



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



RAJNATH TO ARMED
FORCES: HELP STATES
TO TACKLE COVID CRISIS

P5



CHANGE IN HAVANA

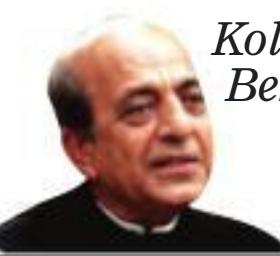
P6



US AMBASSADOR IN
MOSCOW HEADS HOME
FOR CONSULTATIONS

P10





Kolkata has always had a cosmopolitan culture. That is the beauty of West Bengal. All who have come here have fallen in love with the Bengali culture.

BJP LEADER DINESH TRIVEDI
IN AN INTERVIEW

Delhi hospitals gasp for oxygen, CM again sends SOS to Centre

Amid its acute shortage for Covid patients in Delhi, Kejriwal says some city hospitals are left with barely a few hours of oxygen, urges Centre 'with folded hands' to urgently provide it

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI / GREATER NOIDA,
20 APRIL

With Delhi overwhelmed by a massive, unprecedented wave of coronavirus, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today again urged the Centre, this time with "with folded hands", to provide medical oxygen to Delhi urgently, saying some hospitals in the city are going to run out of it in a few hours.

"Serious oxygen crisis persists in Delhi. I again urge Centre to urgently provide oxygen to Delhi. Some hospitals are left with just a few hours of oxygen," the CM tweeted.

In another tweet, Kejriwal stated: "I urge the Central government with folded hands to urgently provide oxygen to Delhi."

Sir Ganga Ram Hospital said they have just eight hours of oxygen left. The hospital has 485 Covid beds, of which 475 are occupied. Around 120 patients are currently in the ICU. Its chairman D S Rana said, "6,000 cubic metres of it is left, which at the rate of current consumption will last till 1 am. Need urgent replenishment."

Sources said the hospital needs about 9,500 cubic metres per day of oxygen. Against this, it is being supplied about 5,000 cubic metres a day.

Kejriwal had on Sunday termed the shortage of oxygen for coronavirus patients in Delhi an "emergency".

He had also written to Prime Minister Narendra



"Serious oxygen crisis persists in Delhi. I again urge Centre to urgently provide oxygen to Delhi. Some hospitals are left with just a few hours of oxygen," the CM tweeted. In another tweet, Kejriwal stated: "I urge the Central government with folded hands to urgently provide oxygen to Delhi."

Modi and Union commerce and industries minister Piyush Goyal, seeking their intervention for resolution of the crisis.

On Monday, the Delhi government set up a 24-

member committee to ensure "rational" use of oxygen for treatment of Covid patients. An order issued by the health department

said the 'Oxygen Audit Committee' will identify areas of wasteful consumption.

The consumption of oxygen has undergone a quantum increase with the admission of a large number of serious patients who require oxygen support, it said.

Delhi deputy CM Manish Sisodia today said the Centre should be "sensitive and active" in handling the situation so that there is no clamour among states over its supply.

Sisodia, who is also the nodal minister for Covid management in the national capital, said he was getting SOS calls on oxygen short-

age from all hospitals. He also alleged that people involved in supplying oxygen were being stopped in different states.

"Getting SOS calls on shortage of oxygen from all hospitals. People involved in supplying oxygen are being stopped at different states. To ensure that there no 'jungle raj' among states over supply of oxygen, the Central government should be very sensitive and active to handle the situation," he tweeted in Hindi.

Sisodia also said that most of the Delhi hospitals have only 8-12 hours of oxygen supplies left. He said that for the past one week the Delhi government has been urging the Centre to ensure adequate oxygen supply to Delhi. He also said that there will be a disaster if adequate oxygen

supplies are not ensured for Delhi hospitals by tomorrow morning.

Meanwhile, amid severe shortage of oxygen for Covid patients, the Uttar Pradesh administration has issued an order and stationed officers at a Greater Noida oxygen manufacturing plant to check movement of oxygen cylinders, hindering supplies to hospitals in the national capital.

Gautam Buddha Nagar district magistrate Suhas L Y today issued orders posting two senior officers round-the-clock at Inox Air Products Pvt Ltd's Greater Noida factory that manufactures and supplies medical oxygen.

The officers, of the rank of deputy district officer, will "be present at the company site during the allotted hours and ensure adequate supply of oxygen to Covid-19 hospitals" in the Gautam Buddha Nagar district, Suhas' order said.

One officer has been posted at the factory from 8 am to 8 pm and another for 12 hours beginning 8 in the evening, according to the order.

The factory supplies medical oxygen to hospitals in Delhi. The order has hampered supplies to several hospitals in the national capital.

Also, the company is unable to supply oxygen from its Rajasthan plant due to restrictions imposed by the state government.

This is creating an acute shortage in the national capital, three persons aware of the development said.

LG concerned over migrant workers leaving Delhi after lockdown decision

PTI
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal on Tuesday expressed concern over migrant workers leaving the city following the imposition of a six-days lockdown to curb the rise in COVID-19 cases and deputed principal secretary (home) and special commissioner of police to handle the situation.

Baijal held an emergency meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the chief secretary to take stock of the situation and asked them to initiate every possible steps to prevent a reverse migration, officials said.

Kejriwal has announced a lockdown in the national capital from 10 pm on Monday till 5 am on April 26, saying it was necessary to deal with the rising number of COVID-19 cases as the city's health system was stretched to its limit.

Hours after the announcement, thousands of migrant workers gathered at Anand Vihar ISBT here to catch a bus home, even as the chief minister appealed to them with folded hands not to leave Delhi while sounding a word of assurance -- "Main hoon na" (I am here for you).

In a tweet on Tuesday, Baijal said, "I appeal to all the migrant citizens of Delhi not to leave the city out of fear. I assure you that the government will take care of all your needs in this situation of corona pandemic. All the arrangements for you are being made," Baijal said in a tweet.

In another tweet, he said migrant workers run Delhi



A large number of migrants seeks to board buses in a bid to head home after imposition of lockdown in Delhi. At Kaushambi Bus Depot in the Capital on Tuesday.

through their labour and the city belonged to them.

The L-G has directed officials to ensure provisions of food and shelters for the migrant workers.

The principal secretary (home) and special commissioner of police have been appointed as nodal officers by the L-G to handle the situation, officials said, adding Baijal has also asked officials to facilitate necessary permissions to hospitals with oxygen plants to enhance production.

Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Committee polls deferred amid rising Covid-19 cases

PTI
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

The Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee elections have been postponed due to the surging COVID-19 cases and the week-long lockdown imposed in the city to check the spread of the virus, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

The proposal stated it would not be prudent to hold the DSGMC elections during the ongoing curfew, and added polling booths might become "hotspots" and "super-spreaders".

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has sent a proposal to Lt Governor Anil Baijal in this regard, Sisodia said in a tweet.

"Gurudwara elections in Delhi, to be held on 25 April, have been postponed due to corona and ongoing curfew. Hon'ble CM sends the proposal to Hon'ble LG," Sisodia tweeted.

Referring to a High Court case, the proposal said the Delhi government has stated in the court that election process will be completed by April 29. The court has directed to adhere to the schedule with permissible variation of two weeks, it said.

Therefore, the elections should be postponed as it could be conducted by May 13 as per the court order, it said.

Day 1 of Delhi lockdown: Streets deserted; Kejriwal urges people to stay home

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

Streets of the national capital wore a deserted look today after the week-long lockdown came into effect since last night. The lockdown, imposed to curb the exploding surge in coronavirus cases in Delhi, will continue till 26 April morning.

Thousands of police personnel have been deployed to implement this lockdown.

Appealing to people to stay at home during the six-day lockdown in Delhi amid the spiralling Covid crisis, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today said the decision was taken in view of their health and safety.

The lockdown kicked in from 10 pm on Monday and will continue till 5 am on April 26.

"The lockdown in Delhi has started today. This decision has been taken in view of your health and safety. Kindly cooperate with the government and stay home to keep safe from the infection," Kejriwal tweeted.



During the day one of the lockdown in Delhi on Tuesday with deserted streets and shops and markets remaining closed. SNS

although it has not collapsed yet, Kejriwal had said, adding that despite upto 25,500 cases coming up in the last few days.

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, he had said.

People were packed inside their homes as private offices and other establishments like shops, malls, weekly markets, manufacturing units, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, restaurants, bars, assembly public parks, gyms, barber shops were closed down.

According to a Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) order, people going for Covid testing or vaccination have been exempted from lockdown on production of a valid l-card.

People going to airports, railways, and bus terminals have been allowed movement, but they will have to

show a valid ticket.

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

Delhi Police said people in the national capital largely remained indoors on the first day of the week-long lockdown but some were penalised for stepping out of their homes unnecessarily.

In several areas of the city, the police made announcements through loudspeakers to inform people about the lockdown and ask them to follow the Covid guidelines issued by the government, they said.

A senior police officer said while people facing an emergency were facilitated, those who were roaming without a valid reason were challaned.

They were also sensitised by police personnel regarding the Covid guidelines.

Delhi to have 2,700 more Covid beds within 4-5 days: Sisodia

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

government was continuously working to increase the Covid-19 hospital beds. At present, there are 320 beds in Burari Hospital, which will be increased to 800.

The capacity of beds at Ambedkar Nagar Hospital will be increased from 200 to 600. The beds at Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Hospital will go up from 250 to 750. The government will add 250 new beds to Acharya Shree Bhikshu Hospital as also to the DRDO's Covid-19 Centre.

The number of beds in the Satyawadi Raja Harishchandra Hospital of Narela will be increased from 200 to 400. Also, a Delhi government school will be connected to LNJP Hospital with 125 beds and a centre of 500 beds will be set up in the Commonwealth Games Village. All these beds will be ready in the next four-five days.

Addressing a press conference, he pleaded that there was no need to panic but to follow the six-day lockdown properly. He stated that the number of Covid-19 beds in Delhi was increased from 6,071 on 3 April to 19,101 on 20 April, and warned the hospitals that showing inaccurate information on the Delhi CoronaApp will be dealt with stringently.

He asked the public not to rush to hospitals if anyone was asymptomatic or had mild symptoms of coronavirus. The most effective way to fight Covid-19 is through home isolation.

Sisodia said the Delhi

isolation is the most effective way to fight Covid-19. During home isolation, doctors regularly keep in touch with patients over the phone. If you have a high fever or severe symptoms, only then go to hospitals."

Sisodia appealed to people to check the status of beds in hospitals on the 'Delhi CoronaApp' before going to any hospital to save their time. If a hospital is showing false information on the app or refusing people despite having beds, then action will be taken against that hospital.

Health Minister Satyendra Jain said if the Central government allowed the state governments to open vaccination centres in schools and community centres, then Delhi would be able to complete the vaccination drive quickly.

He said there were already more than 500 vaccination centres in Delhi, but their number would be increased fur-

ther.

He added: "We had asked the Central government to give permission for opening vaccination centres. We demanded that vaccination centres should be allowed to be opened in schools and community centres. If this permission is granted, then we will be able to do vaccination very fast."

The Health Minister said Delhi had witnessed an unprecedented surge in Covid-19 cases. As a result, people are now scared and everybody wants to get tested. The reports should come within 24 hours.

If the test report is

TENDER

DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER RAJASTHAN HOUSE, 7, PRITHVIRAJ ROAD, NEW DELHI	
F-14/RH/NIVIDA/2021/28 Bid for Providing the Services of Garden Maintenance / Garden upkeep Manpower on Job basis & Supply of Gardening Material on yearly Rate Contract Basis at Rajasthan House situated at 7, Prithviraj Road, New Delhi are invited from 10-04-2021 at 12-00 noon till 20-04-2021 at 4-00 p.m. The tender value is Rs. 24,00,000 and other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (https://sppr.rajanstan.gov.in) of the state.	
NIB: GAD2122 A002	Deputy General Manager
UBN: GAD2122SLB00003	Rajasthan House, New Delhi

The Statesman

KOLKATA
Statesman House,
4, Chowringhee Square
Kolkata-700 001

Tel: (033) 22127070-76,

(033) 41071700

Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780

Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com

[statesmanclassified@gmail.com](http://www.statesmanclassified@gmail.com)

DISTRICT 24 Parganas (South), West Bengal

Before the Ld. 6th Court of Additional District Judge at Alipore

Mat Suit No. 755 of 2019.

Rakesh Gupta;

...Petitioner/Husband

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

NOTICE — The Premises

No. 24 Bhawan, Dutt Lane, P.O.

Jorasanko, Kolkata-70007

No. 11-044-03-0026-1 has been

Inherited by my clients

Advocate Raj Kumar Gupta

Section 15, Gurugram

NOTICE — The Premises

T'gana night curfew till 30 April

Essential services, govt officers, medical personnel, pregnant women are exempted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 20 APRIL

questioned the court's intervention.

Telangana today imposed night curfew between 9 pm and 5 am till 30 April in order to curb the spread of Covid-19 virus, a day after the High Court threatened to step in, dissatisfied over the measures taken so far by the state government. However, doubts have been raised over the effectiveness of the move and BJP and AIMIM leaders

allowed to remain open along with print and electronic media, telecommunications, IT and IT enabled services, delivery e-commerce companies, petrol pumps, power and water supply, cold storage and private security services. Public transport will be allowed to ply though Metro and state-run buses have amended their time schedule according to the night curfew timings.

The order was issued by chief secretary Somesh Kumar

which read: "It is decided to introduce night curfew in the state for the period from 9 pm to 5 am next day till 30 April 2021 as a further measure to prevent the spread of Covid-19." The government also came out with a separate order directing cinema halls to shut down by 8 pm. The High Court had come down heavily on the state administration yesterday and had warned that the state should introduce some curbs to tackle the spread of the virus.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer Electrical Division No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9, on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in Single/T2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms. Eligible contractors registered with HPPWD in appropriate Class. The bidder shall have to fulfil the criteria as specified in Technical Qualification Criteria (TQC) in Form- 8 available online in tender document.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Time	Cost of Tender
1	Construction of Warehouse for the Storage of EVMs & VVPATs at Nahan Distt. Sirmour (H.P)(SH:- Providing Electrical installation thereof).	Rs. 16,77,514/-	32700/-	Six Months	500/-
2	Providing Renovation to first floor in Government Senior Secondary School at Amboya, Tehsil Shillital, District Sirmour (SH:- Providing wiring and LED lights there in)	Rs. 5,85,183/-	12000/-	Six Months	350/-
3	C/o State Level Training Institute and District Ayurveda office Building at Tutikandi Shimla (SH:- Providing 1 No. 8 passenger elevator therefor).	Rs. 15,95,000/-	31500/-	One Year	500/-
4	C/o Rajiv Gandhi Multipurpose sports Stadium at Katasani District Shimla; H.P (SH:- Providing 1 No. 13 Passenger Electric Traction Elevator therein).	Rs. 25,02,578/-	45100/-	Six Months	500/-
5	C/o Govt. Degree College at Koti (SH:- Providing E.I therein).	Rs. 26,99,290/-	47989/-	One Year	1500/-

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htenders.gov.in>.

Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in ze-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://htenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:

1. Date of Online Publication	28/04/2021	5.00PM
2. Document Download Start and End Date	28/04/2021	5.30 PM 07/05/2021 5.00 PM
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	28/04/2021	5.30 PM 07/05/2021 5.00 PM
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document	09/05/2021	11.00 AM
5. Date of Technical Bid opening; Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	09/05/2021	11.30 AM

4. Tender details:

The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 1 Cover/2 Cover :

(I) Cover 1: Shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Document / Eligibility Information"

(II) Cover 2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer or each item.

5. Submission of original documents: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents in O/o Executive Engineer Electrical Division No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9 as specified in Key dates under Sr. No. 3 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. Bid opening details: The bids shall be opened on 09/05/2021 at 11:30 Hrs in the office Executive Engineer Electrical Division No-I, HPPWD Shimla-9 by the authorised officer. In their interest the tenderers are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders.

7. If it happens to be holiday on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue and no separate notice will be given in this regard.

8. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 90 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

9. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

10. The competent authority on behalf of Governor of H.P reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason.

11. Registration with HP Sales Tax is essential. If the bidder has not registered and found to be the lowest bidder he is supposed to register him on award of work. He shall submit the sales tax paper to the employer, before any payment is made to him.

Executive Engineer,
Electrical Div No-1,
HPPWD Shimla-9
(on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh)

0373/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Office of the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No.1, HPPWD, Shimla-9

Web:www.hppwd.gov.in E-mail: ee-eled1-hp@nic.in Phone/Fax No.0177-2621398

"Notice Inviting Tender"

Sealed percentage rate tenders on form No. 6 & 7 are invited by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No.1, HPPWD Shimla-9 for the following works on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved and eligible contractors enlisted in HPPWD Electrical, so as to reach in this office on or before 11/05/2021 up to 10.30 AM and will be opened on the same day at 11.30 AM in the presence of the intending contractors or their authorized representatives. The tender form can be had from this office against cash payment (Non-refundable) up to 01.00 PM on date 10/05/2021.

The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate/Time Deposit Account/Saving Account in any of the Post Office in HP duly pledged in favour of undersigned must accompany with each tender at the time of issue of tender form. Conditional tenders and the applications for tender received without earnest money will summarily be rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 90 days. The undersigned reserves the right to reject the tender without assigning any reason. It is further added that the rates are quoted both in words and figures for proper checking and to avoid any complications. No tender form will be issued to those contractors who are not registered under HPGST Act 1968. The contractors shall show their registration/renewal of enlistment to the undersigned before issue of tender forms. If the date of opening of will be holiday, the tender will be opened on the next working day at the same time.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Time	Cost of Tender
1	Annual Maintenance contract (AMC) of 1 No. passenger Elevators (Ottis make) installed in FRU Hospital Nalagarh, Tehsil Nalagarh Distt. Solan (H.P). Machine No. 52NU6102 (For three years w.e.f 2021-2023).	Rs. 3,41,476/-	6900/-	3 years	350/-
2	Annual Maintenance contract (AMC) of 1 No. Passenger Elevators (Johnson make) installed in Mini Secretariat at Solan (H.P) machine No. L- J6726 (For three years w.e.f 2020 to 2023).	Rs. 2,97,911/-	6000/-	One Year	350/-
3	Providing One Number Driver for Swift Dzire HP52-B-0428 allotted to Superintending Engineer Electrical Circle HPPWD Shimla-9 Form 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2022.	Rs. 1,94,340/-	3900/-	One Year	350/-
4	Providing One Number Driver for Bolero Driver for Bolero car vehicle No. HP 18A 8228 under Assistant Engineer HPPWD Elect. Sub Div. Nahan/Solan (SH:- Providing services Driver w.e.f 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2022).	Rs. 1,94,340/-	3900/-	One Year	350/-
5	Providing One Number Driver for Bolero camper car Vehicle No. HP 18A 8228 under Assistant Engineer HPPWD Elect. Sub Div. Nahan/Solan (SH:- Providing services Driver w.e.f 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2022).	Rs. 1,94,340/-	3900/-	One Year	350/-
6	Providing One Number Driver for 800 car Vehicle No. HP 51- 2529 under Assistant Engineer HPPWD Elect. Sub Div. Vidhan Sabha (SH:- Providing services Driver w.e.f 01-04-2021 to 31-03-2022).	Rs. 1,94,340/-	3900/-	One Year	350/-
7	Providing & Installation of 5 KVA UPS for S.E. 4th Circle, HPPWD at Winter field Shimla.	Rs. 1,80,000/-	3600	Three Months	350/-
8	C/O Multi Storey Parking & Office accommodation at Secretariat Armsdale, Phase-III, Shimla (SH:- Providing E- Communication server therein).	Rs. 4,65,000/-	9300/-	Three Months	350/-
9	Providing special repair to E.I and replacement of old light fixture with energy efficient LED lights in Kothi No. 1 F/F, Kothi No. 2 G/F/F, Cottage-12,17,4,10,11,16,18, Type-IV set No. Brockhurst, Belowpine set No. 4,37, at Brockhurst Shimla-2.	Rs. 1,91,021/-	3800/-	Six Months	350/-
10	Providing 2 No. Passenger Elevators in Ellerslie in Building at HP Secretariat Shimla-2 (SH:- Providing E.I therein).	Rs. 2,74,468/-	5500/-	Six Months	350/-
11	C/O Additional three rooms with verandah at GSSS (Boys) (SH:- C/O three No. Class rooms with verandah and stairs at Nahan, Dist. Sirmour (H.P) SH:- Providing E.I thereof).	Rs. 2,14,298/-	4300/-	One Year	350/-
12	C/O Additional two rooms with verandah at GSSS Birla, Tehsil Nahan Distt. Sirmour (H.P) (SH:- C/O 2 No. class rooms with verandah & staircase) (SH:- Providing E.I thereof).	Rs. 1,19,081/-	2400/-	One Year	350/-
13	Rewiring at HPPWD sub Division Renuka Ji, Tehsil Sanghar, Dist. Sirmour (H.P).	Rs. 1,63,418/-	3300/-	Three Months	350/-
14	C/O Type-I (2 No. set) for the Fisheries Dept. at Poanta Sahib, Dist. Sirmour (H.P) (SH:- C/O 2 No. type-I residential quarters at Ground & First Floor) (SH:- Providing E.I thereof).	Rs. 1,84,141/-	3700/-	One year	350/-
15	Providing & replacement of conventional fittings with energy saving LED fitting in Administrative Block at HP Vidhan Sabha Shimla-4 (SH:- Replacement of Street Light, Shifting of Barrier Arm & Special Repair/ Additional Alteration to E.I therein).	Rs. 3,91,114/-	7900/-	Three Months	350/-
16	Renovation of Police Gully and main gate at HP Vidhan Sabha Shimla-4 (SH:- Replacement of Street Light, Shifting of Barrier Arm & Special Repair/ Additional Alteration to E.I therein).	Rs. 1,25,822/-	2500/-	Three Months	350/-
17	Providing rewiring new LED fittings & replacement of old damaged cables, main switches in the HPPWD Mechanical workshop at Tara Devi Shimla.	Rs. 2,21,931/-	4500/-	Three Months	350/-
18	Providing additional alteration to E.I replacement of conventional fittings with energy saving LED fittings in Bithia Bhu Bhawan Block at HP Vidhan Sabha Shimla-4.	Rs. 1,63,402/-	3300/-	Three Months	350/-
19	Providing special Repair/Additional Alteration to E.I in various Type I,I, II, III, V sets at Nabha & old MLA Quarter Shimla.	Rs. 1,34,366/-	2700/-	Three Months	350/-
20	Providing LAN cabling and Electrical Panel in Distt. Treasury Office Shimla-1.	Rs. 1,85,832/-	3700/-	Three Months	350/-
21	Providing and installing energy saving LED lights in place of old/outdated CFL fittings in Third, Fourth & Fifth Floor of Planning Department at Yojna Bhawan building Shimla-2.	Rs. 1,60,680/-	3300/-	Three Months	350/-
22	C/O Veterinary Hospital building at Parara, Tehsil Nahan District Sirmour (H.P) (SH:- Providing Electrical installation thereof).	Rs. 4,44,168/-	8900/-	Six Months	350/-

Note:-i) Copy of latest Enlistment/renewal and sale tax Clearance Certificate from the excise and taxation department and copy of PAN be submitted along with application.

Executive Engineer
Electrical Division No-I
HPPWD Shimla-17109
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

B'lore Metro Rail Project

PTI
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

The Centre on Tuesday
approved the 58.19-km Bang-

alore Metro Rail Project phases 2A (between Central Silk Board Junction and K R Puram) and 2B (between K

R Puram & airport via Hebbal Junction), Union minister Piyush Goyal said.

TENDER

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ENGINEERING SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR
HOWRAH - 711103
(An Institute of National Importance
under MHRD, Govt. of India)

DEPARTMENT OF CIVIL
ENGINEERING
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF
ENGINEERING SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY, SHIBPUR
HOWRAH - 711103
(An Institute of National Importance
under MHRD, Govt. of India)

Date: 16.04.2021
Advt. No. CGE 1670

RE-TENDER OF E-PROCUREMENT

Quotations are invited for
Research Centrifuge, Peristaltic Pump, Hotplate Magnetic Stirrer, Ultra Sound Bath Sonicator (1 nos each) for DST-WB(STB) Project at the Department of Civil Engineering. For details please visit Institute website: [www](http://www.iests.ac.in)

US, China & Climate

On the eve of the international conference on climate change, quite the most reassuring development must be that the USA and China have agreed to cooperate on the seemingly intractable issue of climate change. The pledge, which hopefully will influence the negotiations at the high table, comes after several meetings between China's climate envoy, Xie Zhenhua, and his US counterpart, John Kerry, in Shanghai last week. Days ahead of the jaw-jaw, the two agreed on further specific actions to reduce emissions, a joint statement has confirmed. "The United States and China are committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency that it demands," the statement said. Both nations have been forthright in spelling out the objectives, but it will be unfortunate if a consensus eludes the developed and the developing blocs yet again. The conference has been convened by President Joe Biden, but it is as yet uncertain whether his counterpart, President Xi Jinping, will be in attendance.

Is China set for a 'great leap' on climate change? Suffice it to register that both nations will continue to discuss "concrete actions in the 2020s to reduce emissions aimed at keeping the Paris agreement-aligned temperature limit within reach". Both nations have also agreed to help developing countries finance a switch to low-carbon energy. Fairly positive is the joint statement. "It sends a very unequivocal message that on this particular issue ~ both China and the United States will cooperate. Before the meetings in Shanghai this was not a message that we could assume," was the faint optimism expressed by Li Shuo, senior climate adviser for the environmental group, Greenpeace.

The joint statement ~ issued symbolically at a round table ~ will be greeted with a sense of relief by any country concerned about the planet to which the world belongs. Very pertinently has it been remarked that "it simply won't be possible to stabilise climate change unless the superpower super-polluters, so-called, pull much harder." According to a recent report, China must close down 588 coal-fired power plants to meet its climate pledges.

There is no such signal of intent in the US-China joint statement, however. In point of fact, China's regional governors have been building even more coal plants to stimulate the economy. One major outcome of the US-China meeting is the acknowledgement that the flow of finance should be channelled to low-carbon ~ and not high carbon ~ projects. Both sides have also promised to reduce their own emissions further. For all that, climate is an issue that all other nations need to tackle... and not just the superpowers. The US-China forward movement must be sustained.

Change in Havana

Raul Castro's decision to retire as head of the Cuban Communist Party marks the end of an era. It ends his family's six decades in power, in itself testament to the profound influence of the Castro clan since the revolution of 1959 and the decades that followed. The nation is now headed for what they call a generational shift, almost inevitable with the march of time. Raul expects the next generation at the helm of the Communist Party to be "full of passion and anti-imperialist spirit", going by his presentation at the party congress. At the ripe age of 89, the brother of the legendary Fidel Castro announced that he is handing over the leadership to a younger generation, recalling Jyoti Basu's statement as Chief Minister, also when 89 ~ "Let the younger lot take over." Raul told party delegates in Havana over the weekend, "I believe fervently in the strength and exemplary nature and comprehension of my compatriots." The move is not wholly unexpected; it is historic and symbolic nonetheless. Such pregnant symbolisms have shaped a welter of events in history and Cuba in the 21st century.

Although Raul has not endorsed a successor, it is widely believed the party leadership will pass to Miguel Diaz-Canel, who took over as President in 2018. Diaz-Canel may well succeed him now as the party's first secretary, too. It seems likely he will be forced to take further steps to liberalise Cuba's centrally controlled economy. The island is currently in the grip of its worst economic crisis since the period immediately following the end of the Cold War. And this will be the forbidding challenge as Cuba gears up for the next phase. Small wonder that "private farmers" were recently permitted to sell beef and dairy products, indeed commodities that previously were under the sole control of the State. The reality is that, at least in the short term, little might change.

Any hope of improving ties with the United States of America may have to wait, however. Not the least because the Biden administration has shown little or no inclination to discontinue the Trump administration's harsh sanctions on Cuba at this stage when the country has reached a turning point and America bears witness to almost a watershed change of guard.

Arguably, Raúl Castro's words of keeping "one foot in the stirrup" means he will remain a power-broker, if behind the scenes. And by reiterating the country's eternal commitment to socialism, political change remains as unlikely under his successor as it was under his late brother, Fidel. As leader, Raúl maintained the Communists' one-party grip on power. He can be credited with an improvement in relations with the United States between 2014 and 2016, pre-eminently the historic talks with President Barack Obama in 2016. As Cuba shifts from the family paradigm, the change of guard in Havana will be no less profound.

Realpolitik at Play?

The subtle message conveyed in the USS John Paul Jones incident was that the US now considers India as a rival. Obviously, a re-calibration of India's foreign policy is required; after abandoning its special relationship with Russia, India has to re-think its strategy



A statement by the US Seventh Fleet Commander that the destroyer USS John Paul Jones had asserted its navigational rights and freedoms by sailing 130 nautical miles west of the Lakshadweep Islands, inside India's exclusive economic zone, without requesting India's prior consent, created headlines the world over. For good measure the statement added: "This Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) upheld the rights, freedoms, and lawful uses of the sea recognized in international law by challenging India's excessive maritime claims... We conduct routine and regular Freedom of Navigation Operations, as we have done in the past and will continue to do in the future. FONOPS are not about one country, nor are they about making political statements."

A weak protest by the Ministry of External Affairs was brushed aside by the Pentagon spokesperson, John Kirby, who confirmed the USS John Paul Jones' incursion into India's exclusive economic zone. Justifying the transgression, Kirby added: "Again, we continue to maintain the right, indeed the responsibility, to fly, sail, and operate in accordance with international law."

Understandably, the Indian Government has downplayed this incident but experts are hard put to explain the reason behind the belligerence of the US ~ sailing a warship in a friendly country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and later publicising and justifying the incursion.

Taking a purely legalistic view, Article 58 of the United Nations Convention on Laws of Sea (UNCLOS) authorises coastal states to make laws regarding its EEZ. India has enacted the Territorial Waters, Continental Shelf, Exclusive Economic Zone and Other Maritime Zones Act, 1976, according to which, "all foreign ships (other than warships including submarines and other underwater vehicles) shall enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial waters." However, the US has not ratified UNCLOS and has proposed an alternative theory of "rules-based international order."

The US Department of Defense releases a Freedom of Navigation (FON) Report annually, identifying the broad range of excessive maritime claims that were challenged by the US Gov-

ernment, by intrusion of its warships. FON Reports of recent years indicate that the US had often challenged India's EEZ claims in the past also, but a public statement of this kind was never made earlier.

The Ministry of External Affairs' response to the Seventh Fleet Commander's statement indicates that the Indian Navy was closely following the passage of the USS John Paul Jones through Indian waters. However, later developments caught the Government of India off-guard, which never expected its recent ally to thumb its nose at us.

For the record, along with Japan and Australia both India and the US are members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) since 2007. The importance of Quad for the US can be gauged from the fact that President Biden hosted a virtual summit of the Quad on 12 March, soon after his inauguration.

Later on, navies of France and Quad countries conducted the sophisticated La Pérouse multilateral naval exercise in the eastern Indian Ocean between 5 and 7 April ~ the time when the USS John Paul Jones was sneaking into the Indian EEZ.

Moreover, only recently the US special presidential envoy for climate, John Kerry, and the US Secretary of Defence Lloyd J Austin had visited India where, amongst other platitudes, Austin had reiterated a "commitment towards strengthening the bilateral defence relations between the two countries."

China reacted with undisguised glee at India's discomfiture. Accusing India of being a hegemon in the Indian Ocean, a news item in Global Times, alleged that of late, India had become tolerant towards US Naval operations only to cope with China's rise. The article concluded that "India needs to re-evaluate its ties with the US, have a clearer awareness of this country (US) and avoid any illusion toward this country (US)." Sputnik International, a Russian State newspaper, took a dig at India by reproducing a highly objectionable

sequence of events, seen in the perspective of the Seventh Fleet's fleeting visit to the Bay of Bengal in December 1971, in the aftermath of Indo-Pak hostilities, when the US Navy had to beat an ignominious retreat after protests from India and the erstwhile USSR, probably apprised the US of the current state of Indo-Russian relations, emboldening it to embark on the USS John Paul Jones misadventure.

At the same time, it's also clear that Covid cases can't be allowed to grow at the current pace. The healthcare infrastructure is again stretched in several states and cities with hospital beds and oxygen supply reaching dicey. In such a scenario, the minimum that authorities must do is to prevent potential super spreader events at all costs. This is why the ongoing Kumbh Mela and the Bengal assembly polls must be seen in the context of the current extraordinary circumstances.

It is welcome that after PM Modi's call for observing the Kumbh symbolically

tweet by Subramanian Swamy implying that India was now neither fish nor fowl ~ neither with Russia nor with the US.

Charitably interpreted, the USS John Paul Jones incident is a warning to China that the US would mount Freedom of Navigation Operations against all countries ~ friend or foe. The message to the world at large is that the US has the might to enforce its hegemony on the entire world. Coincidentally, or otherwise, the Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov flew directly to Islamabad from Delhi, after staying in Delhi for less than 24 hours. While in Delhi on 6 April, Lavrov met his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar but not Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was campaigning in West Bengal.

In stark contrast to his reception in India, in Pakistan Lavrov was received personally at the airport by Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi. Later on, Lavrov met Prime Minister Imran Khan and Army Chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa. During the visit, Lavrov expressed Russia's readiness to supply special military equipment to Pakistan, to strengthen its counter-terrorism capabilities. This sequence of events, seen in the perspective of the Seventh Fleet's fleeting visit to the Bay of Bengal in December 1971, in the aftermath of Indo-Pak hostilities, when the US Navy had to beat an ignominious retreat after protests from India and the erstwhile USSR, probably apprised the US of the current state of Indo-Russian relations, emboldening it to embark on the USS John Paul Jones misadventure.

Meanwhile, last month the US held a high-level meeting with China in Anchorage (Alaska) where the US was represented by Secretary of State Antony Blinken and National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and China by Chinese Communist Party Politburo Member Yang Jiechi and State Councillor Wang Yi. Notably, the Chinese refused to be cowed down by US posturing, reiterating inter alia their rejection of the US Freedom of Navigation doc-

rine. In what may be a development related to current events, after speedily completing withdrawal of its troops from Pangong Tso in East Ladakh, China seems to be dragging its feet on moving back from Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang.

Despite sweet words, the Biden administration has not proved any better for India than the Trump Presidency. The US has threatened to levy additional tariffs up to 25 per cent on around 40 Indian products including shrimps, basmati rice, gold and silver items in retaliation against the Equalisation Levy or Digital Services Tax, imposed by India on non-resident e-commerce operators. To attract investment in manufacturing, India had lowered the income-tax rate to 15 per cent for newly established manufacturing companies. This concession would be neutralised, once the Biden Administration operationalises its new US income tax regime whereby American MNCs would have to pay additional US tax, if they are not paying at least 28 per cent income tax abroad.

The subtle message conveyed in the USS John Paul Jones incident was that the US now considers India as a rival. Obviously, a re-calibration of India's foreign policy is required; after abandoning its special relationship with Russia, India has to re-think its strategy. We may start by normalising our relations with arch-enemy Pakistan, even at some cost to ourselves. Differences with Pakistan enable other countries to hyphenate India and Pakistan. Our Government willingly plays along in this game, because we can get the better of Pakistan in every field, which is applauded by the domestic audience. We should avoid devaluing our position unnecessarily, that is now on par with that of great powers like China, Russia and the US.

Finally, we have to avoid putting all our eggs in one basket by getting too closely aligned to the US, because the US has a history of ditching all friends, except their proxies, UK and Israel. We should not blindly trust a country whose foreign policy has been summarised by its foreign policy architect, the former Secretary of State and National Security Adviser, Henry Kissinger, in the following words: "America has no permanent friends or enemies, only interests."

Yours, etc., Khokan Das, Kolkata, 19 April.

UNCERTAINTY

SIR, The tweet of the Ministry of Health on 18 April has shocked me greatly. The MoH tweeted: "The claims under PMGKP will be settled by the Insurance Company till 24th of April 2021. Thereafter a new dispensation will be provided to cover the Corona Warriors, for which the Ministry is in talks with the Insurance Company (New India Assurance)." It clearly signifies that extension of existing coverage/package or a new package for Corona warriors is subject to further consideration and approval by the government of India. This will force dedicated Covid warriors and their families to face tremendous psychological pressure and helplessness. On his return to Delhi from West Bengal, the Prime Minister should seek an am from the MoH and reassure all Covid fighters.

Yours, etc., Indran Guha, Kolkata, 19 April.

A MEMBER OF THE

ANN
ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES
Shadow government wants seat at ASEAN crisis talks

Myanmar's shadow government on Sunday urged Southeast Asian leaders to give it a seat at the table during crisis talks this week, and not to recognise the military regime that seized power in a February coup. The army has moved to quell mass protests against its rule, killing at least 730 people according to a local monitoring group.

Min Aung Hlaing's invitation to the meeting of the 10-country Association of Southeast Asian Nations has drawn scorn from activists who have urged foreign leaders not to formally recognise the junta. Moe Zaw Oo, deputy minister of foreign affairs for the parallel "national unity government" ~ formed Friday by ousted lawmakers mostly from Suu Kyi's party, as well as ethnic-minority politicians -- said ASEAN had not reached out to them.

"If ASEAN wants to help solve the Myanmar situation, they are not going to achieve anything without consulting and negotiating with the NUG, which is supported by the people and has full legitimacy," he told Voice of America's Burmese service. "It's important that this military council is not recognised. This needs to be handled carefully."

Meanwhile, the junta continued targeting the media on Sunday, arresting Japanese freelance reporter Yuki Kitazumi. He was arrested at his home in Yangon on Sunday evening, his assistant said in a message.

In February, he was beaten up and briefly detained during a crackdown on protesters but was later released.

The number of reporters arrested so far has totalled more than 65 and at least 34 remain in custody, according to monitoring group Reporting ASEAN.

Authorities announced Sunday night on state-run television 20 more celebrities and 20 more doctors would be added to their arrest warrant list of 420 prominent people.

Earlier unrest continued across the country on Sunday, with protesters rallying in Mandalay, Meiktila, Magway and Myingyan, showing support for the national unity government.

At Palau in the country's south, demonstrators brandished banners that read: "Military dictators should not be allowed to rule. The dictatorship will be uprooted."

Support the national unity government." Young demonstrators also staged motorbike rallies while carrying flags in Hpakant and Sagaing.

The previous night, there were violent clashes in the central gem-producing city of Mogok when security forces cracked down on protesters.

According to an AFP-verified video filmed by a resident, soldiers crouched on a street as their commanding officer shouted that he wanted "deaths". The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners (AAP) verified two deaths at Mogok.

Much of Myanmar remains under a curfew imposed shortly after the coup, running from 8 pm to 4 am every night.

Late Saturday, a young man was shot and killed in Kyaukme town in northern Shan state while riding his motorbike during the curfew.

Extraordinary times

SIR, Please refer to your report 'Kumbh Mela: PM seeks curtailment' (18 April). With India's Covid case-load reaching alarming proportions ~ daily cases have hit the 2.6 lakh mark with the number of daily deaths reaching 1,493 ~ there is an urgent need to strike a balance between pandemic mitigation efforts and public activities.

While restrictions on movement and businesses are already in place across districts and cities in the country, a return to the hard lockdown of last year would be disastrous for the economy. The country can ill afford another economic blow, especially since it has barely recovered from the

previous one. At the same time, it's also clear that Covid cases can't be allowed to grow at the current pace. The healthcare infrastructure is again stretched in several states and cities with hospital beds and oxygen supply reaching dicey. In such a scenario, the minimum that authorities must do is to prevent potential super spreader events at all costs. This is why the ongoing Kumbh Mela and the Bengal assembly polls must be seen in the context of the current extraordinary circumstances.

It is welcome that after PM Modi's call for observing the Kumbh symbolically

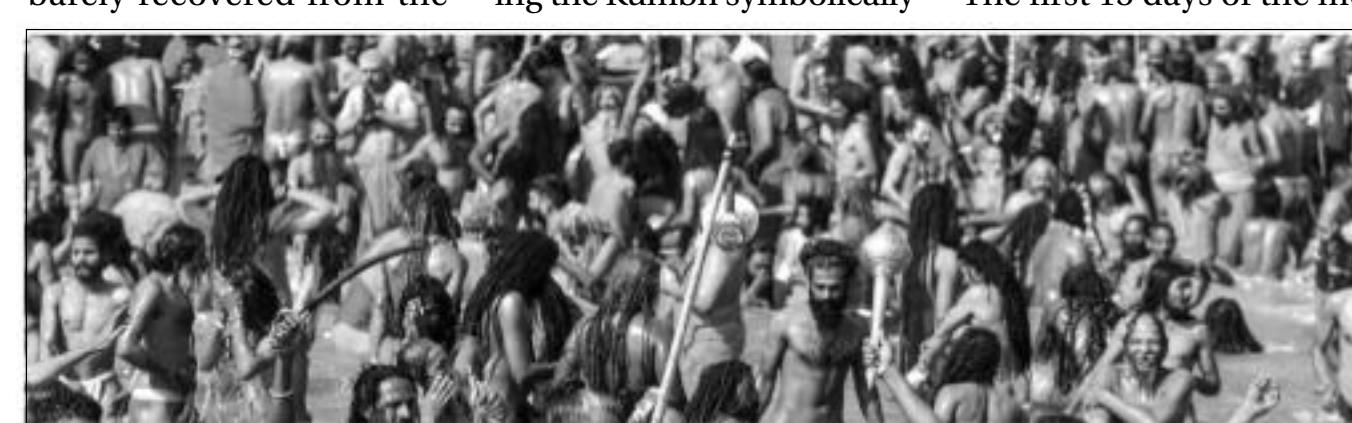
from here on, the Juna akhada ~ the largest of the 13 sects of seers in the country ~ decided to pull out of the religious festival. With lakhs thronging to Haridwar, 1,700 tested Covid positive last week with Mahanirvan akhada's head even dying from the disease. And with devotees going back to their home states after a dip in the Ganga, there is a serious risk they will become Covid carriers to interior hamlets of the country. Thus, curtailing the Kumbh and saving lives of devotees must become a priority.

Similarly, the long-drawn Bengal election is proving to be another Covid unsafe event with political parties holding large rallies with few safety protocols. The first 15 days of the monsoon have already seen new Covid cases in the state rise to 49,970 with 151 fatalities. Although the Election Commission has rejected the proposal of clubbing the remaining three phases of the election, saying such a move will be unfair to candidates in these rounds, the proposal needs to be re-examined. After all, a majority of the seats have already finished polling while many in the remaining three phases are located in urban areas like Kolkata. Hence, conducting these phases in one shot is both possible and preferable to temporary curbs like restricting campaigning between 7 to 10 pm. Again, these are extraordinary circumstances that demand authorities and the public adapt to the new normal. Nonetheless, it's heartening that Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has restricted her election rallies in Kolkata while Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has cancelled his poll campaigns in Bengal in view of the Covid surge. It's time other political parties think about the conse-

quences of holding big public rallies.

TREES WE LOST
SIR, On May 20 last year, West Bengal was devastated by a terrific typhoon named Amphan. Kolkata was also battered by this storm. The then Mayor of Kolkata said the city had lost more than 10,000 trees on that fateful day. He also pledged to replant all the trees that the city lost on that day. Yes, the KMC planted small saplings. But sadly 90 per cent of these plants did not survive more than a month. I am a resident of ward 72 in Bhowanipore. Here trees more than 100 years old and also others got uprooted. The new ones that were planted didn't survive due to lack of care. Through the columns of your esteemed daily I appeal to the citizens of our beloved city to come forward and plant trees and take care of them till they grow to a minimum height. By this act we can truly make Kolkata a city of joy.

Yours, etc., Susanta Ranjan Das, Kolkata, 18 April.



BHARAT DOGRA

Can dangers from floods and fire increase at about the same time? This unlikely question is being asked in the context of the recent experiences of Uttarakhand.

In February, this year destructive floods were reported from some parts of Uttarakhand which attracted attention all over the country for several days as many people lost their lives and several others were trapped.

However, what is not so well known is that during the just ended winter, Uttarakhand also established a record of sorts for the maximum number of forest fires reported in a winter season. According to recently published official data, Uttarakhand recorded 470 incidents of forest fires from November 2020 to March 2021, while the number of forest fires during approximately the same period in the previous year was 39. Some sources maintain that the number of forest fires this season has been even higher than reported.

Floods are generally a monsoon phenomenon and forest fires are reported mostly in summer months. The first three months of the winter are known normally to be relatively milder and quieter in the lower and middle Himalayan region. But such destructive floods and many forest fires during this quiet season this year appear to indicate a deteriorating situation in times of climate change aggravated by policy mistakes, which together are pushing the people of the Himalayan region towards more disasters.

The increase in the threat from floods has been linked time and again to indiscriminate tree-felling for many projects and excessive dam construction activity in recent years. But this is set to further increase greatly even in hitherto untouched areas like the Lahaul-Spiti region of Himachal Pradesh. This is also being linked to impending disruption of livelihoods and displacement. Meanwhile the people displaced by the Pong project several years ago have still not been rehabilitated properly. Such problems are more in areas where a chain of dams is being constructed or has been constructed as the combined impact of displacement and in terms of less visible and longer-term factors like RIS (reservoir-induced seismicity) may be much higher. A study by Prof. Shivani Abrol in the context of Chamba region of Himachal Pradesh says: "Large-scale execution of hydropower projects has wreaked havoc on hill districts' environment, and has brought it to the verge of ecological disaster as the flow of major rivers is being diverted into tunnels leaving the original bed dry." In fact, the entire ecology and even geography of ecologically sensitive regions may be changed entirely within a few

Increasing pressure on hill communities



100 YEARS AGO

Occasional Note

That Calcutta is making some progress towards overtaking the arrears of house-building which accumulated during the years of the war is evident to anyone who notes the number of new blocks of flats now under construction. "The number of new buildings now being erected in Calcutta is unprecedented." This statement occurs in the speech which Mr. C.F. Payne, once more Chairman of the Corporation, delivered at Tuesday's meeting. At the same time, as Mr. Payne said, the demand for accommodation is enormous. It does not appear that the new building now going on, unprecedented as it is in amount, will do more than partially relieve the existing congestion. It is common knowledge that large blocks of flats have all been taken in advance by prospective tenants even before their construction was commenced. One effect of the growth of accommodation is to increase the demand on the city's water supply; and the Chairman warned the Corporation that the difficulties already experienced both with regard to the filtered and the unfiltered supplies will become steadily worse until the quantity of water available is substantially increased. In the Chairman's opinion, "the pace at which the demand for water has exceeded the supply, which is already alarming enough, is going to be accelerated." There is no time to spare, therefore, in getting on with the work to which the Corporation has already set its hand.

News Items

DISTURBANCE AT CHOOLI

A serious disturbance occurred at Chooli yesterday necessitating the summoning of reserve police. On Monday last, it is understood, Mahomedans in large numbers waylaid a batch of Panchama coolies returning to work after their midday meal. The Mahomedans overpowered the coolies and Ponnuwamy, an employee in the Buckingham Mills, was seriously injured. He was removed to the General Hospital but died after an operation yesterday. The Panchamas went to fetch the dead body when they were again attacked by the Mahomedans, with the result that a free fight ensued. Mr. A.J. Happell, Deputy Commissioner, and Inspector Hakinson arrived on the scene with the Reserve City Police and after talking to the leaders on both sides brought the disturbance to an end.

BOMBAY'S WHITE ELEPHANT

Bombay has at present a white elephant in the Prince of Wales Museum. The foundation stone was laid by the present King when he came to India as Prince of Wales in 1905. It was completed during the war and since then it has been used successively as a hospital, as a military records office, and as a hostel. The trustees have now discovered that it is not large enough for a museum and as it has a site of six and a half acres they propose to make extensive additions, borrowing the money a eight per cent. They propose to pay for the additions and put themselves a little in pocket by letting out three-fifths of the additional buildings for offices and business premises.

TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FOR JAMSHEDPUR

It is understood that the subject to be considered at the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Transferred Subjects will be in connection with the Technical Institute at Jamshedpur. The Government had for some time under consideration the question of having a technical school at Jamshedpur and the Industrial Commission also favoured the establishment of a metallurgical research institute there. A rough scheme for the establishment of a technical school was prepared by Mr. Jenkins, and submitted to the Industrial Commission, and the more detailed scheme was prepared by Mr. Walford. This scheme was considered by the Jamshedpur Committee of which Sir Alfred Chaterton is a member. The authorities of the Tata Iron and Steel Company, after discussion, agreed that an Institute should be started by the company.

CHARGE AGAINST ASSAM TEA PLANTER

At the High Court before Mr. Justice Newbould, Mr. Pankridge applied for bail on behalf of Mr. H.W.L. Reed, the accused in what is known as the Khoreal Shooting Case. Mr. Reed, who is an Assam tea planter, was tried by the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar on a charge of causing grievous hurt to a coolie named Gangadhar Goalal, by firing a revolver. The complainant moved the High Court and their lordships directed Mr. Reed to be retried at the High Court Sessions. Mr. Reed appeared before the Deputy Commissioner of Cachar when he was arrested, and was remanded to custody, bail refused. His lordship directed Mr. Reed to be released on bail, on furnishing two sureties of Rs 2,000 each.

Spring thaw in bilateral ties?

HUMA YUSUF

With spring comes thaw. Recent tentative steps towards improving India-Pakistan relations are welcome. It has been two months since the ceasefire announcement, and several weeks since the Indus Water Commission met. Confirmation of the UAE's mediating role implies that the process has legs. This should be a relief for our conflict-prone region.

Against the backdrop of worsening US-China relations, the India-Pakistan rivalry seemed on track to deepen. China sees strategic value to CPEC, and the initiative, despite recent setbacks, is set to be Pakistan's economic backbone. India and the US, meanwhile, are enjoying unprecedentedly close bilateral relations, fuelled further by New Delhi's membership of the Quad — the strategic partnership between the US, India, Japan and Australia, with an eye to countering Chinese influence. Add to that the prolonged military stand-off between India and China following clashes in the Galwan Valley last June, and the recent detente seems even more unexpected.

There are some who argue an India-Pakistan puppet show in the context of broader US-China tensions is, perversely, a route to stability. The



argument is that the two powers have too much at stake to risk a proxy war, and that Beijing and Washington would apply pressure as needed on Islamabad and New Delhi, respectively, to prevent conflicts from escalating. But for neighbours who share borders and harbour nuclear arsenals, it's more complicated.

Our increasingly multipolar world offers new opportunities for Pakistan and India to engage in dialogue and strengthen economic ties. It makes sense that the UAE has bro-

kered the latest round of backchannel engagement. Gulf states are pursuing parallel engagement policies with Pakistan and India with less qualms than the US, for example, which has taken a zero-sum approach to balancing ties. Other countries such as Russia are also pursuing strategies of simultaneous engagement, driven by areas of mutual interest, and proportionate to Pakistan's and India's economies and strategic priorities. Over time, this will mean that there are more international

actors invested in, and empowered to, bring Islamabad and New Delhi to the negotiating table.

News of the US's imminent withdrawal from Afghanistan also means that Pakistan's western border will — and should — be Islamabad's priority. Much has already been written about the likely spillover effect of a return to power for the Afghan Taliban, including the potential resurgence of the Pakistan Taliban. Pakistan does not need this scenario to become more precarious with a hostile Indian military or strategic presence ramping up in Afghanistan and fuelling a regional proxy war. Better ties between Pakistan and India will hopefully create more opportunities for collaboration, resulting in a better outcome for the Afghans and the region.

Similarly, geopolitical developments with regard to Iran including US efforts to revive the 2015 nuclear deal, can be reframed as another opportunity to incentivise normalisation of India-Pakistan ties. Iran is one subject on which Pakistan finds itself at odds with its Gulf allies because of domestic security and economic concerns, particularly fears of sectarian conflict. India for its part sees Iran as a key economic partner. To date, Iran's role in the India-Pakistan dynamic has only accelerated the rivalry, especially with Chabahar being pitted as an alternative to Gwadar. But both countries' interests in better economic ties with West and Central Asia should be cast as another

opportunity for regional integration.

Pakistan's new geo-economic push cannot work without stable ties with India, as hinted at by both Prime Minister Imran Khan and army chief Gen Qamar Bajwa. A 2018 World Bank study estimated that the two countries are missing out on \$37 billion in trade due to tariffs and non-existent connectivity infrastructure. Pakistan's aspirations of being a connectivity hub also make more sense if it can serve as a conduit for Indian goods into Central Asia and Europe.

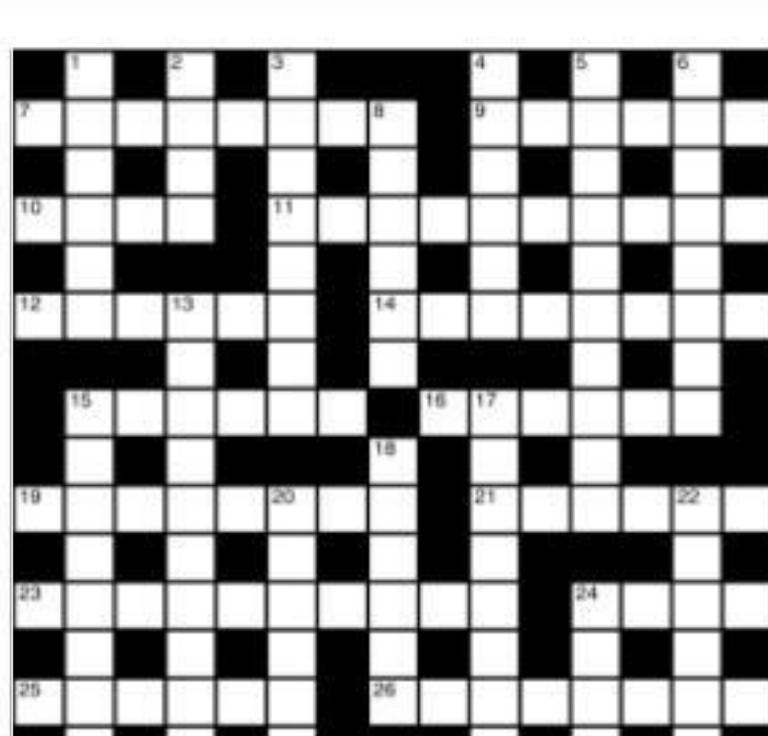
Recent baby steps acknowledge this, but may yet be quashed by big challenges. The key issue is Kashmir. New Delhi is unlikely to change its post-Article 370 stance, while Pakistan will, at minimum, continue to call for demilitarisation, provisions for self-governance and some redressal of human rights violations. As these entrenched differences resurface, India's historic reluctance for third-party involvement will also kick in, limiting the extent to which the growing number of interested international actors can sway outcomes.

The 21st century's greatest challenges have no interest in borders or petty politicking. Pandemics, climate change, water scarcity and food insecurity can only be tackled collaboratively. Perhaps this new truth will add fresh impetus to Islamabad's and New Delhi's latest engagement.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28890

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 9 Second secretary with oil magnate picked up dish (9)
- 10 The type that regularly gobbles 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
- 23 revolutionary Japanese ware (7)
- 24 Toddler munches a small piece of brown bread (5)
- 25 Canal complaint? It is on record (9)
- 26 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 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)



India can scale up Covid-19 vaccination by adopting streamlined approach using technology

NANDAN NILEKANI
INFOSYS CO-FOUNDER

THUMBNAILS

Hero MotoCorp to stop operations temporarily: The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp on Tuesday said it is temporarily stopping operations at all its manufacturing facilities across the country, including its Global Parts Center (GPC), in the wake of a surge in Covid-19 cases across India. The company has six manufacturing units located at Dharuhera and Gurugram, Haryana; Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh; Hardiwar in Uttarakhand; Neemrana in Rajasthan, and Halol in Gujarat with a total yearly production capacity of 90 lakh units, as per its annual report. The Global Parts Center (GPC) is located at Neemrana. "Each plant and GPC will remain shut for four days, in a staggered manner between 22 April and 1 May basis the local scenario," Hero MotoCorp said in a statement. PTI

Bajaj Auto: Bajaj Auto has launched the new Pulsar NS 125 in India. The new Pulsar NS 125 is an addition to the Pulsar "NS" range of motorcycles which is the most popular sports motorcycle brand in the country, the company said in a Press statement. Targeted at young enthusiasts, the Pulsar NS 125 is power-packed with performance and multiple class leading features, the statement added. SNS

MFine Pulse: Digital health startup MFine has launched MFine Pulse, an app based SPO2 (blood oxygen saturation) monitoring tool which enables users to keep track of their oxygen saturation levels without needing an additional device, according to a Press release. Using the power of smart-phones and AI, MFine Pulse helps users measure oxygen saturation using the phone camera and flash, it said. SNS

Cashfree-Dukaan pact: Digital payments company Cashfree has partnered with Dukaan to enable digital payment solutions for merchants across 3200 cities and towns, said a Press release issued jointly by the companies. This partnership aims to help over 3 million merchants across tier 2 and 3 cities and towns sell online, the release added. SNS

Book launch: Leading psephologist and CMD of Axis My India, Pradeep Gupta, on Tuesday announced the launch of his new book "How India Votes: And What It Means". The book chronicles the nature of Indian elections and demystifies how and why Indians choose their political leaders by unravelling rich truths basis field interviews and analysis, said a Press release. SNS

Tea industry plea: The tea industry has urged finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman to facilitate setting up of ATMs across gardens to facilitate payments to the workers, an industry source said on Tuesday. PTI

Govt to provide ₹4,500-cr as advance to vaccine makers

Serum Institute of India will get ₹3,000 crore as advance and Bharat Biotech about ₹1,500 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL



facturers and this approval does not require vetting by the Cabinet.

"I think the finance minister has approved and this is part of her powers to approve these funds because it is in the form of credit line, and will be backed with the adequate supplies of vaccines to support the government procurement and vaccination programme of the government of India," he said.

Earlier this month, SII CEO Adar Poonawalla had said that the company would require around Rs 3,000 crore to ramp up production capacity for making vaccines for Covid-19.

The decision to provide credit line was hailed by SII. "On behalf of the vaccine

industry in India, I would like to thank and applaud Shri @narendramodi ji, @nsitharaman ji, for your decisive policy changes and swift financial aid which will help vaccine production and distribution in India," Poonawalla said in a tweet today.

Meanwhile, the government on Monday allowed citizens over the age of 18 years to receive Covid-19 vaccination from 1 May as it seeks to control the rapid spread of the virus.

Under the third phase of its vaccination strategy, manufacturers will be required to supply 50 per cent of their monthly doses to the government and the rest to state governments or the open market.

Centre may waive customs duty on imported vaccines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

ones made by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech.

"A customs duty waiver is being considered," a source aware of the matter said. Another source said a decision is likely to be made "very soon." As and when, foreign vaccine manufacturers approach the government with a formal proposal for allowing import of vaccine, the waiver would be given, government sources explained. No proposal has been made so far, finance ministry sources added.

The government is likely to waive 10 per cent customs duty levied on imported vaccines in a bid to keep low the cost of overseas vaccines that are being eyed to supplement domestically made shots ahead of opening of Covid-19 vaccination to all citizens over 18 years of age, sources said. While Russia's Sputnik V vaccines are due to arrive this month or latest by next month, manufacturers like Moderna and Johnson and Johnson have been urged to seek emergency use approval in India.

The government presently levies 10 per cent customs or import duty plus a 16.5 per cent GST and social welfare surcharge on vaccines coming from overseas. These taxes would make the imported vaccines costlier than the

Subsidy for urea produced through coal-gasification

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

The Union Cabinet today approved an "exclusive subsidy policy" for urea fertilizer produced through coal-gasification by Talcher Fer-

tilizers Ltd (TFL). strategi-

ally important as coal prices are non-volatile and coal is abundantly available in the country, he said.

...India has large coal reserves but not adequate gas. This effort to convert coal to gas, and then gas to urea will truly help India become Atmanirbhar (self-reliant)," Goyal said. The gasification process adopted in the Talcher unit is a clean coal technology giving negligible sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and fine particulate emissions as compared to direct coal fired processes, he said.

The Talcher plant is also expected to reduce dependence on natural gas for production of urea leading to reduction in LNG import bill, he added.

Further, the minister said the Talcher project will help improve availability of fertiliser to farmers, thereby boosting development of eastern region and will save transport subsidy for supply of urea in eastern part of the country.

It would assist in reducing Urea imports to the tune of 12.7 lakh tons per annum leading to savings in foreign exchange.

Coal gasification plants are

'Exports reviving, may be in positive territory in FY22'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

The country's exports are reviving and the shipments are expected to be in the "solid" positive territory in this financial year, commerce secretary Anup Wadhawan said today.

He said that exports recorded positive growth during March include oilmeals, iron ore, carpet, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, rice, spices, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, marine products, petroleum products, coffee and tea.

Gems and jewellery is a luxury product, and its demand would also slowly pick up, Wadhawan said, adding that exports are recovering from the severe Covid-19 impact.

Since December 2020,

the country's merchandise exports are recording positive growth. In March this year, the exports rose by 60.29 per cent to \$34.45 billion. However in financial year 2020-21, the shipments dipped by 7.26 per cent to \$290.63 billion.

When asked about India's trade gap with the US and China, the secretary said that trade surplus with the US and deficit with China has improved in fiscal 2020-21.

India's exports to the US stood at \$53 billion in fiscal 2019-20 and \$51 billion in fiscal 2020-21. Imports from the US aggregated at \$35.8 billion in fiscal 2019-20 as compared to \$28 billion in fiscal 2020-21.

The country's exports to China in fiscal 2019-20 were at \$16.6 billion and \$1.2 billion in fiscal 2020-21. Imports from China were worth \$65 billion in fiscal 2019-20 while the numbers were roughly the same for fiscal 2020-21.

He added that exporters

West Bengal's industry needs 'a lot more oxygen', says Sitharaman

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 20 APRIL

Sitharaman said that there was no doubt that the BJP would come to power in West Bengal, where every section is in need of help.

"Kolkata used to shine with industries in the past, it should do so again. Bengal and its tradition have to be preserved and protected," the minister said.

"Once the saffron power forms government in West Bengal, funds will be provided to the farmers. Once BJP voted to power, it will ensure the livelihood and minimum wage guarantee across segments like fishermen and so on. Our manifesto has elaborated in details about the revival of Bengal's economy," she said.

Referring to Darjeeling tea, the finance minister said that this "signature product"

was "languishing" and said that more branding was required to push signature offerings.

"This is the scenario across products and sectors in the state," she added.

Sitharaman said that there should be complete trust between the industry and the government to sustain growth amid Covid-19 pandemic situation. "The Centre has taken several measures to ensure the revival of economy continues despite a raging second wave of the pandemic," she said.

"There should be complete trust both between the government and the industry and vice versa to sustain the growth. There should not be disturbances in the continuity, which lead to mistrust and distrust," she added.



Crude oil & gas production declines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

India's crude oil production fell by 5 per cent and natural gas output slumped by 8 per cent in the fiscal year to March 2021 as private and public sector firms produced less, government data showed today.

Crude oil production fell to 30.5 million tons in fiscal 2020-21 from 32.17 million tons a year back, according to the latest data released by the ministry of petroleum and natural gas.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) produced over 2 per cent less oil at 20.2 million tons than a year back as a nationwide lockdown that lasted over two months some of its fields.

Gas production in March 2021 was higher "due to new field D-34 (KG-D6 block of Reliance-BP), which started production in December 2020 with 1.3 million standard cubic meters per day, ramped up to 9.6 mmmscmd in March 2021," notes accompanying the

data said.

With the pandemic pummelling economic activity, resulting in fall in fuel demand, India's public and private sector refiners processed nearly 13 per cent less crude oil at 22.17 million tons in 2020-21.

Reliance Industries Ltd's twin refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat had a 11.5 per cent less crude throughput at 60.94 million tons while Rosneft-led Nayara Energy processed over 13 per cent less oil at 17 million tons.

Public sector refiners such

as Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) had nearly 12 per cent less crude processing at 127.5 million tons.

The refineries produced 11.2 per cent less petroleum products at 233.4 million tons in 2020-21, the data showed.

India is nearly 85 per cent dependent on imports to meet its crude oil needs. It spent \$61.9 billion in 2020-21 on import of 198.2 million tons of crude oil. This was lower than \$101.4 billion spent on import of 227 million tons crude in the previous fiscal.

The lower import bill was partly due to lower volumes but largely because of lower international oil prices.

India posted a third contraction in fuel demand on record in 2020-21 with demand falling over 9 per cent due to coronavirus lockdown.

It consumed 194.6 million tons of petroleum products in the year to 31 March, down from 214.1 million tons in 2019-20.

RBI activity in forex market balanced: Commerce secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

India today rejected grounds used by the US treasury department for putting the country on the currency manipulator watchlist, saying the central bank's activities in foreign exchange market were perfectly balanced and it was not accumulating forex reserves.

For the second time since the start of the pandemic, India on Monday figured on the US treasury department's watchlist of currency manipulators. The central bank's dollar purchase at 5 per cent of the GDP exceeding the 2 per cent threshold was cited as the reason.

Commerce secretary Anup Wadhawan said that these watchlists are recent phenomena and it is an intrusion into the policy space of central banks, which "I personally do not understand it's rational or economic logic".

He said that India's overall foreign reserves have been fairly steady, below \$500-600 billion, and the country is not accumulating reserves like China.

"These are, in my view, very legitimate market based operations of a central bank. It is a mandate of the central bank to provide stability in the currency, as a result of which the central bank buys and sells foreign currency.

Our overall foreign reserves have been fairly steady.

"We are not accumulating reserves, which are steadily growing. We have a steady pattern of reserves holding... So

I think the central bank's activity in the foreign exchange market has been perfectly balanced and completely legitimate," he told reporters.

When asked about the proposal of India and South Africa at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) about temporary waiver of certain provisions related to an agreement on intellectual property rights to deal with Covid-19 pandemic, Wadhawan said that proposal has received "widespread" support from different members, while some nations have opposed that.

"The proposal has met with tremendous success and more importantly highlighted the importance of the issue," he said.

On a question whether the government is planning to waive 10 per cent customs duty on Covid vaccines, the secretary said that departments of revenue and pharmaceuticals would take a joint decision on that.

ICRA cuts GDP growth estimate by 0.5%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 20 APRIL

Domestic rating agency ICRA today cut its 2021-22 growth estimate by 0.5 per cent on the upper end, as a newer spate of lockdowns and restrictions get imposed in pockets to arrest the rising Covid-19 cases.

The agency now expects the economy to grow by 10-10.5 per cent in financial year 2021-22, against the 10-11 per cent estimated earlier.

Starting with Maharashtra, a slew of other pockets in the country like Delhi have been taking to localised lockdowns to arrest the climbing Covid-19 cases, which derails economic activity.

"For Q1 FY2022 (April

per cent to 20-25 per cent, the agency said.

For Q1 FY2022, it had earlier expected a GDP expansion of 27.5 per cent, boosted by the low base.

With the unprecedented surge in cases and evolving restrictions, the pace of GDP growth in the ongoing quarter may be tem-

porary," the agency said.

The recent surge in Covid-19 cases has resulted in a dip in consumer confidence and reignited uncertainty regarding the near-term outlook, it said.

In sequential terms, the momentum eased for domes-

tic airlines' passenger traffic in March 2021, it said.

The report added that there are indications of a similar slackening in April 2021 in vehicle registrations, electricity demand and generation of GST e-way bills, reflecting the impact of the rise in infec-

"However, this offers limited solace in light of the recent rise in coronavirus infections in India, and the proliferation of restrictions that is currently underway," it made clear.

Meanwhile, Nomura, a Japanese brokerage on Monday said the "Oxford Stringency Index" for India has risen to 69.9 as of 13 April, from a recent low of 57.9 at the start of the month, reflecting the pan-India spread of the lockdown.

The brokerage's proprietary business resumption index dipped to 90.4 for the weekend 11 April, from 93.7 in the previous week, suggesting that the economy is currently tracking 9.6 percentage points below its pre-pandemic normal.

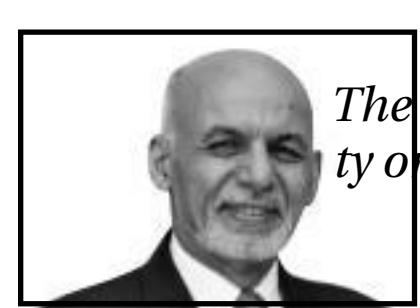
A key reason for that has been a dip in the mobility indicators, which have taken a hit following the rise in cases and the localised restrictions, it said. The brokerage maintained its gross domestic product (GDP) growth estimate of 12.6 per cent, which was recently revised down.

Birla Sun Life AMC files papers for IPO

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 20 APRIL

Aditya Birla Capital has approved sale of up to 28,50,880 equity shares of face value of Rs 5 each held in ABSLAMC out of the total paid-up share capital of 28,80,00,000 equity shares of Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, the company added.

As per the filing, Sun Life (India) AMC Investments Inc., the joint venture shareholder in Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, filed a draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) dated 19th April 2021 with the Securities and Exchange Board of India



The country that would be most damaged by insecurity or a renewed civil war in Afghanistan is Pakistan.

ASHRAF GHANI
PRESIDENT OF AFGHANISTAN

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 21 APRIL 2021

09

Xi Jinping hits out at USA

'Big countries should behave in a manner befitting to their status, responsibility,' says Jinping.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 20 APRIL

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Tuesday hit out at the US, saying there should be no "bossing" and "meddling" in the internal affairs of other countries as Beijing is increasingly coming under pressure from Washington and its allies over issues of human rights violations, Taiwan and Hong Kong.



(BFA), a China promoted influential think tank based in Hainan via video link.

"Big countries should behave in a manner befitting to their status and with a greater sense of responsibility," he said.

His snide remark against Washington came as US President Joe Biden vigorously pursued a strong China containment policy initiated by his predecessor by Donald Trump.

"What we need in today's world is justice, not hegemony," he said addressing the annual Boao Forum for Asia

These countries have also taken united position on China firming up its control over Hong Kong with its new national security law subduing the massive pro-democracy agitation in the former British colony.

Those who attended BFA meeting including Apple's CEO Tim Cook, Tesla's Elon Musk, Blackstone's Stephen Schwarzman and Bridgewater's Ray Dalio, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.

Xi, in his address, also called on all countries in Asia and beyond to answer the "call of our times," defeat the pandemic through solidarity, strengthen global governance, and keep pursuing a community with a shared future for mankind.

Marking the 20th anniversary of the BFA, this year's annual conference is themed "A World in Change: Join Hands to Strengthen Global Governance and Advance Belt and Road Cooperation."

"Global governance should

reflect the evolving political and economic landscape in the world, conform to the historical trend of peace, development and win-win cooperation, and meet the practical needs in addressing global challenges," Xi said.

On creating a future of health and security with solidarity and cooperation, Xi said the key role of the World Health Organization (WHO) must be given full play in the ongoing fight against Covid-19. On climate change, Xi stressed the importance of following the philosophy of green development, advancing international cooperation and doing more to implement the Paris Agreement.

Efforts should also be made to boost the digital economy, and step up exchanges and cooperation in areas such as artificial intelligence, biomedicine and modern energy, to turn the fruits of scientific and technological innovation into greater benefits for people in all countries, he said.

EU expands sanctions against Myanmar military & army firms

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BANGKOK, 20 APRIL

The European Union expanded its sanctions against Myanmar's military leaders and army-controlled companies ahead of a regional meeting to discuss the worsening crisis after army leaders deposed the elected government.

The Council of the European Union's latest sanctions target 10 individuals and two military-controlled companies already subject to sanctions by the United States, Britain and other governments.

It is unclear if such moves are having any impact as the military escalates its efforts to crush opposition to its seizure of power.

Myanmar's economy is already in crisis, worsened by the coronavirus pandemic and by the mass civil disobedience movement that arose following the 1 February coup.

The European Union said the number of individuals sanctioned was expanded to

35 people it said were responsible for undermining democracy and the rule of law, for repressive decisions and for serious human rights violations.

The two military-controlled companies, Myanma Economic Holdings Public Company Ltd. (MEHL) and Myanmar Economic Corp. (MEC), have vast holdings in many industries and help fund the military.

All are subject to having their assets frozen, travel banned and other measures. EU citizens and businesses are banned from doing business or providing funds to them without special permission.

Today's decision is a sign of the EU's unity and determination in condemning the brutal actions of the military junta, and aims at effecting change in the junta's leadership," the EU said in a statement.

Today's decision also sends a clear message to the military leadership continuing on the current path will only bring further suffering and will never grant any legitimacy," it said.

Since the coup, security forces have killed at least 738 protesters and bystanders, according to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which monitors casualties and arrests.

The EU already had an embargo on sales to Myanmar of arms and equipment that can be used for internal repression; an export ban on dual-use goods for use by the military and border guard police; export restrictions on equipment for monitoring communications that could be used for internal repression, and a prohibition on military training for and military cooperation with the army.

Last week, the US S&P 500 said it was removing India's Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. from its sustainability index due to its alleged dealings with Myanmar authorities. Adani did not respond to a request for comment on that move.

Military says Chad's president died of battle injuries

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CHAD, 20 APRIL



Chadian President Idriss Deby Itno, who ruled the central African nation for more than three decades, died Tuesday of wounds suffered on the battlefield during a fight against rebels, the military announced on national television and radio.

The stunning announcement came just hours after electoral officials had declared Deby, 68, the winner of the April 11 presidential election, paving the way for him to stay in power for six more years.

An 18-month transitional council will be led by Deby's 37-year-old son, Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, the military said, also imposing a nightly curfew of 6 p.m.

"In the face of this worrying situation, the people of Chad must show their attachment to peace, to stability and to national cohesion," Gen. Azem Bermandao Agouma said.

The circumstances of Deby's death could not immediately be independently confirmed due to the remote

location of the fighting.

The military said Deby had taken "the heroic lead in combat operations against terrorists who had come from Libya." After being wounded in battle, he then was taken to the capital, the general announced.

Deby, a former army commander-in-chief, first came to

power in 1990 when his rebel forces overthrew then-President Hissene Habre, who was later convicted of human rights abuses at an international tribunal in Senegal.

Over the years Deby had survived numerous armed rebellions and managed to stay in power until this latest insurgency led by a group calling itself the Front for Change and Concord in Chad.

The rebels are believed to have armed and trained in neighboring Libya before crossing into northern Chad on April 11. Their arrival came on the same day that Chad's president sought a sixth term on election day, which several top opposition candidates boycotted. Deby was a major French ally in the fight against Islamic extremism in Africa.

Former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad urges king to end covid emergency

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KUALA LUMPUR, 20 APRIL

Malaysian opposition lawmakers led by former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad submitted a petition to the country's king on Tuesday seeking an end to a coronavirus emergency so Parliament can resume.

The king approved Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin's plan for an emergency in early January to curb the spread of the coronavirus, but critics said it was a political ruse to help the embattled leader stay in power amid challenges to his leadership.

The emergency involves no curfew or military powers

but Parliament is suspended until 1 August. Muhyiddin's government remains in control and has extraordinary powers to introduce laws without parliamentary approval. Mahathir, 95, accused Muhyiddin of using the king's name as a shield against critics, making many Malays angry with the monarch instead.

The king took power in March 2020 after instigating the collapse of Mahathir's reformist alliance that won 2018 elections and joining with the opposition to form a Malay-centric government. But his government is shaky with a razor-thin majority in Parliament. Muhyiddin faces challenges from within his coalition and from the opposition, but support for his leadership cannot be tested with Parliament suspended.

Critics said the emergency has failed to curb new infections, with Malaysia's total cases more than doubling to over 379,000 since January. Many also questioned why Parliament cannot resume since most restrictions have been lifted, with businesses, malls and schools reopened.

With no parliamentary oversight, the government introduced a new law to combat fake news" about Covid-19 that critics say is a threat to freedom of expression.

Another law allows the Finance Ministry to approve additional spending without scrutiny. King Sultan Ahmad Shah in Feb said Parliament can sit despite the emergency order, but Muhyiddin's govt said it wasn't safe because there are many older lawmakers.

US continues to have dialogue with Pakistan on terrorism along Afghanistan border: Pentagon

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 20 APRIL

Secretary John Kirby told reporters at a news conference here.

Responding to a question, Kirby said President Joe Biden is clear on withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan by September 22.

The president was clear. We are removing US forces from Afghanistan and will maintain the sufficient counter terrorism capabilities we need to detect and prevent threats to our homeland that could emanate from Afghanistan, Kirby said. Once the US leaves Afghanistan, he said, they expect the sovereignty of Afghanistan to be respected

The president was clear. We are removing US forces from Afghanistan and will maintain the sufficient counter terrorism capabilities we need to detect and prevent threats to our homeland that could emanate from Afghanistan, Kirby said. Once the US leaves Afghanistan, he said, they expect the sovereignty of Afghanistan to be respected

from Afghanistan, Kirby said.

Once the US leaves Afghanistan, he said, they expect the sovereignty of Afghanistan to be respected.

He was responding to a question on reports that Beijing is considering sending a peacekeeping force to Afghanistan once the US pulls out which will be deployed at the neighbouring province it has with Afghanistan across that 44-mile border.

We certainly wouldn't speak for another nation and obviously we would call on all of Afghanistan's neighbours to respect its sovereignty and to respect its territory integrity as well, he said.

If there's a legitimate terrorism threat that's emanating from Afghanistan to work in accordance with international law and with

the Afghan government to address that, but we want Afghanistan's sovereignty to be respected, he asserted.

The US, he said, is removing all military personnel from Afghanistan.

We will remove them by early September. All of them with the exception of what's going to be required to protect the diplomatic mission in Afghanistan, he said.

So I know of no discussions with government in Kabul about reinserting

counterterrorism forces inside Afghanistan. As the Defense Secretary made clear in Brussels last week, we will maintain a sufficient counterterrorism capabilities in the region to deal with emanating threats from Afghanistan, threats to our homeland from terrorist groups, but the president's direction was crystal clear."

"All US military personnel with that exception are going to be leaving Afghanistan by the early fall, he said.

Kirby insisted that there's no plans to reintroduce American boots on the ground in Afghanistan.

We have robust counterterrorism capabilities all around the world, and I think as he also - you heard him say in Brussels there's not a part of the Earth that we can't hit if we need to hit it, but there are no plans and no discussions about reintroducing American combat forces on the ground in Afghanistan, he said.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 Baroque composer (6)
4 Bleats (4)
7 Card game (8)
8 Big cat (4)
9 Establish as valid (12)
11 Supplement (3,2)
12 Indian dish (5)
16 Greek roe pâté (12)
18 Central part (4)
19 Out of date (8)
21 Stupor (4)
22 Roof beam (6)

DOWN
1 Ivy League university (7)
2 Pen part (3)
3 Rubber (6)
4 Knitted helmet (9)
5 Concerning (5)
6 Bunk on a ship (5)
10 Priva te chat (4-1-4)
13 Farm vehicle (7)
14 Chaos (5)
15 Sick feeling (6)
17 Scent (5)
20 Auction item (3)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Cite, 11 Samosa, 13 Lessee, 15 Curdum, 17 Drift, 19 Mixed doubles, 20 Stay, 21 Gems, 22 Roof beam (6)

DOWN
1 Baroque composer (6), 2 Pen part (3), 3 Rubber (6), 4 Knitted helmet (9), 5 Concerning (5), 6 Bunk on a ship (5), 10 Priva te chat (4-1-4), 13 Farm vehicle (7), 14 Chaos (5), 15 Sick feeling (6), 17 Scent (5), 20 Auction item (3)

By arrangement with The Independent

Figures in parentheses denote the number of letters in the words required

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

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

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 180012511
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

23864470

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23688336, 23865181

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513218, Call Centre 09910383338,

18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air-

port 011-25671580; Terminal I 23860526

B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

• JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

• EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 3373377

• U.P. Roads 23868709

• AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

• AIR FRANCE Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 25652294 (Airport)

• KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION BY JUDD

OR P H A N
A R C S I N E
V O L C A N O
M A R L I N

RACK 1 = 19
RACK 2 = 59
RACK 3 = 74
RACK 4 = 11
JUDD'S TOTAL 153

FIVE RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 25



If Joe Biden wants to keep our country safe from radical Islamic terrorism, he should reinstitute the foreign country travel ban

FORMER US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP

THUMBNAILS



Portugal's European Affairs Secretary Ana Paula Zacarias rings a bell to signal the start of a European Foreign Ministers video conference meeting at the European Council headquarters in Brussels on Tuesday. AP

Walter Mondale, Carter's vice-president, dies at 93: Former Vice-President Walter F. Mondale, a liberal icon who lost one of the most lopsided presidential elections after bluntly telling voters to expect a tax increase if he won, died Monday. He was 93. The death of the former senator, ambassador and Minnesota attorney general was announced in a statement from his family. No cause was cited. AP

US advise citizens to avoid travelling to India: The US has advised its citizens to avoid travelling to India, even if they are fully vaccinated as there is a 'very high level' of Covid-19 in the country. AP

Egypt fires top railway official: Egypt's transportation minister on Tuesday said he sacked the country's top railway official, following three train accidents in less than a month that left at least 29 people dead and some 320 injured. The firing of Ashraf Raslan, head of the railway authority, was part of a wide ranging overhaul of the rundown railway system's leadership amid public outcry over repeat train crashes. AP

Laschet chosen as Merkel's successor: Armin Laschet has won his rival's backing to lead Chancellor Angela Merkel's center-right bloc into the German election in September, after a bruising power struggle. Markus Soeder said on Tuesday that he will back Laschet, the head of Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, after the latter's party leadership gave him majority support. Soeder said that the die is cast: Armin Laschet will be the chancellor candidate of the Union. AP

Merkel defends German-Russia pipeline construction

BERLIN, 20 APRIL
German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Tuesday defended her country's ongoing cooperation with Russia on the building of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline amid growing criticism of Moscow's treatment of Opposition politician Alexei Navalny and aggression toward Ukraine.

In an online appearance before the Council of Europe, Merkel noted that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline isn't yet completed but Russian gas already flows freely into Europe along other routes, including the existing Nord Stream 1 pipeline under the Baltic Sea to Germany.

"I know that there is controversy about Nord Stream 2 and I know the opinion of many member states," she said. "But I would like to point out that the gas delivered through Nord Stream 2, which isn't yet flowing, is no worse than the gas from Nord Stream 1, that which flows through Ukraine, and that which comes across Turkey from Russia," Merkel added. Nord Stream 2 is owned by Russian state company Gazprom, with investment from several European companies, and Merkel noted that it had appropriate EU approvals. It is being built under the Baltic, bypassing Poland and Ukraine and raising objections in both countries. The US has also vocally opposed the pipeline, saying it would make Europe too dependent on Russian gas. AP

US ambassador in Moscow heads home for consultations

Sullivan emphasises that he will return to Moscow within weeks after discussion with Biden admin

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, 20 APRIL

The US ambassador to Russia said on Tuesday that he will head home for consultations a move that comes after the Kremlin prodded him to take a break as Washington and Moscow traded sanctions.

The Kremlin emphasised that it couldn't order Ambassador John Sullivan to leave for consultations and could only recommend that he do so amid the current tensions.

Sullivan said in a statement that he is returning to the United States this week to discuss US-Russian ties with members of President Joe Biden's administration. He emphasised that he would come back to Moscow within weeks.

"I believe it is important for me to speak directly with my new colleagues in the Biden administration in Washington about the current state of bilateral relations between the United States and Russia," Sullivan said in a statement issued by the embassy.

On Thursday, the Biden administration announced sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2020 US presi-

Also, I have not seen my family in well over a year, and that is another important reason for me to return home for a visit.

Sullivan's departure comes after Russia on Friday stopped short of asking Sullivan to leave the country but said it suggested that he follows the example of the Russian ambassador to the US, who was recalled from Washington last month after President Joe Biden described Russian President Vladimir Putin as a killer.

Russia has set no time frame for Ambassador Anatoly Antonov's return to Washington. Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, said the ambassadors' departures reflect current tensions in the relationship between the United States and Russia. The relations now have hit the bottom, Peskov said.

There are certain consequences of the unfriendly measures taken against our country and the retaliatory measures taken by us.

On Thursday, the Biden administration announced sanctions on Russia for interfering in the 2020 US presi-



US ambassador to Russia John Sullivan.

dential election and for involvement in the SolarWind hack of federal agencies activities Moscow has denied.

The US ordered 10 Russian diplomats expelled, targeted dozens of companies and people and imposed new curbs on Russia's ability to borrow money. Russia denounced the US move as absolutely unfriendly and unprovoked and retaliated by ordering 10 US diplomats to leave, blacklisting eight current and former US officials and tightening requirements for the US Embassy operations.

While ordering the sanc-

tions, Biden also called for de-escalating tensions and held the door open for cooperation with Russia in certain areas.

Biden emphasized that he told Putin that he chose not to impose tougher sanctions for now and proposed to meet in a third country in the summer. Russia said it was studying the offer.

"I will return to Moscow in the coming weeks before any meeting between Presidents Biden and Putin," Sullivan said in Tuesday's statement.

On Monday, US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had a call with Nikolai Patrushev, the secretary of the Russian presidential Security Council, to discuss the prospect of a US-Russian summit and they agreed to continue to stay in touch, according to a statement from US National Security Council spokesperson Emily Horne.

Peskov noted the Sullivan-Patrushev call, adding on Tuesday that if it becomes expedient, the ambassadors will come back and resume their duties. As for the Russ-

ian ambassador, the President of Russia will decide when such expediency comes, Peskov said. He said, Russia certainly can't order the US ambassador to return home for consultations.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said that we are in the very beginning of analyzing the situation regarding Biden's summit proposal and no specifics have been discussed yet. A big question is what course the US will take, Ryabkov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies.

While the new US sanctions further limited Russia's ability to borrow money by banning US financial institutions from buying Russian government bonds directly from state institutions, they didn't target the secondary market.

Fyodor Lukyanov, a leading Moscow-based foreign policy expert, said while the Kremlin's advice to Sullivan to leave for consultations stopped short of expulsion, it reflected Moscow's dismay about the new sanctions.

68 per cent by 2030.

The government's Climate Change Committee recommended the 2035 target last year, and said achieving it would require more electric vehicles, expanded wind power capacity and a reduction in meat and dairy consumption.

Biden's to have virtual climate summit

There will be no hands to shake or backs to slap, no way to look a foreign leader in the eye. The small human moments that define statecraft will be reduced to images on a screen.

President Joe Biden will host a major climate summit with dozens of world leaders all of them stuck on Zoom. Streamed 100 percent live with no backroom give-and-take, the summit will be more geared to sending a message about America's return to the climate fight and nudging the world toward a greener planet than about specific deals or action.

Biden has made clear he understands the necessity of doing meetings remotely to safeguard the health of the leaders and set example that he is discouraging travel amid rise in Covid-19 cases.

UK to toughen climate target before Biden summit

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 20 APRIL

The UK government will set itself a more ambitious climate target, pledging to reduce carbon emissions by three-quarters of their 1990 levels by 2035, British media reported Tuesday.

They said the goal is to be announced ahead of a virtual climate summit hosted by US President Joe Biden on Thursday. The Financial Times, which first reported the news, said that for the first time the UK would include emissions from international aviation and shipping in its goal.

The 2035 plan would put Britain on course to meet its target of reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

The UK government declined to comment directly on the reports. The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said that ministers would be making an announcement shortly, taking into account the latest advice from the Climate Change Committee.

British PM Boris Johnson is due to host a major global climate summit, known as COP26, in Glasgow in November. Britain has already pledged to slash emissions by

EU drug regulator prepares to issue advice on J&J Covid shot

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 20 APRIL

Experts at the European Medicines Agency are preparing to present the conclusions of their investigation later on Tuesday into possible links between the Johnson & Johnson coronavirus vaccine and very rare cases of unusual clotting disorders detected in the US.

Last week, J&J halted its European rollout of its one-dose vaccine after the US Food and Drug Administration recommended officials pause its use while the rare blood clot cases are examined. Officials identified six cases of the highly unusual blood clots among nearly 7 million people who were immunised with the shot in the US.

J&J advised European governments to store their doses until the EU drug regulator issued guidance on their use; widespread use of the shot in Europe has not yet started.

The delay was a further blow to vaccination efforts in the European Union, which have been plagued by supply shortages, logistical problems and concerns over unusual blood clots also in a small number of people who have been immunised with the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine.

Experts worry the temporary halt on J&J's shot could further shake vaccine confidence and complicate worldwide Covid-19 immunization efforts.

Last week, South Africa suspended its use of the vaccine in the wake of the US pause.

The blood clots linked to the J&J vaccine are occurring in unusual parts of the body, such as veins that drain blood from the brain.

Those patients also have abnormally low levels of blood platelets, a condition normally linked to bleeding, not clotting.

With the AstraZeneca vaccine, scientists in Norway and Germany have suggested that some people are experiencing an abnormal immune system response, forming antibodies that

'Media freedom has deteriorated during pandemic'

PARIS, 20 APRIL

There's been a dramatic deterioration of Press freedom since the pandemic took across the world, Reporters Without Borders said in its annual report published on Tuesday.

The group's new World Press Freedom Index, which evaluated the press situations in 180 countries, painted a stark picture and concluded that 73 percent of the world's nations have serious issues with media freedoms.

It says countries have used the coronavirus pandemic, which erupted in China in late 2019, as grounds to block journalists' access to information, sources and reporting in the field.

This is particularly the case in Asia, the Mideast and Europe, the media group said.

Issues have also arisen from a drop in public trust in journalism itself.

The group said 59 percent of people polled in 28 countries claimed that journalists deliberately try to mislead the public by reporting information they know to be false.

attack their own platelets.

It's not yet clear if there might be a similar mechanism with the J&J vaccine.

But both the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines, as well as a Russian Covid-19 vaccine and one from China, are made with the same technology. They train the immune system to recognise the spike protein that coats the coronavirus.

To do that, they use a cold virus, called an adenovirus, to carry the spike gene into the body.

UK job figures show young hardest hit by Covid restrictions

LONDON, 20 APRIL

The number of workers on UK corporate payrolls dropped by 0.2 percent in March as young people were hardest hit by coronavirus restrictions that closed bars, restaurants and hotels, according to the latest government statistics.

Company payrolls fell by 56,000 last month, pushing the decline since March of last year to 8,13,000, the Office for National Statistics said Tuesday.

Workers under 25 accounted for more than half the decline, with the number of young people on company payrolls dropping by 4,36,000 over the past year.

Payrolls in the accommodation and food service industries, which employ large numbers of young people, fell by 3,55,000 workers.

Despite the drop in payroll figures, the unemployment rate for the three months through February fell to 4.9 percent, a decline of 0.1 percent from the November-January period.

The figures don't include furloughed employees, who continue to receive a portion of their wages under a government programme designed to preserve jobs during the pandemic.

About 4.7 million workers across the UK were fully or partially furloughed during March, according to ONS figures released last month.

The UK has begun to relax restrictions imposed in December to limit the spread of Covid-19.

Nonessential shops, hairdressers and gyms across England were allowed to reopen last week, while bars and restaurants were permitted to serve patrons outdoors.

Indoor service is scheduled to resume 17 May. AP

Murder case against ex-cop in Floyd's death goes to jury

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MINNEAPOLIS, 20 APRIL

The murder case against former officer Derek Chauvin in the death of George Floyd went to the jury on Monday in a city on edge against another round of unrest like the one that erupted last year over the harrowing video of Chauvin with his knee on the Black man's neck.

The judge told Chauvin's attorney: Congresswoman Waters may have given you something on appeal that may result in this whole trial being overturned.

He added: I wish elected officials would stop talking about this case, especially in a manner that is disrespectful to the rule of law and to the judicial branch. Chauvin (45), is charged with second-degree murder, third-degree

murder and second-degree manslaughter, all of which require the jury to conclude that Chauvin's actions were a substantial causal factor in Floyd's death and that his use of force was unreasonable.

The most serious charge carries up to 40 years in prison. Use your common sense. Believe your eyes. What you saw, you saw, prosecutor Steve Schleicher said in closing arguments, referring to the excruciating bystander video of Floyd pinned down on the pavement with Chauvin's knee on or close to his neck for up to 9 minutes, 29 seconds, as bystanders yelled at the officer to get off.

Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson countered by arguing that Chauvin did what any reasonable police officer would

have done after finding himself in a dynamic and fluid situation involving a large man struggling with three officers.

As Nelson began speaking, the now-fired Chauvin removed his Covid-19 mask in front of the jury for one of the very few times during the trial.

The dueling arguments got underway with some stores boarded up in Minneapolis, the courthouse ringed with concrete barriers and razor wire, and National Guard members on patrol.

Floyd's death last spring set off protests in the city and across the US that sometimes turned violent.

The prosecutor, who is Black, said the questions about the use of force and cause of death are so simple that a child can understand it.

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England's Queen enters 'twilight of reign' after farewell to Philip

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, 20 APRIL

Now that the Royal Family has said farewell to Prince Philip, attention will turn to Queen Elizabeth II's 95th birthday on Wednesday and, in coming months, the celebrations marking her 70 years on the throne.

This combination of events is reminding the United Kingdom that the reign of the queen, the only monarch most of her subjects have ever known, is finite.

That has triggered speculation about how long she will remain on the throne, what the monarchy will look

like in the future and, for some, even whether it should continue to exist.

The queen is certainly moving now into the twilight of her reign and a new phase of her reign," said Anna Whitelock, director of the Centre for the Study of Modern Monarchy at Royal Holloway, University of London. She now is a widow, and it remains to be seen how she's going to respond to that." While most observers say the queen is unlikely to abdicate given her lifelong commitment to public service, she has already started to turn over more responsibilities to Prince Charles, 72, her eldest son. That process

Answer to the surge

Scientists have shown that masking should get top priority on the list of essentials to handle the pandemic

S ANANTHANARAYAN

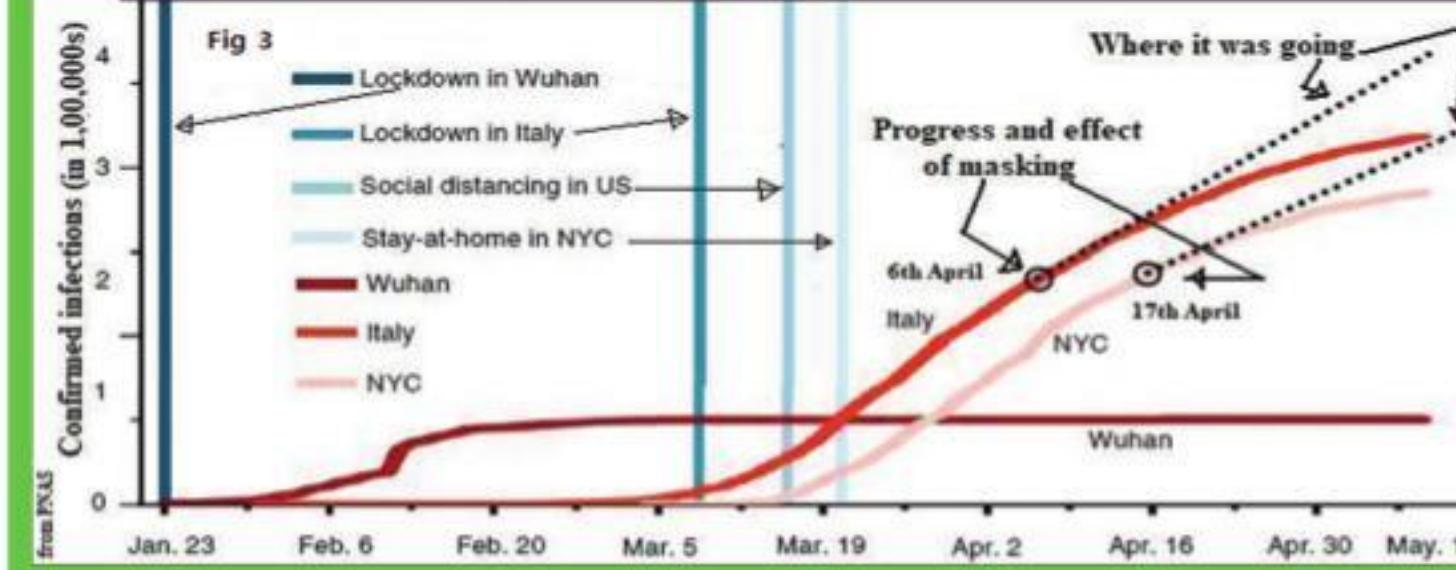
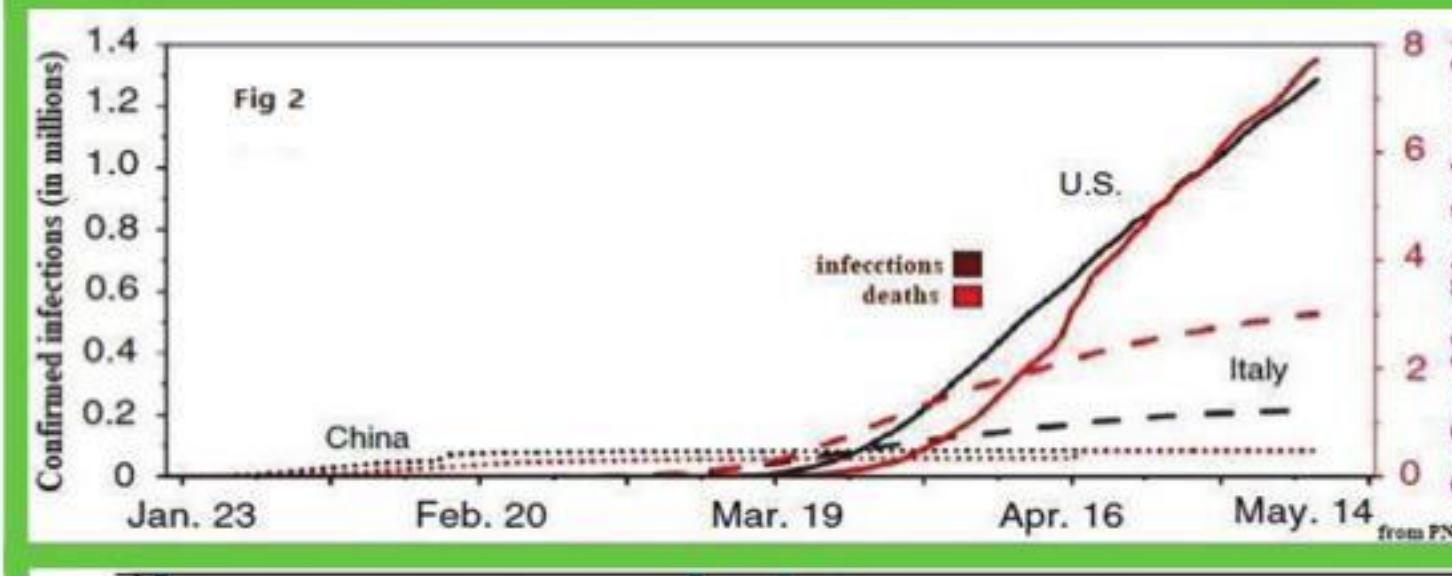
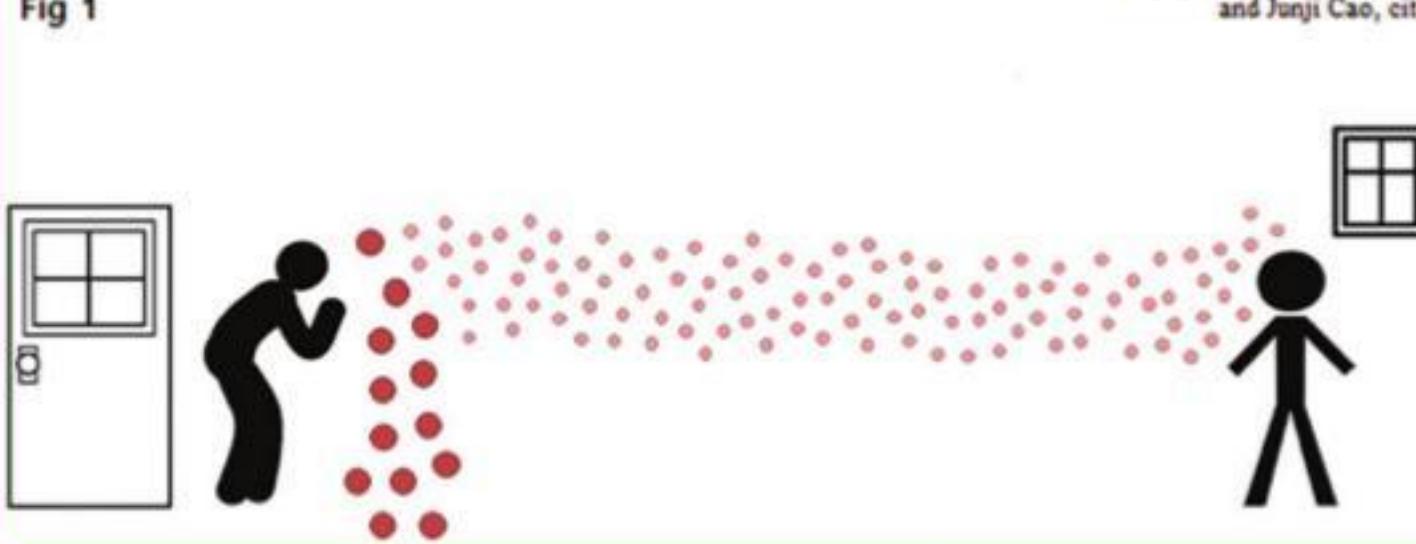
Just as India faces the second wave of Sars-CoV-2, prestigious medical journal, *The Lancet*, prescribes a number of urgent measures that we need to take. In particular, the report says that the spread of the virus is predominantly through aerosols, or in other words, it is airborne. The recommendations are thus, one, to promote wearing of masks and next, to avoid collections of people, particularly in closed spaces.

The recommendations are not new, both were specifically made, with grounds for their making, in June 2020. A team at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography and the School of Medicine, University of California at San Diego, and Sun Yat-sen University, Taiwan, in the journal, *Science*, detailed the findings about the airborne transmission of Sars-CoV-2. A team at the Texas A&M University, at Austin, Caltech, and University of California, San Diego, in the journal, *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, confirmed the finding and added data that shows the positive protection provided by the use of masks.

Respiratory infection, the first paper said, happens through virus-containing droplets, exhaled when infected persons cough or sneeze, or smaller droplets when they breathe or speak. Droplets larger than five microns fall to the ground or other surfaces before they evaporate, and deposit viruses that may remain for hours or days.

Droplets that are smaller than five microns evaporate before they fall, and the viruses they contain stay suspended in the air, as an aerosol, which can stay airborne for hours. The paper cites studies that say much of the transmission of Covid-19 has been through aerosols produced, perhaps, by asymptomatic individuals. Exercises of tracing those who came into "close contact" with infected persons are hence inconclusive. And it seems that many infections were acquired from longer distances, another of the cited studies said.

Transmission by aerosols consists of smaller respiratory droplets, and this affects the severity of the infection, the paper said. It is possible, the paper said, that the smallest aerosols reach the deepest parts of the lungs, even before the immune responses can start. The Covid-19 virus, which multiplies three times faster than the Sars virus, can then spread to the pharynx, from where it would enter the environment, when the patient breathes, speaks or laughs – all before symptoms begin to show. The paper cited a study which said undiagnosed cases of Covid-19 infection, with "mild, limited or no symptoms", were responsible for up to 79 per cent of viral infections in Wuhan.



The paper said World Health Organisation guidelines of six-feet distancing and hand washing were based on studies carried out in the 1930s. The technology available did not permit study of aerosols. Now we know that a large droplet settles in four to five seconds, but a one-micron particle stays airborne for over 12 hours. We also know that coughs and sneezes can deposit droplets 20 feet away and create thousands of aerosols that travel much further.

In enclosed spaces, hence, if there is an

infected person, the viral load increases every minute. Ventilation is thus paramount and then, air-conditioning, which recycles the air, is a true step-in-aid to spreading infection.

Despite such findings in June 2020, the danger of airborne transmission has been questioned, as "not being established." The current study by *The Lancet*, however, says there is overwhelming evidence and details the grounds to show that it must be so. "...From 33 per cent to 59 per cent of all Covid-19 cases could be attributed

to asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic transmission of Sars-CoV-2 from people who are not coughing or sneezing...which supports a predominantly airborne mode of transmission," the study says. That "super spreading events may be the pandemic's primary drivers, and other data, cannot be adequately explained by droplets or fomites," the study says.

Masking

The second paper, in *PNAS*, considered the then available data of Wuhan, Italy and New York City, to conclude that "that the difference with and without mandated face covering represents the determinant in shaping the pandemic trends in the three epicentres."

The graph in Figure 2 shows that the rise in infection flattened in China by end of January 2020, but rose sharply in Italy and NYC through March to May. In the case of China, there was extensive testing, quarantine, and contact tracing, and their aggressive measures of lockdown of all cities and rural areas in the whole country, isolation of those in close contact with infected people, and it was mandated to wear face masks in public. As all of those were put in place at the same time, we cannot identify how much each measure contributed.

In Italy also, measures of quarantine, isolation and city lockdown were implemented, right from 9 March 2020. In most of the US too, social distancing, quarantine and isolation was started in March and April, on 22 March in NYC. But, as we can see from Figure 3, numbers kept increasing, and it was on 6 April (Italy) and 17 April (NYC) that the curve began to flatten.

It was on 6 April last year that WHO issued the guidelines for masking and it was ordered in northern Italy on the same day, and nation-wide on 4 May. NYC followed suit on 17 April. We can see from Figure 3 that on those very dates, the rate of infection began to drop (the dotted lines show where the trend was leading the curve).

India introduced a nation-wide lockdown from March 2020 and continued restrictions even after partial relaxations. Our infections, however, saw very high numbers through June and September. Our ratios appeared to be better than in other parts of the world, but it may be a result of our younger population, as well as much lower mobility. The surge of the last few days, however, has taken us to the very top of the list of affected countries.

Administrative measures, of restricting commercial activity, travel and gatherings are sure to follow. The simple step, however, of ensuring that everybody wears a well-fitting mask, even indoors, when in an enclosed, public space, would have dramatic effect. And so would steering clear of gatherings and crowded places. We should still wash our hands, however, as airborne transmission has not affected direct transmission through droplets.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Going to sleep



The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's InSight Mars lander is currently trying to endure the abrasive Martian environment, as it sits on the Red Planet conserving power as its solar panels get covered in dust.

InSight was designed to be powered by solar energy, gathered through dual two-metre panels. It was always expected that the panels would reduce their power output as time went on and dust landed on them, but would still have enough to last throughout the two-year mission.

Unfortunately, not all has gone to plan. Despite InSight landing in Elysium Planitia, a windswept area of Mars that gets lots of sunlight, none of the passing dust devils (funnel-like chimneys of hot air) have been close enough to clean the panels.

It means that InSight is only getting 27 per cent of the power that it otherwise would – shared between its scientific instruments, robotic arm, radio, and heaters.

To make matters worse, the windiest Martian season has just ended and it could be months before another cleaning event naturally occurs, and Mars is moving away from the Sun. Its already weak energy is getting weaker, and when InSight needs it most. Science operations have had to be put on hold until July 2021 when Mars is closer to the star.

"The amount of power available over the next few months will really be driven by the weather," said InSight's project manager, Chuck Scott of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California. "As part of our extended-mission planning, we developed an operations strategy to keep InSight safe through the winter so that we can resume science operations as solar intensity increases."

Nasa scientists now find themselves in the unenviable position of having to choose which instruments need to be switched off each day to conserve necessary power for the heaters and radio communication.

The craft's weather monitoring will be off most days, meaning that Nasa will get less frequent updates about its environment, but it hopes that even if the craft did go offline due to a lack of power that it would be able to reboot when the sunlight returns.

Before that, there is some recourse the agency can take to try and spark the lander into life. InSight will move its robotic arm, equipped with a camera, closer to the panels to better image the dust coating.

The team will then pulse the motors which unfurl each panel, in an attempt to disturb the dust. Nasa is not hopeful it will work, however, but feels it is worth the attempt to keep the craft powered.

The risk of damage to the craft is pretty likely, InSight's principal investigator commented to *Insider*. The cold weather on the Red Planet means that the delicate electronics could be damaged by the low temperatures – the lowest they will sink during the Martian year.

"Right now, our predictions, our projections are that we should be able to make it through the lowest-power point and come out the other side," Banerdt said. "We think we're pretty well off, but Mars is unpredictable. We never know exactly what's going to happen."



ZOLTAN FODOR

When the results of an experiment don't match predictions made by the best theory of the day, something is off.

Fifteen years ago, physicists at Brookhaven National Laboratory discovered something perplexing. Muons – a type of subatomic particle – were moving in unexpected ways that didn't match theoretical predictions. Was the theory wrong? Was the experiment off? Or, tantalisingly, was this evidence of new physics?

Physicists have been trying to solve this mystery ever since.

One group from Fermilab tackled the experimental side and on 7 April this year released results confirming the original measurement. But my colleagues and I took a different approach.

I am a theoretical physicist and the spokesperson and one of two coordinators of the Budapest-Marseille-Wuppertal collaboration. It is a large-scale collaboration of physicists who have been trying to see if the older theoretical prediction was incorrect. We used a new method to calculate how muons interact with magnetic fields.

My team's theoretical prediction is different from the original theory and matches both the old experimental evidence and the new Fer-

milab data. If our calculation is correct, it resolves the discrepancy between theory and experiment and would suggest that there is not an undiscovered force of nature.

Our result was published in the journal *Nature* on 7 April, the same day as the new experimental results.

The muon and the Standard Model

The muon is a heavier, unstable sister of the electron. Muons are all around us and are, for example, created when cosmic rays collide with particles in the Earth's atmosphere. They are able to pass through matter, and researchers have used them to probe the inaccessible interiors of structures from giant volcanoes to the Egyptian pyramids.

Muons, like electrons, have an electric charge and generate tiny magnetic fields. The strength and orientation of this magnetic field is called the magnetic moment.

Almost everything in the universe – from how atoms are built to how your cell phone works to how galaxies move – can be described by four interactions. You are probably familiar with the first two: gravity and electromagnetism. The third is the weak interaction, which is responsible for radioactive decay. Last is the strong interaction, the force that holds the protons and neutrons in an atom's nucleus together. Physicists call this framework – minus gravity –

the Standard Model of Elementary Particles.

Three generations of matter (fermions)

Interactions / force carriers (bosons)

Scalar bosons

Gauge bosons

Vector bosons

Leptons

Quarks

Mass

Charge

Spin

Mass



LAUGH OUT LOUD

Florentino Prez (photo, left), founding chairman of the Super League, said on Tuesday the new competition was being created to save football for everyone, not to make the rich clubs richer. He felt it was "impossible" that the proposed tournament's players would be banned by Uefa but conceded it would not kick off next season if no deal was reached with European soccer's governing body.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Stokes surgery: Ben Stokes will undergo surgery on a broken finger next week. He broke his left index finger while making a catch during Rajasthan Royals' Indian Premier League season-opener, successfully dismissing Punjab Kings' Chris Gayle.

Test championship: The World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand will go ahead as planned in Southampton from 18 June, the International Cricket Council said after Britain had added India to its travel red list because of a new Covid-19 upturn.

Vaughan's tip: Michael Vaughan has said Chennai Super Kings should build their team around Ravindra Jadeja considering his all-round abilities. "You may say (MS) Dhoni will play for two or three more years but he isn't gonna play long after that," Vaughan said.

Dhoni's fitness: Chennai Super Kings skipper MS Dhoni said on Monday while he could not always guarantee good performances, he tried to keep fit to be in step with the younger players. The 39-year-old led his team to their third win of this season on Monday.

Uefa stand: Uefa on Monday confirmed a new format for the Champions League would be introduced in 2024 with the number of clubs in the group stage increasing from 32 to 36, despite an earlier announcement that 12 major clubs were planning to break away.

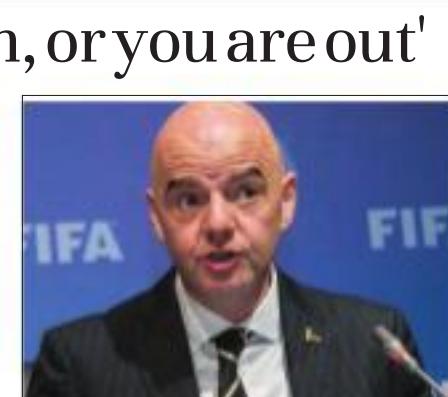
Football finance: Uefa is in discussions with Centricus Asset Management over a 6 billion package to overhaul its flagship Football tournament and stop plans for a new breakaway Super League. Uefa is working on a plan to fund a new-look Champions League.

Liverpool held: Liverpool conceded an 87th-minute equaliser to draw at Leeds 1-1 on Monday, denying Jurgen Klopp's team a spot in the top four of the English Premier League, but were among the 12 clubs behind the creation of a controversial Super League.

Prompt retribution: Chelsea, Manchester City and Real Madrid will be expelled from the Champions League this week, says Danish Uefa member Jesper Moller. He expects the trio to be kicked out on Friday for being in the controversial breakaway Super League.

Olympic inoculation: Around 225 Belgian athletes wanting to participate in this summer's Tokyo Olympics and Paralympic Games will be given Covid-19 vaccines. The athletes concerned are primarily those who have not yet qualified to take part in the Games.

APRIL 20



'Either you are in, or you are out'

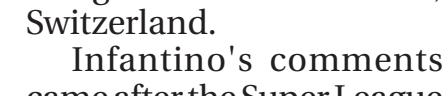
ZURICH, 20 APRIL

Fifa president Gianni Infantino told the 12 breakaway European Super League clubs today that they could not be "half in, half out" of the established football system and must face up to the reality of their decision.

Real Madrid, Barcelona, Manchester United, Liverpool and Juventus are among the members of the proposed new league, but Uefa has threatened to ban them from domestic and international competition and vowed to fight the move.

"If some elect to go their own way then they must live with the consequences of their choice, they are responsible for their choice - concretely this means, either you are in, or you are out. You cannot be half in and half out. This has to be absolutely clear," Infantino told Uefa's

AGENCIES



congress in Montreux, Switzerland.

Infantino's comments came after the Super League had called yesterday for talks with Uefa and Fifa about their new competition's place in the football "ecosystem."

The Fifa head, a former Uefa general secretary, repeated his opposition to the breakaway project. "We can only and strongly disapprove of a Super League which is a closed shop, breakaway from current institutions," Infantino said. "No doubt whatsoever of Fifa's disapproval. Full support to Uefa."

AGENCIES

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LONDON, 20 APRIL

English opposition to the Super League intensified on Tuesday when the Premier League threatened action against the six rebel clubs and Prime Minister Boris Johnson considered introducing laws to stop them forming the new European competition.

Divisions within the Super League clubs also grew with Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola (in photo) saying joining a largely closed competition away from UEFA's existing Champions League could damage the integrity and values of sport. Liverpool manager Jrgen Klopp has also expressed concerns about the actions of his club's owners.

The Premier League has already threatened the six

Super League clubs with expulsion if they go it alone in Europe. The other 14 clubs met on Tuesday and "unanimously and vigorously" rejected the Super League plans.

"The Premier League is considering all actions available to prevent it from progressing, as well as holding those shareholders involved to account under its rules," the English top division said in a statement.

The six clubs, driven by the American owners of Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal, have teamed up with three elite teams from both Spain and Italy to rip up the structures of the European game.

Chelsea and Tottenham are also part of the breakaway that would see them guaranteed entry each year into the Super League rather

than having to qualify through the previous season's Premier League placing.

"Sport is not a sport when the relationship between the effort and the success, the effort and reward doesn't exist," said Guardiola, whose Manchester City side leads the Premier League.

"It's not a sport. It's not a sport when success is already guaranteed. It's not

a sport when it doesn't matter when you lose."

Premier League officials were also part of a meeting alongside representatives of fan groups led from Downing Street by Johnson, who called the Super League "anti-competitive" and pledged to "drop a legislative bomb" on it if necessary.

The government could adopt the 50-plus-1 rule from Germany that gives fans the majority of voting rights, nominally to protect clubs from being controlled by private investors.

All attendees agreed that action was necessary to protect the fairness and open competition we expect to see in football, and to uphold the fundamental principle that any club should have the chance to play and win against the biggest players in the game," Johnson's

Downing Street office said in a statement.

The Super League aims for 15 founding Super League clubs three places are yet to be filled and only five spots with more open access.

"The Prime Minister confirmed the government will not stand by while a small handful of owners create a closed shop," Downing Street said.

"He was clear that no action is off the table and the government is exploring every possibility, including legislative options, to ensure these proposals are stopped."

Everton decried the "preposterous arrogance" of Super League clubs. Everton's nine titles are the fourth most by a team in the history of the English top division, and the club from Merseyside was considered part of the country's elite in

the 1980s and early 1990s.

"The backlash is understandable and deserved and has to be listened to," Everton's board of directors said in a statement.

"This preposterous arrogance is not wanted anywhere in football outside of the clubs that have drafted this plan."

Everton's majority owner, British-Iranian businessman Farhad Moshiri, has spent heavily in recent years in an effort to push the team, which is managed by Carlo Ancelotti, into the group stage of the Champions League for the first time.

West Ham is also pursuing a top-four finish to qualify for the Champions League for the first time. The east London club said the Super League is an "attack on sporting integrity, undermines competition."

The Statesman Sport

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Knight Riders not really galloping

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 20 APRIL

On a roll after back-to-back wins, Chennai Super Kings would look to savour more of the same when they clash with struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in their next Indian Premier League match here tomorrow.

After their lacklustre campaign in the United Arab Emirates last year, CSK started the current season badly, losing to Delhi Capitals by seven wickets.

But the MS Dhoni-led side have since then come into their own with the captain making the most of his resources at the batting-friendly Wankhede stadium. Deepak Chahar's brilliance handed them their first win of the season against Punjab Kings. It has subsequently been

the all-round value which was missed in the previous IPL

season.

"He is adding an all-round aspect to our game which we lacked last year," Fleming

said, adding: "His contribution was just what we were looking for. We are absolutely happy with the way he has started. I'm really excited about the way we are playing." He said Dhoni would get better as he spent more time in the middle.

Sam Curran has also made an impact with both bat and ball. Be it his 15-ball 34 against in a losing cause against Delhi Capitals, or his bowling in powerplay sessions, Curran is giving Dhoni many options.

Against a side who will play their first match of the season at the Wankhede, smarting from two successive defeats, CSK will start as overwhelming favourites, though Eoin Morgan is all set to ring in some changes to revive their campaign. After their emphatic start against Sunrisers Hyderabad, KKR have slipped to No 5 following defeats by

Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore.

And in both the defeats, KKR had the upper hand but could not consolidate their advantage.

Varun Chakravarthy had dismissed Virat Kohli and Rajat Patidar in five balls to have RCB in a spot 9/2 inside two overs but Morgan then took the mystery spinner out of the attack and brought in Shakib-Al-Hasan as Glenn Maxwell and AB de Villiers lifted their team to 204/4.

Morgan has persisted with the veteran Harbhajan Singh, giving him the opening over in all three matches, but left-arm wrist-spinner Kuldeep Yadav could be a better option. Head coach Brendon McCullum has hinted at changes after KKR's 38-run loss to RCB. CSK opener Ruturaj Gaikwad is in a form slump with scores of 5, 5 and 10.

Match starts at 7.30 pm

Why Samson takes failure in his stride

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 20 APRIL

Rajasthan Royals captain Sanju Samson (in photo) is not left depressed by failures and says he would continue to play his shots and keep batting the way he loves to in the Indian Premier League.

Samson had scored a blistering century in the first match which the Royals lost narrowly to Punjab Kings but failed to come good against Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings.

"Yeah, actually it keeps happening in this format. I think the IPL definitely demands a lot of risk-taking shots. And as I said before when I succeeded, I took a lot of risks. That's why I scored a hundred. So, it depends actually on the day, the mindset you are coming in with," Samson said at the post-match Press conference after RR had lost to CSK by 45 runs here last night.

Samson said the chase last night would have been easy if dew had set in. "Looking at the previous matches, we played here or which we watched on TV, I think bowling first has more advantages than bowling second. So that's why we opted to bowl first and actually restricting CSK around 180 was really good work by our bowlers.

I thought if the dew comes on and the wicket eases out a bit, it would have been an easy chase for us," he added.

Asked about the batting order, the RR captain backed Shivam Dube, who had not got going last night, for the No 4 position.

"I think our batting order is very nicely set up. I think Dube is someone who is good at playing both spin and pace. I think No 4 really suits him. It depends upon the conditions actually. I think he has definitely done really well in the domestic season and I feel he is really looking good and we expect a lot of runs from him in the coming matches.

David Miller is a really great finisher and one of the greatest finishers in world cricket."

He said the IPL was a long tournament and it was normal for any player to fail in a few matches.

Warner required to turn things around for Sunrisers Hyderabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 20 APRIL

After suffering three defeats, Sunrisers Hyderabad would hope for skipper David Warner (in photo) to stop a further slide when they take on Punjab Kings in an Indian Premier League match here tomorrow.

SRH couldn't have asked for a worse start to the season as they slumped to three straight defeats, always while chashing.

Punjab have had one win in three games to be No 7, a rung above SRH.

Hyderabad have been hit hard by the lack of depth in their playing XI and their below-par Indian bench strength. It is now for Warner to pull off something spe-

cial for his team to be able to bounce back. A big innings is due from the SRH captain as he has scored just 93 runs in the three matches he has played so far, the 54 against Royals Challengers Bangalore having been the highest

total.

He also needs to be careful when deciding on his playing XI. Warner himself and Rashid Khan are certainties in the foreign players' slots, but the absence of Kane Williamson has been felt badly.

Punjab have been losing since defeating Rajasthan Royals. They lost to Chennai Super Kings and Delhi Capitals. After a batting collapse against CSK, Punjab made a significant improvement and rode on half-centuries by skipper KL Rahul (61) and Mayank Agarwal (69) to post a challenging 195 for four against DC.

But a below-par effort from their bowlers nullified the hard work of the openers. Mohammad Shami has not been at his best form and the Australian pace duo of Jhye Richardson and Riley Meredith has disappointed. It is time for Rahul to think of other alternatives like Chris Jordan. Young Arshdeep Singh has been impressive for Punjab.

Match starts at 3:30 pm

SA captains fear ICC ban, apex body says no intervention as of now

AGENCIES
JOHANNESBURG, 20 APRIL

that demands the apex body's intervention.

"ICC doesn't want to press the panic button yet and want them to solve the issue themselves," the source said. "We aren't saying that the government intervention in this case is problematic or not. It is a general view in terms of the process we follow. When the government grants funds etc, under certain conditions that is also termed as government intervention."

Earlier, the players feared if the current impasse is not resolved soon, South Africa may not be able to take part in the ICC T20 World Cup, to be held in India in October-November.

"At a time when we should be enthusiastic about the future, we have to be concerned about the future (of the game)," they said. "The Proteas Men's team has an ICC World T20 event in November. The current state of cricket administration undermines our preparation in this regard. It may even lead to our suspension from this event."

Experienced leg-spinner Amit Mishra (in photo) spun his web and snared four crucial wickets as Delhi Capitals restricted Mumbai Indians to a below-par 137 for 9 in their IPL game here on Tuesday.

Mumbai suffered a middle-order collapse on a sluggish Chepauk track after they were 67 for 2 at one stage as Delhi led by Mishra (4/24) made a spectacular comeback.

Opting to bat, Mumbai lost opener Quinton De Kock (1 early), who edged a Marcus Stoinis (1/20) delivery to Rishabh Pant in the third over.

Suryakumar Yadav (24) then joined Rohit Sharma (44), who got his first boundary an elegant drive, which raced to deep extra cover fence in the third over.

The duo rallied the innings with their 58-run stand.

Rohit took on ace off-spinner Ravichandra Ashwin (0/30) in the 4th over which fetched 15 runs.

The Mumbai skipper hammered a boundary and a max-

imum a loft over extra cover, while Surya also got one boundary, courtesy, an outside edge.

Rohit then hit Kagiso Rabada (1/25) for a six over long-off.

Surya then hit successive fours off Mishra as Mumbai raced to 55 for four after six overs.

However, Delhi pegged back the defending champions by grabbing three quick wickets.

First Avesh Khan (2/15) dismissed Surya, who nicked one to Pant and then Mishra removed Rohit and Hardik Pandya (0) in the 9th over as Mumbai slipped to 77 for 4.

Both Rohit and Hardik holed out at long on.

Mumbai then lost half its side for 81 as Krunal Pandya (1) chopped an under-cutting arm ball by Lalit Yadav (1/17) onto his stumps.

Mishra then used his googly to trap Kieron Pollard (2) in front of the wicket, as MI was teetering at 84 for six.

In the end, a responsible 26 from Ishan Kishan, who became Mishra's fourth wicket, coupled with Jayant Yadav's 23 took the side beyond the 125-run mark.

Scoreboard

MUMBAI	