



The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



AIR CHIEF LEAVES FOR
FRANCE TO DISCUSS
DELIVERY OF RAFALE

P4



JAISHANKAR DISCUSSES
BILATERAL TIES WITH
UAE COUNTERPART

P5



TESTING TIME

SEISMIC UPHEAVAL
IN EUROPEAN
CLUB FOOTBALL

P6



P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 37 and 19 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 76% Min: 27%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 37.8°C (+1) Min: 18.5°C (-3)

SUN RISES

05:50 hrs

MOON RISES

11:44 hrs

SUN SETS

18:50 hrs

MOON SETS

02:01 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Women offer prayers outside a shrine on the sixth day of Ramadan in Srinagar on Monday.

SC stays proceedings in Amazon-Future case: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the ongoing proceedings before Delhi High Court in the case related to the amalgamation of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) with Reliance Retail. Amazon had moved the apex court on 8 April challenging the Delhi High Court's division Bench order that had vacated a stay on Kishore Biyani-led Future Group proceeding with its Rs 24,713-crore asset sale to Reliance Industries. P8

Covid surge: Summer vacation in Delhi schools from 20 April: The Delhi government on Monday advanced the summer vacation in all schools in the national capital in view of the COVID-19 situation. The vacation which was scheduled from May 11 to June 3 has now been rescheduled from April 20 to June 9.

Moderate turnout in UP panchayat elections: Moderate polling was recorded in the first six hours of voting on Monday for the second phase of the Uttar Pradesh panchayat polls in 20 districts where 3.48 lakh candidates are in the fray for over 2.23 lakh posts. Gautam Budh Nagar recorded the highest polling percentage of 48 per cent till 1 p.m.

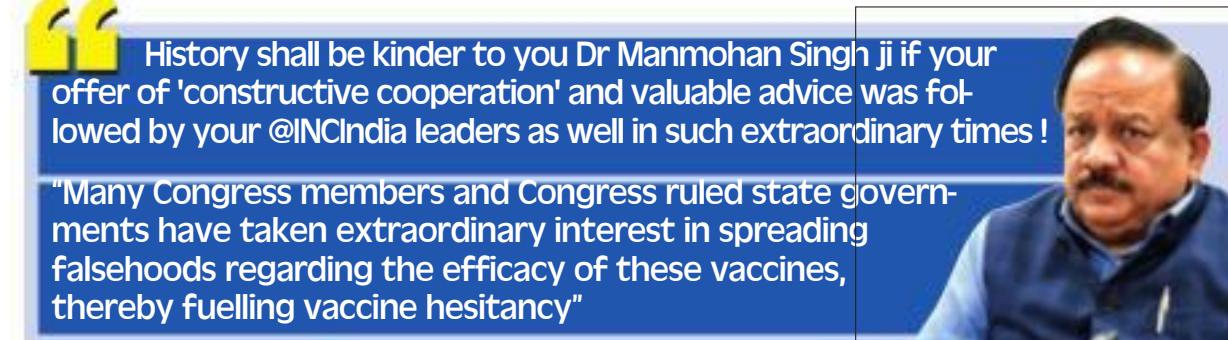
'2nd wave fuelled by Cong-ruled states': Vardhan slams ex-PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Hitting back at senior Congress leader Manmohan Singh for his critique of the government's Covid-19 management, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday alleged the second wave of the pandemic was instead fuelled by Congress-ruled states as they were busy raising doubts about vaccines rather than vaccinating people.

Responding to Singh's letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Vardhan also said that the letter drafters of the senior Congress leader have done a below



great disservice to his standing. Acknowledging that while Singh understands the importance of vaccination as an important method of fighting the Covid-19 battle, Vardhan said in his letter that "irresponsible" public pronouncements made by some Congress leaders have resulted in a below

national average vaccination coverage of senior citizens and even front-line workers in some of the Congress-ruled states.

Tweeting the letter to Singh, the health minister said, "History shall be kinder to you Dr Manmohan Singh ji if your offer of constructive cooperation and valuable advice

was followed by your @INCIndia leaders as well in such extraordinary times!"

Singh on Sunday wrote to Prime Minister Modi suggesting five measures to battle the Covid-19 crisis, including ramping up vaccination and boosting supply of medicines. Vardhan said, "People in

responsible positions in your party as well as in the state governments formed by your party do not seem to share your view."

"Let alone thanking our scientists, many Congress members and Congress-ruled state governments have taken extraordinary interest in spreading falsehoods regarding the efficacy of these vaccines, thereby fuelling vaccine hesitancy, and playing with the lives of our countrymen."

"A sitting chief minister of your party created a dubious world record of sorts by being the only head of government directly inciting people against

an indigenously developed vaccine! Some Congress leaders even shamed the vaccines in public but took their doses in private, quietly," he charged.

"A word of advice from you to them may have ensured better cooperation from these people," the minister said.

Manmohan tests Covid positive: Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh tested positive for Covid-19 and was admitted to AIIMS, New Delhi with a mild fever on Monday afternoon. Singh, 88, has been admitted to the AIIMS trauma centre, which is a dedicated Covid facility, sources said.

an indigenous health system is stretched although it has not collapsed yet, he said, adding that despite around 25,500 cases coming up every day, Delhi's health system is still functioning.

The lockdown is needed to prevent the health system of Delhi from collapsing under the increasing number of patients as there is an acute shortage of medicines, beds, ICUs and oxygen, Kejriwal said.

Noting that the decision to impose lockdown was not an easy

(SEE P2)

Italy initiates solatium for kin of killed Indian fishermen

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

The Centre on Monday told the Supreme Court that Italy has initiated the transfer of Rs 10 crore compensation to be given to the kin of two Indian fishermen killed by Italian Marines off the Kerala coast in February 2012.

The Centre told a bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde that as soon as the money is received, the government will deposit it with the apex court as per the 9 April direction. We are awaiting the receipt of money, advocate Rajat Nair, appearing for the Centre, told the bench.

The bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and

V Ramasubramanian, was hearing the Centre's application for closure of case against the two Italian marines - Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre. The bench asked whether the amount has been deposited. Nair told the bench that Italy has initiated the transfer of money.

The bench said that the Centre's counsel had earlier insisted on an early hearing and on the last date said that money would be deposited within three days.

On 9 April, the top court had directed the Centre to deposit in its account Rs 10 crore to be given by Italy for the kin of two Indian fishermen and said the court itself will disburse the compensation.

Campaigning closes for sixth phase of Bengal polls

SNS & PTI

KOLKATA, 19 APRIL

Curtain came down at 6.30 p.m. on Monday on the campaigning for 43 Assembly constituencies of West Bengal which will go to polls on 22 April in the sixth phase of elections.

In view of the rising cases of Covid-19 in the state, the Election Commission (EC) has extended the silence period from 48 hours to 72 hours in each of the remaining three phases of the Assembly polls to be held on 22, 26 and 29 April. Polling will be held between 7 a.m. and 6.30 p.m. at 14,480 polling stations in North 24 Parganas district, nine each in Nadia and Uttar Dinajpur

Polling will be held in 17 constituencies in North 24 Parganas, nine each in Nadia and Uttar Dinajpur and 8 in Purba Bardhaman

districts and eight in Purba Bardhaman district. Altogether 306 contestants including the BJP's national vice president Mukul Roy, senior TMC leaders and ministers Jyotiripriya Mallick and Chandrima Bhattacharya, and CPI(M) leader Tamay Bhattacharya are in the fray.

The political fate of film director Raj Chakraborty and actress Koushani Mukherjee, who were fielded by the Trinamul Congress, will also be sealed in this phase of the

election. There are more than 1.03 crore voters in these 43 constituencies, who are eligible to exercise their franchise.

The BJP's star campaigner included such as Prime Minister Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, party president J P Nadda and actor Mithun Chakraborty.

On the other hand, TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee led party's campaigning for the sixth phase. **BJP to curb rallies:** BJP president J P Nadda has decided that in view of the Covid crisis, all public meetings of BJP leaders henceforth in Bengal, including those of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, will not have more than 500 people.

Mamata rules out lockdown

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

MALDA/RAIGANJ, 19 APRIL

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee today ruled out chances of the state government imposing a lockdown or night curfew in the state due to the surge in Covid-19 cases. She was addressing a Press meet in Narayanpur under the Malda police station.

Addressing another rally at the Sirsa Madrasa Maidan in Chakulia in North Dinajpur district, Miss Banerjee said, "Had requested the ECI to hold the last

three phases on a single day to save people from Covid, but the officials concerned did not do so. I still pray to them with folded hands to conduct the last two phases on a single day," she said.

SC rejects plea for 100% matching of VVPATs with EVMs

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea seeking 100 per cent matching of the voter verifiable paper audit trail (VVPAT) slips with the electronic voting machines (EVMS) vote count in the elections, saying it will not interfere in the middle of poll process.

In April 2019, the apex court had directed the EC to increase random matching of VVPAT slips with EVMS to five polling booths per Assembly segment in the Lok Sabha polls and said it would provide greater satisfaction not just to political parties but the entire electorate.

(PTI)



Everyone should remain very careful during this second wave of Covid-19

MAMATA BANERJEE, CHIEF MINISTER, WEST BENGAL

SPEAKING IN MALDA ON THE COVID SURGE SEEN ACROSS THE STATE

Lockdown in Delhi till 26 April amid exploding Covid cases

Kejriwal says the lockdown, beginning from 10 pm on 19 April till 5 am on 26 April, is needed to prevent the collapse of Delhi's health infra reeling under acute shortage of ICUs, beds, oxygen & medicines

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

In view of the grim situation arising out of the fast-surfacing cases of Covid-19 daily in the national capital for the past several days, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today announced a six-day lockdown in the city beginning from 10 pm tonight till 5 am next Monday (26 April).

Kejriwal said his "harsh" step was needed to prevent the collapse of the national capital's health care infrastructure, which was under tremendous strain under the prevailing circumstances, though he did not believe that the lockdown would provide a solution to the problems being faced by Delhi. The city has already been under a night curfew till 30 April.

Addressing an online press conference, the CM said that he had a meeting with Lt-Governor Anil Baijal this morning when there was an elaborate discussion on the disturbing scenario created by the "fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic" in Delhi. The decision to declare a six-day lockdown was taken to ensure that Delhi did not face a bigger crisis, Kejriwal said.

During the lockdown all religious places will be permitted to open, but no visitors

will be allowed. The Delhi government offices and corporations will remain closed except those involved in essential and emergency services such as healthcare and emergency services.

Kejriwal said the planned marriage functions will be allowed but only with 50 participants. There will be permission for only 20 persons to be present at funerals.

He said doctors, healthcare staff, essential service workers, officials, journalists, judges, government officials and diplomats can move out without restrictions on the production of a valid ID proof. Students appearing in examinations will be allowed to travel on the production of a valid ID card.

Explaining the circumstances why the lockdown was to be declared, the CM said, "I have always explained everything to people honestly. I have never tried to hide anything because the cooperation of the public is essential to control the situation. On an average, one lakh tests are being conducted daily. The actual figure of deaths have also been put before people. I never believed in conducting a small number of tests which would lead to the identification of a reduced number of coronavirus positive cases."



Kejriwal said with an average number of 25,000 cases of Covid-19 being identified daily for the past few days, the situation could lead to the breakdown of healthcare infrastructure in any city. "In Delhi, the number of available ICUs is virtually nil. There is an acute shortage of oxygen supply. The medicine Remdesivir, which is in great demand for curing the serious cases of Covid-19, is disappearing."

He pointed out that the lockdown was needed to enable the government to use this period to strengthen the health infrastructure in the city.

The CM appealed with "folded hands" to migrant workers to remain in Delhi till the lockdown came to an end. "I know the daily-wagers will be put to a great difficulty. But believe me

the government will take care of you. I appeal to you to remain in the city. It is a small lockdown. 'Main hoon na,' he told them.

It is however another matter that thousands of migrant workers in Delhi started heading to their homes in other states despite Kejriwal's appeal.

The lockdown is needed to prevent the health system of Delhi from collapsing under the increasing number of patients as there is an acute shortage of medicines, beds, ICUs and oxygen, the CM said.

In its order, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said that the movement of people will be allowed for marriage related gatherings and up to 50 people will be permitted to attend a wedding, but they will have to show soft or hard copy of the marriage card. For funerals, 20 people will be allowed to attend.

Essential services will be allowed during the lockdown, but private offices and other establishments like shops, malls, weekly markets, manufacturing units, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, restaurants, bars, assembly halls, auditoriums, public parks, sport complexes, gyms, spas, barbershops, salons, and beauty parlours will remain closed.

In the order, the DDMA said that swimming pools (except those being used for training of sports persons for participation in national and international events), construction activities (except where labourers are residing onsite) will also remain shut. Stadia will be permitted to remain open for organising national and international sports events without spectators, stated chief secretary Vijay Dev, who is also the chairperson of the DDMA's executive committee.

The DDMA's order said that public transport such as metro and buses with their 50 per cent capacity will be allowed to run. In taxis, not more than two people will be allowed.

According to the DDMA, e-passes obtained by a person for movement connected to essential goods and services during night curfew and weekend curfew will also be valid for the six-day lockdown.

During his press conference, Kejriwal maintained that this decision to impose lockdown was not an easy one for the AAP government as "it hurts the poor, daily wagers the most".

"I appeal to people not to leave Delhi during the lockdown. We will take care of you. I am there to ensure it," the CM appealed to migrant workers.

He said that he has been strictly against lockdown, adding that he believes it can slow the pace of infections but it is not a solution. "It should be imposed only when health system reaches its limits. I appeal to people to completely follow the lockdown. We will together overcome this fourth phase of Covid—as we did in the earlier three waves," he said.

During the lockdown, pregnant women and patients going for medical services along with an attendant will be allowed on production of valid I-card or doctor's prescription or medical papers.

According to the DDMA, e-passes obtained by a person for movement connected to essential goods and services during night curfew and weekend curfew will also be valid for the six-day lockdown.

Those going to airports, railways, ISBTs have been allowed movement, but they will have to show a valid ticket. Electronic and print mediapersons have also been exempted from the restrictions.

Delhi on Sunday recorded a massive jump in its daily Covid tally with 25,462 fresh cases, while the positivity rate shooting up to 29.74 per cent—which indicated that almost every third sample being tested in the city was turning out to be coronavirus positive.

People flock markets to stock groceries, other essentials ahead of lockdown in Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

People flocked the markets to stock groceries and other essentials, and ran other errands soon after Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a week-long lockdown 19 April amid rising coronavirus cases.

Long queues were seen outside stores at many places in Delhi soon after the announcement.

A few anticipated that the lockdown may be extended further, others did not want to step out during the restricted period and hence wanted to be better prepared.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a six-day lockdown from 10 pm on Monday night till 5 am next Monday as the health system is being stretched to its limits amid the spiralling infections.

"Services during morning (8 AM to 10 AM) and evening (5 PM to 7 PM) peak hours across the network will be available with a headway (frequency) of 30 minutes," the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said in a statement.

Shiv Takkar, a 30-year-old law student residing in Lajpat Nagar, said although he was anyway coming to buy some essentials and medicines, the moment he got a message from a friend about the lockdown, he thought of fetching whatever is needed immediately. "The situation has not improved a bit a year after. We do not have beds in hospitals then, we do not have beds now. So, it becomes difficult to trust the government, especially when it is an emergency," he said.

Rajbir Singh, a 58-year-old employee at a mineral water distribution company, said, "Shopkeepers tend to increase the prices of items when such a situation arises. Last year, the prices of hand sanitiser and floor cleaners went through the roof."

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF DR. SHIRISH AGGARWAL Administrative Civil Judge cum-Additional Rent Controller (Central), Court Room No. 323, 3rd Floor Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi N.D.O.H.: 05-06-2021 SC-69/2020 Deepak Khosla, s/o Late Pushpa Nath Khosla, r/o 11A/35, W.E.A. Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005. Petitioner

Versus The State & Anr. FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To: All concerned.

Whereas 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 expenses and of Rs. xx/- As per record to be standing in the name of Late Smt. Prem Khasla deceased.

Whereas the 05-06-2021 at 10 (Ten) O'Clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing on the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court this 15th day of April 2021.

Administrative Civil Judge cum-Additional Rent Controller (Central), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. UMED SINGH GREWAL Addl. District Judge-02 (West)

Room No. 127, 1st Floor Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi PC NO. 25/2020 Pawan Nangia, s/o Late Versus State & Anr. CITATION UNDER SECTION 283(2) OF SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

Whereas an application under the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of Probate of the Will or for Letters of Administration to the estate of Late Smt. Anuradha Nangia, w/o Sh. Pawan Nangia in respect of Locker No. 225 with Punjab National Bank, Main Patel Road, Opp. Metro Pillar, Sector 8, Noida, Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110093, died on 09th July 2010 at Delhi has been made by Sh. Pawan Nangia, s/o Late Sh. Chander Parkash Nangia, r/o F-82, 1st Floor, West Patel Nagar, New Delhi-110008.

Whereas the 28th day of May, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest in the Estate of the said deceased may if he/she desires to appear in this case and on the above date and time on the proceedings Grant of Probate (or Letters of Administration).

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 09th day of March, 2020.

Addl. District Judge-02 (West)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. CS No. 477/2018 Deki Electronics Ltd.

Versus M/s. TSAC Polymers And Ors.

1. M/s. TSAC Polymers Through its Partners: Mr. Mayank Gupta & Mr. Adhar Narain, having its registered Office at: A-2/48, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029. Contact Nos: 9810635191, 9999611991, Email: polytac@saconline.com

Also: C-84A, 1st Floor, Sector-8, Noida-201301 (U.P.) Also: A-178, Sector, 63, Noida-201301 (U.P.)

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 01-05-2021, 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 09th day of April, 2021.

District Judge (Commercial Court-02) New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Ms. Manisha Khurana Senior Civil Judge Cum-Rent-Controller South East District Room No. 201, 2nd Floor District Court Saket Court Complex New Delhi Case No. CS SC/472/2017 M/s. Tushar Vision, A-5, Main Suraj Kund Road, Pul Phelad Pur, New Delhi-110044, Through Sri Pradeep Singh, Authorized Representative —Plaintiff Versus M/s. P.D. Enterprises —Defendant To: M/s. P.D. Enterprises Through its Proprietor Trivender Sharma, s/o Preml Dutt Sharma, Shop No. 1, Shopping Complex, Shakti Vihar, Scholl Road, Meethapur, Badarpur, New Delhi-110044 Mob. No. 9810660027

Whereas abovenamed Plaintiff has instituted a suit against you. You are hereby summoned to appear before this court by pleader or through video conferencing on 31-05-2021 at 10-00 a.m. to answer the same.

The written statement must be filed within thirty days from the date of receipt of the summons. You are to also file affidavit of admission/denial of the documents filed by the plaintiff with written statement.

It is made clear that any unjustified denial of documents and delay in the time lines may lead to an order of costs against the concerned party.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on that day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court, this 09th day of April, 2021.

District Judge (Commercial Court-02) New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-02)

Commercial Court-02 Annex Building New Delhi District Patiala House Courts, New Delhi Case No. 03, Ground Floor Patiala House Courts, New Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Gurvinder Pal Singh District Judge (Commercial Court-



The fanning of the dangerous flames of communal divisions has not occurred as strongly in Bengal since 1946, as it is happening now.

SAYING BENGAL SHOULDN'T BE A PARTY TO THE 'NATIONAL DEGENERATION' BY CHOOSING TO BE GOVERNED BY CENTRAL LEADERS

NOBEL LAUREATE AMARTYA SEN NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021

03

Punjab govt imposes stricter curbs as Covid cases rise

CM orders that all people flying into Punjab should have a negative RT-PCR from within 72 hrs

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 19 APRIL

As Covid cases continue to rise rapidly in Punjab and other states across the country, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Monday ordered the imposition of stricter restrictions in the state beginning tomorrow, including extension of night curfew timings (8 p.m. to 5 a.m.), closure of all bars, cinema halls, gyms, spas, coaching centres, sports complexes, with restaurants and hotels to be open only for takeaway and home delivery from Monday to Saturday.

The rates for RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) by private labs have been reduced to Rs 450 and Rs 300 respectively (with additional charges for home collection of the samples), in a bid to promote increased testing.

The gatherings of more



than 20 persons, including for weddings and cremations, have also been banned across the state. The new restrictions, which also include closure of all malls, shops and markets on Sunday, coupled with the ones imposed earlier, will remain in effect till 30 April, announced the CM.

Chairing a high-level, virtual meeting to review the Covid situation in the state, the CM also ordered that all people flying into Punjab should

have a negative RT-PCR not more than 72 hours old, else they would have to undergo RAT testing at the airport. He also ordered that

people who have attended large gatherings anywhere to be mandatorily home quarantined for five days and tested as per protocol.

Capt Amarinder directed the transport department that the number of people in buses, taxis and autos be restricted to 50 per cent of the capaci-

ty. In a bid to check inbound travellers, the CM also directed that the RAT testing booths should be set up at bus stands and railway stations and all passengers be checked. All eligible persons should also be vaccinated against Covid.

He further said that military hospitals in the cantonments in Punjab had assured the state government of all possible help to tackle the coronavirus surge, while private hospitals had already been directed to reserve 75 per cent beds for Covid patients.

Capt Amarinder said that no elective surgeries should be conducted in any government or private hospitals till 15 May and all OPD patients must

be tested, besides encouraging them to get vaccinated.

The chief secretary, Vini Mahajan, said police personnel were being placed at the disposal of the health

department, along with education department personnel including teachers, for more aggressive tracing of contacts of Covid positive persons.

Health secretary Hussan Lal, in a presentation, said the state's positivity rate was around 7.8 per cent but had shown a quantum jump thereafter, going up to 12.6 per cent as of 15 April, with Mohali being the worst hit at 36.53 per cent. The spike, he said, could be attributed to the new variant, along with people coming back from large gatherings from outside Punjab.

The figure was expected to go up further with more testing, he said, adding by 5 of May, the state was projected to report 6000 cases a day if urgent measures are not implemented in districts of Ludhiana, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Jalandhar, Amritsar and Patiala, which would be the drivers of the surge.

On the availability of vaccine, the chief secretary told the CM that the situation was critical, with only three days of stocks left, but the Central Government has assured that more would be coming soon.

Medical education minister OP Soni cited shortage of oxygen supply in Amritsar hospital, while chief secretary Vini

Mahajan said though Indian Oil Limited was providing the state with supplies, the situation was a matter of concern.

A close watch was being kept on the demand-supply situation at both government and private hospitals, she said.

A committee has been

formed by the state government, under principal secretary Industries, to monitor the situation and coordinate with the Centre in this regard, said Vini.

Health secretary Hussan Lal said three plants had been operationalised since the last surge, and two plants at Medical Colleges Amritsar and Patiala were awaiting the Centre's approval. While there was shortage currently, supplies were being diverted from one district to another to meet the requirements.

The meeting was informed that vaccination appeared to be having a positive effect in the police department, with only one vaccinated personnel testing positive in the past 24 hours, and a total of only 397 positive cases among those who have been immunised.

The CM directed all departments to make all efforts to maximise vaccination among the eligible population. He also urged large industries to take responsibility for getting their employees vaccinated.

2 arrested in Haryana for ₹1.5 lakh fraud through digital payment app

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 19 APRIL

Haryana Police has arrested two accused from Kaithal, who have defrauded several petrol pump operators to the tune of about Rs 1.5 lakh through digital payment platform 'PhonePe' app.

While giving this information on Monday, a Haryana Police spokesperson said that the arrested accused have been identified as Sushil Kumar (PhonePe worker), a resident of Moharia in district Karnal and Vishal of Sankara district Kaithal. Rs 5000 cash, 2 mobile phones and a motorcycle have also been recovered from them.

A complaint in this regard was received from a petrol pump operator of Kaithal. It was found that oil was filled from the petrol pump but the payment made through a digital payment platform was not credited in the pump owner's account. The accused had transferred more than Rs 15,000 to their own account through 5 fraud transactions.

It was also revealed that accused Sushil, a worker of PhonePe company was dealing with installation of PhonePe QR codes at interested petrol pumps in Kaithal, Karnal and Kurukshetra districts. During interrogation, Sushil confessed that taking advantage of PhonePe workers, he used to get OTP from pump salesmen while placing QR code on the petrol pump. The accused said that about Rs 1.5 lakh have been fraudulently taken through 25 bogus transactions from October 2020 to April 2021.

Sushil had opened a phone-pay business account in the name of his flour mill and had two QR codes. During installation of QR code at petrol pumps and other places, the accused used to create another QR code with his account, but with the phone number of the salesman. Then they used to actually scan the code.

95 pc Covid patients under home isolation in HP: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 19 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday said 95 per cent of all active cases of Covid in the state are kept in home isolation and there is the need to strengthen the mechanism for better treatment of these patients.

After a review meeting on Covid situation in Bilaspur, Thakur said doctors, paramedical staff and other health workers must bring a behavioural change in their attitude while treating Covid patients both in health facilities and in home isolation.

"Most of the doctors and other paramedical staff are working with great commit-



ment and dedication to treat covid-19 patients but still greater commitment is required to ensure better results.

Strengthening the mechanism of home isolation was the need of the hour as about 95 per cent of the active cases of Covid-19 were in home

isolation," he added.

He further stated that effective data about the patients in home isolation must be collected and they should also be provided pulse oximeter, hand sanitizer along with other essential medicines.

Besides, active involve-

ment of panchayat pradhans in rural areas should be ensured to effectively coordinate with the family members of the covid-19 positive patients in home isolation besides local health and Asha workers.

In addition, effective mechanisms must be evolved to regularly monitor health parameters of the patients in home isolation besides motivating the people, he said.

Thakur urged the members of Vyapar Mandals to give their wholehearted support to the state government to fight the spread of this pandemic.

He said that the district administration must keep watch on people coming back home from religious congregations from other states with intensity of Covid-19 and rep-

Jai Ram asks officials to tackle Bilaspur drought

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 19 APRIL

As Bilaspur district is worst affected by the drought-like situation, HP Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Monday directed the officials to make adequate arrangements to tackle the situation.

After reviewing the situation arising due to the drought-like situation in Bilaspur district, Thakur felt the need for

representatives of the PRIs can play a vital role in identifying such

rapid pace and is more fatal nowadays as the deaths reported in the state during the last about 50 days has gone up from 970 to 1177.

Asha workers must also record the other co-morbidities of the Covid patients in home isolation so that better treatment of these patients could be done," he added.

He called for starting a special campaign to ensure active participation of PRIs representatives, NGOs, mahila mandals, yuvak mandals etc to strengthen the mechanism of home isolation.

"As compared to other states, Himachal is still better placed due to effective Covid-19 management but still a lot more is needed to be done to curb this pandemic," he added.

HP Police forms anti-money laundering cell

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 19 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Police on Monday constituted Anti Money Laundering Cell as per the request of Enforcement Directorate to tackle organized crime in the state.

A senior police official said Anti Money Laundering Cell had been constituted in HP Police headquarters in Shimla which will collect and analyse information regarding criminal cases from all the districts.

The cell will assess whether the information collected in a particular crime can be shared with the Enforcement Directorate to initiate action under Prevention of Money Laundering Act, he added.

He further stated that Director General of Police Sanjay Kundu today held a meeting with Enforcement Directorate Additional Director (North Zone) Sunil Kumar Yadav along with officers from Enforcement Directorate, Shimla on the issue.

"The Anti Money Laundering Cell will share information with focus on organized crime such as cases of drug trafficking, illegal mining, wild life, Excise Act, Prevention of Corruption Act and fake degree cases.

Further, the information will be shared on a fortnightly basis and the main aim of the entire exercise is to launch a multi-pronged criminal action against organized crime in the state," he added.

Affordable housing: Haryana launches portal for applications & draw for flats

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 19 APRIL

The department of town and country planning of the Manohar Lal Khattar-led Haryana government has launched an online portal for receiving applications and online draw for flats under the affordable housing policy.

Now, the applicants will be able to submit their applications for allotment of flats on the portal <https://edrawtp.haryana.gov.in>.

Sharing more details, a spokesperson of the department said with the launch of this portal, the entire process including the launch of the scheme by the developer, scrutiny of the applications, payments, submission of applications and

draw of the flats will be done online, thus bringing in greater transparency in the whole system. The spokesperson said that there were complaints with the present manual system as the interested applicants were required to purchase the application from the developers. However, the developers used to pick and choose the applicants to whom the application forms were distributed.

He said that in some cases, complaints regarding selling the flats on premium by the developers was also coming, and taking note of such complaints, now the online portal for the draw of the flats for affordable housing projects have been launched by the department of town and country planning, Haryana, to bring more transparency.

Despite efforts earnestly put in by the Government of India and the Government of Delhi, we are faced with spiraling infections and resultant acute pressure on institutional hospital support.

Fellow citizens of Delhi, our city has fought and defeated many a catastrophes in the past. I say it with utmost conviction that we would be able to beat the ongoing crisis also.

As much as the Governments fight it, we the people of Delhi can beat the virus by practising self control, restrain and strictly following necessary discipline of wearing masks and maintaining social distance, apart from following prohibitory guidelines that have been put in place keeping nothing but our well-being in mind. We also have to ensure that all eligible are vaccinated without hesitation.

It is the most disadvantaged fellow citizen - the daily wagers and our service providers who will be affected the most. While the Government will do everything to mitigate their problems, all of us have to rise up to the occasion and stand together as a family assisting each other.

For our frontline workers, especially the Doctors and Paramedical Staff, I would like to express deep gratitude on behalf of the people of Delhi. You have remained committed in the service of humanity, and I appeal to you to once again renew your commitment. Generations to come shall forever hold you in high esteem and salute your untiring service and rectitude.

Dear Friends, Precaution, Empathy, Co-operation, Self Restraint and a Positive Attitude should be our talisman during these times.

We will fight and win together

JAI HIND!

Anil Baijal

Lt Governor, Delhi

Thousands of Delhi's migrant workers head home despite CM's assurance

PTI
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Thousands of migrant workers gathered at Anand Vihar ISBT here to catch a bus home, hours after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a week-long lockdown and appealed to them with folded hands not to leave Delhi while sounding a word of assurance -- "Main hoon na" (I am here for you).

Police officials said over 5,000 people gathered at Anand Vihar including at ISBT as well as the railway station and the numbers were rising.

Earlier in the day, Kejriwal appealed to the migrant workers to not leave Delhi, saying the short period of lockdown would need not be extended.

"I assure you, the government will take full care of you. Main hoon na, mujh par bharosa rakho (I am here for you, have faith in me)," Kejriwal said, announcing the lockdown from 10 PM tonight to 5 AM next Monday.

A senior police officer said after the sudden announcement of the lockdown, thousands of migrant workers thronged the ISBT Anand Vihar area.

"We have deployed max-



imum force here. There must be over 5,000 people here at present. Buses are limited as of now, we are guiding people as per their destination," he said. The police were also in talks with civil administration officials to either arrange transport for them or shelter homes for their temporary stay, the officer said.

Policemen deployed in the area were also trying to counsel the migrant workers to stay back as the lockdown was for a few days only, he added.

However, migrants feared that the lockdown could be extended as the situation of COVID-19 was deteriorating

day by day. Mukesh Pratap, who works at a cloth factory in Dildas Garden and a native of UP's Bareilly, said he wanted to go to his home as there was a possibility of lockdown extension.

"Lockdown will definitely affect our livelihood so it is better for us to remain at our home. It may be extended also and I would not like to take a chance," he said.

In an online briefing, the chief minister said, "I would like to appeal to them (migrants), with folded hands, this is a short lockdown of six days. Please do not leave Delhi. You would lose a lot of time, money, and energy in travelling. Stay in Delhi."

Kejriwal said it was not an easy decision to impose lockdown because it hurt the poor people most.

"I understand how people lose their jobs and wages during the lockdown. This is especially difficult for the poor people and daily wage workers," he said.

During the nationwide lockdown last year, a large number of migrant workers from Bihar, UP and other states living in Delhi had moved to their home states, through whatever means available and often on foot.



APPEAL

My Dear Fellow Residents of Delhi,

I appeal to seek your support and cooperation in our collective fight against the COVID-19 Pandemic. Delhi along with the rest of the country is going through, so far the most difficult phase. It has left all of us vulnerable without discrimination.

Despite efforts earnestly put in by the Government of India and the Government of Delhi, we are faced with spiraling infections and resultant acute pressure on institutional hospital support.

Fellow citizens of Delhi, our city has fought and defeated many a catastrophes in the past. I say it with utmost conviction that we would be able to beat the ongoing crisis also.

As much as the Governments fight it, we the people of Delhi can beat the virus by practising self control, restrain and strictly following necessary discipline of wearing masks and maintaining social distance, apart from following prohibitory guidelines that have been put in place keeping nothing but our well-being in mind. We also have to ensure that all eligible are vaccinated without hesitation.

It is the most disadvantaged fellow citizen - the daily wagers and our service providers who will be affected the most. While the Government



Make probe agencies go after medicine hoarders instead of political opponents

CONGRESS LEADER AND EX-MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK CHAVAN

India

HC gives T'gana govt 48-hr ultimatum to decide on lockdown

CM K Chandrasekhar Rao tested positive for Covid-19

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, 19 APRIL



Queue up to buy Remdesivir in Hyderabad.

Telangana High Court issued an ultimatum to the state government to either put in restrictions or night curfew to curb the spread of the virus in the state within the next 48 hours or it will pass orders. This came on a day when chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao tested positive for Covid-19.

According to a statement issued by the chief secretary Somesh Kumar, CM Rao has mild symptoms and has been advised isolation. A team of doctors is monitoring his health. The CM is currently staying at his farmhouse. The chief secretary had also tested positive last week.

Meanwhile, disappointed with the affidavit filed by the state, a bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli directed the state government to either impose night curfew or weekend lock down within two days to curb the spread of the virus otherwise it will pass orders. The Chief Justice asked whether the state intended to make the people "sitting ducks." Dubbing the affidavit as "disappointing" the bench observed that while harping on checking international passen-

gers it was silent on the measures to control those entering the state through bus and railway stations and private vehicles. In the last sitting the court had directed the state to make RT-PCR test reports mandatory for those entering borders. This time the court wanted to know in particular if the state government had issued any circulars to check footfall in cinema halls and other public places witnessing large gatherings. "Do not then blame us for entering your territory" warned the Chief Justice.

The state today had 4,009 cases of new infections and 14 deaths. The Greater Hyderabad area reported 705 new cases. However, there have been complaints that the figures reflected in the state bulletin was far less than what was being reported in the district wise reports leading to accusations that the state gov-

ernment was actually fudging the numbers.

In the meantime the desperation of the common man for a hospital bed, oxygen and even the antiviral drug Remdesivir could be gauged when hundreds queued up before a Hetero Drug retail store at Moosapet where the drug was being sold at Rs 3,400 per vial. Since in the black market the price of the drug has soared to Rs 25,000-Rs 30,000 many helpless kin of critically ill Covid-19 patients queued up since early morning to buy the vials. Many of them came from the districts after the hospitals told them to procure the drug from the retail outlet.

With only two policemen deployed to maintain the queue there was little social distancing as desperate people broke or jump the queue before stocks ran out.

Kerala night curfew
In the wake of huge surge in the number of Covid-19 cases, the Kerala government has decided to impose night curfew for two weeks from Tuesday onwards. The curfew will be imposed from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. No restriction will be imposed on public transport.

Australia-India Indo-Pacific partnership initiative launched

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Amid China's increasing assertiveness on maritime issues, Australia today launched an Australia-India Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative Partnership (AIPOI) grant programme to help support a free, open and prosperous Indo-Pacific underpinned by the rule of law and respect for sovereignty.

"This AUD 1.4 million (Rs 8.12 crore) grant programme is a practical initiative to advance Australia and India's shared vision for the Indo-Pacific," Australia's High Commissioner to India Barry O'Farrell said.

"Through this programme, we are seeking new proposals on how Australia, India and other regional partners can advance our shared maritime objectives," he added.

The AIPOI grants programme will help deliver practical outcomes under the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

The first phase of this multi-year grant programme will encourage proposals from Australian and Indian stakeholders to share expertise and resources.

Air Chief leaves for France to discuss delivery of remaining Rafale fighters

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria, Chief of the Air Staff (CAS), left here for France today on a five-day official visit during which he will hold talks with senior French military officials on the production and delivery schedule of the remaining Rafale jets, among other issues.

"The visit of CAS from 19-23 April will enhance potential avenues for strengthening the level of interaction between the two Air Forces," the Defence Ministry said.

The visit comes after Gen Philippe Lavigne, Chief of Staff, French Air and Space Force (PASF) visited India in February 2020. The two Air Forces have seen significant operational interaction in the recent



past. They engage in the bilateral air exercise series 'Garuda', as well as hop exercises, the last being 'Ex Desert Knight 21' held at the Air Force Station, Jodhpur in January.

There is a possibility of Air Chief Marshal Bhaduria flagging off a batch of five or six Rafale jets from the Mérignac airbase in the French port city of Bordeaux for India,

sources said. Dassault Aviation, the manufacturer of Rafale jets, was scheduled to send six Rafale aircraft to India by the end of April.

The arrival of the new batch of the aircraft will pave the way for the IAF to raise a second squadron of the Rafale jets. The new squadron will be based in Hasimara air base in West Bengal. The first Rafale squadron is based in Ambala air force station. A squadron comprises around 18 aircraft.

India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France in September 2016 for procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets at a cost of around Rs 58,000 crore. Dassault Aviation has delivered 14 jets to the Indian Air Force so far. The first batch of five Rafale jets arrived in India on July 29 last year.

Punjab clamps down with stricter curbs as Covid cases rise

CHANDIGARH, 19 APRIL

As Covid cases continue to rise rapidly across the country, including in Punjab, chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Monday ordered stricter restrictions beginning tomorrow, including extension of night curfew timings (8 p.m. to 5 a.m.), closure of all bars, cinema halls, gyms, spas, coaching centres, sports complexes, with restaurants and hotels to be open only for takeaway and home delivery from Monday to Saturday.

Rates for RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Testing (RAT) by private labs have been reduced to Rs 450 and Rs 300 respectively (with additional charges for home collection of the samples), in a bid to promote increased testing. Gatherings of more than 20 persons, including for weddings and cremations, have also been banned across the state.

The new restrictions, which also include closure of all malls, shops and markets on Sunday, coupled with the ones imposed earlier, will remain in effect till 30 April, said the CM.

Chairing a high-level virtual meeting to review the Covid situation in the state, the CM also ordered that all people flying into Punjab should have a negative RT-PCR not more than 72 hours old, else they would have to undergo RAT testing at the airport. He also ordered that people who have attended large gatherings anywhere to be mandatorily home quarantined for five days and tested as per protocol.

TENDER

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Office of The Ex. Engineer (M-III) Shah-North
LIG Flats, East of Loni Road, Shahdara-Delhi
NIT No. EE (M) III-SH (N)TC/2021-22/002 Dated : 18.04.2021
Executive Engineer M-III/Shah (N) invites tender on behalf of
Commissioner EDMC from registered contractor of MCD

S. No.	Name	Head of	Tender	Estimated	Time of	Tender
No. of work	account	work	Amount	Cost	Completion	Cost
1.	Remodeling and Construction of Vijay Park Road Nalla right side in North Ghonda by pdg. RMC from in ward no. 48E, Shah(N) Zone	MSPV	8676824	173600	3 Months	1000
2.	Imp. Dev. of road From galli no. 03 Mohanpuri H.No. 53/3 to Gurjar Chowk by pdg. RMC from in ward no. 48E, Shah(N) Zone	MSPV	2789878	55800	3 Months	500
Validity of rates:	05 Months.					
Last date & time of Download of tender document	30.04.2021 upto 15.00 PM.					
the detailed documents can be seen & downloaded by the registered contractor from website	www.etenders.gov.in					
The tender will be opened in the office of E.E.-[M Shah(N)-III] on 03.05.2021						
RO NO - 04/DPI/EAST/2021-22	EE-M-III-Shah. (N) Zone					
EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303						

RURAL DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT, SHORT NOTICE TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders on forms PW 6 & 8 are invited on behalf of the Governor of H.P. by the Executive Engineer, Rural Development Department, Zonal office, Dharamsala, Distt. Kangra for the following works from the approved and eligible contractor enlisted in HP, PWD and I&PH Department so as to reach in his office on or before 26-04-2021 up to 11.00 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be had from the office of the Executive Engineer, Rural Development Department, Zonal Office, Dharamshala against cash payment of Rs. 350/- (Non-refundable) up to 4.00 P.M. on or before 24-04-2021

The Earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate, time deposit accounts/ Saving account in any of the post office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, RDD, Zonal Office Dharamshala must accompany with each tender, Conditional tender and the tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tenders shall be open for 90 days. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. If it happens to be a holiday on the date of opening then the same shall be opened on the next working date on the same time & place.

S.No.	Name of works	Estimated Cost.	Earliest Money	Time Limit	Class
1	Balance Work for C/o Community centre at Vill. Gahalian Upper Ghalour Jawala Mukhi Distt. Kangra SH:- wood work, Grill, WS & SI etc. in ground floor)	4,98,760/-	10000/-	Two Month	D
2	Balance Work for C/o DPO residence staff quarter at Chamba Distt. Chamba H.P.SH:- R/wall /B/wall and WS & SI etc.	3,88,850/-	8000/-	Two Month	D
3	Balance Work for C/o MLMB at Bhoranj Dev. Block Bhoranj Distt. Hamirpur H.P. (SH:- R/wall , cutting work and site development)	4,87,550/-	9000/-	Two Month	D
4	P/L tile flooring in corridor , stair case and wall painting, ceiling in conference hall DRDA Office Dharamshala Distt. Kangra H.P.	2,70,785/-	6000/-	Two Month	D
5	Balance Work for proposed DPR building at Dharamshala Distt. Kangra H.P.(SH:- Painting work in building portion)	4,97,950/-	10,000/-	Two Month	D

0319/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

Executive Engineer (RDD),
Zonal Office, Dharamsala

Annexure "A" HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Ph. No. 01907-251336, E-mail: ee-goh-hp@nic.in

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, HPPWD Division Gohar (HP) on behalf of Governor of H.P., invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (in Rs.)	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earliest Money (in Rs.)	Deadline for submission of Bid.
1	Construction of Ayurvedic Health center building at Badhu Tehsil Chachiot, Distt. Mandi (HP) (SH:- Construction of site development, Building portion, W.S. & S.I. & septic tank)	40,96,856	22.04.2021	82,000/-	29.4.2021
2	Periodic maintenance on Sukhbani to Killing road km. 0/000 to 4/000. (SH:- Providing and laying 30 mm. thick bituminous concrete single layer, and hot applied thermoplastic in km.2/000 to 3/000)	12,71,085/-	22.04.2021	25,500	29.4.2021
3	Periodic maintenance on Nalani to Sangam road km. 0/000 to 5/000. (SH:- Providing and laying 30 mm. thick bituminous concrete single layer, and hot applied thermoplastic in km.1/330 to 2/000)	8,51,631/-	22.04.2021	17,100	29.4.2021
4	Periodic maintenance on Old Shimla Mandi road km. 0/000 to 2/5250. (SH:- Providing and laying 30 mm. thick bituminous concrete single layer, and hot applied thermoplastic in km.0/000 to 1/000 and 3/000 to 2/500)	54,01,707/-	22.04.2021	108,100	29.4.2021
5	Periodic maintenance on Jai devi Badhu Bhamroth road KM.0/000 to 2/000 (SH:- Providing and laying 30 mm. thick bituminous concrete single layer & hot applied thermoplastic in km. 1/0 to 7/000)	17,79,437/-	22.04.2021	35,600	29.4.2021
6	Construction of link road Nandi bridge to Nandi village km. 0/0 to 1/130 (SH:- Providing and laying M/T 0/00 to 1/000)	7,46,203/-	22.04.2021	15,000/-	29.4.2021
7	Construction of Sainj Nandi road KM 0/000 to 3/190 (SH:- Construction of 10.00 meter span R.C.C. culvert at RDs 19,06,193/- 1/840) Under SCP	7,68,787/-	22.04.2021	15,400/-	29.4.2021
8	Construction of Sainj Nandi road KM 0/000 to 3/190 (SH:- Construction of 6.000 meter span R.C.C. culvert at RDs 2/450) Under SCP	5,35,480.00	22.04.2021	11,000	29.4.2021
9	Construction of bridge at Shikhan Mata Mandi road via Sayin, Tokhar KM 0/000 to 7/200 (SH:- Construction of 4,000 meter span R.C.C. slab culvert at RD 1/990) Under MMSSY	5,35,187.00	22.04.2021	11,000	29.4.2021
10	Construction of Devidar at Shikhan Mata Mandi road via Sayin, Tokhar KM 0/000 to 7/200 (SH:- Construction of 4,000 meter span R.C.C. slab culvert at RD 0/600) Under MMSSY	5,35,187.00	22.04.2021	11,000	29.4.2021
11	Periodic maintenance on Gohar Kandha road km				



National security massively jeopardised by GOI's wasteful talks.
Our nation deserves better...

REMARKS COME AFTER REPORTS OF CHINA'S REFUSAL TO PULL BACK TROOPS FROM EASTERN LADAKH

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Traffic jam in New Delhi before the state goes into lockdown on Monday. ■ AGENCY

Night curfew in Manipur: The Manipur government has decided to impose night curfew in the state from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. in view of the rise of Covid-19 cases, an official said. The order did not specify for how many days the night curfew will be in force. It said media persons and those engaged in telecom services and essential services will be exempted from the curfew.

PTI

NIA team visits Mansukh Hirani's residence: A team of the NIA on Monday visited the Thane-based residence of businessman Mansukh Hirani, who was allegedly murdered days after an explosives-laden SUV was found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in Mumbai, a police official said. They meet Hirani's family in connection with the investigation into his death.

PTI

Covid: Maha declares 6 states as places of sensitive origin

Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Delhi (NCR), Rajasthan & Uttarakhand are declared as places of 'sensitive origin'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 19 APRIL

Stuggling to contain the huge Covid-19 surge, Maharashtra has declared six states, including Delhi and the NCR region, as places of "sensitive origin" in a bid to stop the influx of other variants of coronavirus into the state.

Maharashtra chief secretary Sitaram Kunte in an order issued on Sunday declared Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), Rajasthan and Uttarakhand as places of "sensitive origin".

As per the order, passengers travelling to Maharashtra from these places will need a negative RT-PCR report of test conducted within 48 hours of their train travel.

The decision has been taken to curb the transmission of coronavirus in Maharashtra and to "stop the influx of other Covid-19 virus variants into the state from other locations," said the order.

On Sunday, Delhi recorded the biggest jump in its daily Covid-19 tally with 25,462 new cases, while the positivity rate shot up to 29.74 per cent. Maharashtra, which is the worst-hit state in terms of the number of cases and deaths, on Sunday reported the highest number of 68,631 fresh infections while 503 patients died, as per the state health department.

With this, the cumulative caseload in Maharashtra mounted to 38,39,338 while the death toll reached 60,473.



A medic conducts COVID-19 testing at Jain Hospital, as coronavirus cases surge in Mumbai on Monday. ■ AGENCY

The Maharashtra government also issued standard operating procedures (SOPs) for passengers from the six states of sensitive origin.

For passengers travelling in long-distance trains from these places, the Railways shall share data of the trains that are scheduled to be running between these places and stations, and stations in Maharashtra with the local disaster management authorities, as per the SOPs.

The data of passengers will be shared with local disaster management authority each day, four hours before the departure from the origin of trains, the govern-

ment said.

No unreserved tickets will be issued from these places to Maharashtra. The Railways should ensure trains from the places of sensitive origin come to outer platforms where it is easier to conduct thermal screening (of passengers), the order said.

If the passengers are not carrying the RT-PCR negative report, they will have to undergo a rapid antigen test at the station, it added.

Covid package:

Maharashtra deputy chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Monday instructed implementation of the Rs 5,476-crore relief package announced

by the state government on a "war level" to cushion the impact on vulnerable sections of the stricter curbs currently imposed to contain Covid-19. According to an official statement here, Pawar, who also holds the finance portfolio, asked the administration to disburse the funds under the package immediately.

Pawar issued instructions for a war-level implementation of the Rs 5,476-crore package at a meeting held to review steps taken to provide help to the poor and other weaker sections in the wake of the tough Covid-19 measures.

Withdraw 'places of sensitive origin' order: Goa CM to Maha

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI, 19 APRIL

Goa chief minister Pramod Sawant on Monday appealed to his Maharashtra counterpart Uddhav Thackeray to withdraw the order declaring five states, including Goa, and Delhi as places of "sensitive origin" in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases.

The Maharashtra government on Sunday declared Kerala, Goa, Gujarat, Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR), Rajasthan and Uttarakhand as places of "sensitive origin" in a bid to "stop the influx of other Covid-19 virus variants into Maharashtra from other locations". As per the order, passengers travelling to Maharashtra from these places will need a negative RT-PCR report of the test conducted within 48 hours of their train travel.

"#COVID19 is a global pandemic. Let us put up a combined fight against this pandemic under the leadership of PM @narendramodi. I urge @CMOMarashtra not to single out states as 'Places of Sensitive Origin' and withdraw the said order in the public interest," Sawant tweeted.

The Maharashtrian focus on post-Covid economic recovery will remain a priority for us," he said in a tweet on Sunday along with a picture of them holding a meeting outdoors.

"Another productive interaction with FM @ABZayed on our bilateral cooperation. Took forward our ongoing discussions on this subject, starting in February. The strong focus on post-Covid economic recovery will remain a priority for us," he said in a tweet on Sunday along with a picture of them holding a meeting outdoors.

The UAE foreign minister visited New Delhi on February 26 and held talks with Jaishankar. Jaishankar earlier paid a two-day visit to the UAE from November 25 to 26 last year in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

Interestingly, Jaishankar's visit to Abu Dhabi coincided with the trip of his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi, amid efforts by the Gulf emirate to facilitate back channel talks to restart dialogue between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Emphasising on the historic

ties between the two nations, Sheikh Abdullah said that the UAE-India strategic partnership contributes to creating more opportunities for growth in commercial, economic, cultural and other fields. They also deliberated the latest Covid-19 developments, the two countries' efforts to contain its repercussions, and the global efforts to provide vaccines to all countries, WAM reported.

Jaishankar arrived in Abu Dhabi on Sunday with a focus on boosting bilateral economic cooperation. His visit to the United Arab Emirates comes amid evolving geopolitical developments in the region, particularly in Afghanistan.

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Emphasising on the historic

Covid: BJD to not hold public rally in Pipili for bypolls

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
BHUBANESWAR, 19 APRIL

Ruling Biju Janata Dal president and chief minister Naveen Patnaik today announced that his party will not hold any public rally or campaign meeting in Pipili for the bypolls scheduled to be held on 13 May.

He also appealed to all political parties and the ECI to reconsider both the duration and method of campaign in view of the serious Covid situation.

This is in addition to the night curfew which is in force. Essential services will however be allowed to function. Ceiling in the number of people attending marriages, funerals and related rituals have been pegged at 50 and 20 respectively. The state welcomed the decision of the centre to make vaccines available and for all above 18 years of age.

BJP men object to Muslims at Hindu cremation, seniors intervene

AHMEDABAD, 19 APRIL

As daily Covid-19 cases in Gujarat touched 10,340 during last 24 hours, several instances of conflicting human nature have come to light.

Some BJP leaders in Vadodara have objected to Muslim volunteers helping cremations of Hindu bodies.

Just like the proverbial silver lining to dark clouds, senior leaders of Vadodara BJP unit have not approved their juniors' objection to Muslim volunteers helping cremations of Hindu bodies.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case, for recovery Rs.10,15,428.56/- (Rupees Ten Lacs Fifteen Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Eight And Fifty Six Paisa Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement before L.d. Registrars on 13.05.2021 at 10.30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.ebtribunal.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473).

Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

Due to ongoing Pandemic Situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:-

(i) All the Advocates/ Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application/ Software.

(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrar/ Recovery Officer- I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No: 23748469.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 23rd Day of March 2021.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL- III, DELHI
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001
Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.
In the matter of: O.A. No.903/2019
LIC Housing Finance Ltd.....Applicant
Versus
VISHALANTAL AND ORS.....Defendants

To,
D-2, M/S. PIYUSH COLONIZERS LTD.
A-16/B-1, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, Main Mathura Road, New Delhi-110044.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement before L.d. Registrars on 13.05.2021 at 10.30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.ebtribunal.gov.in Phone Number: 011-23748473).

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(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No: 23748469.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 20th March 2021.

By Order of the Tribunal
For Registrar

SUMMER SPECIAL TRAINS

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

04474 Anand Vihar T. - Saharsa Jn. Summer Spl. Exp. | 1 Trip

STATIONS ↓	Train No. 04474
ARR.	DEP.
ANAND VIHAR T.	23:15
SAHARSA JN.	23:30

DAYS OF RUN: 04474 Ex Anand Vihar T. on 20.04.2021.

STOPPAGE: Aligarh Jn., Tundla Jn., Etawah, Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Badshah Nagar, Barabanki Jn., Gonda Jn., Basti, Khalilabad, Gorakhpur, Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn., Chhapra, Sonpur Jn., Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn., Samastipur Jn., Dalsingh Sarai, Barauni Jn., Begu Sarai, Khagaria Jn. & Mansi Jn. station.

ACCOMMODATION: AC 2 Tier Cum AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04476 New Delhi - Bhagalpur Summer Spl. Exp. | 1 Trip

STATIONS ↓	Train No. 04476
ARR.	DEP.
NEW DELHI	23:15
BHAGALPUR	19:30

DAYS OF RUN: 04476 Ex New Delhi on 21.04.2021.

STOPPAGE: Kanpur Central, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Patna Jn., Patna Saheb, Bakhtiyarpur Jn., Barh, Mokameh Jn., Hathidah Jn., Luckesara Jn., Kui Jn., Kaira, Abhaipur, Dharhara, Jamalpur Jn., Bariarpur & Sultanganj station.

ACCOMMODATION: Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04478 Anand Vihar T. - Raxaul Summer Spl. Exp. | 1 Trip

STATIONS ↓	Train No. 04478
ARR.	DEP.
ANAND VIHAR T.	23:45
RAXAUL	04:00

DAYS OF RUN: 04478 Ex Anand Vihar T. on 21.04.2021.

STOPPAGE: Pilkhua, Hapur, Amroha, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi, Almora, Lucknow, Barabanki Jn., Rudauli, Faizabad Jn., Ayodhya, Goshainganj, Akbarpur, Shahganj Jn., Jaunpur Jn., Varanasi Jn., Varanasi City, Aunihar Jn., Ghazipur City, Yusufpur, Ballia, Suraimanpur, Chhapra, Dighwara, Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn. & Sitamarhi station.

ACCOMMODATION: Sleeper & Second Seating (Reserved).

04480 New Delhi - Darbhanga Summer Spl. Exp. | 1 Trip

STATIONS ↓	Train No.
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Exams & Evaluation

The deferment of the ICSE and Indian School Certificate exams, at any rate till the first week of June, was only to be expected after the recent postponement of the CBSE's Class 12 exam and cancellation of the Class 10 evaluation. The decision of the Secondary board in West Bengal, though, remains open to question considering the overriding concern over the assembly elections. There are many schools that are now doubling up as voting centres with gun-toting watchdogs in uniform. The academic indecisiveness is likely to persist till the evening of 2 May. It might be tempting to conclude that yet another academic year has virtually gone to waste, tragically on account of the pandemic and its still more daunting resurgence. The perception can at best be greeted with a modified 'yes'. Admittedly, the cascading effect will be considerable as college admissions and entry to the Plus 2 stage will almost certainly be affected. Students have suffered a jolt at a crucial stage in their search of learning. Online learning is no substitute for conventional classroom instruction primarily because not all students can afford hi-tech equipment at home, let alone being computer-savvy. There is dissatisfaction too at the level of teachers over the matrix of evaluation, on which will depend the assimilation of learning and the future plans of the taught. Hence arguably the confusion at the threshold of senior school students generally. Not the least because ICSE candidates will be given the option of writing what they call an "offline exam", along with Class 12 students, or "not writing at all". The choice that was offered by the ICSE Council on Friday is less than fair and is likely to make confusion worse confounded, even intensify the examination stress that has already been caused by the pandemic and the dire uncertainty over classroom lectures and examinations. At the core of the controversy is the absence of uniformity in internal assessments by schools. It is imperative that the system that is adopted will ensure parity across institutions. It ought not to be based on one particular exam and should be embedded in the year-long assessment through the conventional first, second and third term exams. There is considerable delay and confusion in the conduct of crucial public exams and this is bound to impinge on the duration of Class Eleven. There is no scope for truncated learning.

A not dissimilar confusion has affected the senior students of CBSE schools. The proposal on what they call a "robust formative assessment system" is still rather fogbound. A clear-cut method of evaluation is imperative for the future of the students. Just as the decision to postpone the Class 12 exam has been welcomed in view of the exponential rise in Covid cases, the cancellation of the Class 10 exam has been greeted with despondency. There is no scope for tinkering in place of a firm decision.

Testing time

The symbolism inherent in US President Joe Biden's announcement that the last remaining American-led NATO troops will exit from war-ravaged Afghanistan on 11 September is lost on nobody. It is meant to be seen as the completion of – in Washington's view – a virtuous cycle two decades to the day when Afghan soil became the global headquarters of Islamic terrorism and was used to conceptualise and execute the deadliest ever attack on mainland America. But just as the infamous 'Mission Accomplished' speech by President George W. Bush standing under the eponymous banner unfurled aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln on 1 May 2003 was, in retrospect, a case of premature articulation, could President Biden live to regret his decision on the US pull out? That is the question exercising minds across global capitals; for countries in the region with skin in the game such as India, it is vital that the vacuum which will be created when US troops have left should not result in a return to the past when the Taliban ruled Afghanistan and all manner of terror outfits flourished under its presence.

President Biden's decision is likely to prove popular at home and with US allies in the 'Muslim world'. But as India's Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat has put it: "Our concern is that the vacuum created by the US-NATO withdrawal from Afghanistan should not create space for disruptors." Foreign minister S. Jaishankar has flagged much the same concern even while iterating New Delhi's stand that the peace process in that country should be "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, and Afghan-controlled." Both key members of the Indian policy establishment would possibly acknowledge in private, however, that they are only stating the obvious in the hope that the international community will not allow a return to the bad old days. It is likely to prove a forlorn hope. There is, understandably, zero appetite in Western capitals for any more body bags coming home and India's position over the past two decades has been that it would aid Afghanistan while securing its interests in this strategically vital geography in all ways, but short of putting boots on the ground. Realistically, this leaves Afghanistan at the tender mercies of rogue states such as Pakistan and incendiary elements such as the Taliban. Anything India or more powerful global players including the USA, Russia, and China do from here on will only be a palliative to mitigate the very worst excesses which may be in store; the dream of a democratic, liberal, stable Afghanistan is all but buried. The counterpoint to this assessment is that it can hardly be in the Indian interest for US troops to stay on in Afghanistan and thereby strengthen Pakistan's position as a key American ally on whom Washington has had to depend on heavily, and not just for logistical reasons. Given the context, the only workable if morally ambiguous way forward in Afghanistan from the Indian point of view would be a policy of strategic containment in tandem with the USA. Anything else will be a recipe for disaster.

China eyes Taiwan

By October 2020, Taiwan had scrambled 2,972 times against Chinese aircraft that year. The same is happening at sea. China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, had exercised off the coast of Taiwan in early April. By November 2020, Taiwanese vessels had intercepted Chinese ships 1,223 times – a 50 per cent increase over the previous year



The US is once again warning that China is desperate to invade Taiwan. This is because Chinese missiles keep flying in the direction of Taiwan resulting in a US aircraft carrier sailing through the Taiwan Strait in a defiant signal of resolve.

Now, tensions are rising over Taiwan again. China has increased aerial and naval patrols around Taiwan recently. The US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken said in a warning to Beijing that "it would be a serious mistake for anyone to try to change (the) status quo by force."

The public discourse has started to imply war over Taiwan may again be a possibility. Speaking in early March, the commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Phil Davidson, suggested that China might launch an invasion of Taiwan within six years. However, these assessments are misleading. Although Beijing's desire to reunify with Taiwan remains strong, and China has channelled resources to put pressure on Taiwan, it knows the costs of any invasion are incredibly prohibitive and could lead to a long-drawn conflict.

Since the Kuomintang retreated to Taiwan in 1949, reunification has been a primary policy goal for Beijing. But over 70 years, the island has been able to maintain sufficient military deterrence to make an invasion seem too costly or difficult to achieve.

Despite having a population which constitutes just two per cent of China's numbers, Taiwan overall enjoys certain tactical advantages because of American support, rapid economic growth in the latter half of the 20th century and outsized investment in defence.

In the past, for Beijing, focused on defence of its own borders

and often consumed by internal instability, from the Great Leap Forward to the Cultural Revolution, an invasion of Taiwan seemed like an unwise task.

However, the opening of China's economy in the late 1970s, subsequent rapid growth and an effective military industrialisation strategy have seen China leapfrog defence technology development. The military deterrence that Taiwan once possessed is being worn down.

Some estimates suggest the PLA is now not just numerically superior, but technologically on par with Taiwan, meaning that a war across the Taiwan Strait would end in China's favour.

And yet, Taiwan which sits 100 miles off China's coast, is separated by open waters where Chinese vessels would be vulnerable to missile and torpedo attacks. Hence, the cost of war on China would be unbearable.

Taipei has also vowed to pepper China's coastline with missile salvos.

The 2021 Quadrennial Defence Review, released in March, noted that the island's strategy would be to "resist the enemy on the opposite shore, attack it at sea, destroy it in the littoral area, and annihilate it on the beachhead."

China would likely lose tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of troops, to say nothing about the impossible task of pacifying an island of 23.5 million Taiwanese who would likely resist Chinese occupation.

Moreover, while China might be able to launch a successful invasion of Taiwan, the outcome

is less certain if the US commits immediately and resolutely to Taiwan's defence. US nuclear-powered submarines, carrier strike groups and missile forces throughout the region will make any cross-strait operation even more treacherous. In salami slicing, small, incremental changes are made to move towards a larger goal. Those small changes are insignificant enough to fall short of a reason for war, but when added together start to definitively change the facts on the ground.

In China's near seas, this process has involved a massive increase in the patrols of Chinese military, paramilitary and commercial vessels, island reclamation and more overflights of aircraft.

These tactics work on both land and sea. On its mountainous border with India, China has built a string of villages in disputed territory to create a fait accompli of occupation.

With Taiwan, a similar salami slicing strategy is already in process. In recent years, China has successfully eroded decades-long norms about Taiwanese air zones. In 2016, China began frequent circumnavigation flights of the island. In 2019, regular incursions by Chinese military aircraft across the median line between the two entities began. In the 60 years prior to this, just one intentional crossings of the median line had occurred; now they are commonplace. In September 2020, 37 aircraft crossed the line.

And Chinese aircraft crossed into Taiwan's air defence identification zones a record 380 times in 2020, the most since the 1996 Taiwan Strait crisis. On April 13, the largest incursion yet, of 25 aircraft, occurred.

Such flights are becoming so commonplace Taiwan has stopped scrambling jets to every Chinese incursion. It has become too costly to do so. By October 2020, Taiwan had scrambled 2,972 times against Chinese aircraft that year. The same is happening at sea. China's first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, had exercised off the coast of Taiwan in early April. By November 2020, Taiwanese vessels had intercepted Chinese ships 1,223 times – a 50 per cent increase over the previous year.

In the wake of the new Chinese Coast Guard Law in February, Taiwanese analysts have warned that harassment of Taiwanese vessels by China's paramilitary force may be next. Sun Tzu-yun of Taiwan's Institute for National Defence and Security Research noted at a mid-March forum that such grey zone tactics would be harder to counteract.

Meanwhile, Beijing has also started to use commercial vessels as a regular Chinese presence on Taiwan's outlying islands – Chinese dredgers have since mid-2020 been reportedly "swarming around the Matsu islands", while the Taiwanese coast guard had ejected 4,000 Chinese dredgers and sand-transferring vessels from Taiwanese waters in 2020, a 560 per cent increase over the previous year.

The threat of war from China should not be ignored – reunification with Taiwan would be a crowning moment for any Chinese leader and the PLA is explicitly geared toward an offensive against the island.

It is likely that Washington would react militarily if China occupied one of the smaller Kinmen islands – an uninhabited rock just 10 km off China's coastline – in a bloodless operation.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Vietnam tightens land management

Vietnam's ministries of Construction, and Natural Resources and Environment have requested provinces and cities review state management on land prices amid 'land fever' in some localities. The environment ministry said land prices in some localities and areas have increased dramatically, which could affect socio-economic development and investment projects. It assigned the General Department of Land Administration to inspect the planning, leasing and transferral of land in 26 localities.

In Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, the department will inspect the land registration, the issuance of land-use rights certificates, changes of land-use purposes and land-use management in a number of projects which have been slow to put land into use. The construction ministry also requested localities to publish information relating to planning, the progress of infrastructure development projects and real estate projects, especially big ones and their merger, establishment and upgrading of administrative units.

Earlier, Hanoi was asked to prevent land speculation when implementing the Red River urban planning

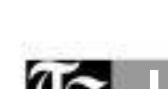
Viet Nam News
THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF VIETNAM DAILY

After property prices in some areas of the city surged after reports on draft planning for the area were released in June. Halong city in the northeastern province of Quang Ninh has reviewed the authentication of transactions relating to land-use rights, while Bac Giang province asked communal People's Committees to pay attention to surging land prices. Local authorities were also told to control virtual transactions while actively regulating land funds through the creation of a clean land fund for the auction of land-use rights.

IN MEMORIAM

CHATTERJEE RAMA PRASAD — (01-05-1927 — 20-04-2020) — Dear Baba, Sejda, Babi, Jethu, "Sir", Dadda, Uncle, it is hard to believe that a year has passed since you left us. — We remember your wit, wisdom, generosity and great love of life and your love for us. We hope your spirit is in peace, united with all those you love. Please continue to bless us and protect us. Love — Chayan, Piya, Sujata, Ayan, Mriganka, Mayukh and family, Priya Chatterjee and family, Nimai Mondal and family.

CHATTERJEE RAMA PRASAD — (01-05-1927 — 20-04-2020) — Dearest Baba, I miss you everyday. I miss your endless support, your wit, and your great love — and embrace of all my lunacies. You loved Tagore so here are his words: "Peace, my heart, let the time for the parting be sweet. Let it not be a death but completeness". I hope you are now complete — and that I will meet you again. — Your loving daughter, Piya, Riverside, California.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Decentralised approach harmful

SIR, Kalyani Shankar's write-up, 'Challenges of virus second wave' (*The Statesman*, 18 April) prompted me to compare Covid-19 with the 1918 Spanish influenza. Indeed, a second wave of Covid-19 is not a theory, but now a reality for many nations, including India, which have already crossed the peak of the pandemic.

The 1918 Spanish influenza had a similar trajectory. It continued for 25 months approximately from 15 February 1918 to 30 April 1920 and consisted of four waves. The first wave lasted approximately from 15 February 1918 to 1 June 1918; the second lasted approximately from 1 August 1918 to 2 December 1918; the third lasted nearly from 3 December 1918 to 30 April 1919 and the fourth wave lasted approximately from 1 December 1919 to 30 April 1920. It infected about 500 million people, roughly one-third of the world population at that time, and resulted in the death of 50 million, including 675,000 Americans.

Unlike flu, which spreads rapidly and relatively through a population, Covid-19 tends to infect in clusters. While the 1918 Spanish Influenza killed a disproportionate number of those between 25 and 40, Covid-19 mostly affects those over the age of 65, especially those also with comorbidities. More countries were spared in the 1918 pandemic, whereas only the Pacific Islands (Solomon Islands and Vanuatu) remain Covid-19 free.



Moreover, the two diseases kill via different mechanisms. While those with the influenza died of secondary bacterial pneumonia, those with Covid-19 died from an overactive immune response that resulted in multiple organ failure. Diagnoses, treatment and vaccines were delayed in both cases. So far, we have learnt a vital lesson from the two pandemics: the delayed reaction and decentralised approaches by the authorities at the start of a follow-up wave can lead to longer lasting, more severe and more fatal consequences.

Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana, Kolkata, 19 April.

IRRESPONSIBLE

SIR, When festivals of other religions are not allowed to take place

EMINENT JURIST

SIR, With the passing away of Monoh Kumar Mukherjee, a jurist and former Judge of the Supreme Court, the country has lost one of its most prudent judges. He was known for his uprightness.

He served as the Chief Justice of the Bombai and Allahabad High Courts and at both the places he showed his prudence. Lawyers who appeared in his court had the confidence that adequate justice would be meted out to their cases.

In fact all his judgments had a clear reflection of his exceptional legal wisdom. It was because of his wisdom that the government chose him to probe the disappearance of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. He came to the finding, with all supporting documents, that Bose did not die in a plane crash. This is the only Commission which had the courage to bring out the truth.

Yours, etc., Arun Gupta, Kolkata, 19 April.

Tokyo, has to accommodate around 15,000 athletes from over 200 countries. Fear is there in the minds of the people of the contesting countries and more so among the Japanese.

The recent torch-relay was already withdrawn from the public streets in Osaka. To add to the pain of the organisers, the tab in the meantime has already gone beyond \$15 billion.

Many people have apparently been reacting against the staging of the games. At the same time, however, there are people who are pushing for the greatest show on earth to go ahead. It's actually a Catch-22 situation.

The small country of Japan, where the postponed Olympics of 2020 is to take place in the city of

the pandemic situation may not worsen, post Olympics. At the same time, it is being contradicted by some that the Tokyo Games 'would be the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel'. Further postponement of the Summer Olympics to next year is hardly feasible, as the Winter Olympics are scheduled to be held in 2022.

All said and done, probably the best alternative would be to go ahead with the 2021 Tokyo Olympics, keeping the best of safety protocols in place. The Games would enthuse the world populace at large, thereby enhancing the mental pleasure and the concomitant uplift in the economy.

Yours, etc., Ashok Kumar Ghosh, Kolkata, 19 April.

paper.thestatesman.com

HARSHA KAKAR

The unauthorised passage of the US navy ship, USS John Paul Jones, through India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) created a controversy which was easily avoidable. While there is a difference in opinion between the two countries on multiple issues, the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) being just one, what was more concerning was the manner in which it was projected by the US. The US projected the incident as if to prove that it possesses the right to do as it pleases, and India will have to grin and bear it. For a supposed ally such an action followed by a blunt statement indicates scant regard for sensitivities.

The statement by the US 7th Fleet read, "(The US ship) asserted navigational rights and freedoms approximately 130 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep Islands, inside India's exclusive economic zone, without requesting India's prior consent." It added its actions were consistent with international law. Rubbing salt, the statement said: "(It) upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea recognized in international law by challenging India's excessive maritime claims." India was irked more by the publicity accorded to the incident than the incident itself.

There have been other disagreements between the two nations - trade, human rights and threat of sanctions under CAATSA on India's proposed procurement of S-400 missile systems from Russia, being the main. While trade talks are on, the use of CAATSA on procurement of the S-400 remains a sticking point. The Indian contention that discussions for procuring the weapon systems were initiated before CAATSA was announced has not cut much ice with Washington. The US has placed some sanctions on Turkey, while claiming that the weapon system has yet to be inducted into the Indian forces. Strategists in the US have been warning their government that any attempt to sanction India will harm QUAD as also close US-India ties.

The fact remains that it was the US that has been pursuing India for enhancing levels of the QUAD, which India was hesitant about in deference to China. After the intrusion in Ladakh, India changed its stance. The QUAD has grown substantially in

An ill-advised step by the Americans

recent months. It is now challenging China, not just in the military sphere but also in economic and vaccine diplomacy. India remains a key player in the grouping as it alone possesses the production capability to challenge Chinese vaccine diplomacy, the current focus of the QUAD.

Russia as a major adversary of the US has now been relegated below China. Major threats from Russia remain in cyberspace and in Ukraine. There are no major military threats to Europe. With a shrunk economy, Russia is currently aligned with China as it needs Chinese investments and support to determine its own global space. It therefore sings the Chinese tune.

SE Asia refuses to support the QUAD nor does it challenge Chinese power, despite most nations having disagreements with China on their outlying islands in the South China Sea. Close US allies in the region Philippines and South Korea have yet to endorse QUAD. Evidently, the Indo-Pacific, where the US is now seeking to project power, is clearly divided between the US and China. Multipolarity has ceased to exist. The US alone does not possess the power to challenge China and needs allies. Its strongest ally is India.

India, apart from stalling the Chinese in Ladakh, is the only military power capable of challenging Chinese offensive designs. The fact that China was compelled to pull back in parts of Ladakh, while talks continue for other friction points, indicates that India possesses requisite military power. India and the US amongst current QUAD members have interests in the Indian Ocean, while Australia's area of concern is the South Pacific and Japan's is the South China Sea. The concerns of China, repeated by Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, during his recent visit, have been growing Indo-US collaboration and proximity.

The only nation which gloated after the USS John Paul Jones incident and sought to exploit it to damage US-India relations was China. The Global



Times stated, "Historical experience tells us that the US is a country which can turn its back on any ally, let alone India, to pursue national interests," adding, "Under the banner of Freedom of navigation it is common for US warships to trespass into EEZs of other countries." It further stated that within India there were calls for tougher actions against the US.

Displaying its military power against an ally is a cheap action which the US should have avoided. It has never undertaken similar operations against Canada or Australia, which have claimed large EEZs, on the pretext of existing security treaties. If the intention was to convey a message to China that it conducts similar operations against its own allies and hence

these should not be taken seriously, then the US has done more damage than good. It has projected that it compares Chinese offensive actions to Indian claims on its EEZ.

If it was intended to display its naval might, then it was an ill-conceived intention. The Indian statement issued after the incident implied that the ship was monitored all through its transit; however, considering relations between the two nations, India maintained silence. It would have been a global embarrassment for both nations and the QUAD had Indian naval ships moved into the region to question the US warship and India would have released tapes of the conversation.

The subsequent watering down

of the statement by the Pentagon did little to limit the damage. In a written comment, based on a query, the Pentagon mentioned that the US warship had "asserted navigational rights and freedoms in the vicinity of the Republic of Maldives by conducting innocent passage through its territorial seas, without requesting prior permission." There was no mention of India or Freedom of Navigation Operations. However, the damage was done.

While relations between the two countries would transcend this incident, within India there would always be doubts on true US intentions and whether it can remain a trusted ally.

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

Nepal's elusive no-confidence motion

NARESH KOIRALA

It has been almost six weeks since Nepal's Supreme Court restored Parliament. Had Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli followed the universally accepted ethical boundaries of democratic politics, the country would have had a new prime minister by now. Oli would have resigned soon after the court's ruling. But our politicians have never allowed ethics to frustrate their lust for power and money. Oli is no different. Predictably, he did not step down. Instead, he is taunting his opponents to defeat him in a no-confidence motion in Parliament. 'If I am defeated, I will resign,' he says, as if the defeat in court meant nothing.

Pushpa Kamal Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal, Oli's enemies in the erstwhile Nepal Communist Party, spent the last year trying to rein in Oli. The Nepal Communist Party was formed about three years ago by merging the CPN-UML led by Oli and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre) led by Dahal. Oli and Dahal had initiated the merger. They celebrated the union as the 'greatest communist unity in the world'. In less than two years, the much-vaunted unity started to unravel. Factional fights driven by the egos and competitive ambitions of the party leaders erupted with Oli on one side and the duo of Dahal and Nepal on the other. When it looked like he was losing ground, Oli dissolved Parliament to avert a threatened no-confidence motion from the rival camp. Nepal's constitution became a hostage to Oli's wily ways.

The dissolution of the House riled Oli's opponents in the Nepal



Communist Party and the opposition parties. The Supreme Court ruled the dissolution unconstitutional and ordered its reinstatement. Less than a month later, ruling on a case that questioned the legitimacy of the Nepal Communist Party, the court voided it and ordered its members to go back to their mother parties. Nepal and his followers returned to the UML, still headed by their nemesis Oli. Dahal was back as the head of the Maoist Centre; his minions followed.

One would have thought that, upon reinstatement of Parliament, the Dahal-Nepal group would rush to register a no-confidence motion. Yet, that is not happening. What is holding them from tabling the motion? What are the options to replace Oli and restore sanity in Nepal's politics? For

Judging from the makeup of Parliament, Nepali Congress leader Sher Bahadur Deuba is the most likely candidate for the next prime minister. Dahal had made overtures to Deuba for an alliance. According to reports, Deuba was non-committal. This was about three weeks ago. Deuba's reluctance is understandable. He knows Dahal cannot be trusted. He was conspiring with Oli to form the Nepal Communist Party when the Maoist Centre was still the Nepal Congress' coalition partner in government; after the formation of the Nepal Communist Party, he started conspiring with Nepal against Oli; going further back, when the king abdicated and the country was declared a republic, in his own words, he reneged on his promise to support Girija Koirala to become president. I could go on. He is allegedly one of the most corrupt politicians in the country. Nepali Congress will have a lot of explaining to do if it forms a government with the Maoists.

For the last 70 years, Congress has led every major change and managed every major crisis in the country. It led to the 1950 revolution and ushered in democratic polity in the country. It fought the king's dictatorship for 30 years and drove the multi-party alliance that restored democracy. It fought the Maoist insurgency, initiated the negotiations with the Maoists, and convinced them to give up violence and accept multiparty democracy. It will be irresponsible for Congress to be indifferent to the current state of the country and let Oli continue as prime minister. Oli's administration is not only one of the most corrupt Nepal has ever seen, but the events of the last three years have

shown that Oli will go to any length to stay in power, even to the extent of tampering with the constitution.

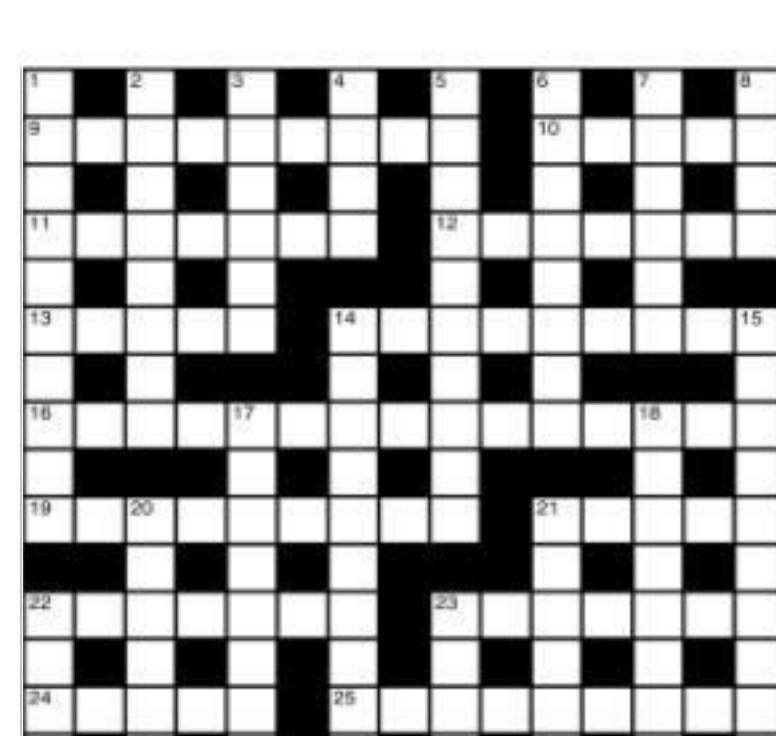
Recent reports suggest Deuba is warming up to working with the Maoists. Unless Oli allies with smaller parties to upend the no-confidence motion or if he continues to stymie the House to force an early election, a no-confidence motion with Deuba as prime minister may hit the halls of Parliament soon. Two questions arise. How should the new Congress-Maoist dispensation look like, and is Deuba capable of providing the leadership the country demands? There is no ideological congruence between the Congress and the Maoists. Add to the series of Dahal's past betrayals. This should rule out sharing the government with the Maoists in any shape or form.

However, Congress could have an anti-corruption and developments-based agreement with the Maoists and form a single-party minority government, with the Maoists acting as their supporters outside the government. Single party minority governments are fairly common in Canada. Nepal's constitution also allows them as long as the Prime Minister has the confidence of the house.

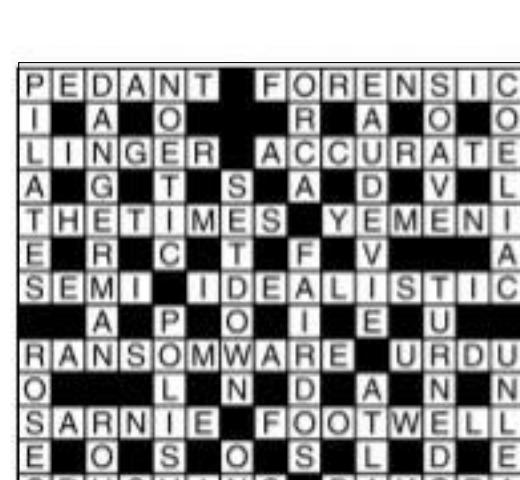
Nepali Congress should not delude itself into thinking its ascent to power will earn it the people's trust. It is a party in disarray, and its performance as official opposition has been more than dismal. Deuba's past performance as prime minister was less than inspiring. His leadership comes with a huge baggage of incompetence and failures. If Congress forms the government, managing Deuba and earning the people's trust will be the party central committee's challenge.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28889



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION



ACROSS

- 9 Second secretary with oil magnate picked up dish (9)
- 10 The type that regularly gobble suet? (5)
- 11 Fit to swallow tablet pro tem (7)
- 12 A Spanish swimmer died without help (7)
- 13 I count 50 leaving country (5)
- 14 I'd once drunk spirit, breaching etiquette (9)
- 16 A Northern Irish lady brings in large man for stock control (6,9)
- 19 For one German hosting buffet it helps to make omelette (9)
- 21 Some Londoners devour fruit (5)
- 22 China must ask about revolutionary Japanese ware (7)
- 23 Wind from the rear outside recalled pasta dish (7)
- 24 Toddler munches a small piece of brown bread (5)
- 25 Canal complaint? It is on record (9)
- DOWN
- 1 I avoid tips in a former digest (10)
- 2 Old mate in Paris welcomes rare beef (8)
- 3 Woman's keen to bottle fruit (6)
- 4 Staunch supporter of plant (4)
- 5 £51 is exceptionally dear for a kitchen device (10)
- 6 Foreign Office spies nicking a
- 7 Cricket club's bread (8)
- 7 Offer kind young nurse a dinghy (6)
- 8 Charge by the day for fodder (4)
- 14 Where to do some poaching, beset by trouble (2,3,5)
- 15 I am anyone's after refreshment and dressing (10)
- 17 Pretty good commercial match (8)
- 18 One who represents Georgia during strike (8)
- 20 Sweet drink in most of France once (6)
- 21 Killjoy is boring drunk, having ejected one Republican (6)
- 22 Son put away stuff (4)
- 23 Time-consuming story's less powerful (4)

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

OCCASIONAL NOTE

In reply to Mr. Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labour, Judge Hughes, Secretary of State, has voiced the pious opinion that "it is unquestionably desirable that commercial relations on an extensive scale should be established between America and Russia." How extremely pious this opinion is, however, is indicated by the Secretary of State's letter addressed to the Moscow Soviet a few weeks ago, and of which a summary appears in our mail telegram. In this communication Judge Hughes expresses the deep sympathy of the United States Government with the people of Russia, and, reading between the lines, it is not difficult to infer that one of the reasons which have most profoundly aroused American sympathy is the Government with which Russia is cursed. Mr. Hughes makes it abundantly plain that, however desirable Russo-American trade may be as a theoretical proposition, it is practically out of the question at the present time. "It is only in the productivity of Russia that there is any hope for the Russian people, and it is idle to expect the resumption of trade until the economic basis of production is securely established." The Secretary of State concludes by pointing out that production is conditional upon security of person and property, the sanctity of contracts, and the rights of free labour - the latter proposition being one which will, one imagines, appeal a good deal more forcibly to Mr. Gompers than to Lenin.

NOAKHALI FERRYBOAT DISASTER

With reference to the recent ferry boat disaster, it is understood that a joint inquiry was held by the local police and the District Board. They examined the lessees, the boatmen and a large number of the survivors, as well as the consignors of the rice and paddy. From the conflicting statements made by the persons examined they have come to the conclusion that there must have been 100 passengers and 150 maunds of paddy and rice. The accident took place near Char Langalia, the time being noon and not 1-30 as previously reported. It is further stated that none of the survivors, or crew could give the exact number of passengers in the boat or the exact number missing. Two dead bodies were found floating in the river on the day following the disaster and were buried by their relatives.

PILFERING FROM SHIPS AND DOCKS

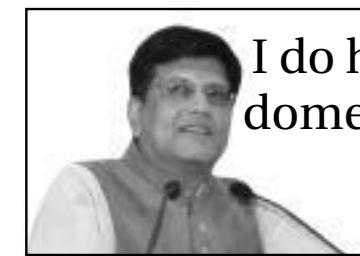
The interim report by a committee of the Chamber of Shipping on the pilferage of goods in transit emphasises the fact that the average claims paid by seven different steamship companies engaged in the same trade ranged from twenty-one pence to sixty-two pence per ton of cargo. The report says that there is evidence of divergence, mainly due to the varying practices which are followed on board ship with regard to tallying and watching cargo. The report recommends efficient control and supervision of loading and discharging by ships' officers or other members of ships' companies; also stricter scrutiny of persons and conveyances entering and leaving dock areas and a more exacting system of goods passes for merchandise to be removed from dock.

SCOTTISH CHURCH MISSION

The report of the Scottish Churches Mission in Calcutta for 1920 tells of a prosperous year. The number of candidates sent up for the B.A. examination was 245, of whom 64 obtained honours, 8 obtained distinction, and 118 passed. This is probably the largest number ever sent up in one year from the College, and the results in honours are far beyond anything hitherto achieved. For the Inter-Arts 147 were sent up and 131 passed; for the Inter-Science 103 were sent up and 92 passed. Every effort is made to keep the College library up-to-date. The school which is connected with the college seems to be in a vigorous condition, the number of pupils increasing in spite of an increase in the fees charged.

MILLIONAIRE'S SUICIDE AT SEA

The Norwegian liner Bergensjord has arrived at New York with a dramatic story of the suicide at sea of Thore Dahl, the richest young man in Norway. Dahl, who was 30 years of age, is heir to a fortune estimated at pound 3,000,000 left by his father, the head of a whaling syndicate. During a storm, according to the captain, he went insane, tore up the sheets in his cabin, destroyed the electric fixtures, cut his clothing into strips, and then jumped overboard. Dahl was wanted as a witness in a perjury suit, arising from an incident which occurred when he was janitor in a New York boarding house in 1919. After the suit had been filed Dahl returned to Norway, ostensibly to inherit his father's millions.



I do hope that Startup India seed fund scheme will support our domestic entrepreneurs and their business ideas.

PIYUSH GOYAL
UNION COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

HDFC Bank move: Having faced multiple episodes of digital banking glitches in the last two years, HDFC Bank has embarked on a "Technology Transformation Agenda" to provide safe and secure banking services to its customers. HDFC Bank managing director Sashi Jagdishan in a letter to employees said the bank has faced five instances of downtime in last 28 months and every instance has hardened the bank's resolve to do better, keeping customers in mind. Giving details of the "Technology Transformation Agenda", Jagdishan said that the bank has invested heavily in the infrastructure to handle any potential load that it might encounter in the next 3 to 5 years. PTI

Amazon solution: Amazon Web Services has announced the launch of the Amazon Digital Suite, a curated set of software solutions aimed at enabling India's small and medium businesses to easily digitise their operations and bring their businesses online. The launch of the Amazon Digital Suite builds on Amazon's commitment to digitise 10 million Indian SMBs by 2025, announced in January 2020, according to a Press release. SNS

Air coolers: Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd has unveiled its latest range of IoT-enabled coolers in the Optimus series, said a Press release issued by the company. Priced at Rs 21,500, Crompton's Optimus 65 IoT Desert Air Coolers are designed to deliver the best-in-class instant cooling even on the hottest day, said the release. SNS

Samsung TV: Samsung on Monday launched its ultra-premium Neo QLED TV range, a new benchmark in TV technology and design that will transform living spaces, according to the company. The range will be priced from Rs 99,990 onwards and will be available at all Samsung retail stores, leading consumer electronic stores, and across online platforms, the company added. SNS

Luminous Power: Luminous Power Technologies on Monday launched its latest range of designer energy efficient fans through a series of TVCs featuring its brand ambassador Sachin Tendulkar. Through this campaign, Luminous intends to draw attention to its different categories of fans under the new range, in a striking and quirky way, the company said. SNS

Sidbi CMD: Sidbi on Monday said Sivasubramanian Ramann has taken charge as chairman and managing director of the bank. The appointment is for a period of three years from 19 April 2021. Sidbi is the principal financial institution engaged in the promotion, financing and development of micro, small & medium enterprises. PTI

Rupee falls 52 paise vs US\$ on fears of forex outflows

Fresh lockdown measures by some states to control spiralling cases of Covid-19 unnerve investors

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 19 APRIL

The rupee plunged by 52 paise to close at 74.87 against the US dollar today as fresh lockdown measures by some states to control spiralling cases of Covid-19 unnerved investors and stoked fears of forex outflows.

Losses in the domestic equity markets also weighed on the rupee which was the worst performer among Asian currencies today, analysts said.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened lower at 74.80 against the greenback and touched a low of 75.05 in day trade. Weakness in the US dollar and losses in crude oil, however, capped the rupee's fall and the local unit recovered some of the losses to close at 74.87, registering a fall of 52 paise over its previous close.

On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.35 a dollar. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength



against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.49 per cent to 91.11.

Sriram Iyer, senior research analyst at Reliance Securities, said the rupee depreciated against the dollar as a constant surge in coronavirus infections in the country increased fears of complete localised lockdown in affected areas and stall the economic recovery and prompt FPI outflows.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced a lockdown from 10 pm on Monday night till 5 am next Monday in view of an exponential rise in coronavirus cases and the city's health system being stretched to its limits.

India's total tally of Covid-19 cases crossed 1.50 crore with a record single-day rise of 2,73,810 new coronavirus infections, while the active cases surpassed the 19-lakh mark, according to the Union health ministry data updated today.

Registering a steady increase for the 40th day in a row, the active cases have increased to 19,29,329 comprising 12.81 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has dropped to 86 per cent.

"Indian rupee erased last Friday's gain to settle at 74.87 a dollar as the situation got worse with a rise in virus cases. State governments started strict restrictions and the lockdown to control the virus spread. Rupee becomes the worst performer among the Asian currencies following weaker domestic equities," Dilip Parmar, research analyst, HDFC Securities, said.

Meanwhile, Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.33 per cent down at \$66.55 per barrel.

Sensex dips 883 pts to close below 48K

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 19 APRIL

Equity benchmark the Sensex plummeted 883 points today following a massive across-the-board selloff as mounting Covid-19 cases spooked domestic investors.

After crashing over 1,469 points in early trade, the 30-share BSE index pared some initial losses, but still ended 882.61 points or 1.81 per cent lower at 47,949.42 points.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty tanked 258.40 points or 1.77 per cent to 14,359.45 points. PowerGrid was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slumping over 4 per cent, followed by ONGC, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, L&T, Asian Paints and Bajaj Auto.

On the other hand, Dr Reddy's and Infosys were the only gainers.

"Domestic equities, which were looking resilient for last couple of days, fell sharply on sharp spike in Covid-19 cases across the country and enhanced economic restrictions imposed by several states. Announcements of wider mobility restriction by Rajasthan and Delhi governments dented investors' sentiments," said Binod Modi, head of strategy at Reliance Securities.

Barring pharma and IT, which remained resilient, all key sectoral indices witnessed sharp correction. Financials and automobiles witnessed steeper correction. Notably, volatility index soared by over 11 per cent.

Govt working to save lives, livelihood: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

their inputs on industry/Association related matters. Informed them that GoI at various levels from @PMOIndia is responding to #Covid management. Working together with states for lives and livelihoods," she said in a tweet.

The finance minister had interactions with heads of industry chambers including CII president Uday Kotak, Ficci president Uday Shankar and Assocham president Vineet Agarwal.

She also spoke to many business leaders like Tata Steel MD/CEO Narendran, L&T chairman A M Naik, TCS MD Rajesh Gopinathan, Maruti Suzuki chairman R C Bhargava, Tvs Group chairman Venu Srinivasan and Hero MotoCorp MD Pawan Munjal to take their feedback on situation arising out of surging Covid-19 cases and local containments.

Apex court stays proceedings before Delhi High Court in Amazon-Future case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

The Supreme Court today stayed the ongoing proceedings before Delhi High Court in the case related to the amalgamation of Future Retail Ltd (FRL) with Reliance Retail.

A Bench of justices RF Nariman, BR Gavai and Hirshikesh Roy posted the matter for hearing on 4 May and directed that all pleadings be completed in the matter.

Amazon had moved the apex court on 8 April challenging the Delhi High Court's division Bench order that had vacated a stay on Kishore Biyani-led Future Group proceeding with its Rs 24,713-crore asset sale to Reliance Industries. Prior to this, FRL had moved the division Bench of the high court against its sim-

gle judge's order upholding the Singapore's Emergency Arbitrator's (EA) order restraining FRL from going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail. The division Bench had granted Future a reprieve from a 18 March single-judge order that restrained it from taking any steps to sell assets to Reliance.

The petition by the US based e-commerce giant has sought a stay on the 22 March order of the division Bench, terming it "illegal", "random", "inequitable and unfair".

Amazon and Future have been locked in a bitter legal tussle after the US firm dragged Future Group to arbitration at SIAC in October last year, arguing that the latter had violated their contract by entering into the deal with rival

Reliance. Amazon had invested in Future Coupons in August 2019 with an option of buying into the flagship Future Retail after a period of three to 10 years.

The Future group had, however, moved the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) seeking regulatory approvals to the Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance.

Amazon had filed a plea before the high court (single judge) for enforcement of the 25 October 2020 Emergency Arbitrator (EA) award by Sin-

apore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) restraining FRL from going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail.

The high court division Bench, however, said that it was staying the single judge order as FRL was not a party to the share subscription agreement (SSA) between Amazon and Future Coupons Pvt Ltd (FCPL) and the US e-commerce giant was not a party to the deal between FRL and Reliance Retail.

The Bench had further said that it was of the prima facie view that the shareholding agreement (SHA) between FRL and FCPL, the SSA between FCPL and Amazon and the deal between FRL and Reliance Retail "are different" and "therefore, the group of companies doctrine cannot be invoked".

In its suit before the single judge for enforcing the EA award, Amazon had sought to restrain FRL from taking any steps to complete the transaction with entities that are a part of the Mukesh Dhirubhai Ambani (MDA) Group.

Amazon had also sought detention of the Biyanis, directors of FCPL and FRL and other related parties in civil prison and attaching of their properties for alleged "wilful disobedience" of the EA order.

Iffco to set up medical oxygen plants

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Cooperative fertiliser major Iffco today said it will set up four medical oxygen plants with an investment of about Rs 30 crore in the next 15 days in Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Odisha, in a bid to supply it for free to hospitals.

The plant will be put up at Kalol (Gujarat), Aonla and Phulpur (Uttar Pradesh) and at Paradeep (Odisha), it said.

"The order has been already issued. It will take at least 15 days from today to transport, install and commission an oxygen plant. A dedicated team is working on this project. Iffco will try to commission it as soon as possible for the service of the nation," Iffco spokesperson said.

Iffco is investing around Rs 30 crore on four oxygen plants, he added.

On Sunday late night, Iffco managing director and chief

executive officer U S Awasthi had announced that the cooperative is going to establish an oxygen plant with capacity of 200 cubic meter per hour in its Kalol unit in Gujarat.

"Iffco will give free oxygen to hospital, each cylinder of 46.7 litres," he had said.

The proposed oxygen plant in Kalol will generate medical grade oxygen and fill 700 big D-type cylinders daily and also 300 medium B-size cylinders on demand, which will be supplied to all hospitals for free," he had added.

Awasthi had also said that Iffco will fill up the oxygen cylinders free of cost for hospitals, but they need to bring their own cylinders for refill. A

security deposit will be taken if cylinders taken from Iffco to avoid hoarding of oxygen.

In view of the recent surge in Covid-19 cases, there is huge demand for oxygen for effective clinical treatment of Covid-19 patients.

IOC, BPCL to supply oxygen: After Reliance Industries Ltd, state-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) and Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) have begun diverting oxygen produced at their refineries to supplement the availability of medical oxygen in states worst hit by Covid-19.

In a statement, IOC said it has "begun the supply of 150

tons of oxygen at no cost to various hospitals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab."

"The first batch of the life-saving medical grade oxygen was dispatched today to Maha Durga Charitable Trust Hospital, New Delhi," it said. "Delhi is already facing an oxygen emergency situation."

In the face of a massive surge in demand for medical oxygen during the second wave of the pandemic, IOC has diverted the high-purity oxygen used in its Mono Ethylene Glycol (MEG) unit to produce medical-grade liquid oxygen at its Panipat refinery and petrochemical complex in Haryana.

The throughput of the unit

has also been scaled down for a more critical cause.

In a separate statement, BPCL said it has started supply of 100 tons of oxygen at no cost. "The company will be supplying around 100 tons per month," it said.

ACC profit jumps 74% to ₹562 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 19 APRIL

Cement maker ACC Ltd today reported a 74.17 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 562.59 crore for the first quarter ended March 2021, helped by an increase in sales and cost efficiency.

The company, which follows the January-December financial year, had posted a profit of Rs 323.02 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago. Revenue from cement segment jumped by 26.25 per cent to Rs 3,980.84 crore, compared to Rs 3,153.07 crore earlier.

Cement sales volume rose by 21.49 per cent to 7.97 million tons (MT) as against 6.56 MT in January-March 2020.

Ready-mix concrete revenue was down 7.71 per cent to Rs 359.78 crore, from Rs 389.83 crore.

Sales volume of ready-mix concrete declined by 10.8 per cent to 0.83 million cubic metres.

GJC seeks extension of deadline for hallmarking

MUMBAI, 19 APRIL

The All India Gem and Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC) has urged the government to extend the deadline for implementation of mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery to June 2022 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lack of infrastructure.

In a letter written to the consumer affairs, food and public distribution ministry, GJC pitched for extending the deadline to June 2022 instead of June 2021 due to the Covid-19 situation.

Also, out of the 733 districts in the country, only 245 now have the Assaying & Hallmarking (A&H) Centres, as per Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) data, it said.

GJC has urged the BIS to ensure that there is at least one A&H Centre in each district, the council said in a statement.

"There are various operational and procedural issues in relation to the implementation of the mandatory requirement, which if unaddressed will create an obstacle for compliance of the hallmarking requirements."

"This will also severely affect the jewellery industry, leading to drastic consequences such as cessation of business, loss of livelihood, litigation and unnecessary waste of time and energy," GJC chairman Ashish Patel said.

Mandatory hallmarking in its current state has the potential to affect the livelihood of millions of people and will lead to huge disruption in the century-old jewellery business, he noted. "Due to Covid-19, the jewellery business is already suffering and mandatory hallmarking should be postponed by at least a year till the infrastructure is in place," he added.

Second Covid wave hits two-wheeler sales hard

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 19 APRIL

The second Covid wave has impacted the two-wheeler markets harder than the earlier one with sales declining by 30-50 per cent so far in April despite a mini festive season during the month, according to a report.

Smaller cities are seeing the impact of the second wave (unlike the first wave), amid the cases reported in the second week of April surpassing the peak of September last year, brokerage firm Motilal Oswal Financial Services said in its report.

Gudi Padwa, which is a major festival of Maharashtra, fell on 13 April while the 9-day fasting period Navratri

commenced from the same day last week, among other festivals.

Festive periods like Navratri and Gudi Padwa account for a fair share of annual vehicle sales across the country, as per the report.

According to Motilal Oswal, inventory at some of the major two-wheeler manufacturers was manageable at the start of the month, with a supporting number of inquiries and bookings. However, dealers saw a significant increase in cancellations with the rise in Covid cases.

and central India) and also rural demand from the rabi harvest, it said.

However, according to the report, sales were much lower from the festive season and the rabi harvest with expected two-wheeler demand recov-

ery during this period is yet to play out and is much lower than normal.

According to Motilal Oswal, inventory at some of the major two-wheeler manufacturers was manageable at the start of the month, with a supporting number of inquiries and bookings. However, dealers saw a significant increase in cancellations with the rise in Covid cases.

Maharashtra dealers on Gudi Padwa posted just 50 per cent of expected sales. UP retailers were also impacted by the ongoing Panchayat elections, it stated.

Stating that unlike the first wave, the second wave would see limited benefit from pent



Opening of travel bubble with NZ a win-win for both
Canberra and Wellington

AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER SCOTT MORRISON

WELCOMED THE OPENING OF A TRAVEL BUBBLE BETWEEN HIS COUNTRY AND NEW ZEALAND

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	25 R
HONG KONG	28	21 CL
TOKYO	19	11 CL
LONDON	17	5 CL
DUBAI	32	22 S
SAN FRANCISCO	18	12 H
NEW YORK	19	10 S
MOSCOW	13	6 H

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

THUMBNAILS



Gulf of Mexico : The capsized lift boat Seacor Power is seen seven miles off the coast of Louisiana in the Gulf of Mexico Sunday, April 18, 2021. The vessel capsized during a storm on Tuesday. ■ AP/PTI

US bar shooting: One person has been arrested in connection with a shooting incident at a bar in Wisconsin in the US in which three persons were killed and three injured, officials said. The Kenosha County Sheriff's Department said in a statement on Sunday that the person, whose name was not released, was arrested on suspicion of first-degree intentional homicide, NBC News reported. The victims were not identified, and more than three people may have been injured, the department said. The person was taken into custody after detectives followed multiple leads and reviewed surveillance video, the department said. Additional details about the arrest were not immediately provided. Police said earlier that officers found the bodies at the Somers House Tavern in the north of the city.

■ AP/PTI

Biden pressed on emissions goal as climate summit nears

Let's stop talking about 2050," said McCarthy, who is leading White House efforts to develop US climate commitments for 2030.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, 19 APRIL

When President Joe Biden convenes a virtual climate summit on Thursday, he faces a vexing task: how to put forward a non-binding but symbolic goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that will have a tangible impact not only on climate change efforts in the US but throughout the world.

The emissions target, eagerly awaited by all sides of the climate debate, will signal how aggressively Biden wants to move on climate change, a divisive and expensive issue that has riled Republicans to complain about job-killing government overreach even as some on the left worry Biden has not gone far enough to address a profound threat to the planet. The climate crisis poses a complex political challenge for Biden, since the problem is harder to see and far more difficult to produce



measurable results on than either the pandemic relief package or the infrastructure bill. The target Biden chooses is setting the tone for the level of ambition and the pace of emission reductions over the next decade," said Kate Larsen, a former White House adviser who helped develop President Barack Obama's climate action plan. The number has to be achievable by 2030 but aggressive enough to satisfy scientists and advocates

who call the coming decade a crucial, make-or-break moment for slowing climate change, Larsen and other experts said. Scientists, environmental groups and even business leaders are calling on Biden to set a target that would cut US greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030. The 50 per cent target, which most experts consider a likely outcome of intense deliberations underway at the White House,

would nearly double the nation's previous commitment and require dramatic changes in the power and transportation sectors, including significant increases in renewable energy such as wind and solar power and steep cuts in emissions from fossil fuels such as coal and oil. Anything short of that goal could undermine Biden's promise to prevent temperatures from rising more than 1.5 degrees Celsius, experts say, while likely stirring up sharp criticism from international allies and Biden's own supporters. The target is significant, not just as a visible goal for the US to achieve after four years of climate inaction under President Donald Trump, but also for leveraging other countries," Larsen said. That helps domestically in the battle that comes after, which is implementing policies to achieve that target. We can make a better case politically at home if other countries are acting at the same level of ambition as

the US? The 2030 goal, known as a Nationally Determined Contribution, or NDC, is a key part of the Paris climate agreement, which Biden rejoined on his first day in office.

It's also an important marker as Biden moves toward his ultimate goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Clearly the science demands at least 50% in reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, said Jake Schmidt, a climate expert at the Natural Resources Defense Council, a leading environmental group. The 50% target is ambitious, but it is achievable," he said in an interview. It's also a good climate message, he said. People know what 50% means it's half." Whatever target Biden picks, the climate summit itself proves the U.S. is back in rejoining the international effort to address climate change, said Larsen, now a director at the Rhodium Group, an independent research firm. The summit is the starting gun for climate diploma-

cy after a four-year hiatus under Trump, she said. John Kerry, Biden's climate envoy, has been pressing global leaders in person and online ahead of the summit for commitments and alliances on climate efforts. Nathaniel Keohane, another former Obama White House adviser and now a vice president at the Environmental Defense Fund, said experts have coalesced around the need to reduce emissions by at least 50 per cent by 2030.

The number has to start with 5, he said, adding. We've done the math. We need at least 50%." The 2030 target is just one in a sometimes overlapping set of goals that Biden has outlined on climate. He also has said he expects to adopt a clean energy standard that would make electricity carbon-free by 2035, along with the wider goal of net-zero carbon emissions economy-wide by 2050.

Biden's climate adviser, Gina McCarthy, acknowledged that the sheer volume of numbers can be confusing. At a

US emissions counter-productive, saying Biden's plan would raise energy costs and kill American jobs while allowing Russia, China and other countries to increase greenhouse gas emissions. The Biden administration will set punishing targets for the United States. That won't solve climate change," said Sen. John Barrasso, the top Republican on the Senate Energy Committee.

Let's stop talking about 2050," said McCarthy, who is leading White House efforts to develop U.S. climate commitments for 2030. Bloomberg 79, was even more blunt: 2050 is a good number for people who give speeches, but I don't know anyone giving those speeches who's going to be alive in 2050. Some Republican lawmakers call the focus on

US emissions counter-productive, saying Biden's plan would raise energy costs and kill American jobs while allowing Russia, China and other countries to increase greenhouse gas emissions. The Biden administration will set punishing targets for the United States. That won't solve climate change," said Sen. John Barrasso, the top Republican on the Senate Energy Committee.

FIERY



Cape Town: A fire rages on the slopes of Table Mountain, in Cape Town South Africa, Monday, April 19, 2021. Residents are being evacuated from Cape Town neighborhoods after a huge fire spreading on the slopes of the city. A famous Table Mountain was fanned by strong winds overnight and houses came under threat. ■ AP/PTI

Jailed Kremlin critic Navalny to be moved to a hospital

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 19 APRIL

The Russian state penitentiary service said Monday a decision has been made to transfer imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, who is in the third week of a hunger strike, to a hospital. The announcement comes two days after Navalny's physician said his health was deteriorating rapidly and the 44-year-old Kremlin critic could be on the verge of death. Navalny went on hunger strike to protest the refusal to let his doctors visit when he began experiencing severe back pain and a loss of feeling in his legs. The state prison service, FSIN, said in a statement that Navalny would be transferred to a hospital for convicts located in another penal colony in Vladimir, a city 180 kilometers (110 miles) east of Moscow. According to the statement, Navalny's condition is deemed satisfactory and he has agreed to take vitamin supplements. Navalny's physician, Yaroslav Ashikhmin, said Saturday that test results he received from Navalny's family show him with sharply elevated levels of

potassium, which can bring on cardiac arrest, and heightened creatinine levels that indicate impaired kidneys.

Navalny went on hunger strike to protest the refusal to let his doctors visit when he began experiencing severe back pain and a loss of feeling in his legs. The state prison service, FSIN, said in a statement that Navalny is receiving all the medical help he needs. In response to the alarming news about Navalny's health this weekend, his allies have called for a nationwide rally on Wednesday, the same day that President Vladimir Putin is scheduled to deliver his annual state of the nation address.

US: Shots fired at Guardsmen patrolling near Wright scene

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MINNEAPOLIS, 19 APRIL

Two National Guardsmen suffered minor injuries when they were fired upon as they provided neighbourhood security in Minneapolis following the police killing of a 20-year-old Black man in a nearby suburb, authorities said. Both have since resigned, and Potter is charged with second-degree manslaughter. The shooting on Sunday happened in north Minneapolis, about 8 km from Brooklyn Center. The Guard members were on a patrol with Minneapolis police at the time.

The Brooklyn Center police station has been the site of protests every night since. Saturday's demonstration was more subdued than earlier in the week, when police used a riot line to clear the street several nights and used gas, flash-bang grenades and marking rounds on demonstrators, and tried to damage a fence.

The Minneapolis area was on heightened alert for a verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial in George Floyd's death even before April 11 when a police officer shot and killed 20-year-old Daunte Wright.

Adults to be reinfected to study immune response in UK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 19 APRIL

Healthy young adults who have previously contracted Covid-19 will be recruited to take part in a new human challenge trial to study how the body's immune system reacts to the deadly coronavirus, for a better understanding to protect against the virus and also for more accurate tests.

The Oxford University-led human challenge trial will look at what kind of immune response can stop people from becoming re-infected and also how the immune system reacts second time round.

People aged between 18 and 30 who have previously been naturally infected will be recruited and re-exposed to the virus in a safe, controlled environment and paid around 5,000 pounds to be quarantined for 17 days at a hospital.

Challenge studies tell us things that other studies can-



They will then infect them with the dose of virus chosen from the first study and measure how much virus we can detect after infection. They will then be able to understand what kind of immune response protects against re-infection.

They will also measure the immune response at several time points after infection to understand what immune response is generated by the virus.

A challenge study allows us to make these measurements very precisely because we know exactly when someone is infected. The information from this work will allow us to design better vaccines and treatments, and also to understand if people are protected after having Covid, and for how long, said McShane, adding that it would also help with designing tests that can more accurately predict whether people are protected.

For phase one, up to 64 healthy participants between

the ages of 18 and 30 who have previously been naturally infected with Covid-19 will be re-exposed to the virus in carefully controlled conditions.

The virus used in the study will be the original strain from Wuhan, China. The participants will be quarantined in a specially designed hospital suite for a minimum of 17 days under the care of the research team.

They will undergo numerous medical tests including CT scans of the lungs and MRI scans of the heart. The risks to participants will be minimised by making sure that those who take part are completely fit and well and have completely recovered from their first infection with Covid, the researchers said.

Any participants, recruited on a voluntary basis, who develop any symptoms will be given medical treatment with the Regeneron monoclonal antibody treatment.

They will only be discharged from the quarantine unit when they are no longer infected and not at risk of infecting others. The full length of the study will be 12 months, including a minimum of eight follow-up appointments after discharge.

The research team explained that a human challenge trial in medical research is a carefully controlled study that involves purposefully infecting a subject with a pathogen or bug, in order to study the effects of that infection.

There are still many unknowns surrounding this virus and human infections studies can enable us to learn a lot about Covid-19. This study has the potential to transform our understanding by providing high-quality data on how our immune system responds to a second infection with this virus, said Shobana Balasingam, Vaccines Senior Research Advisor.

The Minneapolis area was on heightened alert for a verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial in George Floyd's death even before April 11 when a police officer shot and killed 20-year-old Daunte Wright.

It took off a few feet from the ground, hovered in the air for about 20 to 30 seconds, and landed. After this feat, the team will now attempt additional experimental flights of incrementally farther dis-

tance and greater altitude. After the helicopter completes its technology demonstration, Perseverance rover will continue its scientific mission.

In a historic feat for humankind, NASA on Monday successfully launched the first powered, controlled flight of its Ingenuity Mars Helicopter on another planet. The mini helicopter began its flight approximately at 3:45 p.m. (India time) and the data was received at NASA headquarters around 4:25 p.m. (IST).

It took off a few feet from the ground, hovered in the air for about 20 to 30 seconds, and landed. After this feat, the team will now attempt additional experimental flights of incrementally farther dis-

for during the past year," he added.

Carax is best known for his films "Boy Meets Girl", "Bad Blood", "The Lovers on the Bridge", "Pola X" and "Merde".

Produced by Charles Gillibert, Paul-Dominique Vachasanthu, and Driver, in association with Amazon Studios, Arte, and Canal+, "Annette" will be distributed in France by UGC and by Amazon in the U.S.

Kinology is handling international rights. UGC plans to release the film in France on July 6, the day of its Cannes premiere. The Cannes Film Festival 2021 has been delayed from its usual May opening to July 6-17 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Filmmaker Spike Lee will head the international jury this year.

First Australian flight lands in New Zealand since closure of border due to pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE, 19 APRIL

Hundreds of passengers from Australia landed in Auckland on Monday following the implementation of a travel bubble under which New Zealand allowed Australian flights into the country for the first time since the borders were shut in March last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The first flight took off Monday morning at 7 am (local time) from Sydney airport to Auckland following the opening of the travel bubble which would allow Australians to visit New Zealand without going into quarantine and a permit.

The two sides borders were shut in March last year after the coronavirus started to spread rapidly around the globe however, New Zealanders were allowed to travel to Australia on "green zone"



carefully. It will be happening cautiously and carefully, working very hard on the medical and health protections in place because I'm not going to put at risk the way that Australians are living today, he said.

Two weeks ago, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern had announced the arrangement saying: "Those undertaking travel on either side of the ditch will do so under the guidance of flyer beware." "People will need to plan for the possibility of travel being disrupted if there is an outbreak," she added.

Hundreds of passengers crowded the international departure terminal at Australia's Melbourne Airport early Monday amid long check-in lines. "This is really the first day in over a year that Australians get to dust off their passports and travel overseas," Melbourne Airport Chief of Aviation Lorie Argus

said. Melbourne Airport said it will welcome 19 trans-Tasman flights on Monday, which is equal to approximately 4,000 seats, according to a news release.

Each week, around 140 services will operate between Melbourne and New Zealand, and the number will rise to 180 weekly flights by the end of May, the release added around 70 per cent of pre-COVID levels. Melbourne Airport now offers non-stop flights to four New Zealand destinations: Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Queenstown. Both Australian and the New Zealand governments imposed strict lockdowns to curb the spread of coronavirus in the country.

New Zealand is among the nations to have reported the least number of cases due to its strong regulation of measures to contain the virus spread.

In the spotlight, they are the perfect couple, healthy, happy and glamorous but the birth of their first child, Annette, a mysterious girl with an exceptional destiny, will change their lives.

"We couldn't have dreamed of a more beautiful reunion with cinema and the silver screen, in the Palais des festivals where films come to assert their splendor," Cannes General Delegate Thierry Frimaux said in a statement.

"Carax's cinema is an expression of these powerful gestures, these mysterious alchemies that make the secret of cinema's modernity and eternity," he added. "Every Leos Carax film is an event. And this one delivers on its promises!" added Cannes Festival President Pierre Lescure.

"Annette" is the gift that lovers of cinema, music, and culture were hoping for, one that we have been yearning

Marion Cotillard, Adam Driver-starrer 'Annette' to open Cannes Film Festival

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LOS ANGELES, 19 APRIL

"Holy Motors" director Leos Carax's Los Angeles-set drama "Annette", starring Marion Cotillard and Adam Driver, will open the 74th Cannes Film Festival on July 6.

"Annette" Carax's first film in English, will premiere in Competition nine years after the premiere of his film "Holy Motors".

Set in contemporary Los Angeles, "Annette" tells the story of Henry (Driver), a stand-up comedian with a fierce sense of humour, and Ann (Cotillard), a famous singer.

In the spotlight, they are the perfect couple, healthy, happy and glamorous but the birth



ANSHU SHARMA

It has often been assumed that teaching leads to learning, and that good learning comes only from good teaching. It is the fundamental premise of much of India's conventional education system. Yet, there have been situations where despite good teachers, a student didn't perform well, or even in the absence of good schooling, someone learnt just fine and excelled in life. While a major section of society believes that children need proper teaching, a quote attributed to physicist Albert Einstein goes, "Never teach my pupils. I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn".

Learning happens all the time, whether there are conscious teaching inputs or not. Research conducted in the field of disaster management education indicates that there are four broad areas one learns from -- formal teaching, media exposure, personal experiences and traditional wisdom. Teaching and the media have expanded their horizons in recent times with advancing information and communication technologies, bringing global universities and

news within the phones in peoples' pockets. Those two inputs were indeed always sourced from global lessons and brought in immense potential for learning.

Personal experiences and traditional wisdom, on the other hand, are location-centric and include contextual and nuanced lessons that formal teaching seldom covers. The easiest way to see this distinction is to take a look at the life skill of survival, which institutionally evolves to take the shape of disaster management. Every living being instinctively takes steps to avoid threats from predators and recover from shocks. They are exclusively local environmental risks which are specific to that being. Humans have turned it into a rather sophisticated art of survival that they share widely with others and hand down generations.

When the Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami struck the coastlines of the South-east Asian region in 2004, killing over 200,000 people and devastating coastal and island habitations, there were great fears that the indigenous communities of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands would have been wiped out.

Surprisingly, the people survived effectively, reportedly due to lessons learnt from tsunamis hundreds of years ago that were passed down to the present generation. They were able to see the receding sea and understand that it is shortly going to return in giant waves. Educated tourists in many of the beaches across the region, on the other hand, rushed to the retreating sea to marvel at the exposed seabed.

A constant process of experiencing and understanding local, personal and community risks and learning how to avoid or manage them, goes on in every individual's and community's life. Teaching and the media are undoubtedly important additional inputs that help create awareness to some extent but it is also necessary to look beyond it. Tilly Smith, a young schoolgirl from England could save a hundred lives on a beach in Thailand where she was holidaying when the tsunami struck, because her geography teacher had told her about tsunamis just a few days earlier. Teaching can however never substitute experiential learning of an individual or community, which finds roots at a much deeper and wider

level. Some of the best lessons one learns are from making mistakes. The question is, whether one can learn from mistakes made by others in the past, without repeating them. It is the basis of rapidly emerging pedagogy that is case-based, participatory and action-oriented teaching. Pioneering educational programmes are now being designed entirely based on case studies that share real-life situations.

Students use them to understand how varied practices are based on common principles. Hands-on design or planning activities help translate those principles into practice.

On the student's side, it can mean an emphasis on their support-

ing each other through cohort-based learning, social media, peer assessment, discussion groups, and even online study groups but with guidance, support and feedback from learning and content experts. Technology has an increasingly larger role to play, not only to deliver teaching but also to support and assist students and provide new forms of students' assessment of the knowledge acquired.

This new approach of blended learning facilitates the development of future-ready skills. The anywhere, anytime, any size learning has removed the barrier of being restricted by any of the social factors. It has led to increased inclination towards experience-based learning which is inclusive, interactive and allows one to explore individual capabilities in the process.

However, it is imperative to say that further research and an evaluation of these learning methods are needed to identify the factors that will have a lasting value and a permanent effect on the education system.

The writer is co-founder, Sustainable Environment and Ecological Development Society, New Delhi

Anywhere, anytime, any size learning

Pioneering educational programmes are being designed entirely based on case studies that share real-life situations with students



PLUS POINTS Of festivity



Jagran Lakecity University commenced the JLJU Carnival recently. It will be a six-month-long virtual fest and continue till September 2021. Through the virtual fest, JLJU aims to reinvent the way university events are occasioned and attended in the wake of pandemic-induced restrictions while keeping in mind social distancing norms on physical gatherings, for the safety of the audience, staff and performers.

JLJU Carnival is an open-for-all event. The first session began with students interacting with renowned Kochi-based band, "When Chai Met Toast". The organising team received an overwhelming response from students in Central India, garnering more than 500 registrations within two days of sending out the registration link. For the next sessions, celebrities across various domains will perform.

Urban studies



The Centre for Urban Economic Studies, department of economics, University of Calcutta recently organised its 40th annual conference virtually. Panchanan Das, director, chaired the inauguration and highlighted the significance of urbanisation studies. The keynote speaker of the event was Amitabh Kundu, senior fellow, World Resources Institute. He stressed on aspects of migration and urbanisation, and discussed issues such as the increasing population in large urban centres, housing shortages with increased migration, et al.

There were two technical sessions which were chaired by Sudakshina Gupta, Cues and Mahalaya Chatterjee, Cues, respectively. The event ended with a valedictory session.

—ADITI CHATTERJI

Empowering the pen



Trustees of the New India Foundation announced the recipients of the 10th NIF Fellowships – the grant that supports research and writing leading to an extraordinary range of non-fiction works on post-Independence India. This year the fellowship awardees comprise an eclectic mix of journalists, academics and researchers, both young and experienced.

Given the great number and breadth of proposals that the NIF received this year, the foundation has decided to grant the highest number of fellowships for a given year so far – from over 900 applications received, the jury has selected 11 recipients through a rigorous process of screening and interviews.

The NIF fellowships are awarded for a period of one year with an annual stipend of Rs 18 lakh to each recipient; and include editorial and publishing support for each project.

Time to excel



Edukemy, a test prep EdTech company in India, introduced its personalised Indian Administrative Service Interview Mentorship Programme for Union Public Service Commission aspirants recently. It involves exclusive and personalised one-on-one training sessions with young topers, experienced and senior bureaucrats along with sessions for psychological assessment.

Divided into two phases, the programme would help students attain an edge over the rest. In the first phase, pre-detailed application form filling support will be provided. In the next phase, candidates will have a one-on-one session with psychologists and senior bureaucrats to enhance their language, develop originality, consistency and fluency and understand overall stress management. The training programme is available online and students can select slots. For details visit, <https://edukemy.com/landing>

DIVERSIFIED WORKFORCE

Re-skilling allows a productive atmosphere for employees to grow and thrive in

RS MAAN

The advent of the pandemic last year disrupted the entire job scenario. While many were left unemployed, others had to step up their game to ensure survival and sustenance. Understanding the tight situation, organisations are now introducing various innovations in their functioning so that they can maintain their position in the market.

Re-skilling and up-skilling are two of the most effective ways that have been adopted by both brands and start-up ventures to ensure that their operations are not only smooth but also attract and retain quality talent. While both the terms are often used interchangeably, they are distinct concepts with differentiated benefits.

Earlier, up-skilling was considered a viable option as firms focused on training their employees to expand their skill-set within their respective job profiles. With changing times, however, re-skilling has picked up an equal pace and is now increasingly preferred by organisations.

Employers have realised that an employee can possess various traits ideal for a job role other than the one in which he/she is already involved. Hence, companies are training their workforce for a different job role from the one that they have previous experience in, so that they can proficiently perform in other departments too. It is usually done when the organisation wants to retain an employee understanding that he/she is an asset to the company even if their present job designation has no further scope for growth.

From the business perspective, re-skilling helps enterprises to keep existing employees, boost job satisfaction and increase productivity.

faction, maintain their competitive position in the market and optimally utilise the full potential of the workforce on hand. Here are some of the major benefits of re-skilling, which makes it relevant for every professional in the current scenario.

Retaining top talent

Re-skilling helps employers preserve performing employees. They are considered valuable for the company and saving them would eventually benefit the organisation. A company that makes efforts to protect their employees successfully develops a base for their talent, which increases the loyalty of the employee towards his/her organisation.

Overcoming the digital skills gap

In these times, where one needs to be digitally advanced, it is critical to re-skill one's employees to bridge the digital skill gap. For instance, knowledge pertaining to information technology need not be limited to the IT team anymore. The other departments can garner a basic understanding of it so that they can themselves resolve minor issues at their end.

Boosting soft skills

Firms, over the last few years, have started giving preference to the soft skills of their employees. Communication, problem-solving, team-building and management, analytical thinking, leadership, and managerial skills are some of the abilities that are no longer optional and have become requisites to be possessed by the talent pool of companies. Re-skilling employees will help organisations imbibe such soft skills amongst their workers, which will further boost their performance.



Financially feasible

Another major benefit of re-skilling is that it is financially practical process. Hiring new talent will not only be time consuming but can also be economically stressful. Re-skilling existing employees will at once help save costs and ensure trust-building at both ends – the employee will be satisfied that his/her job is not at risk and the firm will be content retaining the best of their employees and having saved the additional costs associated with appointing new faculty.

Engaging employees

Recruits, experienced or not, often tend to face redundancy. It leads to decreased engagement, which in turn affects their performance. Implementing a re-skilling strategy helps encourage collaboration amongst employees while evolving through a continuous learning curve. When reskilled, employees feel valued and benefitted and hence engage proac-

tively. A place that welcomes constant learning is further valued by the staff.

While there are various strategies, one of the common ways of re-skilling adopted by different organisations is by increasing the responsibility and workload of employees along with that of the senior staff mentoring them. Another possibility involves bringing different teams and departments together to work collaboratively.

The majority of corporations experience skill gaps in their talent pool. Very few, however, act upon them. This is where re-skilling plays an important role and helps bridge the gap. Hiring apprentices and then developing them according to the needs of the organisation can be a challenging task, especially at the senior executive and managerial levels in the professional hierarchy. Re-skilling is important for all employees, which can surpass the limitations of work experience, job designation, age,

etc. It induces a collaborative work culture as employees feel treasured and worthy. Such a supportive environment boosts performance and increases engagement and retention.

Re-skilling ensures consistent improvement for employees and companies gain by retaining the best. It builds a productive atmosphere that allows employees to grow and expand their horizons. It is one of the most effective solutions to thrive in the ever-evolving job landscape.

While there are a plethora of courses offered by academic institutions for re-skilling, one can themselves indulge in various flexible and online-based programmes to enhance their personality and skill-set. Re-skilling is indeed the need of the hour and the best future strategy for organisations to keep abreast with technological developments and stay ahead in their respective industries.

The writer is managing director and global chief revenue officer, Codleo, New Delhi

