Since then we have been expanding our outreach."

Buoyed by the project in Mumbai, Chef Kapoor says, "José Andrés is a friend and when I told him we want to extend the meals to other cities, he brought in WCK."

Although restaurants, home chefs and volunteers have been working towards helping feed the staff and patients at hospitals, continuity is a challenge at Government hospitals where the numbers are large. WCK, with its sheer manpower, infrastructure and expertise at high volume cooking, helps local teams ramp up. Its relief team will soon start work in Chennai. IHCL's airline catering brand – TajSats has the manpower and the resources to hygienically cook and pack a huge number of meals everyday, says Dubier. He adds, "In Hyderabad, we are delivering around 1,400 meals everyday (lunch and dinner) from Taj Falaknuma Palace and are very grateful to be associated with Chef Sanjeev Kapoor and the WCK."

How it began in India

During the 2020 lockdowns, chef Sanjeev Kapoor realised he needed to find ways to keep his kitchen and staff motivated, despite the challenges of the pandemic. He was also determined to find a way to serve the medical fraternity.

"Chefs I spoke to were more than willing to help," he says over a call from Mumbai. They

the original full newspaper of *The Statesman* of August 15, 1947, which he got after making several visits to the newspaper's office in Kolkata.

In search of cheer

Vijay Shekhar with his collection

■ MIRA SHEKHAR

Vijay has kept aside clippings from the COVID-19 coverage in various newspapers: He subscribes to four.

"For most people, they become scrap after a few days. I derive value from that scrap."

The 46-year-old prefers clippings from newspapers that are accessible to him; the only exception to that was when India won the cricket World Cup in 2011. He then asked many of his friends across the country to send him coverage of the triumph in the newspapers.

Whenever he gets free time, he opens up his collection to either recall old incidents or add newer insertions. "However, there is one small problem in that: 60% of my collection is primarily sad news, while 40% is what can be termed as happy ones," says Vijay. Despite the rush of COVID-19-related updates coming his way, Vijay is looking forward to seeing his big suitcase being filled with more cheerful entries. "My collection depends on how the world shapes up. I hope to see a happier world."



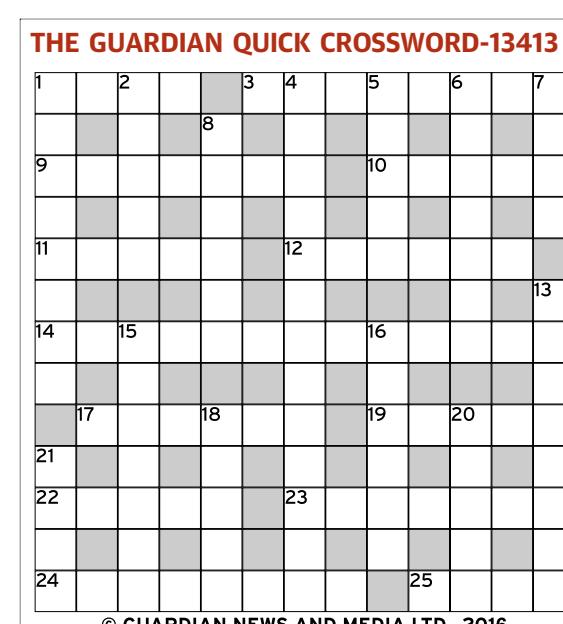
This week, Vijay Shekhar will complete 30 years of his passionate hobby: storing newspaper clippings of major world events

History in a suitcase

spaper vendor around the corner and I quickly bought a copy. I felt it was important to preserve that."

Since then, Vijay took it upon himself to cut and keep aside reports of many important world events. So far he has culled over 300 clippings, apart from entire special newspaper copies and magazines, but the one he treasures the most is

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13413

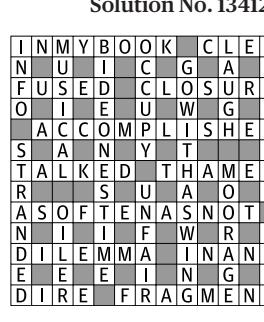


© GUARDIAN NEWS AND MEDIA LTD., 2016

- Across**
- 2 Possessed (5)
 - 3 Alfred the Great's brother and predecessor, d. 871 – the elder (anag) (8)
 - 4 Conical (anag) – brief and to the point (7)
 - 5 Unpleasantly damp and sticky (6)
 - 6 Find oneself eventually (3,2)
 - 7 Spicy Mexican sauce (5)
 - 8 Warning cry by a golfer (4)
 - 9 Quick (3)
 - 10 Large place of worship (8)
 - 11 Frightening (5)
 - 12 Socially deprived (13)
 - 13 Come to maturity (5)
 - 14 Chinese dog similar to a Pekinese (4-3)
 - 15 Stress on a syllable (6)
 - 16 Christmas (4)
 - 17 Gangway (5)
- Down**
- 1 Possess (4)
 - 2 Exciting adventure (8)
 - 3 Glorify (4)
 - 4 Large place of worship (8)
 - 5 Socially deprived (13)
 - 6 Come to maturity (5)
 - 7 Chinese dog similar to a Pekinese (4-3)
 - 8 Thoroughly unreliable (11)

The solution will appear on May 27, 2021.

Solution No. 13413



CM YK

SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

We made Dalgona coffee, baked banana bread, played board games, and even picked up the old habit of reading again. But for 46-year-old Chennai resident Vijay Shekhar, the lockdown meant something different – it presented an opportunity to add more structure to his three-decade long hobby of collecting newspaper clippings of important events across the world.

While bigger libraries and institutions devote a large space for this kind of archival exercise, Vijay is doing it at a much smaller scale: his entire collection fits into a big suitcase. "The past year gave me a chance to revisit many old news items. Looking at such clippings, which I have collected over the years, and reminiscing about 'Oh-so-this-is-how-it-happened' gave me the ultimate kick," says the communications professional.

Past perfect
It all began in 1991 when Vijay, then a 16-year-old, was jogging in Jamshedpur. "It was a normal day in May but people seemed unusually quiet. I overheard someone saying, in Bengali, 'Rajiv Gandhi has been 'shot' in Madras'. There was a new-

Biden seeks 'significant de-escalation'

In call with Israeli PM, U.S. President backs ceasefire; Russia warns against further civilian casualties

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
REUTERS
GAZA CITY

U.S. President Joe Biden told Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that he expects "a significant de-escalation" on Wednesday in the military confrontation with the Palestinians, amid intense efforts to reach a ceasefire.

Deafening air strikes and rocket fire once more shook Gaza in the conflict that has, since May 10, claimed 219 Palestinian lives according to the Gaza Health Ministry and killed 12 people in Israel according to Israeli police.

"The President conveyed to the Prime Minister that he expected a significant de-escalation today on the path to a ceasefire," the White House said after a fourth phone call in a little over a week.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said it warned the Israeli Ambassador on Wednesday that "actions that lead to a further increase in civilian casualties in Gaza were unacceptable", according to Reuters. As diplomatic



Finding solace: Children playing at a UN-run school that houses many displaced Palestinian families in Gaza City. • AFP

efforts intensified to stem the bloodshed, Germany said its top diplomat was heading to Israel for talks on Thursday. Mr. Netanyahu earlier on Wednesday issued a tough threat against the Gaza Strip's Islamist rulers Hamas, who Israel says has fired around 3,700 rockets at Israel since May 10.

"You can either conquer them, and that's always an open possibility, or you can deter them, and we are en-

gaged right now in forceful deterrence," he told foreign envoys. "But I have to say we don't rule out anything."

Ceasefire possibility

But an Israeli military official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said in a separate briefing that Israel was assessing at what stage it may stop its military campaign. "We are looking at when is the right moment for a ceasefire," said the source.

Israel accuses China state TV of 'anti-Semitism'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

The Israeli Embassy in Beijing has accused China's state broadcaster of "blatant anti-Semitism".

A presenter on CGTN on Tuesday mentioned several elements of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories while discussing the U.S. support for Israel.

Israel was evaluating whether its objective of degrading Hamas' capabilities had been achieved, the military source said, and "whether Hamas understands the message" that its rocket barrages towards Israel cannot recur.

Warplanes hit Gaza City again in the pre-dawn hours, as the Israeli military kept targeting militant leaders and infrastructure in the crowded enclave which has

been under Israeli blockade for nearly 15 years.

Meanwhile, Israel fired artillery at targets in Lebanon after four rockets were launched towards Israel from Lebanese territory on Wednesday, the Israeli military said, and a source said Hezbollah was not involved. It was the third incident of rocket fire from Lebanon since hostilities between Israel and Palestinian militants in Gaza flared up.

The presenter said "powerful lobbies" of Jews in the U.S. were responsible for shaping U.S.'s position on the West Asia crisis and that "Jews dominate finance, media and Internet". The Israeli Embassy said it was "appalled to see blatant anti-Semitism in an official Chinese media outlet".



Gayle Smith

VAX as "an absolutely critical and the central platform" for vaccine allocation.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, on Tuesday, said vaccine allocation decisions would be made based on 'equity', in response to a question on whether India would be a recipient of the vaccines. The U.S. has deployed around \$100 million in assistance to India during this current wave of the pandemic.

"We're looking at how we can get maximum coverage, because, I think, as all of you would agree, that demand exists everywhere," Gayle Smith, the U.S.'s Coordinator for Global COVID Response and Health Security, said on a briefing call with reporters on Wednesday. "We're consulting closely with COVAX, which, as you know, is the largest vaccine delivery platform in the world and that is focused on, in particular, low income and low-middle income countries and with our partners," she said.

Ms. Smith referred to CO-

ships," Ms. Psaki said.

While India could theoretically use some of the vaccines it will produce as part of a Quad (India, the U.S., Australia and Japan) plan to supply at least 1 billion doses to the Indo-Pacific by the end of 2022, the actual decisions will be taken based on ground conditions at the time, as per Ms. Smith. Biological E, a Telengana-based pharmaceutical company, is collaborating with Johnson & Johnson to produce the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine under the Quad plan.

"Given the timeline for that production, I think its dispensation will depend to a great extent on the state of play around the world with vaccine coverage. That timeline is fairly extended. So, I think, while in principle those vaccine doses are available for internal use, but also for export to the rest of the world, the final allocation or plan for that will depend on what conditions we're facing at the time they're available," Ms. Smith said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

Putin, Xi hail ties at launch of work on nuclear plants in China

Russia is helping build Tianwan and Xudabao power projects

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on Wednesday hailed close ties between their countries as they launched via videoconference work on Russian-built nuclear power plants in China.

The heads of state initiated work on pouring concrete into new units of the Tianwan and Xudabao nuclear power plants.

Built jointly with Russia, the Tianwan plant has been operating since 2007, while the Xudabao station is still under construction.

"Russian and Chinese specialists are implementing a truly landmark flagship



Vladimir Putin

joint project," the Kremlin cited Mr. Putin as saying.

Describing the nuclear reactors as "powerful" and "modern", the Russian leader said that they "meet all safety requirements and the highest environmental standards".

He said that the new units will be functional by 2026-

2028 and that Russia and China are prepared to further develop nuclear power plants through joint construction.

"We can say that Russian-Chinese relations have reached the highest level in history," Mr. Putin said.

Mr. Xi called nuclear energy a "strategic priority for cooperation" between the two countries, according to a readout published by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

Mr. Xi called for a "more equitable, balanced, inclusive, open and shared global energy governance system," adding that Beijing and Moscow should "play a constructive role in achieving global sustainable development goals."

EU to reopen borders to fully vaccinated travellers

Seven nations in its current 'green list'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BRUSSELS

EU member states agreed on Wednesday to reopen the bloc's borders to travellers who have been fully vaccinated against the coronavirus, sources said.

Meeting in Brussels, diplomats also agreed to increase the level of new cases a country can hit before being declared unsafe - a measure that would open up travel into the 27-member bloc from more places.

The recommendations will be adopted by EU Ministers on Friday, they said.

Since March 2020, non-essential travel into the EU has been banned, apart from a small number of countries deemed safe because of low COVID-19 cases.

Diplomats said that, under the new rules, travellers who could demonstrate that they had received the required number of doses of an EU-approved vaccine could enter the bloc.

In addition, the number of cases per 1,00,000 people that a country could register over two weeks and still be considered for the green list will rise from 25 to 75. This would still exclude non-vaccinated travellers from much of the world, but could allow travel from, for example, Britain, which is well-advanced in its vaccination campaign.

The current green list has seven countries: Australia, Israel, New Zealand, Rwanda, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, plus China if Beijing agrees to reciprocate.

U.S. to work with COVAX to allocate 80 mn vaccine doses

India is expected to receive a significant share of them

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

The U.S. will work with the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access (COVAX) programme as well as its partners to decide how to allocate the 80 million doses of vaccine it is sending to other countries over the next six weeks. India, which is currently the global epicentre of the pandemic, is expected to receive a significant share of these vaccines, but administration officials have not released actual numbers.

"We're looking at how we can get maximum coverage, because, I think, as all of you would agree, that demand exists everywhere," Gayle Smith, the U.S.'s Coordinator for Global COVID Response and Health Security, said on a briefing call with reporters on Wednesday. "We're consulting closely with COVAX, which, as you know, is the largest vaccine delivery platform in the world and that is focused on, in particular, low income and low-middle income countries and with our partners," she said.

Ms. Smith referred to CO-



Gayle Smith

VAX as "an absolutely critical and the central platform" for vaccine allocation.

White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki, on Tuesday, said vaccine allocation decisions would be made based on 'equity', in response to a question on whether India would be a recipient of the vaccines. The U.S. has deployed around \$100 million in assistance to India during this current wave of the pandemic.

"Given the timeline for that production, I think its dispensation will depend to a great extent on the state of play around the world with vaccine coverage. That timeline is fairly extended. So, I think, while in principle those vaccine doses are available for internal use, but also for export to the rest of the world, the final allocation or plan for that will depend on what conditions we're facing at the time they're available," Ms. Smith said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

"We, of course, will be making decisions based on equity, based on ensuring we are - we are providing these vaccines in a transparent manner with the global community through COVAX and also through direct relation-

ships," Ms. Psaki said.

While India could theoretically use some of the vaccines it will produce as part of a Quad (India, the U.S., Australia and Japan) plan to supply at least 1 billion doses to the Indo-Pacific by the end of 2022, the actual decisions will be taken based on ground conditions at the time, as per Ms. Smith. Biological E, a Telengana-based pharmaceutical company, is collaborating with Johnson & Johnson to produce the Janssen COVID-19 vaccine under the Quad plan.

"Given the timeline for that production, I think its dispensation will depend to a great extent on the state of play around the world with vaccine coverage. That timeline is fairly extended. So, I think, while in principle those vaccine doses are available for internal use, but also for export to the rest of the world, the final allocation or plan for that will depend on what conditions we're facing at the time they're available," Ms. Smith said in response to a question from *The Hindu*.

"We, of course, will be making decisions based on equity, based on ensuring we are - we are providing these vaccines in a transparent manner with the global community through COVAX and also through direct relation-

U.S. to waive sanctions on firm behind Russia's Nord Stream 2

Germany hails the lifting of curbs against company, its CEO

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The U.S. government will waive sanctions on the company behind Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline to Europe and its Chief Executive, a Washington source familiar with the plans and Germany's Foreign Minister said on Wednesday.

A U.S. State Department report to be delivered to Congress as early as Wednesday concludes that Nord Stream 2 AG and CEO Matthias Wissner, an ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin, engaged in sanctionable activity but that it was in the

U.S. national interest to waive the sanctions, the source said.

Rebuilding ties

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the administration had waived the sanctions on those two parties but also imposed sanctions on Russian entities and ships linked to Nord Stream 2. "We see this as a constructive step, which we are happy to further discuss with our partners in Washington," Mr. Maas said.

The administration under Democratic President Joe Biden still opposed the Nord Stream 2 pipeline but felt it was important to send a signal about its commitment to ties with Germany, which were badly damaged under former President Donald Trump, the source said.

Russia's state energy company Gazprom and its western partners are racing to finish the line to take Russian gas to Europe via Germany, under the Baltic Sea.

Russia's state energy company Gazprom and its western partners are racing to finish the line to take Russian gas to Europe via Germany, under the Baltic Sea. The project, now about 95% complete, would bypass Ukraine, depriving it of lucrative transit fees and potentially undermining its struggle against Russian aggression.

Sri Lanka to shut its borders for 10 days

It bars all arrivals from tomorrow in the face of a deadly third wave of COVID-19

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's borders will be closed for all arrivals for ten days beginning May 21, the Civil Aviation Authority said on Wednesday, while officials reported a record single-day high of 3,051 COVID-19 cases.

Home to about 21 million people, Sri Lanka is witnessing a raging third wave of the pandemic, with health authorities reporting over 2,000 cases a day over the last week, prompting the government to impose travel restrictions, including lockdowns.

The country's death toll - which was among the lowest



A health worker inoculating a woman in Colombo on May 16. • AFP

motion Bureau.

The decision to bar entry to international travellers comes as a blow to the government's efforts to revive the tourism industry from January this year, following a relative drop in case numbers.

Tourism hit
The Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority said over 4,000 tourists visited the country in April, with Indians topping the list of arrivals. However, early May, the government barred Indian tourists, citing the surge in cases in India.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka has been carrying out its vacci-

nation drive in phases, beginning in January, with the India-donated 5,000,000 doses of Covishield vaccines. Sri Lanka placed an order for more vaccines with the Serum Institute, but its arrival has been delayed amid the significant rise in cases in India since.

The Russian Sputnik and China's Sinopharm vaccines are currently being administered by Sri Lankan health authorities and the military, who are tasked with managing the pandemic. China on Wednesday said it will donate a further 5,000,000 of Sinopharm vaccines to help Sri Lanka "build the Great Wall of vaccines".

KMML The Kerala Minerals & Metals Ltd.

(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)
(An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company)

Sankaramangalam, Chavara - 691 583, Kollam, Kerala, India

Phone : +91-476-2651216 to 2651217,

Fax : +91-476-2680191, 2686721,

E-mail : contact@kmmll.com URL : www.kmmll.com CIN:U14109KL972SGC00239

Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmmll.com

No. Tender ID Items

1. 2021_KMMML_423256_1 For the supply of Refrigerant Gas Freon 22 in cylinder of 61kg

2. 2021_KMMML_423111_1 For fabrication and supply of 1 No. Vessel for Bag Filter S304/305

Chavara 19.05.2021 Sd/- DGM(MMs)

For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Ltd

Our Products: Titanium Dioxide, Titanium Tetra Chloride, Nano Titanium, Titanium Sponge, Rutile, Zircon & Sillimanite

V.O.CHIDAMBARAM PORT TRUST

CIVIL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
TUTICORIN - 625 004

SAGARIMALA

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) Only through E-Tendering Mode

VOCPT E-Tendering Website:www.tenderwizard.com/VOCPT

NIT No & Dated No. E(C) -5/6/2021 - EST Dated: 19.05.2021

V.O.Chidambaram Port Trust invites Offers / bids from the experienced and reputed firms / person for Allotment of port land for 30 years lease period on upfront payment

MARKET WATCH

	19-05-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	49,902	-0.58%
US Dollar	73.18	-0.17
Gold	47,853	0.04
Brent oil	66.38	-4.03

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	772.40	-3.50
Asian Paints	2815.85	-5.95
Axiscity	716.80	5.15
Bajaj Auto	4095.95	28.75
Bajaj Finserv	11215.15	-181.65
Bajaj Finance	5631.20	-57.55
Bharti Airtel	528.20	-8.15
BPCL	446.45	-2.00
Britannia Ind	3534.40	8.95
Cipla	903.95	19.55
Coal India	151.85	5.40
Divis Lab	4039.65	15.70
Dr Reddys Lab	5237.80	22.35
Eicher Motors	2564.70	-7.15
Grafix Ind	1389.70	-2.70
HCL Tech.	931.40	-0.20
HDFC	2459.85	-43.00
HDFC Bank	1458.20	-18.50
HDFC Life	666.15	-0.55
Hero MotoCorp	2915.00	8.05
Hindalco	403.30	1.20
Hind Unilever	2359.75	-14.50
ICICI Bank	625.45	-7.75
IndusInd Bank	967.00	-7.55
Infosys	1337.00	-3.00
Indian Oil Corp	107.20	1.65
ITC	207.75	-2.30
JSW Steel	705.85	-11.60
Kotak Bank	1730.55	-24.55
L&T	1403.45	-13.85
M&M	784.80	-12.90
Maruti Suzuki	6775.90	-35.20
Nestle India Ltd.	17449.35	268.75
NTPC	111.95	-0.15
ONGC	114.90	-1.20
PowerGrid Corp	233.75	0.65
Reliance Ind	1997.05	9.10
SBI Life	978.05	9.60
State Bank	384.40	2.15
Shree Cement	27532.70	58.00
Sun Pharma	703.40	12.60
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	653.20	0.20
Tata Motors	314.45	-18.00
Tata Steel	1164.25	-15.75
TCS	3082.00	-6.80
Tech Mahindra	977.65	6.90
Titan	1521.15	-18.10
UltraTech Cement	6561.20	-91.80
UPL	782.15	12.75
Wipro	511.65	3.60

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.96	73.28
Euro	89.00	89.39
British Pound	103.24	103.69
Japanese Yen (100)	66.74	67.04
Chinese Yuan	11.33	11.38
Swiss Franc	80.85	81.25
Singapore Dollar	54.74	54.99
Canadian Dollar	60.36	60.63
Malaysian Ringgit	17.62	17.72

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Kotak fund buys ₹715-cr. stake in HKR Roadways
MUMBAI
Kotak Special Situations Fund (KSSF) said it had acquired a 74% stake in HKR Roadways, a non-performing asset, for ₹715 crore. The consideration paid for HKR, an SPV owned by a consortium led by the Gayatri Group, includes one-time settlement for funding debt with all the lenders, KSSF said. PTI

BDR Pharma ties up with Eli Lilly for COVID drug

HYDERABAD
BDR Pharma has entered into a royalty-free, limited and non-exclusive voluntary licensing agreement with Eli Lilly and Company for the production and distribution of Baricitinib, a repurposed drug to treat COVID-19. The pact would increase the availability of Baricitinib in India, BDR Pharma said. The company has applied for restricted emergency use approval with the Drugs Controller General of India for Baricitinib for COVID-19.

Aknamed acquires Vardhman for \$40 mn

BENGALURU
Akna Medical (Aknamed), a tech-enabled supply chain platform for the healthcare sector, has acquired Vardhman Health Specialties (Vardhman), a specialty products provider to hospitals in therapeutic areas of oncology, immunotherapy and virology for \$40 million. The acquisition of Vardhman is the third inorganic move by Aknamed Group in the last 12 months and with this, the firm will have an annualised revenue of \$200 million.

Ola Group appoints Rakesh Bhardwaj as CIO
BENGALURU
Mobility player Ola appointed Rakesh Bhardwaj as group chief information officer (CIO). In this role, Mr. Bhardwaj would provide strategic direction to the group's IT initiatives covering information systems, tools, security, IT infrastructure and assets across the company's global operations and businesses, Ola said. Prior to this, he served as global CIO for Cognizant, CIO for GE Healthcare and CIO for GE Aviation and Transportation.

'Low confidence plus high fuel, health costs to hurt demand'

ICRA says slackening in activity due to second wave overshadows base effect

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The pandemic's second wave will dent consumer sentiment even as high healthcare expenses and retail fuel prices will squeeze disposable incomes and consumers, rating agency ICRA warned in a note on Wednesday.

While the low base of April 2020, which saw very tepid economic activity, had propped up several economic indicators this April, ICRA said that there is a persistent slackening in activity due to the second wave that overshadows the base effect.

"The optimism generated by this trend of high growth rates in several high-fre-



Half empty: Momentum in e-way bills, fuel demand and vehicle registrations all slowed in April. ■ SUDHAKAR JAIN

quency indicators for April is limited, as eight of the 13 non-financial indicators in April 2021 remained below their pre-Covid (April 2019) levels," Aditi Nayar, the rating agency's chief economist, said. Many indicators

such as GST e-way bills, fuel consumption and vehicle registrations displayed a slowing sequential momentum in April 2021, reflecting the rise in COVID-19 cases, and imposition of restrictions in various parts of the country,

IOC turns a Q4 net of ₹8,781 cr.

Higher refining margins help oil refiner to post a profit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, on Wednesday reported a better-than-expected net profit of ₹8,781.3 crore in the March quarter, helped by a surge in refining margins as higher crude prices boosted inventory value.

Standalone net profit was ₹8,781.3 crore, or ₹9.56 a share, compared with a loss of ₹5,185.3 crore in the same period a year earlier, IOC Chairman S.M. Vaidya said.

The rise in profitability was due to higher inventory gain and petrochemical margin in the fourth quarter of 2020-21 fiscal, he said.

The company had reported a loss in January-March 2020 owing to inventory losses. Inventory gains are



booked when raw material (crude) prices rise by the time a company processes oil into fuel. Losses are booked when the reverse happens. Brent crude prices jumped about 23% during the March quarter.

IOC earned \$10.6 on turning every barrel of crude oil into fuel compared with a negative gross refining margin (GRM), or loss, of \$9.64 per barrel, he said.

Without inventory gains, GRM for the January-March quarter stood at \$2.51 per barrel. Mr. Vaidya said the company earned a record net profit of ₹21,836 crore in the fiscal ended March 31.

The second wave of coronavirus infections has disrupted fuel demand but not to the extent seen in April-June last year, he said.

"Demand destruction is not to that extent," he said, adding that petrol and diesel sales have fallen 15-20% while ATF demand continued to be half of the pre-COVID-19 levels. The board has declared a final dividend of ₹10 per equity share.

Mr. Vaidya said IOC is targeting capital spending of ₹28,847 crore in FY22 compared with ₹27,194 crore the previous year.

NCLAT rejects Thiru Arooran ex-CMD's plea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), Chennai has rejected a plea by R.V. Tyagarajan, former CMD of Thiru Arooran Sugars Ltd. against liquidation orders.

In April, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Chennai, had ordered liquidation after lenders did not find any viable plan for revival.

In 2019, NCLT had ordered insolvency proceedings against the firm in a case filed by State Bank of India for alleged default of ₹149.36 crore.

The NCLAT cited a Supreme Court verdict that stated commercial wisdom of the committee of creditors is not to be interfered with except in exceptional circumstances.

Assam tea gardens hit by COVID-19, bad weather

Crop loss estimated at 60 million kg

RAHUL KARMAKAR

GUWAHATI

The double whammy of COVID-19 infection among plantation workers and drought-like conditions has rendered an estimated crop loss of 60 million kilograms to tea estates in Assam.

"Spells of pre-monsoon showers have made planters heave a sigh of relief, but the damage has already been done," the North Eastern Tea Association (NETA) and Bharatiya Cha Parishad (BCP) said following a survey across plantations.

Second year of loss
This is the second successive year of massive crop loss. The lockdown last year saw most of Assam's 803 major estates and more than 1.70 lakh small tea gar-

DHFL lenders can mull offer by Wadhawan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Wednesday directed the administrator of DHFL to present the settlement offer of the non-banking financial company's ousted promoter Kapil Wadhawan before the creditors for their consideration.

The tribunal, in an oral order, has asked the RBI-appointed administrator of Dewan Housing Finance Ltd (DHFL) to present the settlement plan to the Committee of Creditors (CoC). In 2020, Mr. Wadhawan had made his settlement offer to the CoC that was rejected by the lenders. DHFL had gone bankrupt with more than ₹90,000 crore in debt to various lenders.

ICRA noted, adding that this trend has continued so far in May, with restrictions spreading to more States.

"In our view, the sharply higher daily infections in the second wave of COVID-19 in India will have a prolonged negative impact on consumer sentiment.

In addition, the substantial healthcare expenses related to the COVID-19 treatment, along with high retail prices of fuels, are likely to squeeze disposable incomes in the urban as well as rural areas," Ms. Nayar said. With pent-up demand satiated during the festive season in 2020, demand for many varieties of consumer durables may be low, ICRA reckoned.

FinMin grants 'infrastructure' status for convention centres

Tag to ease bank financing for such projects

VIKAS DHOOT

NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has granted 'Infrastructure' status for exhibition and convention centres, a move that is expected to ease bank financing for such projects.

"Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre is included in the Harmonised Master List of Infrastructure sub-sectors by insertion of a new item in the category of Social and Commercial Infrastructure," the Department of Economic Affairs said.

In addition, the substantial healthcare expenses related to the COVID-19 treatment, along with high retail prices of fuels, are likely to squeeze disposable incomes in the urban as well as rural areas," Ms. Nayar said. With pent-up demand satiated during the festive season in 2020, demand for many varieties of consumer durables may be low, ICRA reckoned.

However, the benefits would only be available for projects with a minimum built-up floor area of 1,00,000 sq. m. of exclusive exhibition space or convention space or both com-

bined. As of now, the major projects under way in the sector are backed by the government - the International Exhibition-cum-Convention Centres at Dwarka and Pragati Maidan in the capital.

The infrastructure tag does not involve significant tax breaks but would help such projects get easier fi-

nancing from banks, said experts. However, restrictions on size may be a dampener.

"India doesn't have large convention centres or single halls with capacities to hold 7,000 to 10,000 people, unlike countries like Thailand that is a major global MICE destination," said Abhay Agarwal, partner, infrastructure practice at EY India.

Becoming a MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) destination can generate significant revenue with several global firms active in India but it will take time to become a preferred destination.

Last August, the government had granted infrastructure status to affordable rental housing projects.

Das tells PSBs to implement RBI measures

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

'It is not only about skills but also mental toughness'

India pacer Jhulan Goswami dwells on the challenges of switching from white-ball to red-ball cricket

CRICKET

WRIDDHAAN BHATTACHARYYA
KOLKATA

What does it take to play a Test match, and that too in England, after seven years? Ask Jhulan Goswami and she will stress on the importance of mindset.

The veteran fast bowler is excited yet nervous to hold the red ball in the fickle English weather after such a long gap.

The Indian women's cricket team will start with a one-off Test in Bristol from June 16 followed by three ODIs and as many T20s.

In a chat with *Sportstar*, Jhulan shares her thoughts on the skills needed to excel against England, the return of Ramesh Powar as head coach and the lessons learnt from W.V. Raman. Excerpts:

How prepared are you to bowl longer spells? It seems very challenging with no Test cricket for the girls in the past seven years...



Rare opportunity: The Indian players are glad to play a Test match after a long time, says Jhulan Goswami. ■ FILE PHOTO

Even in the domestic tournaments, there is no red-ball cricket as such. After a long time, the whole team will be switching from white-ball to red-ball.

It all depends on how our bodies react after being on the field for 90 overs.

It is not only about skills but also mental toughness. You have to stay strong in your mind because you need thinking powers to analyse the game situation in different sessions. The youngsters may lack that temperament...

You may not get a wicket in a session but there will be sessions where you can bag three in one go. So you have to be alert, switch off and switch on accordingly as you won't be able to concentrate for the whole span of the game. You have to take ball

by ball and session by session. When we played the last Test match in 2014, there were many debuts.

I am looking forward to more debuts this time as well. The players are glad that we are getting to play a Test match after a long time.

And I want to thank the BCCI officials for this initiative.

Your thoughts on Ramesh Powar's return as head coach and W.V. Raman's exit?

I would like to congratulate Ramesh and we are looking forward to working with him.

It was a great experience to work with Raman but I am not going to compare. He has worked hard on us and he taught us a lot of things from his coaching experience over the years. I want to wish him well for his future.

How is the team going to prepare in the UK? Will there be warm-up games?

Practice and preparation depends on the COVID protocols that one needs to follow today. We really don't know where the pandemic is going to take us eventually.

There are lots of restrictions but as professional athletes, we have to prepare mentally so that we can adapt under any circumstances.



Richa. ■ FILE PHOTO

and Radha Yadav, along with swashbuckling opener Shafali Verma – have been rewarded for their excellent show with a promotion from Grade C to B.

The contracts list:

Grade A (₹50 lakh): Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana, Poonam Yadav.

Grade B (₹30 lakh): Mithali Raj, Jhulan Goswami, Deepa Sharma, Punam Raut, Rajeshwari Gayakwad, Shafali Verma, Radha Yadav, Shikha Pandey, Taniya Bhatia, Jemimah Rodrigues.

Grade C (₹10 lakh): Mansi Joshi, Arundhati Reddy, Pooja Vastrakar, Harleen Deol, Priya Punia, Richa Ghosh.

T20 World Cup and IPL on SGM agenda

BCCI set to discuss upcoming season, scheduling issues on May 29

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

In a bid to chart out contingency plans for the T20 World Cup and the Indian Premier League, the BCCI has convened a Special General Meeting (SGM) of its affiliates on May 29.

The single-point agenda of the virtual meeting, as per the notice circulated among Board members on Tuesday night, is a "discussion on the upcoming cricket season in view of the pandemic situation".

India is scheduled to stage the T20 World Cup in October-November. But after the forced postponement of the IPL because of breaches in the biosecure bubbles amid a surge in cases in the country, the International Cricket

Council (ICC) is likely to push the BCCI to move the tournament to the United Arab Emirates, already shortlisted as a back-up venue.

With the ICC set to finalise the venue and fixtures for the marquee event during its annual conference in June, *The Hindu* understands that the BCCI hierarchy, with secretary Jay Shah leading from the front, feels members should be taken into confidence ahead of the conference.

"Since there is no resolution listed in the agenda, something that is a convention for any SGM, in all likelihood, the office-bearers will be authorised to take last-minute decisions on behalf of the Board," said a seasoned State association official.

The SGM will likely formalise the back-up plan should ICC members decline to travel to India for the tournament.

IPL conundrum

The SGM may also authorise the office-bearers to decide the fate of IPL-14, suspended after 29 of the 60 matches were completed.

With the international calendar hardly having any breathing room, the SGM is likely to be presented with options: staging IPL in the UAE in September, sandwiched between India's tour of England and the T20 World Cup; hosting it in England in September after the conclusion of the Test series; a remote possibility; playing it in the UAE without En-

gland and Australia cricketers immediately after T20 World Cup final in November; abandoning the edition and revising the contract with the broadcaster and other stakeholders.

It is also understood that the BCCI may propose bilateral T20I series against South Africa (as part of the FTP) and Sri Lanka in UAE in September as the last leg of preparation for the T20 World Cup, should the window for IPL be deemed unrealistic.

With the focus on rescheduling the IPL, the domestic season may be left in limbo yet again. Some of the State associations may seek clarity, since the apex council in April had discussed the possibility of starting the domestic season in September.

Asia Cup T20 tournament called off

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

The Asia Cup Twenty20 cricket tournament due to be held in Sri Lanka in June has been called off because of the worsening coronavirus crisis in the region, a top organiser said on Wednesday. The tournament was already held over from last year in Pakistan

"Due to the prevailing situation, it will not be possible to play the tournament in June this year," Sri Lanka Cricket chief executive Ashley de Silva said. He said the Asian Cricket Council would soon make a formal announcement.

...and the journey starts



Mumbai, here we come: England-bound players Mithali Raj, R. Ashwin, Mayank Agarwal and Washington Sundar winging their way to quarantine in Mumbai on Wednesday. The teams will fly out to the United Kingdom from there. ■ TWITTER/BCCI

Ruud meets Koepfer in last eight

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

Casper Ruud believes he has the weapons to reach the second week of Roland Garros and maybe help transform him into a "rock star" in his native Norway.

Ruud is the third seed at the Geneva Open and has a good shot at winning his second-ever title, with top seed and 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer already eliminated.

Ruud beat Tennys Sandgren 7-5, 6-2 on Wednesday to set up a quarterfinal with Germany's Dominik Koepfer, who first knocked out seventh seed Benoit Paire and veteran Feliciano Lopez in the round-of-16.

The results (round-of-16): Casper Ruud beat Tennys Sandgren 7-5, 6-2; Dominik Koepfer bt Feliciano Lopez 7-5, 6-7 (1), 6-3.

Olympics medal is our biggest goal: Satwiksairaj

Feels Chirag and he are much better players now

BADMINTON

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

India's leading doubles shuttler R. Satwiksairaj was back for training on Tuesday with his partner Chirag Shetty, after a week-long break, as part of the preparations for the Tokyo Olympics later this year.

"Our biggest and immediate target is to win an Olympics medal now. And, we are really working hard to realise this goal," he said.

Same intensity

Despite the uncertainty about the Games being held on schedule now, Satwik and Chirag have decided to train with the same intensity as they have been doing this for the last three months under the guidance of doubles coach Mathias Boe.



"We have had the best of training after a long time with no breaks and thanks to Boe's emphasis on the importance of scoring points with strong defence and not just with an attacking game, we feel we are much better players now," said Satwik in a chat with *The Hindu*.

"It would have been great if we were to play in at least

one of the three Super Series which were cancelled because of the pandemic to test our skills and how far we are good in adapting the new techniques being taught by Boe," he said.

"Well, we want to avoid the kind of confusion we have had in the European circuit, including the Swiss and the All England cham-

Glad we made it to the Olympics before the second wave disrupted the BWF calendar

SATWIK

pionship, where we were in a dilemma whether to adapt the new strategy or not and were a confused lot in the crucial phases of the matches," he said.

Useful sessions

"It takes time to get used to it and this is where the last three months training is so helpful to us," he said, adding that the sessions with sports psychologist Divya Jain have been very useful.

"Glad that we made it to the Olympics before the second wave of the pandemic disrupted the BWF calendar."

"But, I feel sorry for those who could have made the cut even if only they had taken part in one of the three Majors which were cancelled," the Arjuna Award recipient said.

Blues exact revenge over the Foxes

Rudiger and Jorginho score Chelsea in its 2-1 victory

Premier League

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Chelsea avenged its FA Cup final defeat by Leicester to move above the Foxes into third in the Premier League with a 2-1 win in front of 8,000 fans at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday.

Antonio Rudiger and Jorginho, from the penalty spot, scored the goals for Thomas Tuchel's men to

Four players, including Veda, lose contracts

Richa the only addition to the 19-member list

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Veda Krishnamurthy is among four players who have been omitted from the list of centrally contracted players for 2020-21.

While announcing the women cricketers' annual contracts on Wednesday, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) informed that the list has been pruned from 22 to 19.

Besides Veda, who was in Grade C last year, Ekta Bisht (Grade B), Anuja Patil and D. Hemlatha (both Grade C) have also been excluded from the list of contracted cricketers.

The only addition to the list is teenager Richa Ghosh, who impressed during last year's World Twenty20, in Grade C.

Promoted
Three players – the spin duo of Rajeshwari Gayakwad

Bach offers extra medical help during the Games



Bach... in a virtual address on Wednesday. ■ REUTERS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO

Confronted in Japan with some of the strongest medical-community opposition yet to the Tokyo Olympics, IOC president Thomas Bach on Wednesday offered to have added medical personnel available to help out when the games open in just over nine weeks.

Bach, speaking remotely at the opening of three days of meetings between the International Olympic Committee and local organisers, said the help would come from various national Olympic committees and be available in the Olympic village and sports venues.

In his 12-minute address, Bach attempted to assure the Japanese public and athletes coming to Tokyo that the IOC will hold "safe and secure" Olympics in the midst of the pandemic.

In his 12-minute address, Bach attempted to assure the Japanese public and athletes coming to Tokyo that the IOC will hold "safe and secure" Olympics in the midst of the pandemic.

Bach appeared to be responding to one of the strongest demands so far to call off the postponed Olympics.



Tim Paine. ■ AFP

that Test match," the Test skipper was quoted as saying by *Sydney Morning Herald*.

In fine mood

"Their mood was fine, I think they've spoken to (Bancroft), cleared the air and I think everyone's looking forward to moving on. We're all grown men and those guys have made contact with each other and sorted it out," Paine added.

Bancroft has since then backed off his claim, informing CA's integrity unit that he has no "significant new information" to share.

Victory away to Aston Villa on Sunday will guarantee Chelsea a top-four finish.

There was little doubt



Making no mistake: Jorginho scores Chelsea's second goal from the spot. ■ REUTERS

about the outcome once Rudiger bundled home a corner two minutes into the second half.

Wesley Fofana's foul on Timo Werner was initially given as a free-kick outside the box, but on review Dean was told to point to the penalty spot.

Jorginho coolly sent Kasper Schmeichel the wrong way and for 10 minutes, Chelsea looked to be cruising.

However, Leicester set up a nervy finale when Wilfred Ndidi robbed Mateo Kovacic and teed up Iheanacho to slot home his 19th goal of the season.

The results:
Premier League: Brighton 3 (Trossard 50, Webster 72, Burn 76) bt Manchester City 2 (Gundogan 2, Foden 48); Chelsea 2 (Rudiger 47, Jorginho 66-pen) bt Leicester 1 (Iheanacho 76); Manchester United 1 (Cavani 15) drew with Fulham 1 (Bryan 76); Southampton 0 lost to Leeds 2 (Bamford 73, Roberts 90).

IN BRIEF



Kolesnikov lowers his own world record again

BUDAPEST For the second consecutive day, Russian swimmer Kliment Kolesnikov improved his own world record in the 50-meter backstroke. The 20-year-old Kolesnikov clocked 23.80 seconds to win the gold medal at the European Championships on Tuesday. AP

EU Parliament to take down illegal streaming

BRUSSELS European legislators adopted a proposal on Wednesday to combat online piracy of live sporting events that includes the option to block illegal broadcasts within half an hour. AP



Norris signs contract extension with McLaren

WOKING (UK) Lando Norris signed a multi-year contract extension with McLaren on Wednesday that will keep the 21-year-old driver with the Formula One team for the immediate future. The British team's statement didn't specify the length of the extension, noting only that it includes '2022 and beyond'. 'My commitment to McLaren is clear: my goal is to win races and become Formula 1 world champion and I want to do that with this team,' Norris said. AP

Former CAB official Naskar passes away

KOLKATA Surajit Naskar, who served as an assistant secretary of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) between 2010 and 2012, passed away on Tuesday, according to a CAB statement.

Bergkamp and Lampard in PL Hall of Fame

ANI LONDON Arsenal's iconic Dutchman Dennis Bergkamp and Chelsea great Frank Lampard have become the latest players to be inducted into the Premier League Hall of Fame.

The duo joins Thierry Henry, Alan Shearer, Eric Cantona, and Roy Keane in the elite list.

Bergkamp, who won three league titles, scored 87 goals in 315 appearances for the Gunners.

The forward's direct involvement in 181 Premier League goals for Arsenal is second only to the 249 of Henry.

Lampard, also a three-time champion with Chelsea, scored 177 goals during his time at West Ham United, Chelsea and Manchester City, the most by any midfielder in the competition's history.

Long-range goals Renowned for his stunning long-range goals, Lampard holds the PL record for the most scored from outside the penalty area, with 41.

Asian championship crucial: Mary Kom

Champion boxer wants to assess herself before the Olympic Games

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

It's a tournament she has dominated for years but the Asian Boxing Championship this time is more than just a medal-winning opportunity for M.C. Mary Kom, who is "desperate for competition" before the Olympics.

Mary Kom (51kg) has one silver and a staggering five gold medals from her seven appearances at the continental showpiece.

The six-time world champion can't wait to land in Dubai for the upcoming edition, which starts on May 24 because all she wants right now is a "good slugfest".

"I have been so eager to compete, there has hardly been any training because of the pandemic and I need this desperately to assess myself before the Olympics," the 38-year-old said from Pune, where she has been training for the past few days.

"It has not been easy. I was at home after coming back from the tournament in Spain (in March). My children were not well, we had to manage that and it comes with its own set of anxieties. Then, the camp in Delhi was called off because of COVID-19," she said. "Something or the other kept affecting the training. The Asian Championship is important because I get to compete and there is nothing better than a good competition to help in preparations."

Beneficial

The few days of training have been beneficial, according to the pugilist. "I feel confident about my body. I will give my best, whether it would be enough to get a medal is something that only time will tell," said Mary Kom.

All four Tokyo-bound women boxers – Mary Kom, Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) and Pooja Rani (75kg) – will be in action. From the men's Olympics-bound group, Amit Panghal (52kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg) and Ashish Chaudhary (75kg) will fight it out along with seven others.



Geared up: Mary Kom feels there is nothing better than a good competition to help in preparations. ■FILE PHOTO

Skipper Chhetri makes a return to the squad

Indian team leaves for joint 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers in Doha

FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Captain Sunil Chhetri made a return after recovering from COVID-19 as a 28-member Indian football squad leaves for Doha on Wednesday for the three matches of the joint 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifiers.

The team will have a preparatory camp inside a bio-bubble in Doha before its first match on June 3 against host Qatar.

After missing the two in-



Sunil Chhetri. ■FILE PHOTO

25 and 29, Chhetri is set to feature in the forthcoming games.

As per the health parameters required to travel to Qatar, all the players and staff will carry with them negative results from the RT-PCR COVID-19 tests conducted during the last 48 hours.

Prior to their departure, all of them were serving quarantine in the national capital since May 15.

Lone new face

FC Goa midfielder Glan Martins is the lone face to make it to the squad for the first time, while the likes of win-

ger Udanta Singh, Brandon Fernandes, Pronoy Halder and Abdul Sahal also return to the national team setup.

Three goalkeepers

Head coach Igor Stimac opted for three goalkeepers even as Subhasish Roy Chowdhury missed out.

India, fourth in Group E with three points, is already out of contention for a World Cup berth but it is still in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup in China.

The squad:

Goalkeepers: Gurpreet Singh Sandhu, Amrinder Singh, Dheeraj Singh; **Forwards:** Ishan Pandita, Sunil Chhetri, Manvir Singh.

India's fixtures:
June 3: Vs. Qatar (10.30 p.m. IST); **June 7:** Vs. Bangladesh (7.30 p.m.); **June 15:** Vs. Afghanistan (7.30 p.m.).

Ramkumar training in Barcelona

He's determined to make the coming weeks count

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

It has been a season of fluctuating fortunes for Ramkumar Ramanathan, but he is determined to make the coming weeks count.

"Am training in Barcelona for the French Open," said the 26-year-old, ranked 215 in the world, as against his career best of 111 in 2018.

Tough time Grounded by a COVID-19 positive test in Portugal, as the season was hotting up, Ramkumar stayed away from the circuit for six weeks to recover from the virus.

As if isolation was not bad enough in a foreign country, Ramkumar also had to endure the emotional crisis of his dad being treated for the virus in an hospital back home in Chennai.

"Dad went through a tough time," recalled Ramkumar, quite relieved that he was physically and mentally strong to beat the virus.

"I have also totally recovered, by God's grace. I had two good matches in Zagreb last week," said Ramkumar,



Ready for the challenge: Ramkumar, who has recovered from COVID-19, hopes to make an impression at French Open. ■ATP

who did very well to qualify for the main event in the Croatian Challenger on return to the circuit.

He and Sriram Balaji had nearly a dozen match points, but lost in the quarterfinals of the doubles.

"They just could not convert those match points," said Ramkumar's father, Ramanathan, who watched the match on ATP's web streaming. He also felt Ramkumar's opponent was too good in the singles main draw.

Busy season Of course, it was a busy sea-

son for Ramkumar, as he had travelled for three Challengers in Turkey, apart from Doha, Singapore and Kazakhstan for many tournaments, including the qualifying event of the Australian Open.

"I will give my best in the coming weeks," said Ramkumar quite focused on his training rather than trying more events before the French Open.

For sure, Ramkumar is hungry and ready to do well as the Grand Slams come around in Paris and Wimbledon.

Tatum on fire as Celtics stun Wizards

Red-hot Indiana Pacers sting Charlotte Hornets

NBA PLAY-INS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Jayson Tatum erupted for 50 points, including a perfect 17 from the free-throw line, as Boston Celtics booked its place in the playoffs on Tuesday with a 118-100 win over the Washington Wizards as the NBA's play-in tournament got under way.

Tatum produced a virtuous performance to outshine Wizards triple-double king Russell Westbrook as the Cel-

tics advanced to a first round playoff series against the second seeded Brooklyn Nets.

The Wizards will now host the Indiana Pacers on Thursday, with the winner of that game facing a first round playoff series against the Philadelphia 76ers, the top seed from the Eastern Conference.

Bradley Beal led the Wizards' scoring with 22 points while Westbrook finished with 20 points.

In another match, Indiana looked red hot in a 144-117 blowout to eliminate the Charlotte Hornets on Tues-

day's early play-in game.

Dominant Oshae Brissett scored 23 points and Doug McDermott added 21 as the Pacers got off to a fast start and never eased up in a comprehensive wire-to-wire victory in Indianapolis.

Only one win had separated the ninth-placed Pacers from the 10th-ranked Hornets during the regular season which wrapped up on Sunday.

The results: Boston Celtics bt Washington Wizards 118-100; Indiana Pacers bt Charlotte Hornets 144-117.

Prasanta Mohapatra passes away

CRICKET

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Former Odisha Ranji Trophy player and Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) match referee Prasanta Mohapatra passed away in Bhubaneswar on Wednesday, tweeted the Odisha Cricket Association (OCA).

Mohapatra, 47, succumbed to COVID-19-related complications.

Mohapatra had lost his father, eminent sculptor and Rajya Sabha member Raghunath Mohapatra, due to COVID-19 11 days ago.

Mohapatra, who made his debut against Bihar in 1990, scored 2196 runs at 30.08 in 45 First-Class matches. He also played in the Duleep and Deodhar Trophies.

As a match-referee, he regularly supervised BCCI matches at different venues in the last few years.

Annika Kannan loses tamely in doubles

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
PLATJA D'ARÓ (SPAIN)

Annika Kannan and Nora Ayala Serra of Spain were beaten 6-0, 6-2 by Isabelle Haverlag and Suzan Lamens in the pre-quarterfinals of the \$25,000 ITF women's tennis tournament here.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Isabelle Haverlag & Suzan Lamens (Ned) bt Nora Ayala Serra (Esp) & Annika Kannan 6-0, 6-2.

Akhil Rabindra inches closer to contract

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BENGALURU

GT4 racer Akhil Rabindra on Wednesday made it to the coveted list of the Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy for the third time in a row for the 2021 class.

Akhil, who is currently competing for AGS Events Racing team. He will be racing the second round of the 2021 season at the European GT4 Championships from May 28-30.

The race will be hosted at the Paul Ricard circuit.

with 14 others from across the world.

The British luxury sportscar manufacturer made the announcement on Wednesday.

Akhil currently drives an Aston Martin Vantage GT4 for AGS Events Racing team.

He will be racing the second round of the 2021 season at the European GT4 Championships from May 28-30.

The race will be hosted at the Paul Ricard circuit.

SRM VIRTUAL CONCLAVE FOR CAREER GUIDANCE 2021

Powered by THE HINDU

SRM

SRM INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE HINDU GROUP

தமிழ்நாடு தேசியக் குழுமம்

SRMIST

SRMIST

A CAREER IN ROBOTICS: CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) in association with The Hindu Group brings a 15-part webinar series to provide expert career guidance to Class 10, 11 and 12 students.

Join the webinar on
22nd May 2021 (Saturday) at 11:00 AM

to hear from the experts
followed by a Q&A session.

Sneha Priya

Co-Founder & CEO
SP Robotic Works

Prof. Sanjay Goel

Director
Institute of Engineering and Technology
JK Lakshmi Pat University, Jaipur

Dr. R. Senthilnathan

Associate Professor
Department of Mechatronics Engineering
SRM Institute of Science & Technology (SRMIST)

Mini Tejaswi

Deputy Editor
The Hindu (Moderator)

Register for the Webinar at:
<http://bit.ly/SRMISTTH7>
Or Scan QR Code

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), SRM Nagar, Kattankulathur, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu - 603 203.
Phone: +91 (44) 27455510, 47437500, 67370700 | Email to: <a href="mailto:admissions.india@srmist.edu