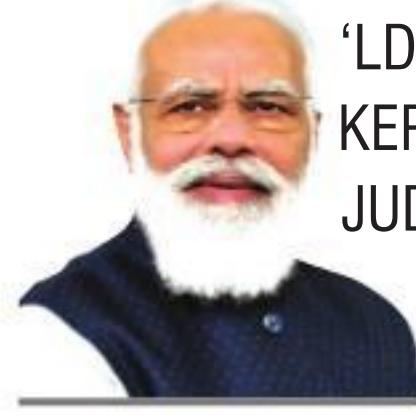




Pages 12 | ₹5 | LC

KOLKATA | NEW DELHI | SILIGURI | BHUBANESWAR



'LDF GOVT BETRAYED  
KERALITES JUST AS  
JUDAS DID TO JESUS'

P4



MY CONSCIENCE IS  
CLEAR: MISTRY ON  
APEX COURT RULING

P8



JOHNSON CALLS FOR  
NEW GLOBAL TREATY  
TO FIGHT PANDEMICS

P10

twitter.com/TheStatesmanLtd  
facebook.com/thestatesman1875



SMITH GAME FOR  
ANOTHER BITE  
AT THE CHERRY

P12

## WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Strong dust raising winds during the day. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 36 and 18 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 82% Min: 17%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 37.9°C (+ 6) Min: 19.0°C (+ 1)

SUN RISES

06:11 hrs

MOON RISES

21:40 hrs

SUN SETS

18:38 hrs

MOON SETS

08:45 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



A flock of flamingos at a creek in Navi Mumbai. AGENCIES

**Sensex, Nifty rally to 2-week highs:** Benchmark Sensex rallied by 1,128 points, its biggest single-day gain in nearly two months, to close at a two-week high on Tuesday as financials, IT and energy stocks advanced amid positive global cues. Extending its gains to the second consecutive session, the 30-share BSE index ended 1,128.08 points higher at 50,136.58. P8

**Sharad Pawar hospitalised:** NCP chief Sharad Pawar was on Tuesday admitted to a hospital in Mumbai, a day ahead of the scheduled surgery after he experienced pain in his abdomen, a party leader said. Pawar will undergo surgery at the hospital after it was diagnosed that he has a gall bladder issue.

## Virus situation turning from bad to worse: Centre

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

The coronavirus situation is "turning from bad to worse" and is a huge cause of worry especially for some states, the Centre said on Tuesday while stressing that the whole country is at risk and nobody should be complacent.

"Hospital and ICU preparations have to be readied. If the cases increase rapidly, the healthcare system would be overwhelmed," Paul said.

There is a need to significantly and exponentially increase the number of Covid-19 tests. The proportion of RT-PCR tests need to be increased too, Bhushan said.

"On Saturday, we held meeting with these states and also spoke to 47 districts. We requested them to increase the number of tests with a special focus on RT-PCR tests," he said.

On variants of the virus, the health secretary said 10 laboratories have done genome sequencing of 11,064 samples since December of which the UK variant was detected in 807 samples, South African variant in 47 and Brazilian variant in one.

Total of 6,11,13,354 Covid-19 vaccine doses have been

a huge cause for worry. No state, no part of the country or district should be complacent."

"We are facing an increasingly severe and intense situation, more so surely in some districts. But the whole country is potentially at risk and therefore all efforts to contain and save lives should be taken.

Hospital and ICU preparations have to be readied. If the cases increase rapidly, the healthcare system would be overwhelmed," Paul said.

There is a need to significantly and exponentially increase the number of Covid-19 tests. The proportion of RT-PCR tests need to be increased too, Bhushan said.

"On Saturday, we held meeting with these states and also spoke to 47 districts. We requested them to increase the number of tests with a special focus on RT-PCR tests," he said.

On variants of the virus, the health secretary said 10 laboratories have done genome sequencing of 11,064 samples since December of which the UK variant was detected in 807 samples, South African variant in 47 and Brazilian variant in one.

Total of 6,11,13,354 Covid-19 vaccine doses have been



administered till 10 a.m.

Bhushan also said that 48.39 per cent, Telangana tops the list of states with the highest Covid-19 vaccine doses given in private facilities. Delhi came second with 43.11 per cent.

From April 1, people above the age of 45 years would be eligible for vaccination.

## 56,211 cases in a single day

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

India's Covid-19 tally climbed to 1,20,95,855 with 56,211 more people testing positive for the infection in a span of 24 hours, while 271 more fatalities pushed death toll to 1,62,114, according to the Union Health Ministry's data updated on Tuesday.

Registering a steady increase for the 20th day in row, active cases have increased to 5,40,720 comprising 4.47 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 94.19 per cent.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,13,93,021, while the case fatality rate stands at 1.34 per cent, the data stated.

India's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20 lakh-mark on August 7, 30 lakh on September 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It went past 60 lakh on Sep-

tember 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one crore-mark on December 19.

According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 24,26,50,025 samples have been tested up to March 29 with 7,85,864 samples being tested on Monday.

Some experts said that the low count of daily cases could be because of lower testing on account of Holika Dahan.

The number of samples tested on Sunday were 9,13,319, according to the ICMR.

Delhi's positivity rate stands at 2.70 pc:

Delhi today reported 992 new coronavirus infections with a positivity rate of 2.70 per cent, even as 4 more people succumbed to the pathogen in the city, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

(SEE P2)

## Pak President, minister latest victims of Covid after PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 30 MARCH

Pakistan's top leadership has been hit by the coronavirus with President Dr Arif Alvi (in photo) and Defence Minister Pervez Khattak contracting it, days after Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife tested positive for the disease which is now raging in the country.

On Monday, President Alvi tweeted that he had tested positive for the virus. "I have tested positive for Covid-19. May Allah have mercy on all Covid-affected. Had the first dose of the vaccine but antibodies started developing after the second dose that was due in a week. Please continue to be careful," the president said.

First Lady Samina Alvi tested negative for Covid-19 and was quarantining. She said the president has "mild symptoms but is in good spirits".

Sindh Governor Imran Ismail tweeted that Defence Minister Khattak, 71, had also tested positive for the virus. "Pervez Khattak is diagnosed with Covid positive. Get well soon PK," wrote Ismail, who

himself contracted and recovered from the virus last year.

Prime Minister Khan, 68, tested positive for the virus on March 20. His wife Bushra Bibi also tested coronavirus positive the same day. Both were now self-isolating.

Meanwhile, former finance minister Hafeez Shaikh was tested positive for Covid-19, it emerged on Tuesday.

Shaikh, who was dropped from the Cabinet on Monday by Prime Minister Khan, has tested positive for the novel coronavirus.

The news was tweeted by Shaikh's successor Hammar Azhar. "Just found out that Dr Hafeez Shaikh has tested positive for Covid-19. I pray for his swift recovery and good health. Ameen," Azhar tweeted.

## Pak desires peace: Imran writes to Modi

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Amid attempts by key Gulf nations to bring India and Pakistan to the negotiating table, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying the people of his country desired peaceful cooperative relations with all countries, including India.

"We are convinced that durable peace in South Asia is contingent upon resolving all issues between India and Pakistan, particularly the Jammu and Kashmir dispute," he said in the letter sent in response to the message received by him from Modi last week on the occasion of 'Pakistan Day'.

Khan is believed to have stated that the creation of an enabling environment was imperative for a constructive and result-oriented dialogue between the two countries. He also conveyed to Modi his best wishes for the people of India in the fight against Covid-19.

In his letter sent on 22 March, Modi had stated that India desired "cordial relations" with Pakistan in an environment "devoid of terror".

The exchange of letters between the two Prime Ministers follows efforts being made by Saudi Arabia and the UAE to bring down the temperature between the two South Asian neighbours and persuade them to resume the stalled dialogue after more than two years of heightened tensions in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack and the Balakot airstrikes.

But in February, the two countries agreed to abide by the 2003 ceasefire agreement at the LoC in letter and spirit. They also last week concluded water-sharing talks in New Delhi on a positive note.

However, the much-anticipated meeting between the foreign ministers of the two countries on the sidelines of the 'Heart of Asia' conference on Afghanistan in the Tajikistan capital of Dushanbe did not fructify today. SNS

## Consider imposing fines for not wearing masks properly: DGCA to airports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday told airports to increase surveillance to ensure Covid-19 norms are followed and consider imposing spot fines, with the help of police authorities, on passengers who are found not wearing masks properly and not maintaining social distancing.

On March 13, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had asked airports and airlines to ensure that passengers wear mask and maintain social distance at all times during air travel, and take action against those violating the norms.

In a circular issued on Tuesday, the regulator said, "During the surveillance of

some airports, it has come to notice that compliance (of Covid-19 protocols) is not satisfactory."

"All airport operators, therefore, are requested to ensure that the instructions on Covid-19 protocol from the standpoint of wearing face mask properly, covering nose and mouth, as well as maintaining social distance norms within the airport premises are followed scrupulously," it said.

Accordingly, all airport operators can increase surveillance in this regard, the DGCA said.

"The possibility of taking punitive action, such as levy of spot fines in accordance with the law, shall also be explored with local police authorities so as to serve a deterrent for violation of Covid-19 proto-

## SUMMER SCHEDULE



col," it stated.

The March 13 circular had asked the airport operators to

hand over the passengers, who are not following the Covid-19 protocol even after repeated warnings, to the security agencies. Moreover, it had asked the

DGCA on Tuesday said it has approved 18,843 flights per week from 108 airports for the summer schedule, which begins on the last Sunday of March and ends on the last Sunday of October. Out of these 108 airports, Bareilly, Bilaspur, Kurnool and Rupasi are the new airports proposed by the scheduled airlines

IndiGo's 8,749 weekly flights, SpiceJet's 2,854, GoAir's 1,747 flights, Air India's 1,683, Vistaar's 1,288 and AirAsia India's 1,243 have been approved. The number of flights for this year's summer schedule has been approved keeping in mind that airlines are permitted to operate not more than 80 per cent of their pre-Covid flights

repeated warnings, and consider treating them as "unruly". An "unruly" passenger can be banned from flying by an airline for any period between three and 24 months, as per DGCA norms. Fifteen passengers, who were found violating Covid-19 norms on domestic flights of three airlines between March 15 and March 23, might be banned for three months by carriers, senior officials of the DGCA had said last week. These 15 passengers included nine of IndiGo, four of Alliance Air and two of AirAsia India. While most of these passengers refused to wear masks onboard the flights, others refused to put on PPE gowns that are compulsory for those sitting in the middle seats.



*This is the public money they had looted and now giving in ₹500/1000 to each voter. We had informed the Election Commission about this but it still continues unabated*

MAMATA BANERJEE

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

# Delhi govt tracking emerging Covid situation closely: CM

Kejriwal says his govt will take all necessary steps to tackle the virus surge in the city, announces an increase in the number of normal and ICU beds reserved for Covid patients in a few hospitals

SNS &amp; PTI

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Delhi today reported 992 new coronavirus infections with a positivity rate of 2.70 per cent, even as 4 more people succumbed to the pathogen in the city, according to the latest health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

Evidently, the relatively lower number of cases could be attributed to fewer Covid tests conducted the previous day on account of Holi.

A total of only 36,757 tests, including 28,618 RT-PCR tests, were conducted to detect these cases, the health bulletin said. This figure was less than half the number of tests being conducted daily on an average in the national capital.

The total number of infections in the national capital mounted to 6,60,611, with over 6.42 lakh patients having recovered from the disease so far, the bulletin stated.

Four more fatalities took Delhi's Covid toll to 11,016. The number of active cases stood at 7,429.

The number of patients under home isolation in the city rose to 4,832 from 4,639 a day ago. The number of containment zones increased to 1,903 from yesterday's 1,849, the bulletin added.

The city had recorded 1,904 cases yesterday, 1,881 cases last Sunday, 1,558 cases on Saturday,



day, 1,534 cases on Friday, 1,515 cases on Thursday, and 1,254 cases on Wednesday.

Delhi's Covid positivity rate was 2.77 per cent yesterday, 2.35 per cent on Sunday, 1.70 per cent on Saturday, 1.80 per cent on Friday, 1.69 per cent on Thursday, and 1.52 per cent on Wednesday.

The Covid caseload in Delhi on 1 January was over 6.25 lakh, and the total count of fatalities

was 10,557. The number of daily cases had started to come down in February. On 26 February, the month's highest daily count of 256 cases was recorded.

However, the cases began to rise again in March, and it has been steadily surging over the past several days.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced today that the number of beds reserved

for Covid patients is being increased at a few hospitals in view of the surge in cases in the city in recent days.

"In view of COVID situation developing in Del, no. of normal and ICU beds reserved for COVID is being increased in a few hospitals. This will improve bed availability. We're keeping close watch and will take all steps necessary. There is nothing to worry. But pl follow all

precautions," Kejriwal tweeted.

Health minister Satyendar Jain had last week dismissed any possibility of imposing another lockdown in Delhi, saying it was not a solution to check the spread of the coronavirus.

He had said there were enough hospital beds available for coronavirus patients in the city, which could be increased if the need arises.

## Kejriwal discusses Delhi's air pollution, Covid management with Swiss envoy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today met Switzerland Ambassador Ralf Heckner, with the envoy praising the various steps taken by the AAP government to deal with Covid-19 despite difficult circumstances.

Kejriwal spoke about how they didn't allow any bed shortage to occur even when the Covid-19 surge was at its peak, with the Delhi government even launching a mobile application, which helped one find out beds availability in hospitals.

He also spoke about how the Delhi government will implement a Health Information Management System (MIMS) soon and with its help every Delhi citizen will get a health card, detailing their entire medical history.

This card may also help an individual get better treat-

ment.

Kejriwal said the Delhi government adopted the method of home isolation to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. Serious patients were admitted to hospitals while other patients were provided treatment at their home.

The home isolation method was very successful and it was adopted by other states too.

Kejriwal pointed out that the Delhi government was committed to providing better health facilities to the people.

The Chief Minister also discussed in detail with the ambassador the measures being taken to tackle air pollution in Delhi. He informed him that the Delhi government was taking various steps to promote the tourism industry in the city and working on a number of schemes.

Kejriwal also discussed about the Swiss companies working in the tourism sector to invest in Delhi so that tourism in the city can be promoted.

also taking the help of IIT-Kanpur, IIT-Delhi and TERI. Both IIT-Kanpur and IIT-Delhi have developed a technology which allows one to identify the actual source of pollution occurring at certain places during a particular period of time. When the source is known, it will be easy to take necessary steps. Under the pilot project, super sites and mobile sites will be installed in the hotspot areas of Delhi.

During his meeting with the Swiss envoy, Kejriwal also expressed the need for cooperation to promote tourism in Delhi. He informed him that the Delhi government is taking various steps to promote the tourism industry in the city and working on a number of schemes.

Kejriwal also discussed about the Swiss companies working in the tourism sector to invest in Delhi so that tourism in the city can be promoted.

## Man arrested for killing chartered accountant in Delhi's Adarsh Nagar

PTI

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

A 22-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing a chartered accountant in northwest Delhi's Adarsh Nagar during a suspected robbery bid, police said on Tuesday.

Jai Kumar Singh, who has been previously involved in nine other criminal cases, was arrested from Sarai Rohilla on Sunday, they said.

Anil Aggarwal and his wife Anju visited their under-construction house in Adarsh Nagar after morning walk on March 16. When they were standing on the ground floor, the accused wearing a helmet came inside the house and fired at Anil Aggarwal before fleeing from the spot on his scooter.

The victim suffered a bullet injury near his neck and was declared brought dead by doctors at the hospital.

On the basis of a statement of his wife, a case was registered under IPC section 302 (murder) and other relevant sections of the Arms Act.

"During investigation, our teams found out that a person wearing a helmet was noticed following Aggarwal and his wife on a white-coloured scooter on the day of the incident," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Northwest) Usha Rangnani said.

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

**PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT**  
(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)  
In the Court of Ms. Suneta Sharma Addl. District Judge-04 Room No. 33 Patiala House Courts, New Delhi CS 859/19 NODH-07-2021 Ashok Arora Versus

Vijay Arora, s/o Late Sh. Jagdish Arora, r/o WZ-1635, Nangal Rai, New Delhi.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 08-07-2021 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 27th day of March, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-04 Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI**  
Case No. CUSA No. 118/2019 & C.M. No. 15164/2019

(U/O V Rule 20 CPC for Substitution Service of Notice upon Respondent)  
Appeal against the order dated 04-08-2017 in C/A/55711-55712/2017-CU(DB) Passed by The Learned Customs, Excise & Service Tax Appellate Tribunal, Principal Bench, New Delhi in Appeal No. C/306/2011.

Commissioner of Customs ICD Tughlakabad - Appellants Versus

Sh. G. Ram Bhupal Respondents

Notice to Respondents : Sh. Ram Bhupal, Chief Financial Officer of M/s. Stone Travels (P) Ltd., 4th Floor, Building No. 10, Tower-A, DLF Cyber City, Phase-II, Gurugram, Haryana.

Whereas the abovenamed appellants has presented an appeal under Section 130 of the Customs Act, 1962 which was listed before the Court on 27-08-2019 and on the other subsequent dates when the Court ordered issuance of notice to you.

And whereas it has been proved to the satisfaction of the Court that you cannot be served in the ordinary manner, notice by way of publication to you is hereby issued. If you wish to defend the abovementioned appeal and application, you may cause an appearance to be entered on your behalf either in person or through an Advocate duly appointed by you for the purpose before the Hon'ble Court on 23-04-2021 (Actual).

If no appearance is made on your behalf, by yourself, your pleader or someone by law authorized to act for you in the said appeal and application will be given to you and the same will be heard and determined ex parte in your absence.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court, this 23rd February, 2021.

Assistant Registrar (Civil) for Registrar General Seal of the Court

### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT

(Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Ms. Preeti Parewa ACJ/CCJ/ARC

Room No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Cause No. S-5/2019/2019

Next Date of Hearing: 05-04-2021

Emtex Engineering PV Ltd. —Petitioner

Versus —Respondent

To, 1. Parau Thakur Proprietor of Shrikesh Engineering.

2. Shrikesh Engineering Through its Proprietor .

3. Ravi Arora,

All At: B-1, Basement Bardhaman Complex Yamuna Vihar New Delhi-110053.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 05-04-2021 the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 24th day of March, 2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi

Seal of the Court

tioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Vijay Kumar Nayyar, S/o Gurkha Singh, died on 27-06-2020 at B-8/070 Vasant Kunj New Delhi.

Particulars are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court to be standing in the name of deceased.

Whereas the 29-04-2021 at 10 (Ten) O'Clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing and the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court this 27-03-2021

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi

Seal of the Court

**IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC**

Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts

New Delhi

Petition No. SC-22/2021

Sh. Gurav Sharma Versus State & Ors.

—(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned.

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Saroj Bala, w/o Jagdish Prasad, died on DT 12-04-2020 at WZ-343A, Naraina Village, New Delhi-110028 and Mr. Rakesh Sharma, s/o Jagdish Prasad died on DT 18-03-2020 at Lotus Hospital WZ-409A, Hari Nagar Janapark New Delhi. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court to be standing in the name of deceased.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 27th day of March, 2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi

Seal of the Court

**IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC**

Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts

New Delhi

Petition No. SC-15/2021

Surat Versus State & Ors.

—(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned.

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Saroj Bala, w/o Jagdish Prasad, died on DT 12-04-2020 at WZ-343A, Naraina Village, New Delhi-110028 and Mr. Rakesh Sharma, s/o Jagdish Prasad died on DT 18-03-2020 at Lotus Hospital WZ-409A, Hari Nagar Janapark New Delhi. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court to be standing in the name of deceased.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 27th day of March, 2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi

Seal of the Court

**IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC**

Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts

New Delhi

Petition No. SC-22/2021

Smt. Veena Nayyar Versus The State & Ors.

—(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned.

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Raj Kumar, s/o Samay Singh died on DT 06-02-2019 at Lal Ram Sarup Institute

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court, this 20th day of March, 2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi



*Our people are well aware of the fact that the BJP respects Gorkhas*

RAJU BISTA, MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, DARJEELING  
ON BJP LEADER KAILASH VIJAYVARGYA'S 'MISSTATEMENT' ON THE GORKHAS

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 2021

03

# Covid upsurge: Punjab govt extends curbs till 10 April

CM's order follows continuing rise in virus cases & deaths and prevalence of UK strain in the state

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 30 MARCH

**A**s Covid cases and deaths continue to escalate in Punjab, with the UK strain emerging as the most prevalent in the state, Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday ordered extension of curbs till 10 April. Reviewing the Covid situation with the chief secretary and other top officials, the CM said all restrictions that were in place till 31 March will now remain in force till April 10, after which they would be again reviewed.

Following the fresh Covid surge, Capt Amarinder had on 19 March ordered state-wide restrictions, with closure of educational institutions till 31



March and restrictions on cinemas as well as shopping mall capacities. The CM also ordered the launch of a vaccination drive in the prisons, in the wake of 40 women in Patiala's Nabha Open Jail testing positive for Coronavirus.

Expressing grave concern over the situation, the CM

asked chief secretary Vini Mahajan to issue the necessary directions for carrying out testing and vaccination in busy market areas along with other crowded places.

The latest data shows the UK strain of the virus to be the most prevalent in the state. While 326 of the 401 Covid positive sam-

ples sent initially to National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for genome sequencing were found positive for the UK variant, subsequently of the 95 samples sent to Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, Delhi for genome sequencing, 85 samples were found to be positive for the same.

The meeting was informed that the positive cases and deaths were rising rapidly in some of the districts, with projections presented by CMC Ludhiana showing a steep rise in the number of cases and peak around 6 April.

The number would be decreasing by mid or late May, 2021, as per the estimates, which suggest that Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Patiala, Sahibzada Ajit Singh Nagar, Hoshiarpur

and Kapurthala are expected to contribute more cases and that positivity is likely to be high in the younger population of 40 years of age or less.

All districts have also been asked to strengthen their teams so that the data entry of Covid sampling and transportation of samples to the designated lab takes minimum time, and the result is made available within 24 hours.

Dr KK Talwar, adviser health and medical education to the government of Punjab, has suggested that routine non-Covid treatment in some of the selected private hospitals may be deferred by two to four weeks, and more ambulances be made available to the district hospitals where there are no medical colleges.

## Snow Festival will boost Lahaul Spiti tourism: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 30 MARCH

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the 75-day long Snow Festival would go a long way in promoting the rich diverse culture and traditions of Lahaul Spiti district and also act as a catalyst for promoting tourism activities in the district.

Addressing the concluding function of Snow Festival of Lahaul-Spiti district virtually from Shimla on Monday, Thakur said the Atal Tunnel had opened new vistas of development as it had ensured round the year connectivity.

"The tunnel has also given a big boost to the tourism development as it has opened the virgin and beautiful val-

ley to the world tourists. This will not only provide ample employment and self-employment opportunities to the locals, but would transform the economy of the people of this district," he said.

Thakur said the Atal Tunnel and tourism were gradually becoming synonymous as over 5,000 tourist vehicles were daily crossing this Tunnel towards Lahaul valley.

He called for taking steps to provide the best infrastructure to the tourists so that they could stay in the valley comfortably.

He further stated that this festival had helped revive the traditions almost on the verge of extinction, besides showcasing the diverse culture to the rest of the world.

This would motivate the tourists from all across the world to visit the valley to have a glimpse of the tribal culture and costumes.

Before the tunnel was dedicated to the nation, there were only about 71 "home stays" and today there were over 450 home stays catering to the needs of the tourists, he said.

The Chief Minister said efforts must be made to diversify the Snow Festival so that it has something special and new to showcase before the rest of the world.

State Tribal Development, Technical Education and Information Technology Minister Rani Lal Markanda, Principal Secretary, Tribal Development, Onkar Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister R N Batta, Deputy Commissioner, Lahaul Spiti, Pankaj Rai were also present on the occasion among others.

## Khattar condemns attack on BJP MLA in Punjab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 30 MARCH

Days after a Punjab BJP legislator was thrashed by a group of protesting farmers in Muktsar, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, on Tuesday said adopting violent ways is "highly condemnable" in a democracy.

Responding to a question regarding the attack on BJP legislator Arun Narang in Punjab, Khattar said that the incident is highly condemnable and the matter has been brought to the notice of the Punjab and Central governments.

The CM said in democracy, everyone has the right to freedom of speech and expression. Protests should be done in a peaceful manner.

## Jai Ram appeals to people to follow Covid protocols to keep virus at bay



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 30 MARCH

chayati Raj representatives should be involved in monitoring such persons and encourage the people to take precautionary measures in fight against this deadly virus. No person should be allowed to walk without wearing a mask in public places.

The CM said the shopkeepers should not allow the people to enter their outlets without masks and proper hygiene habits should be practised to keep this virus at bay.

He said the health experts had observed that after the advent of new variants of Corona, there are no traces of cough or fever and the patients were just complaining of joint pains, weakness and loss of appetite and Covid-19 pneumonia.

He said it was taking less time to get to extreme in comparison to the past and sometimes there were no symptoms even. "Therefore it is better to be careful than remaining unguarded and putting ourselves, family and the society in danger," he said.

Thakur was presiding over a review meeting on the state of Corona virus in Himachal Pradesh, which was organised at the premises of Dr. Rajendra Prasad Medical College, Tanda, in district Kangra.

The chief minister asked the health authorities and local administration to keep a close vigil on the persons advised and kept under home isolation.

He said the local Pan-

as far as possible and wear face mask all the time while being at public places or on transport. The practice of frequent hand washing should be continued as it simply ensures health. He said that due to negligence of the people the number of new cases had been increasing daily putting the society in peril at large.

Earlier, Chief Medical Officer Dr Gurudarshan Gupta said that after the new strain of Corona virus across the country, the number of patients were being seen without fever, but X-ray reports showed moderate chest pneumonia. It meant that the virus spreads directly to the lungs causing acute respiratory distress due to viral pneumonia. It simply explains why the new strain had become acute and more fatal.

Thakur directed the health authorities to enhance testing of Corona virus in order to stop the community spread.

He said that it had been seen that the new strain was not

domiciled in our nasopharyngeal region and had been directly affecting the lungs, which means window periods are shortened.

The chief minister asked the health department to encourage the people to take a jab against this fatal virus. He urged the people to be careful and avoid crowded places



# Co-WIN

Winning Over COVID - 19



अब आप  
आरोग्य सेन्ट्रु एप  
के माध्यम से भी खुद  
को कोविड टीकाकरण  
के लिए पंजीकृत कर  
सकते हैं

कोविड  
टीकाकरण  
पंजीकरण  
करने  
के लिए

- http://www.cowin.gov.in/home
- अथवा
- http://selfregistration.cowin.gov.in पर जायें
- अपना मोबाइल नंबर दर्ज करें
- मोबाइल पर प्राप्त ओटीपी नंबर दर्ज करें और सत्यापित करें
- फॉर्म के अनुसार विवरण भरें और खुद को रजिस्टर करें

इसके उपरांत  
अपना टीकाकरण  
स्थल एवं समय  
का  
स्वयं चयन करें

खतरा अभी टला नहीं है  
ज़रूरी है दवाई भी कड़ाई भी



क्या करें

- ✓ अगर आपको दुखार, खांसी और सांस लेने में कठिनाई है तो स्वयं इलाज न करें, तुरन्त डॉक्टर से समर्पक करें।
- ✓ छींकते और खांसते समय, अपना मुँह या नाक टिशू पेपर / रुमाल या कपड़े से ढकें।
- ✓ प्रयोग के तुरन्त बाद टिशू पेपर को किसी बद डिब्बे में फेंक दें।
- ✓ हवादार कमरे में रहें, यातायात करते समय गाड़ी के शीर्षों खुले रखें।
- ✓ अगर आप में कोरोना वायरस के लक्षण हैं तो कृपया हेल्पलाइन नम्बर 104 पर कॉल करें।
- ✓ सरकार के दिशा-निर्देशों का अनुपालन करें।

क्या न करें

- ✗ यदि आपको खांसी और दुखार अनुभव हो रहे हों तो किसी के समर्पक में न आएं।
- ✗ अपनी आंख, नाक या मुँह को न छुएं।
- ✗ सार्वजनिक स्थानों पर न थूकें।
- ✗ भीड़-भाड़ वाली जगह पर न जाएं।
- ✗ ए.सी. का प्रयोग ना करें।
- ✗ मास्क पहने बिना घर से न निकलें।



A woman buys earthen water pots for summer season, in Patiala on Tuesday.

AGENCY

Vizag steel plant: A PIL was filed in Andhra Pradesh HC against Centre's decision to privatise Vizag steel Plant which pleaded to set it aside and instead look for its revival through alternate measures.

SNS

22 new UDAN flights: A total of 22 new flights under regional connectivity scheme UDAN were started in the last three days, said the Civil Aviation Ministry on Tuesday.

PTI

HP to hold departmental exams: The Himachal government will conduct departmental examinations for eligible officers/ officials, serving on regular basis from 17 to 25 May 2021. Candidates who intend to appear in the exams should submit their application online on Manav Sampada portal.

SNS

## PM: LDF govt betrayed people of Kerala just as Judas did to Jesus

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
PALAKKAD (KER), 30 MARCH

Taking a swipe at CPI-M-led LDF and Congress-led UDF in Kerala ahead of 6 April Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said both these friends are engaged in politics of 'match-fixing' and this time people of Kerala will reject this type of "friendly agreement".

"For many years, the worst kept secret of Kerala politics was the friendly agreement of LDF and UDF. Now, the first-time voter of Kerala is asking what is this match-fixing?"

People are seeing how UDF and LDF misled them. This time the people of Kerala will reject this politics of 'match fixing,'" Modisaid. In Palakkad while addressing his first election rally in poll bound Kerala on Tuesday.

"UDF should be ashamed of remaining silent when this was happening. I am proud to belong to a party that has, is and will always defend the culture of our land."

Slamming the Pinarayi Vijayan government over the gold smuggling scam, PM Modi said the CPI(M)-led government "betrayed" the people of the state just as Judas did to Jesus for a few pieces of silver. LDF betrayed Kerala for a few pieces of gold.

The number of road-blocks by UDF and LDF has slowed down the speed of development in Kerala. The time has come for FAST development in the state, which BJP promises, PM said. "By FAST, what I mean is: F for fisheries and fertilizers, A for agriculture and ayurveda, S for skill development and social justice, T for tourism and technology," he said.

He slammed the LDF government on the manner in which it dealt with the agitation against the decision to implement a Supreme Court verdict allowing entry of women in all age groups into Sabarimala temple, saying the Left dispensation should be ashamed of showering litanies on innocent devotees.

"UDF should be ashamed of remaining silent when this was happening. I am proud to belong to a party that has, is and will always defend the culture of our land."

Targeting the CPI-M for indulging in the politics of violence, the Modi said: "Left parties have been in power many times here. But under their eyes and with their blessings, political rivals are killed, hacked, beaten. A BJP government in Kerala will stop this culture of violence."

# Modi slams Cong-DMK's 'anti-women' mindset

Prime Minister dubs former Union telecom minister A Raja 'outdated 2G missile' of Congress & DMK

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHENNAI, 30 MARCH

**A**mid black flag protests and arrests, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a whirlwind campaign in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry today. #GoBackModi also trended ahead of the

**Campaigning for NDA candidates at Dharpuram in Tiruppur district, Modi accused the Congress-DMK culture to insult women and the Opposition's 'anti-women mindset' extended to other states as well like West Bengal, where an elderly woman Shoba Majumdar lost her life.**

PM's visit to campaign.

Campaigning for NDA candidates at Dharpuram in Tiruppur district, Modi accused the Congress-DMK culture to insult women and the Opposition's 'anti-women mindset' extended to other states as well like West Bengal, where an elderly woman Shoba Majumdar lost her life.

The NDA by contrast, believes



Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Dharpuram. AGENCIES

that the nation's development can only start with women empowerment. In his speech, Modi referred to Dindigul Leon's sexist remarks on women while campaigning for the DMK, and also reminded of the assault on J Jayalalithaa in Tamil Nadu Assembly in 1989.

In a veiled attack, the PM dubbed former Union telecom minister A Raja, as an 'outdated 2G missile' of the Congress and DMK and slammed him for insulting chief minister Edappadi K Palaniswami's mother and targeting Tamil Nadu women.

Chief minister Palaniswami and deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam, and BJP TN candidates shared stage with Modi. Modi started his

speech with slogan to reverend Murugan, 'Vetri Veeravel' after receiving a Vel (spear) from BJP state unit president L Murugan.

While seeking vote for NDA candidates Modi said: "People are expecting a rail link and the Union government is positively looking into the demand. We are making efforts to make technical and medical language courses available in the local language, if possible. If you vote for NDA, it's a vote to solve long-standing issues."

Making scathing attack on opponents in the fray, the DMK and Congress alliance, Modi said while NDA's agenda is development, the Congress and DMK have their own 'dynasty agenda.' The speech

es of the leaders of these parties had nothing positive to offer and they hardly talk about their vision or work and all they do is 'demean' others and spread 'lies'.

Today Congress and DMK have insulted the respected mother of Tamil Nadu chief minister Palaniswami, he alleged. "God forbid, if they come to power, they will insult many other women of Tamil Nadu."

"Insulting women is a part of DMK and Congress culture. When the crown prince of DMK (Stalin's son Udhayanidhi Stalin) sidelined many senior leaders and made horrible remarks, DMK did nothing to stop him."

He recalled the infamous episode in Tamil Nadu Assembly on 25 March, 1989 when late AIADMK supremo, J Jayalalithaa (then leader of the Opposition) was attacked allegedly by DMK leaders. DMK-Congress will not safeguard women, he said.

Meanwhile, police on Tuesday arrested social activist Mugilan for his attempt to show a black flag to the PM. Several protesters were arrested for showing black flag ahead of PM's visit. In Dharpuram, farmers who held black balloons were detained.

Narayanasamy rules out possibility of being Puducherry chief minister

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Senior Congress leader V Narayanasamy on Tuesday ruled out any possibility of him taking on the mantle of chief ministership if the Congress-led alliance comes to power in Puducherry, saying he would turn down such an offer and would work 24x7 to strengthen the party in the UT. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said the defining issue of the Assembly poll with the UT is whether Puducherry will be strengthened or not. The former Puducherry chief minister's remarks come days after his name did not figure in the list of 14 candidates announced by the Congress for the Assembly polls and he asserted that he was not contesting the 6 April elections as there was a need to coordinate poll-related works and programmes of the party in the Union Territory. Narayanasamy said



*Two Congress members don't know Assamese culture and is pursuing politics only for the survival of their family...*

REFERRING TO CONGRESS LEADERS RAHUL GANDHI AND PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA

UNION MINISTER SMRITI ZUBIN IRANI

The Statesman

05

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 2021

## THUMBNAILS



City neighbourhood shrouded in haze, during a cloudy and dusty weather, in the Capital on Tuesday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

**President undergoes bypass surgery:** President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday underwent a cardiac bypass surgery at the AIIMS in New Delhi, a statement issued by the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. The surgery was successful and his condition is stable, it said.

PTI

**Life imprisonment to 12 IM members:** A court in Jaipur on Tuesday awarded life imprisonment to 12 members of Indian Mujahideen terror outfit who were arrested by Rajasthan police in 2014. A total of 13 alleged members of a terror module were arrested by the anti-terrorist squad (ATS) and special operations group (SOG) based on information provided by IM terrorists arrested by the NIA.

PTI

**Nanded gurdwara violence:** Police have arrested 14 people in connection with an attack on policemen by a mob of sword-wielding Sikhs in Nanded after they were denied permission to hold a public procession due to the Covid-19 pandemic, an official said on Tuesday.

PTI

## SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Kajal D/o Suresh Shah R/o H.No. O-39, Malkaganj, Subzi Mandi, Delhi  
**Age :** 16 years, **Height :** 5', **Complexion :** Sallow, wearing black colour jeans and pink colour suit, has been missing 10.03.2021 at about 06:00 A.M. from her house. In this regard FIR No. 113/21 Dated 10.03.2021 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO : P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi Website: http://cbi.nic.in Fax: 24368639, Tel. No. 011-23827354, 23823161

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: About 65 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, ID Mark: Old Injury mark on right side of Cheek, Wearing: Hospital Cloth and bare footed was found unconscious vide DD No. 15A in front of ACP Office, near Town Hall, Chandni Chowk, Delhi and was admitted in AAA Hospital vide MLC No. 521/21, during the treatment he was shifted to Safdarjung Hospital for further diagnosis, where they informed about this death vide DD No. 53A, U/s 174Cr.PC on 24.03.2021 been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

**SHO**

P.S. Kotwali, Delhi Ph.: 011-23953442, 23977100

## NATIONAL EDUCATION SOCIETY FOR TRIBAL STUDENTS (NESTS)

(Autonomous organization Under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India) GF Gate No. 3 A Jeevan Tara building, Parliament street New Delhi, 110001

## EKLAVYA MODEL RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS TEACHING STAFF SELECTION EXAM (ETSSSE) - 2021

National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS), an autonomous organization under Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, registered under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, invites online applications for the recruitment of the teaching staff viz. Principal, Vice-Principal, PGT and TGT for Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) across the states.

Details regarding the online application, educational qualifications, teaching experience (wherever applicable) and other eligibility criteria etc. for the ETSSSE-2021 has been detailed in the Information Bulletin, which is accessible at <https://recruitment.nta.nic.in>.

The eligible and interested candidates can apply online up to 30.04.2021 (up to 23:50 Hrs. on the above-mentioned website by submitting the prescribed application-cum-examination fees mentioned there on). State-wise vacant positions are available in the Information Bulletin and vacant positions in a State are open to only those who are domiciled in the concerned State.

The candidates are advised to visit the official website of National Testing Agency (<https://recruitment.nta.nic.in>) for the latest updates.

Sd.  
Commissioner, NESTS

DAVP 43101/11/0020/2021

# Naqvi slams 'new secular syndicate'

Says Prime Minister is synonymous with 'good governance and inclusive development'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI, 30 MARCH

**S**enior BJP leader and Union minister of Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi Tuesday termed the All India United Democratic Front in Assam, Indian Secular Front in West Bengal and Indian Union Muslim League in Kerala as the "new secular syndicate of the Congress".

Naqvi, who is here to campaign in the Assam Assembly elections, said in an exclusive interview, "This new secular syndicate is the height of hypocrisy of the Congress."

Congress is partnering with the three parties mentioned in the ongoing elec-

tions in Assam, West Bengal and Kerala respectively.

The Assembly elections in the four states including Assam and Union Territory of Puducherry is a battle for mandate between "communal vote bank owners" and "inclusive development practitioners", asserted the Union minorities affairs minister.

When asked about winning prospect of his party, he exuded confidence that the Assam election results will be "good" for the BJP which will form government again for the second time. Naqvi said Assam has achieved newer heights of development under the leadership of chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal in the last five years as well



Assam chief electoral officer Nitin Khade after installing an 800 sqft sized sand art at the banks of the Brahmaputra as part of SVEEP, to create voter awareness, on Tuesday. ■ AGENCY

as due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "determination of inclusive develop-

ment" ending "appeasement politics".

Saying the Prime Minister

is synonymous with "good governance and inclusive development", the Union minister said the Modi government has made every section of the society an equal partner in progress with the commitment to "reform, perform and transform".

Asked to highlights achievements of the Modi government during the last six years benefitting people, Naqvi replied the government has provided two crore houses to poor; Kisan Samman Nidhi to 10 crore farmers; free gas cylinders to more than eight crore needy women under Ujjwala Yojana; Mudra Yojana has benefitted more than 28 crore people.

Campaigning ends for 2nd phase

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI, 30 MARCH

A high-octane electoral campaign for the second phase of Assam Assembly polls, spearheaded by an array of national and state leaders, came to an end on Tuesday evening.

The second phase of state elections will decide the fate of 345 candidates in 39 seats going to polls on 1 April.

The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) issue was at the forefront of the campaign, with the BJP, which had maintained a studied silence on it in the run up to the first phase of voting, raising it in the Barak Valley this time as a carrot to the predominantly Hindu Bengali population, some of whom have their roots in Bangladesh. While releasing the party manifesto,

BJP president J P Nadda had made a reference to the CAA, mentioning that it would be implemented in time.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, in his rallies at Patharkandi and Silchar, mentioned the controversial legislation, for the first time, assuring that citizenship rights will be given to refugees while asserting at the same time that the BJP will not allow infiltrators to enter the state.

BJP president J P Nadda had sounded the party's poll bugle from Silchar in Barak Valley. Among the prominent BJP leaders who campaigned for candidates, Nitin Gadkari, Narendra Tomar, Jitendra Singh, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan among others.

## Holding polls will scare away corona: Cong MLA

GAURAV CHANDRA  
BHOPAL, 30 MARCH

Citing the examples of West Bengal and Assam, a Congress MLA in Madhya Pradesh has suggested that holding elections in MP too would be the best remedy to immediately stop the spread of Covid-19 in the state.

Vipin Wankhede, MLA from Agar constituency, has written a formal letter to the MP state election commissioner to conduct the pending municipal and rural bodies' elections across the state as soon as possible.

The Opposition Congress MLA has reasoned that huge election rallies of political leaders and mass gatherings of political party workers for the polls would scare away the coronavirus, just like it appears to have in the election going states of West Bengal and Assam.

that the coronavirus gets scared and runs away from MP" the MLA from the SC-reserved constituency in Agar-Malwa district quipped.

Polls to the urban and rural local bodies in MP have been due for more than a year.

The terms of both urban bodies and panchayats expired in December 2019 and January 2020. There are 407 three-tiered urban bodies in MP, including 16 municipal corporations, 99 municipalities and 292 nagar parishes.

344 of these are due for polls. They include 16 municipal corporations, 75 municipalities and 253 nagar parishes.

Meanwhile, the latest wave of Covid-19 in MP has reached disturbing heights and more than 2170 new positive cases were registered across the state on the day of Holi.

With that, the positivity rate in MP became more than 10.5 per cent, as the total samples collected on the day were about 20420. Bhopal recently logged 460 new cases, which was the all time highest number in the state capital till date.

Similarly, the state's business capital Indore registered 619 new cases, which was also the highest count so far in the city.

According to the health department figures, the state had witnessed a whopping spike of 225 per cent in positive cases in just eight days.

## Opp attacks on Govt turn stronger as Parliament concludes Budget Session

DEEPAK RAZDAN  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Opposition attacks on the Government turned stronger as Parliament concluded its Budget Session last week, completing the entire financial business well before 31st March.

The opposition was exercised not just on financial policies; there were Bills that it wanted not passed in haste, but got no concessions from the Government. Confrontation took place on the Insurance Amendment Bill, 2021 and the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021. Like the rest of the Session, there were repeated adjournments and walkouts.

While the Insurance Bill sought to raise the limit of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent, the Delhi NCT Bill sought to redefine certain basic features of the original NCT governance law.

The Insurance Bill was already passed by the Rajya Sabha when the Lok Sabha considered it last week. Still, doubts were raised how the substantial increase in FDI would impact the Indian insurance domain where public sector entities had provided reliable services to their customers and large dividends to the Government.

In both Houses, the Congress recalled that former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee had opened FDI into the sector with a 26 per cent limit, but blocked its increase to 49 per cent when the UPA Government under Mammotha Singh proposed it. The Rajya Sabha had seen a more aggressive Opposition on the Bill, forcing several adjournments before the discussion, but the Lok Sabha allowed its passage without any difficulty.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the FDI limit revision to 49 per cent had brought Rs 26,000 crores in foreign capital for the liquidity-starved sector.

The Finance Bill discussions on Tuesday and Wednesday, in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, respectively, were more comprehensive in reviewing the performance of



the economy. Quite expectantly, the steep increases in the sale prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas came under attack.

In the Rajya Sabha, Sushil Kumar Modi (BJP) responded on behalf of the Government and said those criticizing the taxation rates for petrol and diesel must know that any reduction in the rates would seriously impact the States' income, and their developmental projects eventually.

If out of Rs 100 a litre petrol, Rs 60 was the tax component; the Centre received only Rs 35, and Rs 25 went to the States' coffers. Even out of the Central share, 42 percent devolved on the States as per the 14th Finance Commission formula.

A former deputy chief minister of Bihar, Modi said he had long been associated with the evolution of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and knew that the States would never accept bringing petrol and diesel under the GST purview, as this would mean a reduction in the tax rates, and an annual loss of over Rs 2 lakh crores to them in tax revenues.

Trinamul Congress members led by their leader Derek O'Brien complained of injustice towards West Bengal in the Rajya Sabha, but the finance minister replied the state government was responsible for depriving the poor farmers of the state their due under the Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme by not supplying their names to the Centre.

The toughest battle during the Budget Session was on the Delhi NCT Bill, but the Government eventually managed to get it passed. The Bill was first passed by the Lok Sabha after heated exchanges. The Government defence was the Opposition read too much in the Bill which was just removing some ambiguities in the existing law.

The Rajya Sabha witnessed much more drama, but walkouts before the voting by several regional parties made things easier for the Government. The Bill came up before the Upper House first on 23rd

March but had to be deferred till the next day, after the Opposition described it as "unconstitutional" and forced four adjournments.

On the next day, too, there were two adjournments, and a discussion on the Bill remained stalled for 40 minutes. Leader of the Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge this time described the Bill as dangerous, designed to deprive an elected Government of its democratic powers.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

He suggested a Select Committee reference for the Bill, saying the NCT of Delhi Act was protected by Article 239AA of the Constitution, and a Constitutional amendment must also come. Sanjay Singh, member representing Delhi's ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), had given a notice against the Bill but it was rejected.

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that in reference to the advertisement published on 27.03.2021 in newspapers regarding NTPC Exam Special Trains No. 03297/03298 between Patna-Anand Vihar T., Railways have decided to revise the dates of running of the trains as per details:-

### REVISED DAYS OF RUN OF 03297/03298 PATNA-ANAND VIHAR (T)-PATNA EXAM SPECIAL EXPRESS TRAIN (VIA GAYA) FULL

## Economic connotation

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 48-hour visit to Bangladesh in the midst of the Assembly elections in four states and a Union Territory had a pregnant economic connotation. This is quite apart from the ceremonial niceties that were exchanged by the Prime Minister in the company of his counterpart, Begum Hasina, on the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh and the centenary of its brainchild, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The occasion, therefore, was a chapter in South Asian history. While both leaders have unveiled the "roadmap for a shared future", it is the pacts that they signed that were riveted to brassstacks. Chief among these was the inauguration of a new passenger train service, the Mitali Express, from New Jalpaiguri to Dhaka. Connectivity has been given a boost not the least because this is the fourth train that symbolises the signal of intent on either side of the territorial divide, recalling the train from East Pakistan to Seal-dah station and the steamer service with the delectable chicken curry served on board - both modes of transport in the pre-Partition days. Small wonder that India's foreign secretary, Harsh Vardhan Shringla, told Begum Hasina that Mr Modi's visit has lent "new energy and new pace" to bilateral relations. The pacts that have been concluded envisage the development of a nuclear power plant, *haats* along the border, additional consignments of Covid vaccines, cooperation in space and in the sphere of artificial intelligence, and India's participation in the first-ever air show in Bangladesh in 2022. No less critical were Mr Modi's visits to the Mujib Memorial and the Matua Centre, the latter perhaps with an eye on the electoral potential of the class group in West Bengal. As regards the Teesta, Begum Hasina evaded diplomatic niceties when she told her host rather bluntly that the decision on sharing the waters of the river was taken nine years ago and is yet to be implemented. Mr Modi has reiterated India's "sincere commitment and continued efforts" to conclude this agreement in "consultation with the relevant stakeholders". Pre-eminently Mamata Banerjee who has been stoutly against sharing the Teesta water, primarily because it will impede agriculture in North Bengal, given the shallow depth of the river. Over time, therefore, the river has become an electoral issue. But remarkable indeed was the cooperation in matters of public health. With India gifting 1.2 million doses of Covid vaccine, Bangladesh now ranks as the largest foreign recipient of vaccines made in India. Less easily sorted out was Dhaka's request for what it calls a 1.3 km "Innocent Passage" which will facilitate the passage of the other country's boats with restrictions that will be in place along the Padma river. While India pledged to consider the request, Mr Modi's delegation made a robust pitch for completion of border fencing, beginning with the Tripura-Bangladesh sector. The border remains ever so porous, with passports and visas reduced to irrelevance for hundreds of thousands who cross over amidst what this newspaper described in 1979 as "the quiet influx".

## Japan in focus

Japan has after decades of circumspection shown a willingness to directly call out Chinese behaviour that falls foul of the international order and to affirm its opposition to Beijing's coercive and destabilising acts, thanks, in the main, to the Joe Biden administration's embrace of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept. Tokyo has also welcomed President Biden's efforts to stop the downward spiral in its relations with South Korea. And it has been rewarded - Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga is likely to be the first foreign leader to visit the Biden White House for a summit meet in the first week of April. experts are veering around to the view that Washington's robust diplomatic outreach to allies and like-minded countries in Asia has been welcome news for Tokyo. In fact, concerns that Team Biden would not take complete ownership of the FOIP or adopt a softer line on China have quickly dissipated, say observers. With the successful culmination of the first ever Quad summit meeting (involving the USA, Japan, India, and Australia), and the USA-Japan 2+2 meeting in Tokyo among foreign and defence ministers earlier this month, Japan has clearly emerged as the lynchpin of the Biden Administration's Asia strategy. The 2+2 joint statement stands out for the broad convergence of priorities and agreement to intensify efforts by the two allies in the areas of defence, coordination with like-minded democracies, protection of the rules-based order, and tackling transnational challenges.

Significantly, Tokyo and Washington identified "peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait" as a key concern. Both countries also acknowledged the importance of trilateral cooperation between the USA, Japan, and South Korea as Kim Jong Un looks to pre-empt the outcome of the Biden Administration's ongoing review of America's North Korea policy by expanding his nuclear and missile capabilities thereby effectively ending prospects of denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula. The crucial question for Japan now is whether - and how - it goes about maintaining its careful balancing act vis-à-vis China. After all, China is Japan's largest trading partner with the total value of bilateral trade between the two countries estimated to be north of \$330 billion. Not just Washington, Tokyo will need the support of - and policy coordination with - its other allies and friends in the region as well if it is to play its role as a vital peg in the evolving strategic architecture which seeks to limit Beijing's perceived overreach. It is in this context that Japan's suggestion over the weekend to include the Asean countries in the trilateral (Japan-Australia-India) Supply Chain Resilience Initiative which seeks to reduce dependence on China and build resilient supply chains in the Indo-Pacific must be seen.

# Gandhi and dress

Gandhi's reasons for the metamorphoses were contextual, psychological and assertively political for a reason ~ and that reason was not to disparage Western clothing sensibilities as inferior, amoral or scandalous. Gandhi's insistence on 'Indianness' was not reflective of reverse-superiority or the 'uncivilisationalness' of the West, but in the more profound tenets of equality for all, without discrimination



The 'Mahatma' (great soul) has shaped and inspired many of India's sovereign and political instincts that are still invoked in the name of the 'father of the nation'. Though in recent times, India's veritable 'conscience of humanity' has been diminished and he shares an increasingly growing and disconcerting space with the man who killed him. Overall, the political instincts of the country have not necessarily evolved for the better over the years, in many ways, they have either regressed or atrophied, instead of progressing. The stranglehold of misognostic, chauvinistic and revisionist politicians, cutting across the political lines, is all pervasive.

Their preachy, outdated and unsolicited sermons on issues that ought not to concern them, militates against better-sense and priorities, and are more in conformity with Khap Panchayat mentality that refuses to evolve over time. In recent times, unwarranted comments on Ripped Jeans and Bermuda shorts have horrified the citizenry. The shallowness of the political 'bench strength', even in the ostensible 'party with a difference' came forth with the most undesirable comments from a relatively young Chief Minister, who was recently appointed in a reshuffle to deliver good governance, just before the crucial state elections. Within hours he gave a sneak peek into his mind with, 'You run an NGO, wear jeans ripped at the knees, move about in society, children are with you, what values you will teach' ~ subliminal concerns with the admixture of NGOs, 'society', understanding of 'values' as also, clothing itself, was apparent.

It would be pertinent to imagine as to how Mahatma Gandhi who was shot dead by an illiberal fanatic, would have reacted to the issue of clothing. Gandhi was called a 'half-naked fakir' for his definitive image in a

simple loincloth and khadi, by the racist Winston Churchill. But Gandhi's image was a deliberate optic of his political and 'Indian' assertion, to dare with a visually powerful statement.

Earlier, Gandhi too had adorned the quintessential English Gentleman's attire, albeit spiced with mild 'Indianness' of a velvet Kathiawadi cap and necklace - a subtle cue of his descendants from a family of high-ranking officials in the court of feudal Kathiawad. Gandhi famously confessed his initial vanity in dressing-the-part by admitting, "the punctiliousness in dress persisted for years!"

Gandhi's unpublished handbook, Guide to London, addressed to Indian students migrating to England had a section dedicated to the importance of dressing correctly (with English etiquette). In it, Gandhi makes a compelling case for attention to detail in dressing up, as it reflects on one's character and standards of culture. Clearly shunning ostentatiousness, Gandhi had no qualms in suggesting keeping-up with the trends and fashions that prevailed. That his attempts to be the 'English Gentleman' fell apart with the rude shock in South Africa, where racism tolerated no such parity between a White and a non-White, was to lead to a political awakening of a 'self-respecting Indian' who bore no inferiority complexes about his native dressing style. His personal tribulations during his societal work with the 'indentured Indians' in South Africa triggered seeds of self-reliance, which was to ultimately lead to Swadeshi. Deeper realisation of the miserable fate that awaited the native

Zulus in the Zulu Rebellion, moved Gandhi towards a higher consciousness of Satyagraha (Force of truth/soul). Collectively, the increasingly politicised Gandhi expressed his identity, Swadeshiness, Satyagraha in a visual dimension i.e. simplicity and ethnicity of his dressing. Reneging on his earlier view of Western clothing as the only means of civilizing or the necessity of the Manchester cloth became his rallying cry.

But, Gandhi's reasons for the metamorphoses were contextual, psychological and assertively political for a reason ~ and that reason was not to disparage Western clothing sensibilities as inferior, amoral or scandalous.

Gandhi's insistence on 'Indianness' was not reflective of reverse-superiority or the 'uncivilisationalness' of the West, but in the more profound tenets of equality for all, without discrimination. His changed sartorial sense was symbolic of conflating one's identity, convictions and the need for 'unclothing', towards a higher purpose.

The later-day Gandhi was on a specific mission, and his deliberately austere and native clothing represented a certain topical reaction and a personal quest for truth, empathy and struggle, as he saw necessary to be expressed in his clothing style. However, India's Independence in 1947 recalibrated many of Gandhi's earlier expressions and symbols of freedom struggle (including suggesting the dissolution of the Congress Party) towards more pressing, tangible and critical urgencies in the recently vivisected nation, rather than fussing over clothing style. Unfortunately,

for the ever-evolving mind of a Gandhi, his successors in Indian politics have still bound his memory in selective silos that enforce a rigidity of perception, one which ignores crucial contexts underlying the brilliantly progressive mind of Gandhi that made him, 'Mahatma'.

As 'Father of the Nation', Gandhi's photo adorns the corridors-of-power where elected members to the State and National Assemblies swear to abide by the sacred constitutional spirit, under the watchful (if increasingly diminished) photos of Gandhi.

Beyond the usual partisan slugfest and competitive blame-games ~ the reality is India is in the throes of an unprecedented economic-cartographical-medical-societal crisis, and to pontificate about sartorial preferences is not only a luxury, but a misplaced and a shameful one, at that. The art of 'diverting' attention from the real issues staring in the face of an impending 'second/third wave' of the pandemic, ought to make way for deliberations on our true needs.

Politicians ought to understand the evolutionary spirit of the times (which needs no judgmental or misogynistic pronouncements) and to be confident and reassured of the timeless Sanskaars in a 5000-year-old civilisation.

An acute sense of priority and sensitivity is imperative for the public leadership to goad them towards progressive banks, as opposed to trying to swim against the tide and plodding imperiously, ignorantly and incessantly. The issue of Ripped Jeans is not about clothing as much as it is about a ripped mentality ~ there was nothing Sanskaari or Gandhian about the unwanted statements by these politicians. Gandhi would have surely disdained such thinking, that too 73 years after his death.

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

**ASIAN VOICES**  
Better solution for  
maternal health

In the next two minutes, one woman will die from complications related to pregnancy and child-birth. She will die from entirely preventable causes during one of the most beautiful moments of human life, giving birth. The good news is that there are some solutions that are inexpensive and effective. In a world besieged by problems from Covid-19 to climate change, it's hard to pay attention to the many other challenges that still remain. For the vast majority of the world's population, these are simple problems of survival: not dying from tuberculosis, getting enough food, breaking free of poverty and getting adequate education. Vying for scarce resources, these problems often lose out because they don't have enough media attention, famous spokespeople or viral imagery. The harsh truth is we can't afford to fix all problems. That is why we have to ask hard questions: how big is the problem, what is the solution – and crucially, how much will it cost compared to its effects?

The tragedy of pregnant women and their children dying has been on the global health community's radar for a long time. Twenty years ago, the UN promised to address the issue. But progress to date has not been enough. Yes, maternal deaths declined about a third from 451,000 per year in 2000 to about 295,000 today, but we had committed to more than a two-thirds reduction by 2015.

Since then, we've promised to reduce it even further to around 100,000 deaths by 2030. But commitment without action doesn't save pregnant women and their children. It takes financing and simple procedures. Mothers in the hardest-hit

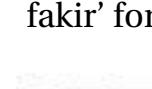
**The Jakarta Post**  
developing countries are still 80 times more likely to die than their rich-country counterparts.

And their newborns also die ~ last year 2.4 million children died in their first 28 days on earth. They die because many women either give birth in their own homes, without access to skilled birth attendants, or in facilities with limited basic emergency care.

The mothers die from infections that abound with low hygiene, and high blood pressure, that can lead to seizures. Severe bleeding that can happen after childbirth kills 46,000 mothers every year. Clearly, something needs to be done.

Development professionals have put forward many proposals on how to address this global crisis, but trying to fix everything everywhere comes at a cost of over \$30 billion per year, and it is unlikely that such funds can be mobilised.

Instead, my think tank Copenhagen Consensus, supported by funding from Merck for Mothers, worked with leading maternal health experts to use cost-benefit analysis to find the most cost-effective policies first. The research focused on the highest-burden 59 countries that account for 91 per cent of all maternal deaths globally.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Life and the preparation for death

SIR, Apropos Abhik Roy's illuminating article, 'Tagore and Death' (2 March), it deals with the poet's philosophy of life and death. Throughout his life, Rabindranath had deeply meditated on the wonderful play of life and death. He realised that if we accept creation we will have to accept dissolution

as well. Just as smiles and tears are two sides of the same coin, death is the reverse side of life. One must calmly accept what is inevitable. His conviction was that life and death in reality constitute the infinite system of the cycle of life.

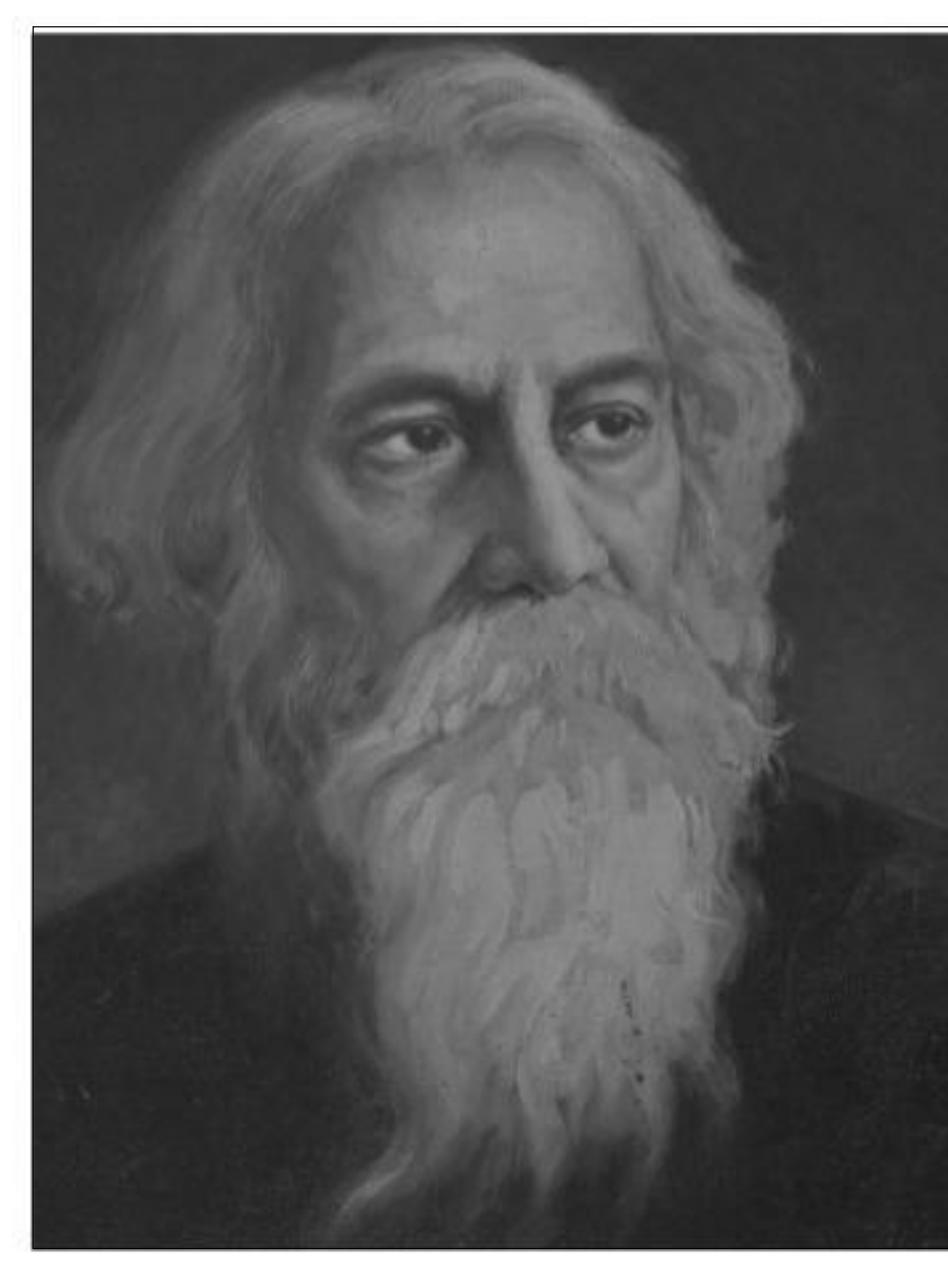
He perceived that if life is seen as a whole, it will appear that the

entire life is the preparation for death itself. And death is the completion of life. Rabindranath conceived of death as an integral part of life. In that arrangement death does not destroy life; on the contrary, it carries life and the flow of life continues.

A flower matures into a fruit

**SPRING SPRINKLES**  
A riot of rainbow shades  
Blue skies drenched  
With the flares and blaze  
Of the rising orange-red orb  
White cloud-boats  
Playfully glide on the ocean above  
Aspirational red blossoms  
Competing flower sports  
Krishnachura, Gulmohor, Palash  
A theatre of riotous dripping colours  
My silver hair has changed colour  
It is dark brown and jet black  
Bottled colours dark brown dark black  
Splashed and spilled with skill  
Colours colour my sight  
Colours colour me  
My feet are restless  
My heart bursts into song  
I raise my arms to touch  
The topmost gulmohor blossom  
I smear spring colours  
On myriad of minds and moods  
In joyous carefree jubilation  
I spin around as the wind  
Tousles my palimpsest strands  
Drenched in an intangible  
Rain of colours.

Yours, etc., Sanjukta Dasgupta,  
Kolkata, 28 March.



that finally falls down, but a new plant grows out of the fruit and it bears flowers again. So life is the flower and death is its fruit. Death is, therefore, a necessary part in the process of the cycle of life. If life is looked upon with such a lofty conception, death loses much of its affliction and agony. Both life and death will appear to be the integral part and thereby create the rhythm in the pattern of life.

Prof Roy has rightly pointed out that in spite of many bereavements in his life, Tagore's intense love of life was never subdued by the successive blows of death. He always "found joy and sublime beauty in the vast universe." Tagore's philosophy of life and his attitude to death will be a perennial source of consolation to our afflictions and bereavements.

Compliments to *The Statesman* for having published such a valuable article.

Yours, etc., Dipak K Prodhan,  
Howrah, 5 March.

### FORBIDDING COCKTAIL

SIR, This refers to your editorial 'Kremlin Rattled' (20 March) that the world's most powerful man, the President of the United States, Mr Joe Biden referred to his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin as a 'killer'. He also described Putin as a man without a soul. The epithet has rattled the Kremlin, though it would be arduous to argue that the latest uproar between Washington and Moscow could ignite a new Cold War. The move to summon the Russian Ambassador to the US, Anatoly Antonov, to Moscow for

talks came shortly after President Biden accused his Russian counterpart of being a killer and warned he would 'pay a price' for alleged election meddling. It is also significant to note the recent nonchalant attitude of Putin regarding the sentencing of Alexei Navalny, a fierce critic of his regime amid nationwide protests in Russia. Further, in spite of protests, Navalny's transfer to a notorious penal colony and subsequently to an indefinite sentence have proved Putin's blatant brazen display of authoritarianism against the opposition.

President Biden can use NATO forces and/or UN forces under any critical circumstances and can put economic sanctions against any country. Ties between the US and Russia have, of late, been under a cloud over the imprisonment of Navalny. The US President's comments were aired as the Commerce Department tightened sanctions on some exports to Russia as punishment for Navalny's alleged poisoning in August last year. The move will toughen restrictions originally put in place in response to the March 2018 poisoning of former Russian military intelligence officer, Sergei Skripal and his daughter Julia Skripal in Salisbury, Britain with a military-grade nerve agent. Altogether, it is a forbidding cocktail of intemperate language, alleged electoral meddling and the current diplomatic blitz on the part of the Kremlin.

Yours, etc., Achyut Mukhopadhyay,  
Howrah, 26 March.

HARSHA KAKAR

**A**ddressing the inaugural Islamabad Security dialogue in mid-March, Pakistani PM Imran Khan stated, "Climate change, food security and economic vulnerability are some of the most challenging impediments to overcoming insecurity across Pakistan. Security of the common citizen is one of the most important issues." There was a mention of talks with India, however no criticism of Indian forces in Kashmir, which is something that dominates every event in Pakistan.

Imran also spoke about regional connectivity and benefits which Pakistan could provide India. He stated, "Without regional peace and improved trade ties with neighbouring countries, Pakistan cannot capitalise on its geostrategic location." He mentioned opening doors for linking India to Central Asia. It was Pakistan which blocked these routes, resulting in financial losses to itself. The opening of Chabahar port with planned linkages to Central Asia was a major challenge, which could make Pakistan's road connectivity irrelevant in case it continued on a similar path.

Pakistan Army Chief, General Bajwa was not much different when he addressed the gathering the next day. He stated, "we face choices; whether to stay etched in the acrimony and toxicity of the past, continue promoting conflict and get into another vicious cycle of war, disease and destruction; or to move ahead, bring the dividends of our technological and scientific advancements to our people and usher in a new era of peace and prosperity." He added, "today the leading drivers of change in the world are demography, economy and technology. However, one issue which remains central to this concept is economic security and cooperation." He also discussed Indo-Pak talks and creation of a conducive environment by India.

Did Pakistan suddenly realise that there are more important issues than Kashmir? The issues of economy and development, stated by both are nothing new; what is new is that after a long time, the leadership of Pakistan has acknowledged this fact. Till the announcement of the ceasefire and hopes for commencement of a dialogue, every speech, despite the occasion, only involved India and Kashmir. There was never a mention of the declining Pakistani economy, the inability to provide health care to its

## Can Pakistan sell changed narrative to its people?



people and its sinking into a debt trap.

Over the years the Pakistan economy has continued shrinking, the nation increasingly isolated on account of its support to terrorism, even as the arms race with India continued, all of which accounted for the nation moving deeper into debt. Added pressure by the FATF, pushed by India and the US, to change Pakistan's behaviour, further curtailed its ability to garner funds needed for development. Its military was supported by China as a counter to India. Its own allies dumped it for economic ties with India, adding to Pakistan's concerns. Yet, instead of working to resolve its problems, the government of Pakistan and the army focussed only on India and their jugular vein, Kashmir. Saudi Arabia and the UAE, both Pakistani benefactors, regularly warned it about its Kashmir obsession, but due to domestic compulsions, it was ignored. Finally, as a sign of disgust, they began demanding repayment of loans, adding to economic pressure on the country.

The Pakistan army had begun

believing its own lies that India would launch operations to regain POK and Gilgit Baltistan. It deployed large forces along the borders and spent scarce funds to procure weapons. It accused India of supporting insurrections along its western borders where it went on a rampage of human rights violations, ignoring development and refusing to win hearts and minds. Its brutality alienated it further from its own population.

The Pakistan army ate a large part of the budget, controlled the nation's foreign policy and ensured that its narrative of defending the country against Indian threats gave it the power to select and control governments. Its fake projection of partition history and twisted reports on human rights violations in Kashmir helped build an anti-India sentiment and diverted public attention from economic woes and development to enmity with India. The bubble had to burst at some stage.

With the implementation of a

2003 ceasefire and an intention of projecting an environment of reduced hostility, Pakistan has suddenly discovered major problems which plague the nation. It has also realised that it faces hostility with every neighbour, be it India, Iran and Afghanistan. Hence, the national leadership has attempted to tackle enmity with one neighbour, India. It is now being compelled to change its own internal narrative and project that India is not the threat which it was claimed to be. However, it has to keep the Kashmir issue alive as dropping it after decades of projection may not be accepted by its radical clerics.

Pakistan's internal problems have remained the same for decades, only worsening over time. However, they have been hidden from the public by pushing in money obtained by borrowing from every possible source and on occasions with high interest rates. At some time, these would need to be repaid. The CPEC which the Pakistani leadership claims is its saviour is in reality nothing but another debt trap, as other than China no other nation

utilizes it for Pakistan to earn revenue.

The time for repayment of debt is now nearing. As per a report in The News Pakistan, the country's total debt stood at Rs 42.9 trillion at the end of December 2020. It is only expected to rise. Dawn in an article, titled, "Heavily in debt" on 19 December stated, "The fact that Pakistan's external debt continues to accumulate, and it has to borrow more dollars to repay its old loans suggests that the country has actually been caught in a debt trap." In this situation can it continue spending money on defence while enhancing hostility with India? For how long can it fool its people that without Kashmir (which it can never claim) Pakistan is incomplete?

The realisation always existed; however, now it is being put into practice. Sense has begun to dawn on the Pakistani leadership. The question is, will it be able to convince its people, who it has been misleading for decades, to accept this change.

The writer is a retired Major-General of the Indian Army.

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Tharus are one of the aboriginal tribes living mainly in northern Bihar along the foot of the Himalayas that have hitherto attracted little attention. Like most of their kind, they have shown a tendency to retire before the advance of civilisation into the jungle, where they follow their traditional occupation of clearing the forest by burning, and planting crops among the ashes, the men being disposed to leave the real labour of cultivation to the women while they engage in hunting and fishing, which they consider the proper calling of their sex. It is said, indeed, that the only regular occupation which a Tharu shows a readiness to accept is that of an elephant driver. The skill the Tharus possess in the management of elephants is indisputable. They are often employed in capturing and taming the wild elephants of the Nepal terai. Their tribal organisation is of the simplest description. Every little village is a self-governing community, presided over by a headman, who has a council of elders to assist him in the administration of justice. Their religion is animistic, but they are inclined to add Hindu deities like Mahadeo to their objects of worship and to imitate the marriage and other social customs of the Hindus. The Bettiah Raj offered to build a hospital and bungalow if the "Regions Beyond" Mission, which works in North Bihar, would supply a medical missionary.

NEWS ITEMS

### BIHAR GOVERNMENT'S HILL EXODUS

A resolution moved by Babu Shyam Narayan Sinha Sharma recommending that the annual exodus of the Government to Ranchi should be limited to three months, and that only the Governor accompanied by the minimum number of officials whose services might be considered essential, should proceed there, was accepted by the Legislative Council today. Babu Ganesh Dutta Singh moved an amendment urging that the exodus to Ranchi should be completely stopped. He said the Governor and members and high officials could go to Ranchi to acquaint themselves with conditions there and stay there some time. He emphasised the necessity of the Government remaining in a central place and instanced the delay in the arrival of the Lieutenant-Governor from Ranchi during the Shahabad riots.

### BOMBAY ART SOCIETY'S EXHIBITION

The thirteenth Annual Exhibition of the Bombay Art Society opened on Tuesday night, when the members of the Committee were "At Home" to a large company of guests, including Their Excellencies Sir George and Lady Lloyd. Nearly six hundred pictures and other exhibits have been displayed. The Society's Gold Medal for the best work in the exhibition was awarded to Mr. H. Mazumdar for his picture "Smriti." The Society's silver medals for the best work in oils goes to Mr. S.L. Haldankare and for the best work in water colours to Mrs. F.F. Sladen. The Society's prize for the best work by a lady was awarded to Mrs. E.G. MacMillan and Sir Dorab Tata's prize for the best work in the Indian style of painting was presented to Mr. G.H. Najakar.

### INDIAN GOVERNMENT'S EXCHANGE POLICY

At the annual general meeting of the Presidency Trades' Association tonight Mr. A. Greville Bullocks, the retiring Master, in presenting the annual report, claimed that the Association should have been represented on the committee recently appointed by the Government to draw up a scheme of industrial and technical education. Referring to the exchange situation, Mr. Bullocks said everybody seemed to be agreed that the time chosen for attempting to fix exchange at two shilling gold was a ghastly error, resulting in the present disastrous condition of things for which the Government of India were largely responsible. There was left an uncomfortable feeling that the Government were misled by the conditions then prevailing and were not sufficiently farseeing to judge of the possibilities of the near future.

### EX-EMPEROR'S EXPLOIT

The greatest astonishment has been caused by the sudden arrival of the Austrian ex-Emperor Karl in Hungary, of which it is rumoured he intends to assume the crown. Well-informed circles in Paris and Rome are inclined to discredit the report, but details are given both from Vienna and Budapest showing that Karl, who was in disguise, reached the Austro-Hungarian Frontier on Saturday. The Hungarian Premier, Dr. Seleki, was summoned, and urged the ex-Emperor not to carry out his intentions. Karl, however, proceeded to Budapest and saw the Regent, M. Horthy, who advised him to return to Switzerland. Karl declined and is at present staying at Steinamanger.

## Celebrations and a vision for S Asia

SHAMSHER B CHOWDHURY

between Bangladesh and these countries in the areas of connectivity, trade, tourism and people to people contact.

With India, of course, there is the major historical context of the relations; India having played a direct and a decisive role in our Liberation War in 1971, where Indian soldiers fought and sacrificed their lives for our freedom. The presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the 50th anniversary of the Independence Day of Bangladesh itself mirrored the special nature of that relationship.

The visit of the Indian prime minister has understandably drawn the biggest attention among political and diplomatic observers and the media on both sides of the border. The last time the two leaders interacted was virtually back in December last year as part of the observance of the Victory Day, a moment in history the two countries proudly share.

Highly reputed Indian political analyst and journalist C Raja Mohan, in an article in the Indian Express on the eve of the visit described the bilateral ties between Bangladesh and India as one of a "steady improvement". He cautioned at the same time, "Delhi will be unwise to take the relationship with Bangladesh for granted".

One couldn't agree with Mr Raja Mohan more; indeed, the basket of positives has grown exponentially, the timely supply of Covid-19 vaccines from India is the latest addition. But there is still much more that needs to be done, bilaterally and in the context of the dawn of a multipolar Asia. Dr Seeradha Datta, of the Delhi-based think tank, Vivekananda

International Foundation, and one who knows Bangladesh well, believes that among other things, geo-strategic interests make India and Bangladesh politically vital to each other. While briefing the media in Delhi the day before the visit, Indian Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla, a former High Commissioner to Bangladesh, described the relations between Bangladesh and India as being one of "comprehensive strategic partnership". This is welcome news. The contours of such a partnership, however, can indeed be broad and have major connotations.

Visits of Indian leaders, especially the prime minister, to Bangladesh, gives rise to expectations among the people on this side of the border for a visible forward movement on unresolved issues, especially on sharing of the waters of common rivers. One also expects delivery on past commitments on reducing the instances of deaths of Bangladeshis in some of the border areas to zero. On the former, the reactivation of the Joint Rivers Commission at the Secretary's level to work towards a basin wide approach looks promising. The latter remains a work in progress, given the divergent interpretations of the causes of the deaths. Assurances are welcome but it is delivery that makes the difference.

On the whole, the optics during the visit were good. In addition to handing over the "Gandhi Peace Prize" awarded to Bangabandhu, Prime Minister Modi in his speech at the official event was superlative in paying his tribute to Bangabandhu and was in glorious praise for all those who had made the supreme sacrifice from both

sides of the border for the freedom of Bangladesh. Prime Minister Modi became the first foreign leader to visit Bangabandhu's Mausoleum in Tongipara to pay respect to the Father of the Nation. He also talked of a shared prosperous future for all.

At the official talks between the two sides, a list of MOUs were inked covering multiple areas, significant of which was establishment of a framework of cooperation to address trade remedial measures and another on disaster management, resilience and mitigation. Connectivity was further enhanced with the launching of the Mitali Express connecting Dhaka with Jalpaiguri. Another 1.2 million doses of Covishield vaccines were formally handed over. Some other decisions were taken to commemorate the history of Bangladesh's Liberation War. The Bangladeshi side said discussions on the sensitive issues of water sharing, including an agreement on Teesta, was also discussed but there was no concrete outcome. But then, none was expected.

Looking at the entirety of the 10 days of observance of the two historic events in the physical and virtual presence of regional and global leaders and the sound bites coming out of it, its potential ramifications for Bangladesh as a country and for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina herself, warrants close study. Needless to say, the events have given Bangladesh huge visibility on the world stage. For Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, it has created the stature of a consequential regional leader. The sense of her call "upon the political leaders and policymakers of South Asia to work hand in hand to build a peaceful and

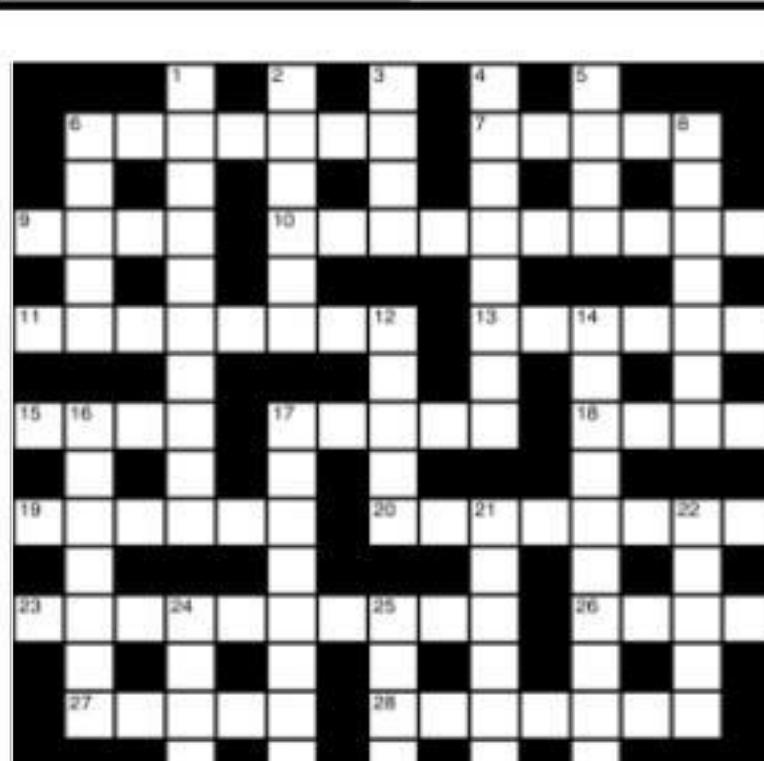
prosperous South Asia" signalled that. The prime minister reiterated this at the end of the ceremonial programme of the Independence Day itself in the presence of Prime Minister Modi, significantly, calling on all for a "pledge to forget all the divisions, work for the development of people and establish a prosperous South Asia", calling on India as the largest country in the region to play a leading role in building a stable and politically and economically vibrant South Asia. The not so veiled messages in these statements were not lost to the discerning ears. She was addressing all those who turned up at the historic events and also those who could not. Prime Minister Modi in his response echoed the sentiments albeit in a more nuanced language.

At the virtual meeting with her Indian counterpart in December last year, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, in reference to the new challenges thrown up by the coronavirus pandemic, floated the idea of setting up a SAARC Medical and Public Health Research Institute. On the 50th anniversary of the independence of Bangladesh, she seems to have taken that a step further by calling for a more inclusive institutionalised regional cooperation, with emphasis on "forgetting past divisions". It may not be wrong to presume that the prime minister has set a vision for a regional role for Bangladesh and for herself as a strong advocate for meaningful regional cooperation in South Asia. If the events of the last 10 days are any indication, Bangladesh and Sheikh Hasina are perhaps best placed to move that process forward.

The Daily Star/ANN

NO 28869

CROSSWORD



### SOLUTION FOR 29 MARCH

#### ACROSS

- 6 Take in Indian spices and wine (7)
- 7 Landowner involved in tactical air defence (5)
- 9 American poet has time to pen final letter (4)
- 10 River creature with weapon creates unnecessary panic (5,5)
- 11 Underwear thief in Kansas (8)
- 13 Used to be part of the LGBT community, which is quite spicy (6)
- 15 Furniture store with department covering Kelvin's proposal (4)
- 17 Religious measure accepted by artist leaving America (5)
- 18 Air defence space in port (4)
- 19 The French native set exercise (6)
- 20 Presumably released from incarceration and did very well (8)
- 23 Lear boats about old navigational aids (10)
- 26 Heartlessly denounces traitors (4)
- 27 Periodically admits actor into dance (5)
- 28 Intern in NI town welcoming English rector (7)
- 1 Get Castro in a tizzy introducing American items of clothing (10)
- 2 Flies briefly split lottery (6)
- 3 Elkie's singer quietly leaves nobleman (4)
- 4 Type of marble style in corridor (8)
- 5 Register for work (4)

#### DOWN

- 6 Look to incorporate zone for mast (5)
- 8 Hardy expert supports Durham (7)
- 12 Special border plant (5)
- 14 Details of money everyone found in career (5,5)
- 16 Spoken to without notice to be prepared (7)
- 17 Courageous person follows criminal group into nerve centre (8)
- 21 Graduate invested in funds for African fortress (6)
- 22 Go in with some Aberdeen Terriers (5)
- 24 Busy bee ignored hazard (4)
- 25 Report of grain in island (4)

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



Government is expected to further extend the existing foreign trade policy (FTP), which is scheduled to lapse from 1 April this year, for few more months

AJAY SAHAI

## THUMBNAILS

**Credai president:** The apex body of private real estate developers, Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (Credai), on Tuesday announced Harsh Vardhan Patodia, managing director of Kolkata-based Unimark Group, as the new national president for the period 2021-23. Patodia, in his maiden address, announced free Covid-19 vaccination drive for 2.5 crore construction workers at the sites of member developers across the country, Credai said in a statement.

SNS

**IRFC cash chase:** The Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), the dedicated financing arm of the Indian Railways, has raised Rs 1,375 crore through issuance of domestic bonds. The fund has been raised at 6.80 per cent coupon rate with 20-year maturity. The bond issuance received a very good response from investors and was oversubscribed six times as compared to the base issue size of Rs 500 crore, said a company statement.

SNS

**Benelli outlet:** Benelli recently launched its 41st exclusive showroom in Howrah. Apart from Italian motorcycles, the showroom also showcases merchandise and accessories, along with a host of motorcycle customisation options, with more being introduced across India in a phased manner, according to a Press release.

SNS

**Mi partnership:** Smartphone and smart TV maker Mi India on Tuesday announced the launch of "Early Access" to exclusive movies titles in partnership with Hoichoi on PatchWall. The association brings an added advantage for Mi and Redmi TV fans and consumers to access the latest Bengali movies, hours prior to the official release on the platform, said a release.

SNS

**Goodyear India pacts IPCA:** Goodyear India Limited (GIL), as a part of its CSR initiative 'Solutions to Air Pollution (SAP)', has partnered with Municipal Corporation of Faridabad (MCF), Corridor Management Unit of Mathura Road, National Highway Authority of India (NHAI), and Indian Pollution Control Association (IPCA) for initiatives to protect the environment, and to improve the quality of air in Ballabhgarh and Faridabad. Goodyear has also installed 22 wind augmentation purifying units (WAYU) i.e. ambient air purification systems, at 3 highly polluted locations at Ballabhgarh, Haryana. SNS

**Newgen Software partners Akshaya Patra Foundation:** Newgen Software, a global provider of low code digital automation platform, teamed up with the Akshaya Patra foundation to provide mid-day meals and 'happiness kits' to combat the severe malnutrition crisis occurred due to Covid pandemic. Newgen has also been supporting Akshaya Patra under their CSR Initiative (health and education) for mid-day meal programmes in Varanasi, Jhalawar and Guwahati, said the Press release.

SNS

# Stock indices jump on positive cues

BSE benchmark the Sensex rallies 1,128 points while the Nifty of National Stock Exchange jumps by 338 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 30 MARCH

**B**SE benchmark the Sensex rallied 1,128 points ~ its biggest single-day gain in nearly two months ~ to close at a two-week high today as financials, IT and energy stocks advanced amid positive global cues.

Extending its gains to the second consecutive session, the 30-share BSE index ended 1,128.08 points or 2.30 per cent higher at 50,136.58 points ~ a level not seen since 16 March.

The broader NSE Nifty also logged its biggest single-day spike since 2 February to settle at a nearly two-week high of 14,845.10 points, showing gains of 337.80 points or 2.33 per cent. As many as 46 of its constituents closed in the green.

"Domestic equities rebounded sharply today, mainly led by strong buying in IT, metals, pharma and FMCG stocks. Barring reality, most of the key sectoral indices ended in the green today," Binod Modi, head-strategy at Reliance Securities, said.

Favourable cues from global markets also supported domestic rally despite the pre-

**SENSEX REGAINS 50K-LEVEL**

- Extending its gains to the second consecutive session, the 30-share BSE index ended 1,128.08 points or 2.30 per cent higher at 50,136.58 points ~ a level not seen since 16 March.
- The broader NSE Nifty also logged its biggest single-day spike since 2 February to settle at

vailing concern of sharp rise in Covid-19 cases in various parts of the country, he added.

HDFC Bank was the lead gainer among Sensex stocks, rising by 4.11 per cent. HCL Tech rose by 3.91 per cent, Infosys by 3.69 per cent and NTPC by 3.6 per cent.

Gains in Nestle India, HDFC, PowerGrid, TCS, HUL, Reliance

nearly two-week high of 14,845.10 points, showing gains of 337.80 points or 2.33 per cent. As many as 46 of its constituents closed in the green.

► HDFC Bank was the lead gainer among Sensex stocks, rising by 4.11 per cent.

and ICICI Bank also supported the rally.

On the other hand, M&M, Bharti Airtel and Axis Bank were the laggards.

"Markets opened firm on strong global cues with Joe Biden slated to announce his \$3-trillion infra package. Investors shrugged off the rising coronavirus cases in few

states as the GOI prepares for a vaccine roll-out on a larger scale. Steel & IT stocks led the bull charge while FMCG stocks joined the party in late afternoon trade as the Sensex scaled past 50K," S Ranganathan, head of research at LKP Securities, said.

All sectoral indices ended on a positive note with BSE IT, tech, metal, healthcare, FMCG, basic materials and finance indices rallying up to 3.51 per cent. Broader mid-cap and small-cap indices surged up to 1.30 per cent.

Abbhishek Chinchalkar, CMT charterholder and head of education, FYERS said that Indian markets have extended their recovery for a second session, boosted by strength across the board. Global cues have been supportive of the rally since Friday, with both US and European markets advancing to life-time highs, he added.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note. Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading with significant gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, the global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.49 per cent lower at \$64.60 per barrel.

## Rupee slumps 87 paise against US \$

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 30 MARCH

against a basket of six currencies, advanced 0.20 per cent to 93.12.

"Indian rupee depreciated amid strong dollar and rise in crude oil prices. Dollar gained strength amid surge in US treasury yields. Yields jumped on expectation that roll-out of Covid-19 vaccines and government stimulus efforts will accelerate economic growth and inflation," said Saif Mukadam, research analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Additionally, the rupee slipped on concern overruling Covid-19 cases in India. However, a sharp fall was prevented on risk appetite in the domestic market. Rupee may trade in the range of 72.70 to 73.60 in next couple of sessions, Mukadam noted.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, were trading 0.69 per cent down at \$64.53 per barrel.

## HPCL buys out partner's stake in LNG terminal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) today said it has bought out its partner SP Ports in the firm that was building an LNG importer terminal in Gujarat, for Rs 397 crore.

HPCL and SP Ports Pvt Ltd held 50 per cent stake each in HPCL Shapoorji Energy Pvt Ltd (HSEPL), the firm that is building the 5-million-ton-a-year liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal.

In a stock exchange filing, HPCL said it had entered into a share purchase agreement with SP Ports on 28 March for the acquisition of the private firm's 50 per cent stake in HSEPL.

"It is now informed that the said transaction is completed on 30 March 2021

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

with the transfer to HPCL 25.70 crore number of equity shares held by SP Ports Private Limited in HSEPL for a total consideration of Rs 397.06 crore," it said.

Later in a statement, HPCL said post-acquisition, the firm's stake in HSEPL has risen to 100 per cent and it has now become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company.

HSEPL is constructing a 5-million-ton-a-year LNG terminal at Chhara in the Gir-Somnath district of Gujarat at a project cost of about Rs 4,300 crore which is likely to be completed by the end of the calendar year 2022.

The terminal will have all facilities for receipt of LNG, the statement said, adding the project is further expandable to a capacity of 10 million ton per annum in future.

## Economic output may remain below 2019-level

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

India's economic output in 2021 is expected to remain below the 2019-level despite roll-out of the vaccine to deal with the menace of the coronavirus pandemic, said a report by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) released today.

India, according to the "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-Covid-19 resilient economies", is estimated to record an economic growth of 7 per cent in 2021-22, over a contraction of 7.7 per cent witnessed in the previous fiscal on account of the pandemic's impact on normal business activity.

Observing that India entered the pandemic with subdued GDP growth and investment, the report said:

### UN REPORT

India, according to the "Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-Covid-19 resilient economies", is estimated to record an economic growth of 7 per cent in 2021-22, over a contraction of 7.7 per cent witnessed in the previous fiscal on account of the pandemic's impact on normal business activity.

"Following one of the most stringent lockdowns in the world, the economic disruptions that the country experienced mounted in the second quarter of 2020."

It added that a subsequent change in lockdown policies and success in reducing infection rates supported an impressive economic turnaround in the third quarter.

"However, the pace of

recovery moderated in the fourth quarter with estimated year-on-year growth still close to zero."

"Despite a robust reduction in new Covid-19 cases and the start of vaccine roll-out, India's 2021 economic output is expected to remain below the 2019 level," it added.

Meanwhile, maintaining low borrowing costs while keeping non-performing loans

in check would be a challenge, it added.

In its second advance estimates of national accounts, the National Statistical Office (NSO) has projected an 8 per cent contraction in 2020-21, showing the pandemic impact.

The report further said China's swift and effective response to Covid-19 enabled it to become the only major economy worldwide to achieve a positive annual economic growth rate in 2020.

Supported by strong recovery in industrial production, infrastructure and housing investment, merchandise exports, and a modest recovery in private consumption, its 6.5 per cent year-on-year growth rate in the fourth quarter exceeded pre-pandemic growth levels.

The report forecasts that on an average, developing Asia-Pacific economies are expected to grow 5.9 per cent in 2021

## Torrent Gas to take over Sanwariya Gas

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Torrent Gas today said it has signed an agreement to take over Sanwariya Gas which has a licence to retail CNG to automobiles and piped gas to households for cooking purposes in Mathura.

The acquisition cements Torrent's city gas distribution network that is now spread over 33 districts in seven states and one Union Territory.

"Torrent Gas, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, has signed a share purchase agreement with the promoters of Sanwariya Gas for the takeover of the company.

AGREEMENT SIGNED

► Torrent Gas, through its wholly-owned subsidiary, has signed a share purchase agreement with the promoters of Sanwariya Gas for the takeover of the company.

statement. It did not provide the value of the deal.

The transaction is subject to approval from PNGRB and fulfilment of other condition precedents.

With this acquisition, Tor-

rent Gas has authorisation to set up a city gas distribution (CGD) network across 17 geographical areas spread over 33 districts in seven states and one UT.

set up a city gas distribution (CGD) network across 17 geographical areas spread over 33 districts in seven states and one UT.

Torrent Gas plans to invest over Rs 8,000 crore in the development of the CGD net-

work in these districts over the next five years, of which Rs 1,500 crore has already been invested, the statement said.

"The Sanwariya Gas acquisition is our fourth acquisition in the CGD sector in three years and is a demonstration of Torrent's commitment to contributing towards the achievement of Prime Minister's vision of creating a gas-based economy and increasing the share of natural gas in the Indian energy basket," said Jinal Mehta, director, Torrent Gas.

Mathura, he said, has significant potential for growth in both the CNG and piped natural gas (PNG) segments.

"We are committed to significantly expand the already existing CGD infrastructure in Mathura and making CNG and PNG widely available, thereby making it a natural choice for families, small businesses and industries," he said.

This is not for the first time that the customers of the bank have faced service outage. In fact, the bank has been penalised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for two major outages in the past.

In December, the RBI temporarily barred HDFC

## HDFC Bank admits net banking glitches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

The country's largest private sector lender HDFC Bank today said it is taking steps to resolve glitches in its digital banking platform and restore services on priority.

"Some customers are facing intermittent issues accessing our NetBanking/MobileBanking App. We are looking into it on priority for resolution. We apologise for the inconvenience and request you to try again after sometime. Thank you," HDFC Bank said in a tweet.

This is not for the first time that the customers of the bank have faced service outage. In fact, the bank has been penalised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for two major outages in the past.

The bank has been penalised for two major outages, one in November 2018 and the other in December 2019.

## India, US to revamp energy ties

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

India and the United States have agreed to revamp their strategic energy partnership with a greater focus on cleaner energy sectors, an official statement said. Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday held an "introductory meeting" with US secretary of energy Jennifer Granholm.

The two leaders reviewed the India-US Strategic Energy Cooperation. The two nations will intensify efforts to take advantage of advanced US technologies and India's rapidly growing energy market.

"Both leaders agreed to revamp the India-US SEP to reflect the new priorities of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden with focus on promoting clean energy with low-carbon pathways and accelerating green energy cooperation," it said.

## Petrol and diesel get slightly cheaper

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Petrol and diesel prices today were cut for the third time within a week on the back of softening international oil prices. Petrol price was cut by 22 paise per litre and diesel by 23 paise per litre, according to a price notification of the concerned fuel retailers.

Petrol now costs Rs 87.96 per litre in Delhi and a litre of diesel comes for Rs 80.87.

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

In Mumbai, the petrol price was cut to Rs 96.98 a litre today from Rs 97.19, while

## My conscience is clear: Mistry on SC ruling

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH

Ousted Tata Sons chairman Cyrus Mistry today expressed disappointment over the Supreme Court order in the fight against the conglomerate over his ouster, but asserted his conscience was clear and he had no doubt about the direction he took regarding the generational change in leadership during his tenure.

The apex court order on Friday had



We are moving forward with EU's help, with the construction of permanent facilities on the islands

GREEK PRIME MINISTER KYRIAKOS MITSOTAKIS  
AFTER MEETING EU COMMISSIONER ON MIGRATION ISSUES

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH 2021

09

Lanka plans to hold provincial council polls towards year end

COLOMBO, 30 MARCH

Sri Lanka plans to hold the long-pending council elections in all of its nine provinces towards the year end and the government will soon discuss the issue with all political parties, a senior minister said.

The decision was taken during a Cabinet meeting on Monday where the subject of holding the provincial council polls was discussed at length.

"The Cabinet last night discussed at length the issue of provincial councils and the government hoped to hold them the latest by the year end," said senior minister S.M. Chandrasena. He said the government will soon have a detailed consultation with all the political parties on the issue.

The announcement assumes significance as India has been advocating the early holding of elections for all nine provinces, stalled since 2018.

## EU, UN hold talks to tackle Syria's humanitarian crisis

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BRUSSELS, 30 MARCH

Dozens of nations and international organisations were holding virtual talks on Tuesday to help tackle the humanitarian crisis deepening in Syria and neighbouring countries as the civil war there entered its 11th year without a political solution in sight.

The annual pledging event is co-hosted by the United Nations and the European Union. The overarching objective of the Brussels Conference is to continue supporting the Syrian people and mobilize the international communi-

This garbage strike is a strike to oppose the junta, read a poster on social media. Death toll in the coup tops 500

AGENCIES  
YANGON, 30 MARCH

Rubbish piled up on the streets of Myanmar's main city on Tuesday after activists launched a "garbage strike" to oppose military rule as the toll of pro-democracy protesters killed by the security forces since a 1 February coup rose to more than 500.

Security forces shot and killed one man in the southernmost town of Kawthaung as they cleared the streets, the *Mizzima* news portal reported, and one person was killed in the northern town of Myitkyina, a relative of the 23-year-old victim said.

Police and a junta spokesman did not answer calls seeking comment.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the army ousted an elected government led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, reimposing military rule after a decade of tentative steps towards democracy.



Anti-coup protesters dump garbage on a street after activists launched a "garbage strike" against the military rule in Yangon, Myanmar on Tuesday.

At least 512 civilians had been killed in nearly two months of protests against the coup, 141 of them on Saturday, the bloodiest day of the unrest, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAP) advocacy group. Alongside the protests, a civil disobedience campaign of strikes has paralysed large parts of the economy.

In a new tactic, protesters sought to step up the campaign by asking residents to leave garbage at intersections in the main city of Yangon. "This garbage strike is a strike to oppose the junta," read a poster on social media.

"Everyone can join." Pictures posted on social media showed piles of rubbish building up. Thousands of protesters came out to march in several other towns across the country on Tuesday, according to media and photos on social media.

On Monday, 14 civilians were killed, including at least eight in Yangon's South Dagon neighbourhood, the AAP

said. Security forces there fired a heavier calibre weapon than usual towards protesters crouching behind a barricade of sand bags, witnesses said. It was not immediately clear what weapon it was but it was believed to be some type of grenade launcher.

State television said security forces used "riot weapons" to disperse a crowd of "violent terrorist people" who were destroying a pavement and one man was wounded. A South Dagon resident said on Tuesday there had been no pause in the crackdown.

"There was shooting all night," said the resident who declined to be identified. Residents found a badly burned body in the morning, the witness said, adding it was not known what had happened to the person and the military took the body away.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged Myanmar's generals to stop the killings and repression of demonstrators.

## Stepping up Myanmar coup penalties, US suspends trade deal

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 30 MARCH

The United States on Monday suspended a trade deal with Myanmar until a democratic government is restored in the Southeast Asian country after a 1 February coup followed by a violent crackdown on protests.

The military overthrew the elected government, jailed Aung San Suu Kyi and other civilian leaders and has killed and imprisoned protesters in the country also known as Burma.

The United States supports the people of Burma in their efforts to restore a democratically elected government," US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said.

The United States strong-

ly condemns the Burmese security forces' brutal violence against civilians. The killing of peaceful protesters, students, workers, labour leaders, medics, and children has shocked the conscience of the international community."

Tai's office said the United States was immediately suspending all US engagement with Burma under the 2013 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement.

Under the agreement, the two countries cooperated on trade and investment issues in an effort to integrate Myanmar into the global economy, a reward for the military's decision to allow a return to democracy a transition that ended abruptly.

ly with last month's coup.

Tai's announcement Monday doesn't stop trade between the two countries. But the United States is separately imposing economic sanctions on Myanmar.

In response to the military takeover, for instance, the United States and the United Kingdom had earlier imposed sanctions on two conglomerates controlled by Myanmar's military, Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd. and Myanmar Economic Corp.

White House Press secretary Jen Psaki noted that the US has also slapped export controls on Burma and added several Burmese businesses to a trade blacklist.

## We feel grief and anger: BTS slams anti-Asian racism in West

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LOS ANGELES, 30 MARCH

K-pop sensation BTS has criticised the incidents of racial discrimination and violence towards Asian people in the West.

The South Korean boy band, one of the most popular groups in world music, posted a statement on social media in both Korean and English, accompanied with the hashtags -- #StopAsianHate and #StopAAPIHate.

The septet, comprising RM, Jin, Suga, J-Hope, Jimin, V and Jungkook, recalled moments when they faced "discrimination as Asians".

The group recalled its own moments of "discrimination as Asians" but said their experience was "inconsequential" compared to the events of last few weeks. "We have endured expletives without reason and were mocked for the way we

look. We were even asked why we spoke in English. We cannot put into words the pain of becoming the subject of hatred and violence for such a reason. Our own experience are inconsequential compared to the events that have occurred over the past few weeks. But these experiences were enough to make us feel powerless and chip away our self-esteem," BTS said.

The band said that it took "considerable time" for them to decide how they should voice the message as they believe that whatever is happening in the world cannot be separated from their "identity as Asians".

The 65-year-old woman was walking in midtown Manhattan on Monday after-

## Video shows Asian American woman assaulted on NYC street

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
NEW YORK, 30 MARCH

An Asian American woman was attacked by a man who repeatedly kicked her in front of witnesses who seemingly stood by, according to surveillance footage released by the New York City Police.

The 65-year-old woman was walking in midtown Manhattan on Monday after-

noon when a man came up to her and kicked her in the stomach, knocking her to the ground, the NYPD said.

The man then stomped on the woman's face several times while hurling anti-Asian sentiments at her, police said. He later casually walked away, the footage shows. The woman was hospitalised with serious injuries.

According to video footage,

a man inside a building lobby seemingly stopped what he was doing to watch the assault. The property developer and manager of the building, Borsky Organization, wrote on Instagram that it was aware of the assault and the staff who witnessed it were suspended pending an investigation. The NYPD's Hate Crime Task Force is investigating the attack.

## China sharply reduces elected seats in Hong Kong legislature

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HONG KONG, 30 MARCH

China has sharply reduced the number of directly elected seats in Hong Kong's legislature in a setback for the territory's already beleaguered democracy movement.

The changes were announced Tuesday after a two-day meeting of China's top legislature. The legislature will be expanded to 90 seats, and only 20 will be elected by the public. Currently, half of the 70-seat legislature's 35 seats is directly elected.

The move is part of a two-phase effort to rein in political protest and opposition in Hong Kong, which is part of China but has had a more liberal political system as a former British colony. China imposed a national security law on Hong Kong last year and is following up this year with a revamp of the electoral process.

The crackdown comes in the wake of months of pro-democracy protests in 2019 that brought hundreds of thousands to the streets and turned violent as the government resisted the movement's demands.

"It's a very sad day for Hong Kong. The election system is completely dismantled, said former lawmaker and Democratic Party member Emily Lau.

They are going to get rid of opposition voices because

under this new system, which is so oppressive and restrictive, I don't think any self-respecting individual will want to take part, Lau said.

China's top legislature, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, amended Hong Kong's constitution to pave the way for the changes. The Hong Kong government is now tasked with revising its electoral laws and holding an election.

In the current 70-member legislature, voters elect half the members and the other half are chosen by constituencies representing various professions and interest groups. Many of the constituencies lean pro-Beijing, ensuring that a majority in the legislature. The new body will have 20 elected members, 30 chosen by the constituencies and 40 by an Election Committee which also chooses the city's leader.

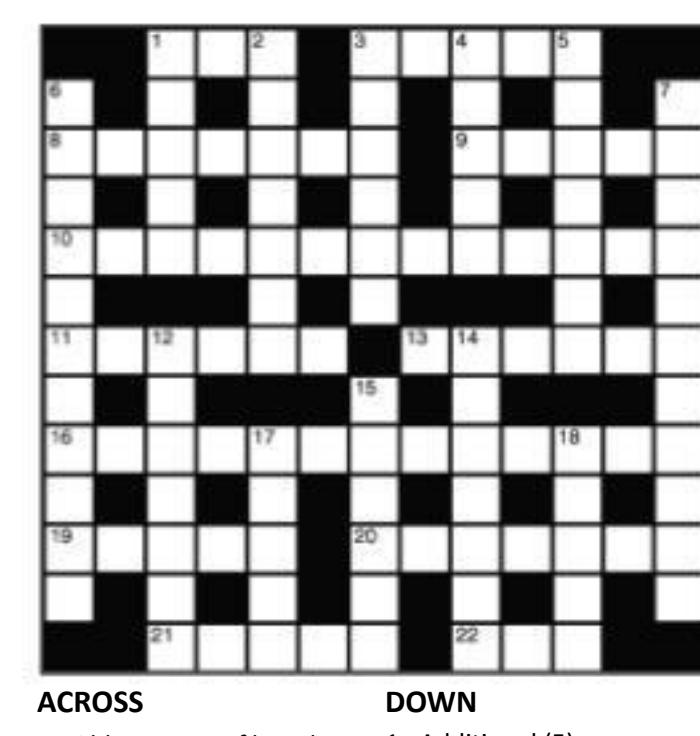
The committee, which will be expanded from 1,200 to 1,500 members.

Election hopefuls will undergo vetting by the national security police and a committee that oversees national security in the city.

A new separate body will also be established to review the qualifications of candidates for office in Hong Kong to ensure the city is governed by patriots, in the language of the central government.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



### SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

| ACROSS   | DOWN                                     |
|--|--|
| 1 Old measure of length (3)                        | 1 Additional (5)                         |
| 3 Herbaceous plant (5)                             | 2 Lönlike (7)                            |
| 8 Became fully realised (3,4)                      | 3 Promise (6)                            |
| 9 Once more (5)                                    | 4 South American animal (5)              |
| 10 Carnivorous insect (7,6)                        | 5 Indefinable quality (1,6)              |
| 11 One or the other (6)                            | 6 Retailers (11)                         |
| 13 Origin (6)                                      | 7 Not necessary (11)                     |
| 16 Old Spanish coins (6,2,5)                       | 12 Quiver (7)                            |
| 19 Disprove (5)                                    | 14 Old ballroom dance (3-4)              |
| 20 Knock (7)                                       | 15 Hairpiece (6)                         |
| 21 Weird (5)                                       | 17 Go into (5)                           |
| 22 Noisy (3)                                       | 18 Cricket fielding position (5)         |
| 23 Knack (5)                                       | 19 Retirement (5)                        |
| 24 Skimp (5)                                       | 20 Map.                                  |
| 25 Score, 21 Side issue, 22 Oven, 23 Delicatessen, | 15 Runner, 17 Iron, 18 Gall, 19 Drunken, |

By arrangement with The Independent  
Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

- AIIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- VidyaSagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23325320

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry: 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800112511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

#### ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23354373

#### FLIGHT INQUIRY

- AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383383, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Airline 23354373

#### SCRABBLE BRAND



#### SCRABBLE® WORD SCORE

#### PAR SCORE 120-130

#### by JUDD

#### FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY SCRABBLE WORD SCORE

#### C R E E P S H I R S U T E U M I A C K H I V E

#### RACK 1 = 60

#### RACK 2 = 60

#### RACK 3 = 18

#### RACK 4 = 18

#### JUDD'S TOTAL = 136

#### SCRABBLE® WORD SCORE

#### SCRABBLE WORD SCORE

#### SCRABBLE WORD SCORE

#### SCRABBLE WORD SCORE



# Looking beyond silicon

Alternatives have been developed to make the solar cell environment friendly

BY AVANTHI HANUMAYA/AVANTHI

**R**enewable energy is the only visible solution to the crisis that the world finds itself in. While wind and hydroelectric energy can be used where we have the right coastlines or river valleys, solar panels have greater scope as they can be widely deployed.

The trouble is that solar panels use pure silicon, and mining and purifying silicon has a large carbon footprint, apart from social and other environmental costs. Although they provide electricity with no emissions, solar cells take over 15 years to work off the emissions produced during their manufacture. Solar panels now provide some three per cent of the world's energy. Raising it to a level that materially helps reduce emissions would call for massive silicon extraction.

The most efficient use of solar energy, of course, is in green vegetation, where chlorophyll helps sunlight break down carbon dioxide and produce hydrocarbons. Ways to use synthetics to mimic the process, using bacteria, are being developed and could lead to some cleaning of the environment. To turn this technology to generate electricity, however, would be a game changer.

That organic dyes can generate electricity when light shines on them was discovered in the late 1960s and the first dye-sensitised solar cell, or the DSSC, was developed by Brian O'Reagan and Michael Grätzel at University of California at Berkeley in 1988, and published from École Polytechnique Fédérale at Lausanne, in 1991. In the DSSC, a molecular dye absorbs sunlight, like the chlorophyll in green leaves, leading to collection of electric charge, rather than promoting a chemical reaction. The charge then drives an electric current, on the way back to the dye, where it gets the dye ready to absorb more sunlight.

The current issue of the journal, *Nature Communications*, contains a paper by Michael Grätzel, Dan Zhang, Marko Stojanovic, Yameen Ren, Yiming Cao, Felix T Eickemeyer, Etienne Socie, Nick Vlachopoulos, Jacques-E Moser, Shail M Zakeeruddin and Anders Hagfeldt, from the institute in Lausanne, that reports advances that improve the performance of the DSSC, for greater relevance as a source of green energy.

The functioning of the conventional solar cell is thanks to the nature of the silicon atom. The atom of silicon has four electrons in its outer-



The Lausanne technique is used in the Swiss Tech Convention Centre to generate electricity

most shell, which is halfway between metals (that are good conductors) and nonmetals. It enables a uniform, "hand-holding" structure of the silicon crystal. If there is a trace impurity with one more outer shell electron than silicon, however, it can result in the extra electron being unpaired and "free". If the trace impurity is of atoms with one less outer shell electron than silicon, it creates a "shortage of an electron" or a "hole", which can also move over the crystal lattice.

In a junction of silicon with the two kinds of impurity, some of the "free" electrons would cross over to the other side, where there are "holes". It would create electrical tension. Now, if light falls on the "holes" side of the junction, an electron gets "freed", and the electrical tension drives it to the other side through a wire that connects to the two sides of the junction.

In the DSSC, in place of silicon, the source of electrons is an organic dye, which behaves like chlorophyll, releasing an electron when excited by light. While the principle had been

discovered in the 1960s, O'Reagan and Grätzel worked out the arrangement where the electron is snared and sent out as an electrical current, with a method of sending it back to the organic molecule.

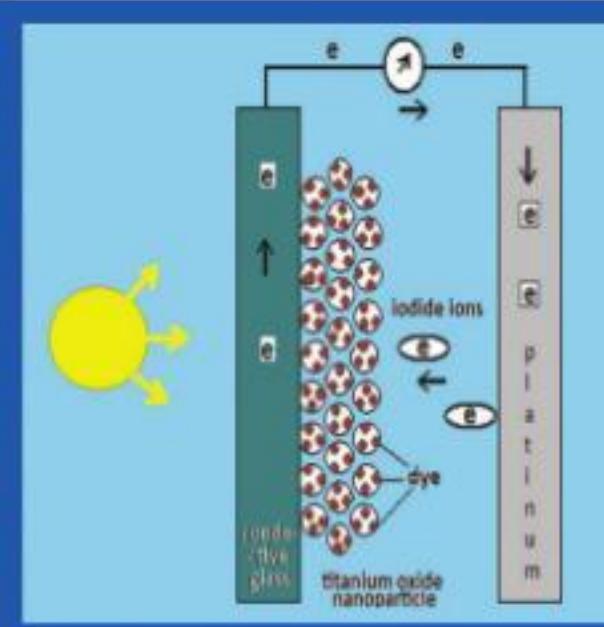
The principle is illustrated in the picture. Photons, or particles of light, pass through the transparent conductor on the right and strike titanium oxide nanoparticles, which carry molecules of the organic dye. The nanoparticles are for assuring a large surface area for dye molecules. Photons knock electrons out of the dye molecules, and the electrons are collected by the conducting electrode. The electrons form a current, to do work and reach the opposite electrode, which is of inert platinum. The medium between the two electrodes contains iodine, which can change form, to pick up electrons from the platinum electrode and carry them to the titanium oxide particles, which are left with a positive charge when they lost electrons. When the electrons reach the particles, they get

back into the dye, and the dye molecules are ready for use again.

In practice, a glass sheet is coated with a thin layer of tin dioxide and then a layer of titanium dioxide, as a porous structure, with a large surface area. This layer is then coated with the photosensitizer dye. The second plate is a sheet of platinum, coated with a thin layer of the iodide electrolyte. And the two plates are joined and sealed.

The conventional solar cell, apart from being based on silicon, needs a thick layer of silicon, to be reasonably effective. Although "thin film" solar cells have been developed, the DSSC films can be far thinner and are substantially cheaper. That is despite the use of titanium and platinum, for which, again, replacements are rapidly becoming available.

The negative, however, has been that DSSCs are less efficient in converting light into electricity and that organic dyes degrade. What the Lausanne group has done is to use molecular engineering and develop a dye



for use in conjunction with the current one, to enable the device to react to more parts of the spectrum of the incident light. The additive also prevents electrons that are emitted from being captured by neighbouring dye molecules before they move through the circuit. The result is greater production of electrons, a voltage of 1.24V or power conversion efficiency of 13.5 per cent. The DSSC is hence suitable for use in cloudy conditions or to power indoor devices, a press release says.

Existing photovoltaic devices convert only part, the lower frequency part of sunlight, into electricity. As the higher frequency range, even the ultraviolet, contains much of the energy in sunlight, not using this part of the spectrum amounts to wasted energy. What is more, this energy heats the PV device, which reduces its efficiency. Sheathing, with organic materials, has been developed, for use with conventional PV devices, to absorb blue and UV light and "step it down" to a frequency that the device can use. Another initiative has been to absorb lower frequency energy, in the infrared, and "step it up" to be useful for the PV cell.

Although the conventional solar cell dominates in the market and it is viewed as a possible solution to the danger of pollution by fossil fuels, however, the cost of silicon-based solar cells makes this unlikely. Alternatives to silicon, like cadmium telluride, have been developed, but there are limitations in use because of pollution concerns or performance. In this context, the rise of the organic, high performance and easily assembled DSSC holds out another branch of hope to achieving power generation without environmental damage.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

## PLUS POINTS

### Space food



Scientists have identified new bacterial strains that they said could potentially support plant growth in space. The discovery could help astronauts grow their own food in space stations, otherwise known as "space farming", according to the University of Hyderabad.

New bacterial strains were identified from different locations on the International Space Station during flights. Scientists found the presence of genes involved in promoting plant growth in genome analysis of the new strains as part of the research, published in the journal *Frontiers in Microbiology*.

The findings may help in creating "fuel" which could support plants in withstanding stressful environments such as space, according to the University of Hyderabad, whose scientists worked with researchers in the US – including from Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory – for the study.

The study's lead authors said the strains could possess "biotechnologically useful genetic determinants that may help growing plants in extreme places where resources are minimal".

For astronauts on the ISS, cargo ships transport their food to them, unlike the early days of space travel when food took the form of cubes and "semi-liquids stuffed inside tubes", according to Nasa.

In a paper published in *The Journal of Nutrition* last year, Nasa scientists outlined the requirements and challenges of creating a food system that can support missions between low-Earth orbit and Mars – which looked at nutrition, safety and reliability.

"Pre-packaged foods are a great candidate because they are easy to prepare, easy to consume. They already have a safe and long history in space flight, but there are some challenges with them – that nutrition and quality degrade over time," Grace Douglas, a Nasa scientist, said. "So, on longer missions, it would be nice to get a fresh component."

There may be issues over the reliability of growing food on space missions, she added. "One of the big concerns with growing food is that if it doesn't grow and you were depending on it, now you have insufficient food, which can be a very, very big concern when you're going on these missions," Douglas said.

Nasa astronauts said last year that the first ever space-grown lettuce was as safe to eat as one grown on Earth. The year before, China successfully germinated a seed taken to the Moon, making it the first time any biological matter had grown in space.

Further research is underway to determine what the discovery of the new bacterial strains found on the ISS could mean for space farming, according to the University of Hyderabad.

—THE INDEPENDENT

## LEARNING FROM THE PAST

People gave up on flu pandemic measures a century ago when they tired of them – and paid a price



ing the devastation influenza had wrought.

For the friends, families and co-workers of the hundreds of thousands of Americans who had died, post-pandemic life was filled with sadness and grief. Many of those still recovering from their bouts with the malady required support and care as they recuperated.

At a time when there was no federal or state safety net, charitable organisations sprang into action to provide resources for families who had lost their breadwinners, or to take in the countless children left orphaned by the disease.

For the vast majority of Americans, though, life after the pandemic seemed to be a headlong rush to normalcy. Starved for weeks of their nights on the town, sporting events, religious services, classroom interactions and family gatherings, many were eager to return to their old lives.

Taking their cues from officials who had – somewhat prematurely – declared an end to the pandemic, Americans overwhelmingly hurried to return to their pre-pandemic routines. They packed into movie theatres and dance halls, crowded in stores and shops, and gathered with friends and family.

Officials had warned the nation that cases and deaths likely would continue for months to come. The burden of public health, however, now rested not on policy but rather

on individual responsibility.

Predictably, the pandemic wore on, stretching into a third deadly wave that lasted through the spring of 1919, with a fourth wave hitting in the winter of 1920. Some officials blamed the resurgence on careless Americans. Others downplayed the new cases or turned their attention to more routine public health matters, including other diseases, restaurant inspections and sanitation.

Despite the persistence of the pandemic, influenza quickly became old news. Once a regular feature of front pages, reportage rapidly dwindled to small, sporadic clippings buried in the backs of the nation's newspapers. The nation carried on, inured to the toll the pandemic had taken and the deaths yet to come. People were largely unwilling to return to socially and economically disruptive public health measures.

### It's hard to hang in there

Our predecessors might be forgiven for not staying the course longer. First, the nation was eager to celebrate the recent end of World War I, an event that perhaps loomed larger in the lives of Americans than even the pandemic.

Second, death from disease was a much larger part of life in the early 20th century, and scourges such as diphtheria, measles, tuberculosis, typhoid, whooping cough, scarlet fever and pneumonia each routinely killed tens of thousands of Americans every year. Moreover, neither the cause nor the epidemiology of influenza was well understood, and many experts remained unconvinced that social distancing measures had any measurable impact.

Finally, there were no effective flu vaccines to rescue the world from the ravages of the disease. In fact, the

influenza virus would not be discovered for another 15 years, and a safe and effective vaccine was not available for the general population until 1945. Given the limited information they had and the tools at their disposal, Americans perhaps endured the public health restrictions for as long as they reasonably could.

A century later, and a year into the Covid-19 pandemic, it is understandable that people now are all too eager to return to their old lives. The end of this pandemic inevitably will come, as it has with every previous one humankind has experienced.

If we have anything to learn from the history of the 1918 influenza pandemic, as well as our experience thus far with Covid-19, however, it is that a premature return to pre-pandemic life risks more cases and more deaths.

And today's Americans have significant advantages over those of a century ago. We have a much better understanding of virology and epidemiology. We know that social distancing and masking work to help save lives. Most critically, we have multiple safe and effective vaccines that are being deployed, with the pace of vaccinations increasingly weekly.

Sticking with all these coronavirus-fighting factors or easing off on them could mean the difference between a new disease surge and a quicker end to the pandemic. Covid-19 is much more transmissible than influenza, and several troubling Sars-CoV-2 variants are already spreading around the globe. The deadly third wave of influenza in 1919 shows what can happen when people prematurely relax their guard.

The writer is assistant director of the Center for the History of Medicine, University of Michigan, US. This article first appeared on www.theconversation.com



## Science equality

Women still face a massive gender bias in science careers worldwide, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation reported recently, with several rich Western nations way behind poorer ones in terms of gender equality.

Despite a shortage of skills in most fields of the current technology revolution, women account for only 28 per cent of engineering graduates and 40 per cent of graduates in computer science and informatics, according to advance excerpts from the organisation's Science Report to be fully published in April.

The track record for members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development – which groups mostly rich countries – came in lower than the global average in terms of the share of women among engineering graduates, the report found.

In France it was 26.1 per cent and Australia 23.2 per cent, slipping to 20.4 per cent in the United States, 20.1 per cent in South Korea, 16.7 per cent in Switzerland and 14 per cent in Japan.

Unesco found no distinct regional pattern, but noted that some of the highest proportions of female engineering graduates were found in Arab states, with Algeria at 48.5 per cent, Morocco at 42.2, Oman at 43.2, Syria at 43.9 and Tunisia at 44.2 per cent.

Latin America also did well, with female engineering graduates representing 41.7 per cent in Cuba, 47.5 in Peru and 45.9 in Uruguay.

—THE DAILY STAR/ANN

BY J ALEXANDER NAVARRO

**P**icture the United States struggling to deal with a deadly pandemic.

State and local officials enact a slate of social distancing measures, gathering bans, closure orders and mask mandates in an effort to stem the tide of cases and deaths.

The public responds with widespread compliance mixed with more than a hint of grumbling, pushback and even outright defiance. As the days turn into weeks turn into months, the strictures become harder to tolerate.

Theatre and dance hall owners complain about their financial losses. Clergy bemoan church closures while offices, factories and in some cases even saloons are allowed to remain open. Officials argue whether children are safer in classrooms or at home.

Many citizens refuse to don face masks while in public, some complaining that they're uncomfortable and others arguing that the government has no right to infringe on their civil liberties.

As familiar as it all may sound in 2021, these are real descriptions of the US during the deadly 1918 influenza pandemic. In my research as a historian of medicine, I've seen again and again the many ways our current pandemic has mirrored the one experienced by our forebears a century ago.

### Sick and tired, ready for pandemic's end

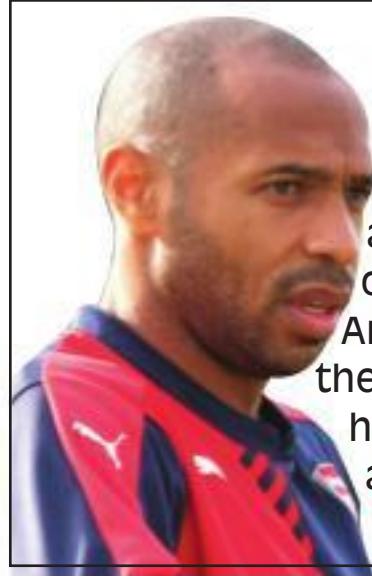
Like Covid-19, the 1918 influenza pandemic hit hard and fast, going from a handful of reported cases in a few cities to a nationwide outbreak within a few weeks. Many communities issued several rounds of various closure orders – corresponding to the ebbs and flows of their epidemics – in an attempt to keep the disease in check.

Those social distancing orders worked to reduce cases and deaths. Just as today, however, they often proved difficult to maintain. By the late autumn, just weeks after the social distancing orders went into effect, the pandemic seemed to be coming to an end as the number of new infections declined.

People clamoured to return to their normal lives. Businesses pressed officials to be allowed to reopen. Believing the pandemic was over, state and local authorities began rescinding public health edicts. The nation turned its efforts to address-

the ravages of the disease. In fact,





## FOUL!

Thierry Henry (*in photo, left*) has called on football's "big guns" to do something about World Cup host Qatar's ill-treatment of mainly southern Asian workers in the Arab country building infrastructure for the tournament. Europe's recent qualifiers have been marked by players' protests against Qatar's human rights record.

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

## THUMBNAILS

**Archer surgery:** England paceman Jofra Archer has had successful surgery to remove a piece of glass which became lodged in a finger when he smashed a fish tank in the bath while trying to clean it. He played two Tests and all five T20s during England's time in India.

**Positive test:** Indian women's Twenty20 team captain Harmanpreet Kaur has tested positive for Covid-19, experiencing mild symptoms. "She is self-isolating at home. She was tested on Monday and the report on Tuesday was positive. She is doing fine otherwise."

**Aguero's plan:** Sergio Aguero, Manchester City's record scorer, will leave the English club after 10 years when his contract expires at the end of the season. The 32-year-old Argentine has 257 goals for City. He is a key player in the growth of the club.

**Major mistake:** A Cristiano Ronaldo goal not given in a World Cup qualifier between Serbia and Portugal would have stood if the two associations had agreed before the game to use goal-line technology, Uefa said on Monday. Ronaldo was left fuming and got booked.

**Barty wins:** Ash Barty has reached the Miami Open quarter-finals, getting there by holding off Victoria Azarenka of Belarus 6-1, 1-6, 6-2. It was Barty's 17th win in her last 20 three-set matches, two of those victories for the Australian coming so far in this tournament.

**Benzema trial:** Karim Benzema will face trial in October for his alleged involvement in blackmailing former France teammate Matthieu Valbuena over a sex tape, the Versailles prosecutor's office said on Tuesday.

**Verma consolidates top spot:** Following a blistering 30-ball 60 in the final against South Africa, India opener Shafali Verma consolidated her position at the top among batters in the latest women's T20I rankings issued on Tuesday.

**Long-term ban:** Pakistan football is staring at a long-term ban from the FIFA after a forced take over of the national federation headquarters in Lahore by a group which won the last elections but annulled by the world governing body of the sport.

**New Zealand win:** New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 28 runs in the rain-affected second Twenty20 and took a winning 2-0 lead in the three-match series on Tuesday. Sent in by Bangladesh, New Zealand was 173-5 in the 18th over when its innings was cut short by rain. Bangladesh was set a revised winning target of 170 from 16 overs under the Duckworth Lewis system and finished 142-7.

**Mancini's plea:** Italy coach Roberto Mancini says he would support the introduction of larger squad limits for the rescheduled European Championship due to the risk of players contracting Covid-19. It is to be staged across 12 host cities from 11 June to 11 July.

**Return trip:** Gareth Bale has reiterated his plan to return to Real Madrid once his loan spell at Tottenham Hotspur is over and played down suggestions his comments were disrespectful to the London club. Last week he ruled out any chance of staying with his former club.

**Espargaro stronger:** Lining up for his debut race in the iconic colours of the Repsol Honda Team, Pol Espargaro made a great initial launch to move up inside the top ten after the first corner. As the race went on and the fuel lowered, Espargaro was able to steadily improve his pace and joined the battle for the top ten by mid-race distance. Espargaro's lap times continued to improve, matching or beating that of the leaders towards the end of the 22-laps.

# Steve Smith keen to captain Australia again

AGENCIES

MELBOURNE, 30 MARCH

**T**hree years after his ignominious exit as Australia's captain in the wake of the ball-tampering scandal, Steve Smith (*in photo*) has said he is keen and ready to lead the national side again if an opportunity came his way.

Smith, one of the world's best contemporary batsmen, was suspended from international cricket for 12 months and banned from leadership roles for two years for his role in the "sandpaper-gate" scandal in Cape Town in March, 2018.

It's certainly something I would be interested in now, that's for sure."

The scandal centred on Smith, his deputy David Warner and Cameron Bancroft, who was caught on camera attempting to change the condition of the ball using sandpaper, and it plunged Australian cricket into crisis.

Paine has since led Australia's Test side with distinction, but with the wicketkeeper-batsman turning 37 by the time he captains the hosts in the Ashes series against England at the end of 2021, a clear succession plan would be



required.

Few players have better credentials to succeed Paine than the 31-year-old Smith but it has been fast bowler Pat Cummins who has been nurtured in the

past as Australia's vice-captain.

"I'm always going to have to live with Cape Town regardless of whether I lead again or not. It's always there," Smith said.

"I've been through all that now.

"Time keeps moving forward, and I've learnt so much the last few years about myself and grown as a human being. I feel as though I'd be in a better place if the opportunity did come up.

"If it doesn't, that's fine as well and I'd support whoever is in charge the same way I've supported Tim and Finchy. I haven't always felt like I want to do it again. That's only come in the last little bit."

Smith's captaincy will be on hold for some time if Australian coach Justin Langer has his way. The national mentor declared there was "no captaincy position available" as his team prepared for an Ashes next summer and back-to-back World Cups. Test captain Tim Paine and white-ball skipper Aaron Finch have Langer's complete backing. "We have two very good captains and two important competitions coming up," Langer told the ABC, adding: "Despite the media chatter there is no captaincy position available." Smith's captaincy ambitions are set to be discussed as part of succession planning by the CA board.

## India to visit Argentina for Pro League matches

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 30 MARCH



The Indian men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh (*in photo*) today returned to the side for FIH Pro League games against Olympic champions Argentina next month. Singh had opted out of the recent Euro tour owing to personal reasons.

Experienced drag-flick specialist Rupinder Pal Singh as well as Varun Kumar, who had missed out on the previous tour during rehab, are also back in the mix. Hockey India announced a 22-member squad which would take on Argentina on 11 April and the day after in Buenos Aires.

India will also play practice matches against the home team on 6 April and 7 April, followed by two more on 13 April and 14 April as part of their preparations for the Tokyo Olympics this July.

The squad include goalkeepers PR Sreejesh, Krishan Bahadur Pathak, Amit Rohidas, Gurinder Singh, Surender Kumar, Birendra Lakra, Hardik Singh, Vivek Sagar Prasad, Raj Kumar Pal, Nilakanta Sharma, Shamsher Singh, Gurjant Singh, Dilpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh and Lalit Kumar Upadhyay. The team also features Jaskaran Singh, Sumit and Shilanand Lakra, who will be playing their first international match in more than a year. Experienced players Akashdeep

"We are taking a 22-man squad attempting a good balance between giving experience to those players who need it and allowing opportunities to players to perform on the international stage in the lead-up to the Tokyo Olympics," stated chief coach Graham Reid in a statement.

Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

"Argentina play in a different style from the teams we played in Europe, and we will be using this tour as a great opportunity to continue our growth and development before Tokyo," he added. The team will leave Bangalore for Buenos Aires tomorrow for the 16-day tour.

## Brathwaite leads Windies victory drive

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NORTH SOUND (ANTIGUA), 30 MARCH



West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite was to sleep on 99 not out after boosting his side against Sri Lanka to 287-7 on the first day of the second Test.

Brathwaite carried his bat through the day to the brink of his first Test century since 2018. He took over the captaincy in February from Jason Holder, and has been dying for a big score after only three half-centuries in 16 innings over the past year.

He held together an

innings that wobbled at the start and briefly in the middle. His stands of 71 with Kyle Mayers, 51 with Holder, and an unbeaten 65 with Rakheem Cornwall ensured that they finished the first day on top.

Brathwaite is trying to

lead his side to a third series win against Sri Lanka after the Twenty20s and One-Day Internationals, while preventing Sri Lanka from a first Test series win in the Caribbean. Both teams were unchanged from the drawn first Test last week in the same, empty Sir Vivian Richards Stadium.

Sri Lanka won the toss but

the bowling was let down by four dropped catches, two of them expensive. Brathwaite was dropped on 37 at third slip by Oshada Fernando off left-arm quick Vishwa Fernando, and Mayers was dropped on 12 at third slip by Pathum Nissanka off medi-

um-pacer Suranga Lakmal.

Lakmal was the pick of the bowlers, taking 3-71. He started the day with six consecutive maidens, two of them with wickets; opener John Campbell on 5 and Nkrumah Bonner for a duck.

Lakmal's eventual seventh over conceded three boundaries to Mayers, who was then dropped.

Mayers was eventually out for 49 in the first over after lunch.

Two others fell in the middle session, Jermaine Blackwood for 18 and Holder for 30 off 34 balls.

Brathwaite should have joined them, but he was dropped on 37. His partner at tea, Joshua Da Silva, was also given a reprieve after a video review of the second ball he faced.

Da Silva was eventually out

for 1 after 35 balls, the fifth batsman in seven to edge behind the wickets. Alzarri Joseph, dropped on 28, was out lbw on 29 at 222-7.

But the bowlers flagged at the end of the day. After conceding 86 runs in the first session and 85 in the second, they went for 116 after tea. Brathwaite batted on serenely, facing 239 balls for his 99 not out. He hit 11 boundaries.

Brathwaite received late support from Cornwall, who was 43 not out from 53 balls at stumps. Cornwall is a tailender but in high spirits after producing his test high score of 61 just last week.

Brief scores: West Indies 287/7 (Kraigg Brathwaite 99, Kyle Mayers 49; Suranga Lakmal 3/71) vs Sri Lanka.

Clubs will gain a say only in the marketing and television

# S The Statesman Sport

Postal Reg. No. DL (ND)-II/6088/2018-19-20

**Amul Milk. Hamesha Fresh.**

Amul Moti अमूल मोटी UNIT TREATED HOMOGENIZED TONED MILK 90 days shelf life Just ₹ 28\* 450 ml \*MRP (incl. of all taxes). Conditions apply.

## Chelsea to face Porto in CL in neutral Spain

AGENCIES

NYON (SWITZERLAND), 30 MARCH

Chelsea and Porto will play both legs of the Champions League quarterfinals in neutral Spain because of travel restrictions related to the coronavirus pandemic.

UEFA said on Tuesday the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan Stadium in Seville will stage the games on April 7 and 13. The venue is the home of Sevilla and hosted Champions League games earlier this season.

The Champions League currently shares almost 2 billion euros (\$2.4 billion) each season among 32 clubs, who are split into eight groups of four to start with. The new format will add 100 games as a 36-team single-standings league is created, adding four more clubs from the current format.

That would guarantee 10 games for each of the 36 teams, against 10 different opponents with balanced schedules based on seedings. The current format consists of six group games against three opponents.

The top eight teams would advance to the round of 16. The next best 16 teams would enter a two-leg playoff to complete the bracket. The tournament would also play matches for the first time on Thursdays which has previously been reserved for the Europa League.

While the second-tier competition is envisaged to stay at 32 teams, it is also set to adopt a variation of the "Swiss System" format from chess tournaments. So the number of rounds in the group stage would rise from six to eight.

UEFA confirmed the future of club competitions from 2024 would still be discussed at the executive committee meeting on Wednesday.

"However, any official decision in this respect will only be made at the next UEFA executive committee meeting on 19 April, in order to finalize ongoing discussions," the governing body said in a statement.

out by then. The other possible scenario has the government declaring a state of emergency as daily cases climb. That could mean the Olympics will be held in