



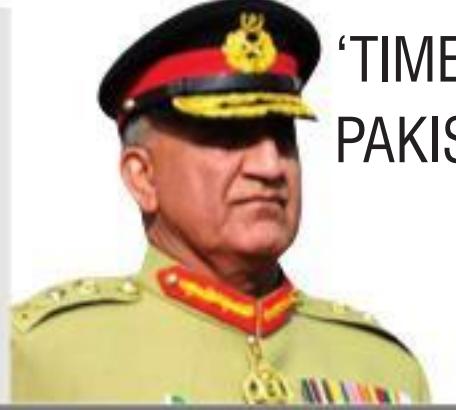
PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



GIVE COVID SHOTS
TO ALL ABOVE 18:
KEJRI TO CENTRE



FIRST SIGNS OF
CHURN
IN CONGRESS?



'TIME FOR INDIA AND
PAKISTAN TO BURY PAST'

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'FOREIGN GARBAGE
DEEMED BETTER
THAN NATIVE TALENT'

P3

P6

P9

P12

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. Mist in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 17 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 92% Min: 32%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 35.3°C (+5) Min: 16.4°C (0)

SUN RISES

06:25 hrs

MOON RISES

10:30 hrs

SUN SETS

18:32 hrs

MOON SETS

23:50 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Ex-Union Minister Vijay Goel leads a cycle rally to demand resignation of Delhi CM Kejriwal on the issue of Delhi being the most polluted city. In the Capital on Thursday. SUBRATA DUTTA

EU drug regulator backs AstraZeneca vaccine: The European Union's drug regulatory agency said Thursday that the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine is not linked to an overall increase in the risk of blood clots and that the benefits of use outweigh the risks, paving the way for European countries to resume administering the shots. Several European countries had suspended the use of the vaccine over the past week following reports of rare types of blood clots occurring in a small number of the millions of people who had received the shot across the continent.

US Defence Secretary begins India visit today: US Defence Secretary Lloyd J Austin is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi late Friday afternoon as part of his first overseas trip that also took him to Japan and South Korea. Ways to further strengthen India-US ties, boosting cooperation in Indo-Pacific and Afghan peace process are expected to be the key focus in talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Austin.

In addition to Maharashtra, Punjab, Karnataka,

Putin shows the mirror to US, retorts to Biden's 'killer' remark

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW, 18 MARCH

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that US President Joe Biden's remarks about him reflect the USA's own past and current problems.

Biden was asked in an interview whether he thought Russian President Vladimir Putin is a killer and said I do. Russia on Wednesday announced it's recalling its ambassador in Washington for consultations.

Asked about Biden's remarks during a video call with residents of Crimea marking the anniversary of its 2014 annexation from Ukraine, Putin charged that they reflect the United States' own troubled past. The Russian leader pointed at America's past history.

America has past history of slaughtering Native Americans and slavery. The painful legacy has weighed on the United States. Otherwise where would the Black Lives Matter movement come from?

VLADIMIR PUTIN
RUSSIAN PRESIDENT

clear that he doesn't want to normalize relations. We will proceed accordingly, Peskov said, noting that "there was nothing like that in history. He wouldn't answer if Russia could go as far as to rupture diplomatic ties with the US."

Konstantin Kosachev, a deputy speaker of the Russian parliament's upper house, said Biden's boorish statement marks a watershed.

Such assessments are inadmissible for a statesman of his rank, he said. They inevitably lead to a sharp exacerbation of our bilateral ties.

The exchange comes on the heels of a declassified report from the US national intelligence director's office that finds Putin authorised influence operations to help Trump in last presidential election.

ing a double toll. "I want to assure the House that within one year all physical toll booths in the country will be removed. It means that toll collection will happen via GPS. The money will be collected based on GPS imaging (on vehicles)," he said.

Explaining further, the minister said he has instructed police inquiry for those vehicles which do not pay toll using FASTag. There are cases of toll theft and GST evasion cases if FASTag is not fitted in vehicles," he said.

FASTag, which facilitates electronic payment of fee at toll plazas, was introduced in 2016. From 16 February, vehicles without FASTag are required to pay double toll fees at electronic toll plazas across the country.

"Making the tags compulsory would also help in ensuring that vehicles pass seamlessly through the toll plazas, as the fee payment will be done electronically," said Mr Gadkari.

Briefing the House about the vehicle scrapping policy, he said it provides for fitness test after 20 years for personal vehicles while commercial ones would require it after the completion of 15 years. If found unfit or in case of a failure to renew registration certificates, such vehicles would be de-registered.

"The scheme shall provide strong incentives to owners of old vehicles to scrap old and unfit vehicles through registered scrapping centres, which shall provide the owners with a scrapping certifi-

cate," Mr Gadkari said. The incentives provided under the scheme say a scrap value to be given for the old vehicle will be four to six per cent of the ex-showroom price of a new vehicle. The state governments may be advised to offer road-tax rebate of up to 25 per cent for personal vehicles and up to 15 per cent for commercial vehicles.

Vehicle manufacturers will be advised for providing a discount of five per cent on purchase of new vehicle against the scrapping certificate. In addition, the registration fees may also be waived for purchase of new vehicle against the scrapping certificate.

As a disincentive measure, increased fees for fitness certificate and fitness test

do not pay toll using FASTag
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Fitness test after 20 years for personal vehicles while commercial ones would require it after the completion of 15 years

5 per cent rebate on new cars would be offered to buyers on scrapping of old vehicles

India has 51 lakh Light Motor Vehicles which are older than 20 years and 34 lakh Light Motor Vehicles which are older than 15 years. Older vehicles pollute the environment 10 to 12 times more than fit vehicles

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may be applicable for vehicles 15 years onward from the date of initial registration.

India has 51 lakh Light Motor Vehicles which are older than 20 years and 34 lakh Light Motor Vehicles which are older than 15 years. Older vehicles pollute the environment 10 to 12 times more than fit vehicles

The objectives of the policy are to reduce of old and defective vehicles, achieve reduction in vehicular air pollutants to fulfil India's climate commitment, improve road and vehicular safety.

The ecosystem is expected to attract additional investments of around Rs. 10,000 crore and 35,000 job opportunities. The Ministry shall in the next few weeks publish draft notifications for comments. The Ministry will promote setting up of Registered Vehicle Scrapping Facility (RVSF) across India.

In the Rajya Sabha, several MPs complained the Vehicle Scrapping Policy offered meagre concessions to vehicle owners, and urged the minister to keep the interests of the middle classes in mind.

Govt pitches for All-India Judicial Service

The service will give an opportunity for induction of suitably qualified fresh legal talent selected through a proper all-India merit selection system as well as address the issue of social inclusion

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD
UNION LAW MINISTER

NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

A "properly framed" All India Judicial Service (AIJS) on the lines of other all-India services such as IAS and IPS is important to strengthen the overall justice delivery system, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

The service will give an opportunity for induction of suitably qualified fresh legal talent selected through a proper all-India merit selection system as well as address the issue of social inclusion by enabling suitable representation to marginalised and deprived sections of the society, he said.

A comprehensive proposal was formulated for the constitution of AIJS and the same was approved by Committee of Secretaries in November, 2012. The proposal was included as an agenda item in the conference of chief ministers and Chief Justices of the High Courts held in April, 2013, he noted.

He said it was decided that the issue needs further deliberation. The views of state governments and the high courts were sought. "There was divergence of opinion among the state governments and among the high courts and some wanted changes in the proposal formulated by the Central government," he observed. The proposal thereon was included in the agenda for the Chief Justices conference held in April 2015, he recalled. However, no progress was made, he said.

Toll booths to go, says Gadkari; unveils vehicle scrapping policy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

India will do away with toll booths and implement GPS-based toll collection within one year, said road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari in the Lok Sabha today.

The minister also unveiled the government's vehicle scrapping policy, proposed in the Union Budget, in suo moto statement made in both Houses of Parliament, under which about 5 per cent rebate on new cars would be offered to buyers on scrapping of old vehicles.

Mr Gadkari, speaking in the Lower House during Question Hour, said 93 per cent of vehicles pay toll using FASTag, but the remaining 7 per cent have still not adopted it despite pay-

ELECTRONIC TOLL COLLECTION

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Police inquiry for those vehicles which

VEHICLE SCRAPPING POLICY

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RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD
UNION LAW MINISTER

NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH



दशकों में जो न हो पाया 4 वर्ष में कर दिखाया

कानून- व्यवस्था हुई बेहतर



- जीरो टॉलरेंस नीति से अपराधों में रिकॉर्ड गिरावट
- माफिया एवं अपराधियों द्वारा अवैध रूप से अर्जित 1000 करोड़ रुपये की अधिक की संपत्तियां जब्त/व्यवस्ता
- उत्तर प्रदेश विधि विरुद्ध धर्म संपरिवर्तन प्रतिषेध विधेयक को मंजूरी
- सी.ए.ए. के विरोध-प्रदर्शन के दौरान सरकारी सम्पत्तियों को क्षति पहुंचाने वाले व्यक्तियों से क्षतिपूर्ति वसूली
- एण्टी रोमियो स्कॉर्यॉड का गठन
- सभी 1535 थानों पर महिला हेल्प डेस्क की स्थापना
- महिला एवं बाल सुरक्षा संगठन (WCSO) का गठन
- 218 नये फास्ट ट्रैक कोर्ट गठित
- उत्तर प्रदेश स्पेशल सिक्योरिटी फोर्स (UPSSF) का गठन
- पुलिस अधीक्षक कार्यालयों में भी एफ.आई.आर. काउन्टर
- 213 नये थानों एवं 16 परिक्षेत्रीय मुख्यालयों पर साइबर क्राइम पुलिस थानों की स्थापना
- 1 लाख 37 हजार पुलिसकर्मियों की भर्ती

शिक्षा से खुले प्रगति के द्वार



- मुख्यमंत्री अभ्युदय योजना में प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए निःशुल्क कोचिंग
- बालिकाओं के लिए स्नातक स्तर तक निःशुल्क शिक्षा
- 3 नए राज्य विश्वविद्यालय, 51 राजकीय महाविद्यालय, 194 राजकीय माध्यमिक विद्यालय, 28 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज, 26 पॉलीटेक्निक, 79 आईटीआई, 248 इंटर कॉलेज और 771 कस्टरबा विद्यालयों की स्थापना
- कक्षा-1 से कक्षा-8 तक के सभी बच्चों को निःशुल्क ड्रेस, जूते-मोजे, स्कूल बैग एवं पाठ्य-पुस्तकों का वितरण
- श्रमिकों के बच्चों की निःशुल्क शिक्षा के लिए 18 मंडलों में अटल आवासीय विद्यालयों की स्थापना
- कोरोना कालखण्ड में विद्यार्थियों के लिए वर्षुअल क्लास की व्यवस्था

महिला सम्मान एवं सशक्तिकरण को प्राथमिकता



- 1 लाख से अधिक महिलाओं को सरकारी नौकरी
- 58,758 महिलाओं की बैंकिंग कॉरेस्पॉन्डेंट सखी की रूप में नियुक्ति
- मिशन शक्ति अभियान में 7.30 करोड़ लोगों को जागरूक किया गया
- प्रधानमंत्री मातृ वंदना योजना से 36.16 लाख महिलाएं लाभान्वित
- 6.94 लाख बेटियों को मुख्यमंत्री कक्षा सुमंगला योजना का लाभ
- 'बेटी बचाओ-बेटी पढ़ाओ' योजना में 1 करोड़ 80 लाख बेटियां लाभान्वित
- ग्रामीण आवासीय अभिलेख (घरौनी) परिवार की महिला सदस्य के नाम होगा
- पौत्री (पुत्र की पुत्री), भतीजी (सगे भाई की पुत्री) और भाजियों (सगी बहन की पुत्री) को भी राजस्व संहिता में भौमिक अधिकार
- महिलाओं एवं बालिकाओं की सुरक्षा हेतु सेफ सिटी परियोजना

किसान हुए खुशहाल



- मंडी शुल्क में 1% की कमी
- 45 कृषि उत्पाद मण्डी शुल्क से मुक्त
- प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना में रु. 1910 करोड़ की क्षतिपूर्ति
- कृषि निवेशों पर देय रु. 1803 करोड़ की अनुदान राशि किसानों के खाते में हस्तांतरित
- रु. 3 लाख 58 हजार करोड़ का फसल ऋण वितरित
- रु. 36 हजार करोड़ से 86 लाख किसानों का ऋण माफ
- 20 चीनी भिलों का आयुनिकीकरण एवं विस्तारीकरण
- बाण सागर परियोजना सहित 11 सिंचाई परियोजनाएं पूर्ण कर एवं अन्य सिंचाई स्रोतों से 3.77 लाख हेक्टेयर अतिरिक्त सिंचाई क्षमता में वृद्धि
- वरासत अभियान के अंतर्गत 8,87,617 प्रकरण निस्तारित
- स्वामित्व योजना के अंतर्गत 2,09,016 घरौनी वितरित
- 5 लाख 66 हजार से अधिक गोवंश संरक्षित, गोवंश रखने पर प्रति गोवंश प्रतिमाह रु. 900 की सहायता

बुनियादी सुविधाओं का विकास



- पूर्वांचल एक्सप्रेस-वे, बुंदेलखण्ड एक्सप्रेस-वे, गंगा एक्सप्रेस-वे व गोरखपुर लिंक एक्सप्रेस-वे का तेजी से निर्माण, बलिया लिंक एक्सप्रेस-वे को मंजूरी
- बोटर नोएडा में हंटरनेशनल शीनफील्ड एयरपोर्ट, अयोध्या एवं कुशीनगर में अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट
- 8 एयरपोर्ट संचालित, 13 अन्य एयरपोर्ट एवं 7 हवाईपट्टी का विकास
- प्रदेश के 10 नगरों का भारत सरकार तथा 7 नगरों का राज्य सरकार के वित्त पोषण से स्मार्ट सिटी के रूप में विकास
- प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सङ्क की अनुदान राशि में 56,862 किमी. सङ्कों का निर्माण
- 3,32,804 किमी. सङ्कों का गड्ढामुक्तिकरण
- 13,189 किमी. नई सङ्कों का निर्माण
- 13,613 किमी. सङ्कों का चौड़ीकरण/सुदृढ़ीकरण
- 428 छोटे-बड़े पुलों का निर्माण
- 1.21 लाख गांवों तक निर्बाध बिजली आपूर्ति
- जिला मुख्यालयों को 24 घंटे, तहसील मुख्यालयों को 22 घंटे तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में 18-20 घंटे बिजली की आपूर्ति
- हर घर नल योजना में 30 हजार ग्राम पंचायतों को शुद्ध पेयजल

निवेशकों की पहली पसंद



- निवेश फ्रेण्डली 21 नीतियां लागू
- इंवेस्टर्स समिट में रु. 4.68 लाख करोड़ निवेश के एम.ओ.यू. हस्ताक्षरित
- सिंगल विडो पोर्टल 'निवेश भित्र' के माध्यम से 96% निवेश प्रस्तावों का निस्तारण
- रु. 3 लाख करोड़ के निवेश से परियोजनाएं शुरू
- फिफेन्स इण्डस्ट्रियल मैन्युफैक्चरिंग कॉरिडोर का निर्माण, रु. 50 हजार करोड़ का निवेश
- फिल्म सिटी से निवेश और रोजगार के बड़े अवसर
- ओडीओपी योजनान्तर्गत 25 लाख से अधिक लोगों को रोजगार, नियात में 38% की वृद्धि
- स्वरोजगार हेतु उद्यम सारथी एप संचालित

जन्मतमंदों को मिला सरकार का साथ



- मुख्यमंत्री सामूहिक विवाह योजना में 1.52 लाख निर्धारण कर्त्त्वाओं का विवाह
- निर्माण श्रमिकों की पुत्रियों के लिए संचालित कन्या विवाह सहायता योजना के अन्तर्गत 11,581 कन्याओं का विवाह
- 51 लाख से अधिक वृद्धजन, 28 लाख निराश्रित महिलाओं व 22 लाख विवाह महिलाओं को रु. 500 प्रतिमाह की पेशन
- मुख्यमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) में 72 हजार 302 आवासों का निर्माण/स्वीकृति
- बनांगीया/मुसाहर/कोल एवं थारु समूह के 38 गांवों को राजस्व गांवों का दर्जा एवं बुनियादी सुविधाएं
- अल्पसंख्यक वर्ग, अनुसूचित जाति/जनजाति, पिछड़ी जाति व सामाजिक वर्ग के कुल 1 करोड़ 78 लाख से अधिक छात्र-छात्राओं को कुल रु. 13,690 करोड़ से अधिक की पूर्वदशाम एवं दशमोत्तर छात्रवृत्ति वितरित
- 40 लाख कामगारों की रिक्ल मैपिंग कर रोजगार उपलब्ध कराया गया
- 101 करोड़ से अधिक मानव दिवस सृजित कर 1.50 करोड़ श्रमिकों को रोजगार
- पी.एम. स्वनिधि योजना में 8 लाख 32 हजार स्ट्रीट वेण्डर्स आचारित

आस्था का सम्मान पर्यावरण के लिए अभियान



- प्रयागराज कुम्भ में 24 करोड़ से अधिक श्रद्धालुओं व पर्यटकों का आगमन, यूनेस्को द्वारा सराहना
- अयोध्या में दीपोत्सव, वाराणसी में देव-दीपावली, मथुरा में कृष्णोत्सव व बरसाना में रंगोत्सव का भव्य आयोजन
- काशी विश्वनाथ कॉरिडोर का विकास
- बौद्ध सर्किट के अन्तर्गत श्रावस्ती, कपिलवस्तु और कुशीनगर का विकास
- रामायण सर्किट के अन्तर्गत चित्रकूट और शृंगवेरपुर का विकास
- जैन तथा सूफी सर्किट के तहत आगरा एवं फतेहपुर सीकरी में पर्यटन सुविधाओं का विकास
- कैलाश मानसरोवर भवन का निर्माण, तीर्थयात्रियों की अनुदान राशि रु. 50 हजार से बढ़ाकर रु. 1 लाख प्रति यात्री की गयी
- 39.42 करोड़ पौधरोपण
- गंगा के दोनों किनारों पर 9 करोड़ पौधरोपण

प्रधानमंत्री जी का विज्ञन हो रहा साकार | काम दमदार, योगी सरकार



I don't know how my name featured in the candidate list. I am still with the Congress and remain so

EX-PCC CHIEF SOUMEN MITRA'S WIDOW SHIKHA MITRA
AFTER BJP ANNOUNCED HER NAME FOR THE CHOWRINGHEE ASSEMBLY SEAT

Make Covid vaccination open for all above 18: Kejri to Centre

Delhi govt to increase the daily count of coronashots from 30-40K to 1.25L, CM says; notes an uptick in virus cases in the city but says it is 'not a cause for worry' as his govt is tackling it

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today appealed to the Centre to bring relaxations in the Covid-19 vaccination guidelines and make this vaccination open for all aged above 18 years.

If the Centre does it then the entire population of Delhi could be immunised against Covid in three months, Kejriwal asserted.

The CM also asserted that the Delhi government will increase the count of the Covid vaccine jabs from the existing 30,000-40,000 per day to 1.25 lakh per day along with doubling the vaccination centres from 500 to 1000 in the next few days. The timings for administering the vaccine a day from 9 am to 5 pm are also being extended to 9 am-9 pm.

Noting that coronavirus cases in Delhi have been rising in the last few days, Kejriwal, at a virtual press conference, said it was not a matter to be worried about.

He said that on one hand India has taken a lead in making a Covid vaccine, but on the other, a rise in coronavirus cases is being again reported in the country. This is "difficult to digest", he said.

"Thus, I would appeal to



the Central government to bring some relaxations in the vaccination guidelines, in terms of eligibility of age groups. The current guidelines are very strict and rigid, and also has co-morbidity rider for an age group.

"Our country is now doing good in terms of the production of the vaccine. Therefore, rather than creating criteria on the eligibility, age groups with comorbidities etc, we should create a category of eligible people, for instance, people below 18 and other age groups," Kejriwal reportedly said.

The CM suggested that the Covid vaccination process be made open and a walk-in facility should be included

as a regular immunisation procedure.

"If the Centre relaxes those criteria and allows vaccination largely for all, and if we get a sufficient supply of the vaccine, then we have formulated a plan today to administer the vaccine to the entire population of Delhi in three months," he said.

Kejriwal also appealed to the Centre to decentralise the vaccination system so that it exercises less control and allows the state governments to carry out the job "on a war footing".

"I also want to appeal to the Central government to provide some relaxation in the guidelines for the expansion of vaccination centres. We will be

writing to the Centre to relax a few parameters. We assure them that we will be careful, and take all precautions.

"This relaxation will help us in opening new centres. Also, many of the existing centres are functioning 24 hours a day. We will have more centres functioning round-the-clock," the CM said.

Kejriwal acknowledged an uptick in Covid cases in Delhi in recent days and said his government has directed officials for stricter tracking, tracing and isolation of cases.

It was a "negligible" rise and "not a cause for worry". It was still much lower compared to several thousands of daily cases reported in the city in June, September and November.

ber, he pointed out.

Earlier in the day, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain asked people to be cautious, observe all Covid safety norms and not get complacent about the pandemic situation in the city.

Jain said that Delhi's positivity rate was 0.6 per cent, which was the lowest compared to states like Maharashtra, Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, MP and Haryana. Delhi's coronavirus testing capacity is five times that of the national average, he said.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 536 coronavirus cases, the highest in about two-and-a-half months, while there more persons died from this infection that took its Covid toll to 10,948. Kejriwal conceded that due to a decrease in Covid cases a few weeks ago, laxity had crept into the system but now direction has been issued for stricter surveillance and stricter enforcement of safety norms like masks and social distancing.

The Delhi government was consulting its own experts and those of the central government and was taking all possible measures to check the fresh rise in the number of coronavirus cases. "We are closely monitoring the situation and taking adequate measures to address the situation," the CM added.

BJP-led U'khand govt doesn't hold any event to celebrate its 4th anniversary

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
DEHRADUN, 18 MARCH

Facing a challenging situation, the BJP-led Uttarakhand government decided not to host any function to celebrate the completion of four years of its regime. The recent sudden change in the leadership of the Uttarakhand government, with Tirath Rawat replacing Trivendra Singh Rawat as Chief Minister, derailed all plans of the celebrations for this occasion. The BJP government completed four years in office in the hill state on Thursday. The new Uttarakhand Chief Minister, Tirath Singh Rawat, is in news these days for his comments on women wearing "ripped jeans" and for comparing Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Lord Ram and Lord Krishna.

When Trivendra Rawat was in power he had chalked out elaborate plans to celebrate

the four year of the BJP government by hosting programmes in every state assembly constituency. After Tirath Rawat took charge a sudden and surprising development took place. Uttarakhand Chief Secretary Om Prakash issued a notification on 13 March, ordering cancellation of all the assembly constituency wise programmes to mark the four year completion of the BJP government in Uttarakhand. The withdrawal of programmes has provided opposition parties with a new issue and on Thursday the Aam Aadmi Party staged a protest march in Dehradun. Uttarakhand Congress president Pritam Singh says, "The public has lost their attachment with BJP due to their anti-people policies. There is anarchy and misery in the state. As a result, every Uttarakhand resident is ready to change the system."

Seeking to beat the Congress, the BJP government

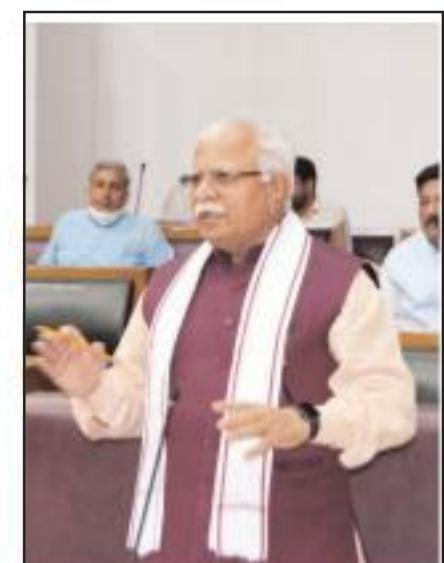
had decided to make Gairsain the summer capital of the hill state. The projects of the central government like the all-weather road connecting the Char Dham and Rishikesh-Karanpraya rail line project provided the BJP an edge over other political parties. But, suddenly there was a change in guard and now the BJP is struggling to provide clarification on the works done by Trivendra Rawat and actual reasons for his removal.

The people were expecting a big administrative change in the Uttarakhand government. By retaining old ministers and providing them old portfolios, Tirath Rawat has so far failed to provide any clarity on, "How is his governance different from Trivendra Singh Rawat government?" It is early to predict anything, but the new Uttarakhand CM does not seem to have started his leadership innings on a high note.



Haryana CM justifies Bill to recover property damages from protesters

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 18 MARCH



by 2025.

The CM said that extensive planning strategy is required before any recruitment process is initiated, be it hiring teachers, doctors or engineers. There was a time when there was a lot of demand for engineers. Today it has decreased. In today's era, recruitment of doctors is the need of the hour. Although earlier also the demand for doctors had been there but in the present times it has increased. Therefore opening medical colleges in every district of the state is the utmost priority of the state government.

HP Parliament Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj while replying to a query of Gagret MLA Rajesh Thakur on increase in smuggling modules on Punjab-Himachal border told the state Assembly that the government had changed its approach in tackling drug trade in the state.

'Himachal changes strategy to curb drug menace, goes after kingpins'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 MARCH

Amid concern over synthetic drugs making inroads in the state, the Himachal Pradesh government has changed its strategy to tackle drug menace and is targeting its kingpins with seizures of their properties or assets.

HP Parliamentary Affairs Minister Suresh Bhardwaj

also raised the issue of Damdial area of Kangra district becoming the biggest drug smuggling hub in the state and that earlier the locals used to indulge in illicit liquor trade but now they had shifted towards smuggling of chhatta.

Gagret MLA Rajesh Thakur also raised the issue of Damdial area of Kangra district becoming the biggest drug smuggling hub in the state and that earlier the locals used to indulge in illicit liquor trade but now they had shifted towards smuggling of chhatta.

Besides, meetings with Chief Ministers of neighbouring states were held to curb drug menace and joint operations with police of neighbouring states were conducted to plug drug supplies in the

state," he added.

Bhardwaj said earlier only small quantities of drugs were seized and most of the times, the arrested persons were the users after which the strategy was changed to stop their harassment besides plugging drug supply.

In most cases, it had been witnessed that most of the persons involved in the chhatta/heroin supplies were from African countries and the police were conducting thorough investigations to catch such kingpins.

Gagret MLA Rajesh Thakur also raised the issue of Damdial area of Kangra district becoming the biggest drug smuggling hub in the state and that earlier the locals used to indulge in illicit liquor trade but now they had shifted towards smuggling of chhatta.

He asked for raids in the area to plug drug supply routes in the state and said the state government should seize the properties of the persons involved.

Responding to the query, Bhardwaj said the state government had already started

financial investigation of persons involved in drug trade and their properties were being seized.

"The HP Police is conducting operations in collaboration with the Narcotics Control Bureau and Enforcement Directorate, besides taking the help of police of neighbouring states for better investigations and action against the drug suppliers," he said.

He added in the last three years, 146 cases of chhatta, 82 of charas, 10 cases of opium and 516 cases of illicit liquor had been registered and the government was making efforts to secure early convictions in the state.

Replying to another query during Question hour on non-payment of salaries and provident fund to outsourced employees, State Health and Family Welfare Minister Rajiv Saizal said a probe will be conducted in the case.

Saizal said Chamba MLA Pawan Nayyar had raised an important issue and said the government will probe the complaints and if any discrepancy was found then

Scrap farm laws and bring in new legislations after discussing with farmers: Capt to Centre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 18 MARCH



to understand why the Central government was trying to break the age-old time-tested relationship between farmers and Arthiyas (grain commission agents). The new laws are not an improvement on the existing system but will destroy the farming sector, he said, asking where the poor farmers (comprising 75 per cent of Punjab's farmers) would go in case of need once the Arthiyas are replaced by big faceless corporates.

Delhi does not understand agriculture, the CM further remarked, in response to a question on the new FCI policy of direct payment to farmers, which he said he did not favour. In any case, he said, agriculture is a State subject and the Centre has no right to legislate on the matter. He flayed the central government for trying to destroy the federal structure enshrined in the Constitution by encroaching on state powers.

The Punjab CM opposed the policy of excessive regionalisation being followed by certain states, saying "Amarinder stands for India for Indians". "I believe that India is one country," he said, adding that too much regionalisation is not a good thing. Responding to a question on reservation in jobs for local youth, as recently announced by neighbouring Haryana, which has reserved 75 per cent of jobs for locals in the private sector, Amarinder said there was no state in India where Punjabis were not flourishing and doing a great job.

HP Oppn stages walkout from House to protest govt's move to amend FRBM law

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 18 MARCH



directions of the Central government and instead of passing the bill, the ruling party should request the Central government to take onus of borrowing and interest liabilities," he added.

The Leader of the Opposition, Mukesh Agnihotri, termed the bill as "black day" in the history of Himachal when the state is celebrating 50 years of statehood and said the state government was aiming to increase the limit to double with new amendments.

This led to the Centre government giving states one time special dispensation for additional borrowing to compensate the states for lower devolution of Central taxes on 26 February 2020 subject to amendment in the FRBM Act.

The legislation will regularise the expenditure and also the debts taken above the prescribed limit in FRBM during Congress regime in 2012-13, 2013-14 and 2014-15," he said.

He further stated that the previous Congress breached the FRBM Act and in addition, they didn't admit to the breach and did not even try to regularise it which was mandatory to avoid future complications. Bhardwaj said Himachal had received one-time receipts from the Union government on account of its share of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) Fund credited in the Public Account which was included in the public debt of the state.

"To enable the state government to avail additional borrowing in public interest and to maintain the pace of development, the fiscal deficit could not be maintained at the level of 3 per cent of the estimated Gross State Domestic Product in the financial year 2019-20.

The bill has become necessary to amend the Himachal Pradesh FRBM Act 2005 suitably from 1st January, 2020, he added.

The opposition members including CPI (M) MLA Rakesh Singh were not satisfied with Bhardwaj's reply and staged walkout from the Assembly and the amendments were passed in their absence in the House.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MP from Mandi, Ram Swaroop Sharma, who was found dead at his Delhi residence on Wednesday morning, was today cremated with full state honours at Machhaval in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, former Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal, other senior ministers and MLAs attended his last rites.

The CM expressed condolences to the family members of Ram Swaroop Sharma by visiting his native village Jalpahar near Jogiandargarh in Mandi district. He prayed for peace to the departed soul and strength to the bereaved family members to bear this loss.

Thakur said that the untimely demise of Sharma was not only a big loss for the Mandi parliamentary constituency but also for Himachal Pradesh and the BJP. He would always be remembered for his humbleness, simplicity and dedication. Meanwhile, national BJP president Jagat Prakash Nadda paid his tributes by laying a wreath on the body of Ram Swaroop Sharma on Wednesday evening at Himachal Sadan in New Delhi.

Nadda also met the family

members of former MP and expressed his sympathies with the bereaved family members.

The body of deceased MP was brought to Himachal Sadan where Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur, MPs Kishan Kapoor, Suresh Kashyap and Indu Goswami, senior BJP leader Mahendra Nath Pandey and Himachalis residing in NCR paid tributes and also conveyed their condolences to the family members of the late MP.

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Nadda also met the family

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures

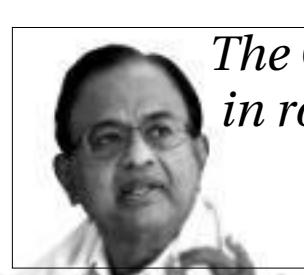
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- PUNCHKUAN ROAD, Garwal Bhawan, (Near Jhandewalan, Gole Chak.)
- WAZIRPUR A-5, Near Richi Rich Banquet (Opp. Shalimar Bagh)
- JANAKPUR B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing



The Central government has failed miserably
in rolling out the vaccination to Indians.

SENIOR CONGRESS LEADER P CHIDAMBARAM

LAMENTING ON THE SLOW PACE OF VACCINATION IN THE COUNTRY

THUMBNAILS



A health worker wearing a PPE kit collects a swab sample from a passenger for Covid-19 test after he arrived from out of station in Ahmedabad. PTI

Kerala Cong leader passes away: Veteran Kerala Congress leader Skariah Thomas, 74, died at a private hospital in Kochi on Thursday due to post-Covid complications. He was the chairman of Kerala Congress (Skariah Thomas), which is part of LDF. PTI

J&K vaccination capacity: J&K government is building the capacity to vaccinate 3 lakh people per day against coronavirus. Vaccine storage capacity of over 50 lakh doses and all vaccination centres will be connected through 873 cold chain points. SNS

Covid spike: T'gana HC cautions govt

Governor seeks report on wastage of vaccine in state



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD, 18 MARCH

past daily medical bulletins to prove that the government didn't perform 50,000 tests despite the increase in Covid-19 cases contrary to High Court's order.

However the advocate general said health staff were involved in vaccination programme and mobile buses were being used at state borders, railway stations and bus stations to conduct tests.

According to a release from the Raj Bhavan the governor directed her officials to get report from the health department about the vaccine wastage after the state was called out for being leading the numbers among all states in this regard. She also asked for report bout the increase in the number of cases in schools and hostels and the measures taken to contain the spread. "I'm concerned bout the high number of Covid-19 positive cases in couple of residential schools. I'm worried bout the high rate of vaccine wastage in our Telangana state.

The state has seen a huge spurt in cases particularly with many students and teachers of government run residential schools testing positive for the virus prompting calls from guardians to shut down schools.

The state was also asked to identify areas with high incidence of cases as containment ones. The bench headed by chief Justice Hima Kohli directed the state government to perform 50,000 RT-PCR tests everyday. Petitioners cited

Amaravati land scam: Naidu files petition against FIR

HYDERABAD, 18 MARCH

Former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu has filed a quash petition in the High Court against the FIR filed AP CID in connection with the Amaravati land scam case.

Meanwhile Andhra Pradesh Assembly Privilege Committee has directed the assembly secretary to write to State Election Commissioner N Ramesh to appear before the panel after two ministers lodged complaints against him.

Two senior ministers Botsa Satyanarayana and P Ramachandra Reddy had complained against him for breach of privilege after he had made some comments against them in letter to the governor for intimidations. The complainant Alla appeared before the investigating officer in Vijayawada on Thursday and presented his case.

"Other officials" have also been included in the FIR as accused but were not named yet. The CID served notices to both asking them to appear before the investigating officer. SNS

Sabarimala issue in SC; nothing to be debated now: CM Vijayan

MALAPPURAM, 18 MARCH

Seeking to put the Sabarimala issue on the back-burner in poll-bound Kerala, chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday said there was nothing to be discussed or debated now as the review pleas against allowing women in 10-50 age group into the hill shrine are before the Supreme Court.

"Whenever the court pronounces the final verdict, and if it concerns the devotees in any manner, then at that time the government will hold discussion with all the sections of the society and take necessary steps", he told reporters here in response to a question.

His remarks came amid demands by the Opposition Congress, BJP and others that he clarify his position in the wake of contradictory views expressed by a minister and the CPI-M top leadership over the issue.

Vijayan was responding to a query on CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury rejecting state Devaswom minister Kadakkampally Surendran's expression of regret over the incidents witnessed in the hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa in 2018.

Sabarimala and several other parts of the state were then rocked by protests against 'hasty' decision of the LDF government to implement the apex court verdict allowing women of all age groups to enter the Lord Ayyappa shrine. Yechury had said he was not aware of the reason why Surendran expressed regret. The incident has come back into focus during the campaign for the 6 April Assembly elections with Congress and BJP attacking the ruling front. SNS&PTI

Economist Arvind resigns as Ashoka University professor

NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Two days after political commentator Pratap Bhanu Mehta resigned as a professor from the Ashoka University, his colleague, economist Arvind Subramanian, put in his papers on Thursday. Faculty members wrote to the Vice-Chancellor expressing deep anguish.

The liberal arts university in Sonipat, much sought after for the courses it offers, has found itself at the centre of a controversy due to the recent developments. A query sent to the university regarding the resignation remained unanswered till the filing of a question.

Subramanian was appointed as chief economic advisor on 16 October, 2014 for three years and was given an extension to 2 May.

At a rally at Nabakunja Maidan in Purulia, Modi said the prime reason for infiltration is Miss Banerjee's appeasement politics. People of Bengal are fed up with her minority appeasement, he told a vast gathering.

A separate ministry of tribal development has been formed during Atalji's (former PM Atal Bihari Vajpeyi) tenure and his government has made a separate budget for tribal development, he said, trying to allure the people in the tribal Janglemahal region of the state.

"Since the Brigade meeting about 11 days ago already a *parivartan* has occurred," PM said, referring to CM's chanting 'Chandi Path' publicly. The 'syndicate raj' led by TMC extorts money from Amphan relief funds and even the free food grains distributed during the lockdown, he alleged.

"TMC means Transfer My Commission and BJP means Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). That's why TMC has not allowed farmers direct benefit transfer in banks and Ayushman Bharat Yojana," he added.

"It's an irony that Sita and Lord Ram stayed in exile in Purulia and Sita's water source for drinking was found at Sit-

i

Bengal fed up with Mamata's appeasement politics: Modi



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a rally in Purulia on Thursday. ■ AMIJAD KAJI

DEBABYOTI CHAKRABORTY

PURULIA, 18 MARCH

Pillorying chief minister Mamata Banerjee for 'appeasement and votebank politics' and running a corrupt administration, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Miss Banerjee's 'game will be over once votes for the Assembly elections are counted on 2 May'.

Wishing CM speedy recovery, Modi said he was worried about the injury of a daughter of the country.

The PM met with the martyrs families of Purulia before his speech and later assured them that all criminals and mafias will be booked and sent to jail after 2 May.

"Didi has forgotten about development, education, youth development, removing mafia raj, employment, school pucca houses, hospital, drinking water instead has been focused on *Khela Hobo*. But I say *Bikash Hobo Khela Hobo Na Ar*," he added. He has assured MPPF for forest goods and 36 lakhs Ujjwala gas connections to the tribals in Purulia and claimed Ekalabha schools for tribals have been set up.

In his speech that lasted an hour, the PM desisted from excoriating the CPI-M and the Congress. He even skirted the soaring prices of kerosene, petrol, diesel, LPG and attempts of privatisation and disinvestment of PSUs and other units.

Union minister and tribal leader Arjun Munda was also present in the rally today.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

IN THE COURT OF
SH. JITENDRA SINGH
Addl. District Judge-5
(Central)
Room No. 318,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.
PC No. 03/2020
NDOH 30-03-2021
Man Singh
Versus
State & Ors.
CITATION UNDER SECTION
276 OF THE INDIAN
SUCCESSION ACT.

Whereas an application under section 276/278 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate/Letter of Administration in respect of the estate of Late Sh. Bharat Singh, s/o Late Shri Saudagar, House No. 10A/10830, WEA, Near Chaina Market, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005, died on 23-09-2016 made by Sh. Man Singh, s/o Late Sh. Bharat Singh, r/o 10A/10830, Gali No. 4, WEA, Karol Bagh, New Delhi-110005.

Whereas the 31st of March, 2021 has been fixed for hearing of the case. Notice is hereby given that any person having any interest probate/Letter of Administration of the Estate of the said deceased if he/she desires to be heard shall appear before this court on 17-07-2021 before the grant of Letters of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court this 12th day of March, 2021.

Addl. District Judge-06
(Central)
Delhi.

Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF
SH. SUNIL RANA
Addl. District Judge-5
(Central)
Room No. 307,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi.
PC No. 16/2021
N.D.O.H. 17-07-2021
Raj Kumar & Ors.
Versus

State
CITATION UNDER SECTION
271 OF THE INDIAN
SUCCESSION ACT.

Whereas an petition under section 276/278 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, for grant of probate/Letter of Adminis-

stration in respect of the estate of deceased if he/she desires to be heard shall appear before this court on 17-07-2021 before the grant of Letters of Adminis-

tration.

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Addl. District Judge-06
(Central)
Delhi.

Seal of the Court

LOST & FOUND

Lost & Found

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Unit-PEM, Plot No. 25, sector 16A,
Noida 201301

Lost & Found

M/s Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Unit-PEM, Plot No. 25, sector 16A,
Noida 201301

SITUATION VACANT

Vacancy — Applications are invited for Accountant, FO, AO & PO (PM&E) for OTELP(ITA) on outsourcing basis through Shree Solutions and Services with B.Com. & Chartered Acc/B.Sc. Agriculture/MCA with 5-7 years exp. Visit: shreesolutionsandservices.com or call-720570624 for details. Send resume to: apply@shree.com by-22/03/2021

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that my client that SVL Developers, have executed a Joint Development Agreement with Abhay Charan Chatterjee Family Trust for Development of 22/1, Sardar Sankar Road, Kolkata-29. Any objection in writing will be entertained within a fortnight from the date of publication and all claims made thereafter shall be treated as null and void.

Chandrarup Chatterjee
Advocate
81/1, Charu Chandra Place
Kolkata-700033

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Prosenjit Saha
Advocate
60A, Bondei Road
Rose Garden Apartment
Kolkata-700019
Mobile: 9433132848

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HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer, Mandi Division No. I, HPWD, Mandi, Distt Mandi (H.P.) on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractor registered with HPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

TENDER

Central Coalfields Limited
(A Miniratna Company
(A Subsidiary of Coal India Limited))

NOTICE

"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on websites of Coal India Ltd. www.coailindia.in respective Subsidiary Company (CCL, www.centralcoalfields.in), CIL e-procurement portal <https://coailindiaenders.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in> in addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>."

TENDERS

Instrument purchase for

DBT - N_E_R - B_P_M C project under Punarbhu

Chaudhuri - 127, Mukundapur, Kolkata-700099

Eastern India Healthcare Foundation MEDICA Superspeciality Hospital

Formation cutting 5/7 mtr.

Wide, construction of

retaining walls, cross

drainage works and wire

meshing, site leveling,

Soil WBM G.I, Weather

WBM G.I.I & G.I.II, Taming

V-shape drain, Parapets

and Kilometer stone &

Sign Board including rou-

tine maintenance in Km

0/0 to 12/525

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

Executive Engineer,

H.P.W.D., Mandi Distt. Mandi (H.P.)

On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh



Modi govt instead of looking at providing livelihood to the people of the country in these difficult circumstances is hell bent to snatch it from those who are already in jobs

CPI (M) LEADER MOHAMMAD YOUSUF TARIGAMI

SLAMMING THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF BEING ANTI-POOR, ANTI-FARMER

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



BJP workers and supporters during a rally in Guwahati, Thursday.

Book release: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday released a book titled *The Forgotten Kashmir: The Other Side of the Line of Control* in which author Dinkar P. Srivastava has unmasked conspiracies of Pakistan. The Lt-Governor also addressed a webinar of Vivekananda International Foundation on the occasion.

SNS

Car seized in Waze case: The National Investigation Agency seized another luxury car allegedly used by suspended Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze. The Toyota Land Cruiser Prado was found parked outside Waze's residence in Saket area. The vehicle was brought to the NIA office at Cumballa Hill.

PTI

Spike in cases, Gujarat schools closed again

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, 18 MARCH

As the daily Covid-19 cases in Gujarat rose above 1,000 once again, the State Government today announced the closure of all schools in eight big cities.

Covid-19 cases in Gujarat

have started rising since last two weeks due to multiple reasons, including large gatherings without masks at the India-England cricket matches at the newly inaugurated Narendra Modi Stadium here.

Following much hue and cry over social distancing not

being observed at the cricket stadium, the last three Twenty-20 matches are being played without any spectators at the stadium.

Education Minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama said that the decision to stop physical classes in the eight municipal corporation cities

was taken at a meeting chaired by the Chief Minister Vijay Rupani. Offline teaching in schools of Ahmedabad, Gandhinagar, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Junagadh and Jamnagar would thus remain suspended from Friday 19 March to Wednesday 10 April.

SC: NCB needs to challenge Rhea's bail order to assail HC's adverse remarks

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

The Supreme Court Thursday told the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) that it would have to challenge the Bombay High Court order granting bail to actress Rhea Chakraborty in a drugs-related case if it wanted to assail adverse remarks made in the judgement.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde took note of the submission of Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for NCB, that the probe

agency was not pressing against the grant of bail to the actress.

The law officer said the high court made certain very wide-ranging observations about the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and they will make it very difficult for the agency to prosecute and ensure conviction. You cannot challenge the bail order observations without challenging the bail order itself, said the bench which also comprised Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian.

Iconic works of Bengali writers' released virtually in NDWBF '21

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Iconic works of Bengali literature, written before the country's Independence, by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, Adwaita Malabarman and Rammohan Roy besides another book on Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi translated by Prof Sabysachi Bhattacharya have been released here at the virtual New Delhi World Book Fair 2021 (NDWBF).

The books published under the aegis of National Book Trust (NBT) were released by renowned astrophysicist and Sanskrit scholar Professor O P Pandey, also well versed in Bengali language.

Another Sanskrit luminary, writer and All India Radio Artist Dr Baldevanand Sagar was also present on the occasion.

The five newly published books are *Anandamath* by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay, *Pather Dabi* by Saratchandra Chattopadhyay, *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam* by Adwaita Malabarman, Rammohan Roy, *Nirbachito Rachna, Samgabay* by Rammohan Roy. Another book *Mahatma O Kabi* translated by Professor Sabysachi Bhattacharya was also released.

The book release programme was telecast live over NBT Book Fair Web Platform, YouTube, Facebook. Over 500 viewers attended the programme on various platforms.

The chief editor and Joint Director of National Book Trust, India, speaking on the occasion referred to the support extended by Director of the NBT Colonel Yuvraj and Chairman Professor Govind Prasad Sharma in coming out with the 5'all-time great' Bengali books.

Editor Bengali language books at NBT Bratin Dey in his vote of thanks to the guests said the virtual edition opened many avenues and options to explore the new format of holding a book fair virtually.

Dr Ananthbandhu Chattopadhyay, noted scholar and biographer of Shyamaprasad Mookerjee, spoke on Anandamath and Pather Dabi. Abir Mukhopadhyay, the noted author and journalist spoke about the book, *Titas Ekti Nadir Naam*.

Professor Barid Baran Ghosh, amongst the finest scholars of Bengal, has done the compilation of and an introduction on noted social reformer Rammohan Roy's works.

He dwelt on Raja Rammohan Roy and his contributions in detail.

Professor Parthasarathi Bhattacharya, elaborated on the letters written between Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore in the book *Mahatma O Kabi* translated by Professor Sabysachi Bhattacharya.

Famous novelist and short story writer Dr Nabakumar Basu had joined the programme virtually from Scanthorpe, United Kingdom.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

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'PM's promises turned into big zero in Assam'

Congress leader Surjewala slams Centre for failed projects and CAA issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI, 18 MARCH

Launching a blistering attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress on Thursday posed a set of questions to him, alleging that big announcements made by him for Assam have translated to a "big zero". Addressing a press conference, All India Congress Committee general secretary Ranjeet Singh Surjewala said Assam is known for its culture, tolerance, moderation, goodwill and harmony in the entire country.



"The first question is about Modi's fake promise in the world's largest river island Majuli, where he had given a speech on March 26, 2016 and promised to build a bridge over the Brahmaputra. Today, we want to ask why there was no development related to it.

"...But in the past five years, to quench BJP's thirst for power in Assam, not only have they sown seeds of division, but also they have attacked the language and land of Assam through the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA)," he said.

Assam can tolerate everything but lies, deception and falsehood, he said.

"From PM Narendra Modi to Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal, they are serving mendacity to the people of Assam in the name of development. Big announcements were made but the outcome is a big zero,"

Surjewala said. Earlier in the day, the prime minister addressed an election rally at Karimganj in the Barak Valley of Assam to campaign for BJP candidates. The Congress wants to ask Modi 10 questions on behalf of the people of Assam, he said.

PM says, Cong can go to any extent to mislead people: Lashing out at the Congress, PM Narendra Modi said the grand old party can go to any extent to 'mislead' people and garner votes. Addressing his first election rally in Assam, the PM said the Congress is moving around with 'tala-chabi' (poll symbol of AIUDF) in the state, even as some of its workers were opposed to the idea.

On August 8, 2021, the Rajya Sabha was informed that there was no proposal to build an expressway in Assam, he said. Listing out 20 projects worth nearly Rs 11,000 crore, Surjewala said the BJP and Modi collected votes by claiming such developmental works, but these have now been thrown into the dustbin.

"There has been total misgovernance in Assam in the last five years with all vital parameters going down. The state GDP went down to 6.3 per cent from 15.87 per cent when Congress had left, ranking of Assam slipped to 20th place from 2nd and per capita growth dipped to 3.4 per cent from 13 per cent," he claimed.

The Opposition leader also

said that Assam is now recognised as the "most unsafe place for women in the entire nation" with the state witnessing 80,794 cases of crimes against women in the last three years.

"BJP has made Assam the hub of child trafficking. What is your answer to the crimes against women? he asked the prime minister. Surjewala pointed out that according to the National Family Health Survey, the schemes related to women and children have fallen prey to corruption during the last five years.

"In 2015, 35 per cent children in the 6-59 month category suffered from anaemia, but it increased to 68.4 per cent in 2020. Moreover, 66 per cent of pregnant women of 15-49 years are suffering from anaemia in 2020 against 46 per cent in 2015. Who will take responsibility for all this?" he said.

Commenting on the development, Ambassador of the EU Ugo Astuto said, "We are happy to join CDRI, an initiative fully aligned with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the recently adopted EU Strategy on Adaptation."

Launched in 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international collaborative platform involving the public and private sector, aiming to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

Commenting on the development, Ambassador of the EU Ugo Astuto said,

"We are happy to join CDRI, an initiative fully aligned with the objectives of the European Green Deal and the recently adopted EU Strategy on Adaptation."

To, 1. Mrs. Madhu Khera (Defendant No.02)
2. Double Storey Vijay Nagar, Delhi-110009 (Defendant No.03)

(Through its Director) D-237, Vivek Vihar Phase-1, New Delhi-110095.

EU accepts India's invitation to join CDRI

NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Accepting India's invitation, the European Union (EU) has officially joined as a member of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), after endorsing the charter of the CDRI.

Launched in 2019 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the UN Climate Change Summit, the CDRI is an international collaborative platform involving the public and private sector, aiming to promote the resilience of new and existing infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks in support of sustainable development.

The JMC will act as an umbrella for all bilateral institutional engagements such as foreign office consultations and joint working groups. Apart from the existing JWG

hydrocarbons, manpower and mobility, and healthcare, new JWG's on trade and investments, defence and security are also envisaged to be established between the two countries, a press release from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The Kuwaiti minister thanked the Government of India for supplying Kuwait with 200,000 doses of Made in India Covishield vaccines in February. Jaishankar thanked the leadership of Kuwait for hosting a large Indian community in Kuwait and taking care of them during Covid-19 pandemic.

He hoped the Indian community would be able to resume travel to Kuwait in larger numbers soon.

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

4th FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001
O.A. No.874/2016
UCO BANK Applicant
Versus
Ms. Kanika Khera & Ors. Defendants

To, 1. Mrs. Madhu Khera (Defendant No.02)
2. Double Storey Vijay Nagar, Delhi-110009 (Defendant No.03)

(Through its Director) D-237, Vivek Vihar Phase-1, New Delhi-110095.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs.35,96,052.07 (Rupees Thirty Five Lakhs Ninety Six Thousand Fifty Two and Paise Seven Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Ld. Registrar on 26.04.2021 at 10:30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRIT Website: www.tribunal.gov.in Phone Number 011-23748473). Take notice that in case of your failure to appear on the above mentioned day before this Tribunal, the case will be heard and decided in your absence.

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

(i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the "Cisco Webex" application / Software.
(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrars / Recovery Officer /and Recovery Officer shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRIT Official Portal i.e., drirt.gov.in under the Public Notice Head.

(iii) In any emergency qua that, the Advocates / Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No 23749473.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 09th March of 2021. Respondent may contact under mention Phone number for further enquiry. Mr. Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRIT, New Delhi. Phone No.: 011-23748473, E-mail: drirtdelhi-dfs@nic.in. By Order of this Tribunal, For Registrars

HOLI SPECIAL TRAINS - 2021

CORRIGENDUM
In continuation to the Notice "Holi Special Trains-2021" which was published in the various Newspapers on 18.03.2021. Following amendments are being issued:-

Train No. / Name	Earlier Published Days of Run	Revised Days of Run
04031/Varanasi-Anand Vihar (T)	21.03.2021 to 01.04.2021	21.03.2021 to 30.03.2021

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Note: For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table & Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

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MORE Holi SPECIAL TRAINS-2021

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during the Holi Festival, Railways have decided to run more Festival Special Trains as per schedule given below :-

04520/04519 Nangal Dam - Kolkata - Nangal Dam 04 Festival Superfast Express 04 Trips

Train No. 04520 ↓ STATIONS ↑ Train No. 04519
ARR. DEP. ARR. DEP.

--- 06:50 NANDAL DAM 15:55 ---

14:45 --- KOLKATA 07:40 ---

Dateline Atlanta

The killings in Atlanta on Wednesday testify to a relatively new aspect of racism in the United States of America, specifically targeting people of Asian descent. In a sense, the nation wasn't daubed in black and white, coincidentally as the trial into the killing of George Floyd gets underway. It thus comes about that six of the eight victims of a white assassin were women of Asian descent, prompting President Biden to remark, "I know Asian-Americans are very concerned." Yes, indeed, they must be. The segment is in mourning across the nation and as with the killing of blacks, there is an overwhelming sense of shock and awe over the horrific tragedy.

It is an index to the enormity of that tragedy that Robert Aaron Long (21), the man who went on the rampage at three spas in the Atlanta area, has been charged with eight counts of murder in connection with the attacks. Experts have warned of a rise in hate crimes motivated by what they call "male supremacy". This is at best a sociological prognosis of the killing spree that convulsed the three spas. The "white supremacist propaganda", so-called, is said to have surged in 2020, according to a report crafted by the Anti-Defamation League. America must fervently hope that the incumbent at the White House, barely two months in office, will get to the root of the malaise that appears to have exacerbated from one President to another. Well and truly has the canker permeated the system in the fountain-head of democracy.

The brazen shootings have stirred considerable outrage and fear in the Asian-American community. Investigators said they had not ruled out bias as a motivating factor even as the suspect denied such racial animus once in custody. The suspect reportedly told the police that he had a "sexual addiction" and had carried out the shootings at the massage parlours to eliminate his "temptation," the authorities said. He had frequented massage parlours in the past and launched the attacks as a form of vengeance. All but one of the victims were women. Whatever the assassin's motivation, the majority of his victims were Asians. This is a menace that is erupting across the country. It is unacceptable. It is hateful and it has to stop. The authorities have charged the suspect with eight counts of murder and one count of aggravated assault in connection with the shootings. Four of the murder counts and the assault charge stem from the first shooting, in Cherokee County, and the other four murder counts relate to the shootings at two spas in the city of Atlanta less than an hour later. Calculated malevolence largely explains the multiple killings. Long has come through as a victim of an extreme form of mental aberration. So afflicted too must be the white policeman who killed Floyd.

First signs?

The first signs of what may emerge from the ongoing churn in the Congress party are slowly but surely becoming visible. The departure from its ranks of Mr PC Chacko ~ a four-time MP from Kerala and former CWC member who headed the Joint Parliamentary Committee on 2G Spectrum when the UPA was in power ~ is far more significant than what many believe. As is his destination, the Nationalist Congress Party headed by Mr Sharad Pawar. Astute observers of the state of play in the Congress reckon that Mr Chacko jumping ship is in many ways more significant than the switching of political sides by Mr Jyotiraditya Scindia, the other senior party leader who quit in recent times. Given Mr Scindia's family connections with the BJP, and the state where he has his base, the saffron camp was his only real choice. The same is true of other Congress leaders down the ladder in North India. But in many other parts of the country where scores of dissatisfied Congress activists and office-bearers have non-BJP options including the NCP, YSR Congress, TRS, Trinamool Congress, BJD, Shiv Sena and even the JJP and JD-U (if they break with the BJP), the choice is clear. The battle for control over India's oldest political party is, in that sense, not going to be fought and won from within. The vice-like grip one family has on the organisation will either successfully withstand or accommodate the so-called G-23 rebellion just as it did similar efforts at leadership change on earlier occasions.

The problem for Congress leaders with political heft who left the party in the past has been that they were reduced to regional players leading personality-centric political parties in their home states. Because of this limitation, none of these parties have been able to attract leaders who may well be seething inside the confines of the Congress. Yet, the talk in political circles now is that Mr Pawar's time may finally be here. So, what has changed over the past two decades since he led the 'Amar-Akbar-Anthony revolt' against Mrs Sonia Gandhi? For one, the Congress is truly crumbling and entirely directionless. But it's now not just a question of stemming the organisational atrophy; though it would take a near-miracle to achieve even that. The bigger issue is that the party's ideological basis is non-existent today ~ a sad end to the original big tent party of Indian politics which understood that this is a culturally Indic nation while being a liberal, modern, secular state.

Of course, the NCP has its problems ~ the rampant corruption in the civil aviation ministry during UPA is still fresh in public memory as is crony capitalism in Maharashtra. But of all the Congress offshoots, the NCP is best placed to ensure they coalesce into the main Opposition. If Mr Pawar can, as it seems he has started to do, hammer out a reformist economic agenda while emphasising moderation on social issues and treating the BJP as a political adversary and not an enemy, it's not at all inconceivable that Congress dissidents would join forces with him.

Rules of conflict

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which regulate the conduct of armed conflict and seek to limit its effects



The United Nations had in 1945 aspired to create a war-free world but people in many parts live in a war-torn world. In the preamble to the Charter, the UN had acknowledged that the two World Wars had brought untold sorrow to mankind and that armed force shall not be used save in the common interest. Even though war is not an acceptable way to settle differences between states, wars do occur and armed conflicts are a sad reality in the contemporary world. What are the reasons for this contradiction? Answers are not far to seek.

The UN Charter has not completely outlawed the use of force. States retain the rights to defend their sovereignty and territorial integrity, individually or collectively, against attacks on their independence in response to a legal or illegal use of force. Also, Chapter VII of the Charter allows member states the use of force in collective action to maintain or restore international peace and security. Finally, the Charter's prohibition of the use of force does not cover internal armed conflicts and civil wars.

The sad conclusion, therefore, is that there is a need for international rules to limit the effects of war on people and property and protect particularly vulnerable groups of persons. That is the goal of international humanitarian law, with the Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols forming an important body of customary law.

Humanitarian law has a long history. The person credited with its conception and application for the protection of war victims was Henry Dunant, a Swiss humanitarian who was an eye witness to the battle of Solferino, fought in Lombardy, northern Italy on 24 June 1859 between the Franco-Sardinian alliance and Austria. It was a decisive battle in the struggle for Italian unification. Dunant who was in the area organised emergency aid services for wounded Austrian and French soldiers helped by local women volunteers. They treated the men equally, regardless of what side they fought on, inspiring them to coin the phrase "tutti fratelli" meaning all brothers.

In 1862, Dunant drew up two proposals intended to relieve the sufferings of soldiers at war: to establish a humanitarian convention and create a permanent aid organisation. In 1864, he founded the Red Cross, and the Geneva Convention came into being. Considered by many as the father of modern humanitarian movement, Dunant was also arguably the first embedded war reporter and citizen journalist rolled into one. For his "supreme humanitarian achievement of the 19th century", he shared with Frederic Passy the first Nobel Peace Prize in 1901.

The "Convention for the

Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field", signed in Geneva in 1864, laid the foundation of international humanitarian law. This treaty opened up a new perspective: to limit the suffering experienced in times of war by means of an international legal instrument. The Convention provided for the protection of wounded members of armies and those giving them aid. It required care to be given to the wounded, irrespective of their nationality and granted neutrality to military hospitals and ambulances, medical personnel and civilians aiding them. The text of the convention granted diplomatic recognition to the protective emblem of the Red Cross on a white background. The motto is Inter Arma Caritas, meaning Amidst War, Charity. The humanitarian agency became Red Cross and Red Crescent in 1906 at the insistence of Ottoman Empire. The name Red Crescent is now used in all Muslim countries. The Red Cross for their humanitarian work of prevention and relief of human suffering received the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1917, 1944 and 1963. The Austro-Prussian war of 1866 and the Franco-German war of

1870 were the first conflicts in which the Geneva Convention was applied. Although the text provided the first components of humanitarian protection, it applied only to a limited category of war victims: the wounded members of land forces. As time went by, new conventions were to remedy the shortcomings which became apparent during subsequent conflicts. Protection was extended to cover members of naval forces, then to all prisoners of war. However, this process took decades to implement. Wounded, sick and shipwrecked members of the naval forces were covered by the 1899 Hague Convention. Prisoners of war were covered by an international convention drawn up in Geneva in 1929. The expansion of humanitarian law was thus to lead, in 1949, to the adoption of the four Geneva Conventions which are in force today and were supplemented in 1977 by two Additional Protocols. The International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Crescent is the custodian of the Geneva Conventions and the guardian of International Humanitarian Law which outlines the rules of war. 13 August 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the landmark Geneva Conventions.

The first three Geneva Conventions did not apply to civilians except for those involved with Red Cross movement. Taking

account of the dramatic fate of hundreds of thousands of civilians deported to Nazi concentration and extermination camps, the fourth convention was added for the protection of civilian victims of war. Yet these Conventions did not apply to victims of civil war or to those of new types of conflict, struggles for national liberation and guerrilla warfare. Furthermore, they did not cover direct attacks on civilian populations. To remedy these shortcomings, in 1977, the Geneva Conventions were supplemented by two Additional Protocols relating to the treatment of the victims of international armed conflicts and to the victims of non-international armed conflicts. Almost every state has signed the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and a clear majority of states are already bound by the two Protocols. Even

wars have rules. The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which regulate the conduct of armed conflict and seek to limit its effects. They protect people not taking part in hostilities and those who are no longer doing so. Serious violations of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols are reg-

arded as war crimes. The law stands on four fundamental principles. One, persons who are not taking part in hostilities shall be respected, protected and treated humanely without any discrimination. Two, captured combatants and other persons whose freedom has been restricted shall be treated humanely. They shall be protected against torture and other acts of violence. If put on trial, they shall enjoy the fundamental guarantees of a regular judicial procedure.

Three, the right of parties to an armed conflict to choose methods or means of warfare is not unlimited. No superfluous injury or unnecessary suffering shall be inflicted.

Four, civilian population and civilian objects shall not be the target of military attacks. These four principles and conditions are binding under all circumstances and no derogation is ever possible. In modern humanitarian law, there is no place for discriminatory treatment of victims of warfare based on the concept of "just war".

The UN has taken a leading role in efforts to advance international humanitarian law. The establishment of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda, as well as tribunals in Timor-Leste, Sierra Leone and Cambodia, not only contributed to ensuring accountability but also in strength-

ening and wider appreciation of humanitarian law. The elaboration by the preparatory commission for the International Criminal Court of the "elements of crimes" with respect to genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity, is another tangible contribution in understanding international humanitarian law and protection of war victims.

The goals of human rights law and humanitarian law overlap although their origins are different. Human rights law had its origin in Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by UN General Assembly in 1948. Humanitarian law originated in the battlefield as the brainchild of Dunant in 1864. Through a process of change, revision, and broadening of earlier texts and addition of two protocols, it became a comprehensive modern humanitarian law in 1977. That was a long journey of 113 years. Both humanitarian law and human rights law are designed to restrict the power of state authorities with a view to safeguarding fundamental rights of the individual. Human rights laws supported by customary laws must be applied to all persons and be respected in all circumstances although a number of rights may be suspended in time of emergency.

Humanitarian law, however, applies only in times of armed conflicts and special circumstances of warfare. It cannot be abrogated under any circumstances. Usually humanitarian laws apply across the front line. The armed forces have to respect humanitarian law in their dealings with the enemy and not in relations with their own nationals. In internal conflicts, however, human rights law and international humanitarian law apply concurrently. In other words, humanitarian law is a specialized body of human rights law, fine-tuned for armed conflicts. Rules of the conduct of hostilities or the use of weapons have no equivalent in human rights law. Conversely, the political right of individual persons which is an important domain in human rights law is outside the scope of humanitarian law. Despite their overlapping, human rights law and humanitarian law remain distinct branches in public international law. International humanitarian law is inspired by considerations of humanity and mitigation of human suffering. It is designed to balance humanitarian concerns and military necessity and subjects warfare to the rules of law by limiting its destructive effects on humanity.

The law must be respected for survival of human values. Given that the body of law also applies during times of extreme violence and internal armed struggles, implementing the law will always be a matter of great challenge. That said, striving for effective compliance remains as urgent as ever.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIAN VOICES

Laws are not enough

In the last five years, child marriage in Nepal has increased to alarming levels. In 2019, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund ranked Nepal as one of the top 10 countries where there is a high prevalence of child marriage among boys and girls. The first in-depth analysis of child grooms among 82 countries by the UN children's agency showed that in Nepal, one in 30 men aged between 20 and 24 is married before turning 18. The figure for women is one in five, showing that child marriage cases among girls is much higher.

Experts working in the field of child marriage say there is a direct relationship between economic pressure and child marriage besides rudimentary social and cultural norms, and legislation alone will not be enough to end child marriage. Reports also indicate that child marriages increased following the 2015 earthquakes. There are concerns that the numbers could have risen significantly in rural areas where child marriage went unchecked amid the lockdown.

In remote Kailikot district of Karnali province, 169 incidents of child marriage were reported in just two local units in 2020, while data from the District Police Office shows that it thwarted some 109 underage marriages since mid-April last year. These staggering figures should keep us on our toes because we risk reversing years of hard-earned progress toward keeping children, especially girls, in

THE KATHMANDU POST

school and ensuring they are safe from the physical, social and emotional effects of underage marriage.

Nepal abolished child marriage in 1963, and the government has committed to ending it by 2030. According to the Civil Code, the legal marriage age for both men and women is 20. However, underage marriage is still rampant, especially in Madhesi communities and remote areas. According to the Nepal Demographic Health Survey 2016, 13 percent of women aged 25-49 were married by 15, while 3 percent of men married that young.

Despite legislative progress and awareness programmes by the government and social organisations to curb underage marriage, surveys show it is a continuing problem that has detrimental effects on children's health and development, which could also result in their death. Psychologists say underage marriage can lead to various social and mental problems like domestic violence, depression, high maternal mortality and malnutrition. Forced into marriage, children bear the brunt of these consequences and take on adult responsibilities while they should be in school with their peers.

However, the damaging effects of underage marriage are not limited to children and their families because as much as this is a social issue, it is also an economic one. It is estimated that state coffers will be burdened by trillions of dollars in welfare expenditure by 2030, but there is clear evidence that children who finish their education make better life choices, provide for the family and contribute to the economy.

Financial burden, illiteracy and socio-cultural norms have long been identified as major factors which lead parents to marry off their children. And there are reports of increasing elopements, which experts link to digital literacy. Of the 169 cases of child marriage in Kailikot district, local children's rights activists say that as many as 156 are elopement cases.

The government needs to work with social organisations and pursue a multidisciplinary approach to end child marriages. It must ensure that children finish school and are involved in social actions in their community.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

When the saints go marching in...

SIR, Bharat Dogra in his article "Warriors for a foreign cause" (28 February) truthfully recounts how Sarla Behn, Britain's angel of Kasuuni in Uttarakhand, followed the imperatives of her conscience to emotionally identify herself with the hopes and aspirations of millions of this country during the

Quit India movement. She thus incurred the wrath of the imperialists and faced incarceration during the difficult war years. Nonetheless, the light that guided her shone steadily on the straight and narrow path of righteousness and armed her with courage and determination to fight

tyranny and oppression. By her thought and action, Sarla won the hearts of common men of the soil and calmly persuaded them to stand up against every manner of oppression that her own countrymen had let loose upon them.

Her struggle was wholly sincere and deeply humane in spirit and essence. It cut across all barriers of race, place and creed. She indeed is among the saints going marching in.

Yours, etc., Sunrit Deb,

Kolkata, 4 March.

POLL PROSPECTS

SIR, Apropos Sudipta Ghosh's letter (9 March) titled "The magic figure", there is no denying that Mr Iftikhar Ahmed appears to have

been exceedingly elated by Prashant Kishore's latest tweet regarding the upcoming state Assembly election, specifically that the saffron party won't be able to secure more than double digit seats in the House, and that Mamata Banerjee will once again come to power.

Mr Ahmed, moreover, appears to have shifted responsibility to the Central Government with the task of addressing the basic grievances of the people, such as the hike in the prices of essential commodities, and the increase in the num-

ber of unemployed youth.

On the contrary, Mr Ahmed has praised the functioning of the state's present ruling dispensation through which almost every section of our society has gained something from the people-friendly government.

However, his accolades for the excellent performance of the Trinamul Congress government at the peak of the pandemic last year do not seem to be based on facts.

Yours, etc., Arun Kumar Bhaduri, Kolkata, 9 March.



TALKING TOO MUCH

SIR, As a woman I do not find any fault with the comment of Mr Mori, the former president of the Tokyo Olympic Organisation. It is universally known that women irrespective of their ethnicity talk too much, and unnecessarily. I as a woman endorse his statement. He just stated a well-known fact.

Yours, etc., Enakshi Ghosh, Kolkata.

VIJAYKUMAR HARBISHTTAR

While the proportion of elderly population is growing in India, and also there is an increasing drive to enhance cashless and digital transactions, people are becoming dependent on financial institutions, mainly banks. Many older adults seem to like to continue banking with Public Sector Banks while the younger generation is inclined towards private banks. While the need for service provision in public sector banks is therefore going up, over the last few years many PSU banks have been merged and reportedly staffing has come down creating a deficit in service provision. There are announcements of service delivery at doorstep particularly for senior citizens by some banks, but this it seems has not yet implemented.

Ageing is associated with general slowing in movement, thinking and processing of information, in addition to difficulties in vision or hearing. The aged also have difficulty in walking, and standing for longer periods. Many suffer from physical ailments like diabetes, hypertension and other diseases affecting the blood vessels mainly those carrying blood to the heart and brain. Along with these, many take medications and need to make regular visits to the hospitals, for check-ups and blood tests, for which they need to perform money transactions. Transportation could be another issue.

With all these difficulties that elderly people have, one cannot expect them to learn to do online banking or on their smartphones by themselves. They have also got the daunting task of remembering many passwords, which if it forgotten lead to a cascade of events that need resolving, resulting in delay in completing even simple financial transactions. This only adds to mental fatigue and causes more stress.

Society needs to find answers to a pressing question. Who is responsible to train its senior citizens to use

Banks must be made senior-citizen friendly



computers, web programs and latest technology? One wonders if the senior citizen representation or relevant NGOs were consulted before implementation of the online system. If this is mostly the issue in urban areas, one can imagine the service provision in rural areas. Society cannot expect its senior citizens to learn the skills of performing online banking and transactions to the same extent it expects this from the younger generation. The staff mem-

bers at banks seem to be unable to patiently sit with elderly persons to assist them in learning to do online banking every time.

There are just one or two NGOs offering free training for senior citizens in the use of smartphones, but hardly anyone is training them in online banking and financial transactions so as to create confidence. This means that senior citizens not just in rural areas, but also in urban areas unwillingly depend on their family

members or relatives. This leaves room for financial exploitation.

Also, if elderly persons have undetected Mild Cognitive Impairment or have early signs of Dementia that affects their ability to manage finances, then there seems to be no system in place to assist or serve them in their best interest. If the wife of this person is dependent on his ability to manage finances and has to urgently pay for his medical bills, then it is nothing but running from pillar to

post.

Many females belonging to the Baby Boomer generation are housewives with minimal education. Many of these female senior citizens hardly have skills to do normal banking, let alone the ability to do it online. Financial transaction is a very basic issue, the easier it is, the better for the elderly persons. Elderly females could try to equip themselves with skills to use the system, by learning with their husbands or their children. NGOs also must try and look to close this gap in digital literacy. Financial Institutions' advisories focus mainly on making money out of money. Most likely they would be trying to secure already saved money and want to make easier and secure transactions.

There must be a separate Standard Operating Procedure for senior citizens in all banks. One comfortable counter with a dedicated, sensitized and well-trained staff member must be available for senior citizens. If needed, the bank should arrange home visit services. The bank environment must be made age friendly similar to what exists for the differently-abled people. All staff members should be sensitized and trained in terms of customer care skills including communication and soft skills in this respect. Financial institutions and the State must focus beyond just perks in terms of higher rate of interest for Fixed Deposits as it is entirely their intention to make transactions mostly digital. Such measures will enhance social support, reduce stress, and thus promote mental health of older adults.

The writer is a Bengaluru-based Consultant Psychiatrist with experience in Geriatric Psychiatry & Dementia.

The darker sides of democracy

C K LAL

The fall from grace of Burmese leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been fast, furious and harsh. Repeatedly held under house arrest for nearly two decades, she was once celebrated as one of the most famous political prisoners in the world. Feted as an icon of peace, democracy and human rights, she strode into the parliament with ease in 2012 through military-controlled elections.

Suu Kyi soon agreed to share power with the junta that had run Myanmar as a vast prison for nearly half a century and had kept her under detention throughout her political career. She failed to flinch from fear or anxiety when the commander-in-chief, U Min Aung Hlaing asserted that the military would maintain its leading political role.

The Nobel Laureate, the winner of the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought and a global icon of democracy, Suu Kyi floundered in persuading even her own party stalwarts—let alone the military brass—that patronising the ‘Buddhist Bin Laden’ and self-described ‘James Bond’ Wirathu was suicidal for the ethnic harmony at home and the image of the country abroad. The hate-mongering monk was partly responsible for inciting violence against Rohingyas.

The final fall came when the discredited human rights champion stood up at Hague to defend the indefensible—the genocidal ethnic cleansing of the most persecuted minority in the world. Militant monks have since come out in support of the military coup and subsequent detention of the fallen idol of democracy on frivolous, if not downright fraudulent, charges.

The Burmese youth have begun to protest against the suspension of limited democracy and detention of their mascot Suu Kyi, but critics are also asking where they were when the ethnic cleansing of Rohingyas had created the largest refugee crisis in South Asia since the partition of British India.



The problem of peace and democracy in Myanmar lies in the way its national identity is conceived by the dominant Bamar population, which is based on taingyintha or ‘national races’ theory that underpins its three layers of citizenship. There is little difference between NLD politicians and the Tatmadaw brass on the fundamentals of state racism.

Confirming James Madison’s worst fears—‘Had every Athenian citizen been a Socrates, every Athenian assembly would still have been a mob’—from The Federalist Papers, Prof Michael Mann writes, “Modern ethnic cleansing is the dark side of democracy when ethno-nationalist movements claim the state for their own ethnos, which they intend to constitute as democracy, but then they seek to exclude and cleanse others.”

While ethnic cleansing is an extremity reserved for the ‘othered’ section of the population, the exclusion of minorities by the majoritarian establishments espousing democracy is common in South Asia. Religious minorities such as Hindus, Christians, Sikhs, Shias and Ahmadis in Pakistan

or the despised Madhesis of all religious faiths in Nepal have routinely been discriminated against irrespective of the nature of the regime.

Beautiful landscapes sometimes hide harsh realities. Even though indirectly controlled by the British through their proxies, Afghanistan was never colonised; yet, its people have endured tremendous hardships. Kashmir has rightly been described as ‘heaven on earth’ but is better known as the most militarized place in the world. Some of the largest rivers that feed the majority of the Asian population originate in Tibet, but the ‘Third Pole’ continues to be drained of its resources.

Back in 2013, flying into Myanmar from Thailand was a startling experience. The view from the window in the late-evening was revealing—the Burmese side of the international border was enveloped in darkness while the Thai landscape glowed a luminescent bright.

Unlike well-kept Thai forests that appear more like woods, Burmese jungles still retained the tropical feel even after being denuded of hard-

wood for centuries. Urbanites of Rangoon above 70 spoke optimistically in quaint English reminiscent of the Raj and the younger generation appeared expectant. At a conclave of political party leaders and media-persons in early-2013, the ambience resembled that of Kathmandu of 1990-91: full of hope and a sense that things could only get better.

In a meeting organised to discuss ways of strengthening democracy, the erect posture and defiant attitude of some participants struck a discordant note. When requested to share their experiences and expectations, several speakers looked sideways before speaking up in a controlled manner. Spontaneity was absent from deliberations.

A very senior and erudite politician of the Anti-Fascist People’s Freedom League (AFFPL) era who claimed to have known several Nepali Congress leaders of the 1950s explained during the lunch break that at least a third of the participants were either retired or serving members of the Tatmadaw and Suu Kyi’s ‘deal with the devil’ was responsible for the ‘controlled democracy’. Perhaps it was fated to end the way it did, through a bloodless coup.

After another deliberation later the same year with activists of non-governmental organisations and media-persons, it became abundantly clear that the Tatmadaw was confident in its belief that Bamar supremacists in politics would be their effective tool of dominating Burmese society and polity.

By late-2015, cadres of the NLD had begun to identify themselves with their earlier tormentors in the establishment. In a closed interaction with representatives of several insurgent groups that had gathered at a secluded spot to listen to international experiences of conflict resolution, it was evident that the so-called Panglong promise of building a multi-national polity was slipping away under Suu Kyi’s watch.

A conference to discuss issues of inclusion in 2019 made it clear that Burmese democracy was determined to be majoritarian. Somewhat like the multi-donor funded and glossily produced inclusion study of Nepal in 2006 that had forgotten to mention

the word Madhes in its report, the term Rohingya wasn’t pronounced even once during the three-day conclave. Political parties had made Rohingyas an unmentionable group of ‘non-people’.

Similar to the hierarchy of belongingness in Burma that constitutionally ‘others’ non-Bamars, Nepal has institutionalised at least four categories of citizenship in Nepal in the order of ease of obtaining a citizenship certificate—descent, birth, naturalised and honorary. Designed to protect and promote the hegemony of the Khas-Arya male, such patently discriminatory laws and their prejudiced practice continue to enjoy widespread democratic support across the political divide.

The Hindutva supremacists of India are determined to make the largest democracy of the world into a farcical one—an elected autocracy—and have come up with a slew of ludicrous citizenship and ‘love jihad’ laws. Sri Lanka’s citizenship laws are meant to maintain Sinhala hegemony. The Khas-Arya supremacists in Nepal have succeeded in establishing their primacy through a controversial constitution.

Colonial powers drew random boundaries around countries that had never existed in the past and where people lacked a shared sense of culture, history and beliefs. They are multi-national states in the making with dormant or active antagonism between dominant and subservient ethnicities.

Geopolitical contestations between global powers definitely affect domestic politics in instable countries. But what really matters is challenging the supremacist ideology of majoritarian hegemony.

Krishna Pahadi and his band of human rights activists did the right thing by demonstrating outside the Burmese embassy in Kathmandu on 15 March 2021, against the brutal suppression of anti-coup protesters. One just wonders where had they all gone when Madhesis were being shot at random in 2015 for disagreeing with a divisive constitution. Human rights advocacy, xenophobic nationalism and supremacists jingoism don’t go together.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28858

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Indian Overseas Association is no doubt right in contending that India as a member of the League of Nations is entitled to make representations to the Council, and as a general rule it is to be desired that the functions of the League and India’s share therein should be maintained in full. As a matter of expediency, however, it would be a very dubious policy for India to appeal, in effect, to the Council in the character of a plaintiff, with British Dominions as defendants, and the Imperial Government expected to act as amicus curiae on both sides. A message from our London Correspondent shows that some such position is contemplated by the Indian Overseas Association in connection with the rights of Indians in the mandated territories of Samoa, New Guinea, Pacific Isles, and South and West Africa. The Association holds that it is the duty of the Imperial Government to support India in view of the hostile attitude of the Dominions. It is not improbable that the Dominions on their side would expect similar support from the Imperial Government, or, at least, neutrality. The contention of the Colonial Secretary, on the other hand, is that the matter must be the subject of direct negotiations between India and the Dominions. Undoubtedly, direct negotiations would be much more likely to lead to a satisfactory result than any appeal to the League.

NEWS ITEMS

THE CASE AGAINST DR. CHOLKAR

In re-examination by Mr. Dick, Standing Council, in Dr. Cholkar’s case, Mr. Kamat, official shorthand reporter, stated that his shorthand notes were on the basis of longhand notes. In the additions he made he had not included any idea which was not conveyed to his mind by Dr. Cholkar, and he omitted nothing in longhand that would change the trend of Dr. Cholkar’s speech. By his statement previously made to the effect that longhand notes were not correct, he meant that he had not exactly transcribed the shorthand notes into longhand. In further cross-examination by Mr. Abhyankar witness admitted that he omitted ideas which he thought were unimportant and it was possible that he might have omitted ideas which he thought were important. The case was adjourned today.

SCOTTISH CHURCHES COLLEGE

In the annual report of the Scottish Churches College it is stated, in regard to examinations, that as compared with previous years the results, all over, are good. For the Inter-Arts 147 were sent up and 131 passed, and for the Inter-Science 103 were sent up and 72 passed. For the Bachelor of Arts Examination the report proceeds, 245 were sent up and of these 64 obtained honours, 8 distinction and 118 passed. This is probably the largest number ever sent up by us, and the results, especially in honours, are far beyond anything that we have set attained to. The result in Physics was notable, no less than three passing with first class honours and two with second.

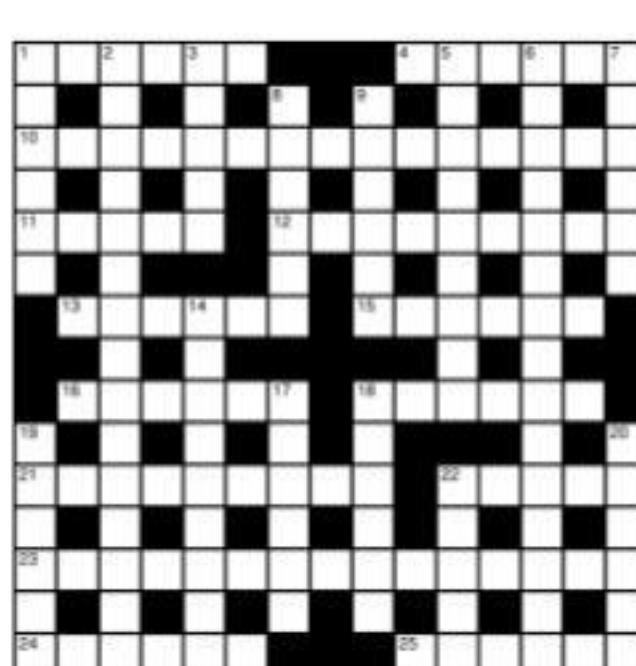
DEATH OF A WELL-KNOWN CEYLON LAWYER

The death is announced of Mr. Arthur L. Reginald Ascrappa, a well-known Advocate of the Ceylon Bar. He acted on various occasions as Crown Counsel for the Island, Examiner in Law, Police Magistrate, Commissioner of Requests, and District Judge. Before commencing his legal career he was a student at the Medical College, Calcutta, during the Principalship of Dr. Edward Birch. He was also Secretary of the Medical Students’ Union at Calcutta, and during the same period he was very closely associated with the Brethren of the Oxford Mission. References to the late Mr. Ascrappa were made in the Supreme Court of Ceylon by Advocate B.N. Bawa, in the presence of the Chief Justice and his colleagues and a large gathering of lawyers.

THE IMPERIAL SHIPPING COMMITTEE

The Committee of the Bengal Chamber, after consultation with some of the recognised associations, have written to the Imperial Shipping Committee, putting forward two matters for consideration. The first of these is the urgent need for the establishment of a lighthouse on the Komari reef, on the east coast of Ceylon. The second matter to which the Chamber has called the attention of the Imperial Shipping Committee is the need for a directional wireless installation on the pilot vessel at the Sandheads. Masters of steamers now complain that they experience difficulty in locating the pilot vessel at such times as she is off her station. And they have expressed the opinion that, if the pilot vessel were provided with directional wireless equipment, this difficulty might be overcome.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1/4 Success – clear tape patched up historic Russian building (6,6)
- 10 No idea why, but I’m at the scene (5,3,2,5)
- 11 Energetic oil well sees abandonment of good conduct (5)
- 12 Two girls returning, with friend about, describing many of the sights of Egypt (9)
- 13 French engineer, in some reports, is quite a sight (6)
- 15 The French aristocrat not sentenced to the guillotine? (3,3)

DOWN

- 16 Bore is quietly intense, not loud (6)
- 18 Exclamation of surprise on getting a vision during eclipse (6)
- 21 Repeating requirement: “Time to oust MP” (9)
- 22 Size Small, arriving later in sudden rush (5)
- 23 Energy in giant mammals perverted sexual attraction (6,9)
- 24/25 Identical trees moved into filming area for TV programme (6,6)

DOWN

- 1 Unusual deviation on the rise, getting banned (3-3)
- 2 Einstein’s decade? (7,8)
- 3 Arab leader always imprisoning me (5)
- 5 Aerospace technology to change with intervention of several years? (9)
- 6 A top teacher coming from Eton’s changed: “I’m English and progressive” (5,2,4,4)
- 7 Waugh, say, bringing name forward, maintaining consistency (6)
- 8 Work on sales pitch, overlooking one truthful message? (6)
- 9 Graduate turned up before exam, perfectly happy to cheat? (6)
- 14 Security device: ranch will install one in actuality (4-5)
- 17 Old lady supporting one in English mystery (6)
- 18 Abnormal reaction, sacking a Liberal Following Conservative ministers (6)
- 19 Examinations reveal further cut on underside of hand (6)
- 20 Small island near France – the very thing for someone demanding solitude (6)
- 22 Sound of sheep initially dismissed after pastor finds fold (5)

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



While the government encourages private players to host apps, it is equally keen to develop and encourage its own mobile app store.

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD
MINISTER FOR ELECTRONICS AND IT

THUMBNAILS

Credit to MSMEs: The cumulative sanctioned and disbursed amounts under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to MSMEs stood at Rs 2.46 lakh crore and Rs 1.81 lakh crore, respectively, as on 28 February, according to the government. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, MSME minister Nitin Gadkari said that under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Subordinate Debt (CGSD), 343 number guarantees have been issued amounting to Rs 40.56 crore as on 10 March. PTI

Sebi bar: The Securities and Exchange Board of India on Thursday barred Profit Money Advisor and its proprietor from the securities market for carrying out unauthorised investment advisory activities. Among other directions, Profit Money Advisor (PMA) and its proprietor Prateek Singh have been directed to cease and desist from acting as an investment advisor. PTI

CCI penalty: The Competition Commission of India has slapped penalties on three entities and certain individuals for rigging bids for a tender floated by Pune Zilla Parishad for procuring sewing machines. The regulator found that there was an agreement between three suppliers to rig the bids in respect of a tender floated by Pune Zilla Parishad for procurement of Picofall-cum-Sewing Machine. PTI

Jeep Wrangler: Jeep India on Thursday announced that the Jeep Wrangler is now locally-assembled and launched in India at Rs 53.90 lakh (ex-showroom price). Jeep India started production of the Wrangler in February and is now ready for retail across the country, said a Press release. Celebrating 80 years of Jeep globally, a limited number of the Wrangler's 80th Anniversary "Launch Edition" is also be available to Indian customers, it said. PTI

CSB Bank expansion: Private sector CSB Bank on Thursday said it is expanding its footprint across India and targeting 30 per cent yearly rise in its branch network. The south India-based century old lender said it is strengthening its presence in key geographies across the country. The bank is working on branch expansion at the rate of 30 per cent year-on-year, after having already clocked expansion of 101 branches during FY20-21, it said in a release. PTI

Vuram hiring plan: IT company Vuram is planning to hire 400 employees this year to address the demand of digitisation across services firm, a top official of the company said. The company at present has 600 employees. "Hiring has started in full swing from entry-level to senior positions in India, the US, and Mexico," Vuram CEO Venkatesh Ramarathnam said. PTI

Rise Fund to invest \$200m in Airtel Africa mobile money biz

Investment firm TPG's Rise Fund is estimated to get 7.5 per cent stake in Airtel Mobile Commerce BV

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

DEAL DETAILS

Investment firm TPG's Rise Fund will invest \$200 million (around Rs 1,450 crore) in Airtel Africa's mobile money business ~ Airtel Mobile Commerce BV ~ at a valuation of \$2.65 billion, Airtel said today.

With this transaction, Rise Fund is estimated to get 7.5 percent stake in Airtel Mobile Commerce (AMC) BV which is currently the holding company for several of Airtel Africa's mobile money operations.

"A newly incorporated investment vehicle of The Rise Fund will invest \$200 million through a secondary purchase of shares in AMC BV from Airtel Africa. The transaction will close in two stages.

► An amount of \$150 mil-

transfers.

"The proceeds from the transaction will be used to reduce group debt and invest in network and sales infrastructure in the respective operating countries," the statement said.

Airtel Africa Group is also in discussions with other potential investors in relation to possible further minority investments into Airtel Money, up to a total of 25 per cent of the issued share capital of AMC BV, the statement said.

An amount of \$150 million will be invested at the first close, once the transfer of sufficient mobile money operations and contracts into AMC BV has been completed, with \$50 million to be invested at the second close upon further transfers.

The transaction is the latest step in the group's pursuit of strategic asset monetisation and investment opportunities, and it is the aim of Airtel

lion will be invested at the first close, once the transfer of sufficient mobile money operations and contracts into AMC BV has been completed, with \$50 million to be invested at the second close upon further transfers.

Africa to explore the potential listing of the mobile money business within four years," Airtel Africa said.

AMC BV is currently the holding company for several of Airtel Africa's mobile money operations. It now intends to own and operate the mobile money businesses across all of Airtel Africa's fourteen operating countries.

Operating under the AirtelMoney brand, Airtel Africa's mobile money services offer financial services which includes mobile wallet deposit and withdrawals, merchant and commercial payments, benefits transfers, loans and savings, virtual credit card and international money



transfers.

Mobile money services are available across the group's 14 countries of operation. However in Nigeria, the group offers Airtel Money services through a partnership with a local bank and has applied for its own mobile banking licence.

The Airtel mobile money service generated revenue of \$110 million in the third quarter. It registered 41 per cent year-on-year growth in constant currency, largely driven by 29 per cent growth in customer base to 21.5 million.

The transaction is expected to reach first close over the next three to four months. From first close, The Rise Fund will be entitled to appoint

a director to the board of AMC BV and to certain customary information and minority protection rights.

"With today's announcement we are pleased to welcome The Rise Fund as an investor in our mobile money business and as a partner to help us realise the full potential from the substantial opportunity to bank the unbanked across Africa," Airtel Africa CEO Raghunath Mandava said.

Yemi Lalude, partner at TPG who leads Africa investing for The Rise Fund, said that financial inclusion is a global issue that is most acute in Africa.

"We look forward to working with Airtel Africa to enhance their mobile money services, broaden its use cases, and grow into new markets. With this investment in Airtel Africa's mobile money operations, we are excited to expand The Rise Fund's global fintech portfolio and continue to deepen our focus on improving financial inclusion in Africa and around the world," Lalude said.

BICL closure proposal in advance stage: Irani

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Proposal for the closure of British India Corporation Ltd (BICL) is in the advanced stage. The corporation has been incurring losses since its nationalisation in 1981
SMRITI IRANI
UNION TEXTILES MINISTER

A proposal for closure of British India Corporation is in the advanced stage as the company has been incurring losses since its nationalisation in 1981, Parliament was informed today.

Closure of Handcraft and Handloom Export Corporation of India was approved by the Union Cabinet this week as it was continuously incurring losses for a long time and there was little scope for its revival, textiles minister Smriti Irani said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

"Proposal for the closure of British India Corporation Ltd (BICL) is in the advanced stage. The corporation has been incurring losses since its nationalisation in the year 1981," she said. She added that owing to continuance of losses, BICL was referred to the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) in 1991 and was declared sick in 1992.

"The government approved revival schemes in November 2001, 2005 and 2011 also failed," she said.

Dalmia Bharat Sugar forays into B2C segment

NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Dalmia Bharat Sugar and Industries (DBSIL) today said it has forayed into business-to-consumer segment and announced the launch of its packaged sugar under the brand name Dalmia Utsav.

"We are extremely excited at the launch of Dalmia Utsav... We aim to provide high-quality sugar to consumers by using a world-class and eco-friendly production process," DBSIL whole-time director BB Mehta said in a statement.

In the initial phase of the transition to B2C (business-to-consumer) segment, the company said, it plans to launch "sulphur-free white crystal sugar and natural brown sugar" in branded packets and sachets in 12 states and UTs.

Kalyan Jewellers IPO subscribed 2.61 times

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Kalyan Jewellers initial public offer was subscribed 2.61 times on the last day of subscription on Thursday. The initial public offer received bids for 24,95,68,044 shares against 9,57,09,301 shares on offer, as per the NSE data.

The portion for qualified institutional buyers (QIBs) was subscribed 2.76 times, non-institutional investors 1.91 times and retail individual investors (RIIs) 2.82 times.

The initial public offer aggregating up to Rs 1,175 crore comprises a fresh issue of up to Rs 800 crore and an offer for sale of up to Rs 375 crore.

The price range for the offer was Rs 86-87 per share.

Kalyan Jewellers India Ltd on Monday raised Rs 352

crore from anchor investors.

Proceeds from the fresh issue of shares would be utilised for working capital requirements and general corporate purpose.

At the end of June 2020, the company had 107 showrooms across 21 states and Union Territories in India, and 30 showrooms in the West Asia.

Kalyan Jewellers designs, manufactures, and sells a wide range of gold, studded and other jewellery products.

Axis Capital, Citigroup Global Markets India, ICICI Securities and SBI Capital Markets were the global coordinators and book running lead managers to the offer.

Meanwhile, IPO of Suryoday Small Finance Bank was fully subscribed on the second day of subscription on Thursday.

Adani Green raises \$1.35 billion for renewable energy projects

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

Intesa Sanpaolo S.p.A., MUFG Bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Coperativa Rabobank U.A., DBS Bank, Mizuho Bank, BNP Paribas, Barclays Bank PLC, Deutsche Bank AG, Siemens Bank GmbH and ING Bank N.V.

"AGEL raised a \$1.35 billion debt package for its under-construction renewable asset portfolio through definitive agreements signed with a group of 12 international lenders.

The revolving project finance facility would initially finance the 1.69 GW hybrid portfolio of solar and wind renewable projects to be set up in four SPVs (special purpose vehicles) in Rajasthan, AGEL said in a statement.

The new pool of liquidity strengthens AGEL's strategy to fully fund its under-construction asset and augurs well for its vision of scaling capacity to 25 GW by 2025.

The company claimed this will be the first certified green hybrid project loan in India.

The 12 international banks that will provide loans are Standard Chartered Bank,

growth aspirations.

AGEL shall engage with the financiers to raise financing efficiently and expeditiously for all the future projects as per the agreed thresholds and parameters, it added.

"We believe that establishing depth and diversity in our funding resources is critical for AGEL's vision to become the largest renewable player in the world. The banks that have committed to this strategic transaction are our key partners in ensuring seamless access to global capital for our underlying renewable asset portfolio," said Vireet Jain, chief executive officer, AGEL.

The facility will also ensure capital recycling needs of the banks and make the same capital available for future projects of AGEL and will

position the company well to capture growth in the attractive Indian renewable sector, he added.

AGEL, a part of India-based Adani Group, has one of the largest global renewable portfolios with over 14,815 MW of operating, under-construction and awarded projects catering to investment-grade counterparties.

The company develops, builds, owns, operates and maintains utility-scale grid-connected solar and wind farm projects.

Key customers of AGEL include NTPC and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) and various state discoms.

Listed in 2018, AGEL is a \$25.03 billion market cap company helping India meet its COP21 (Paris agreement) goals.

Don't modify existing health policies: Irdai tells insurers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 18 MARCH

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India has directed health insurance providers not to make any changes to existing health policies that may lead to a rise in premium for policyholders.

The directions are also applicable for personal accident and travel insurance cover.

In a circular, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) said general and standalone health insurers are not allowed to modify existing benefits and add new benefits in the existing products, which leads to imposing an increase in premium.

The watchdog also said that insurers are permitted to effect minor modifications in

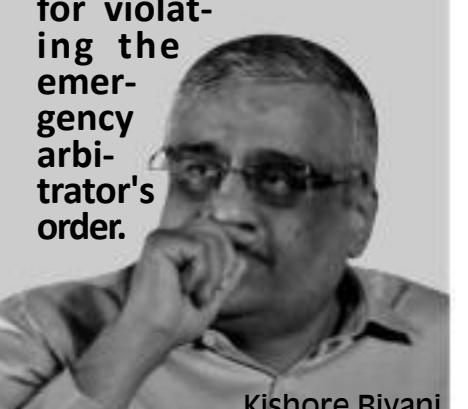
Delhi HC restrains Future-RIL deal on Amazon's plea

COURT ORDERS

► Delhi High Court directed Future Group to approach authorities for recalling the approvals granted for the FRL-Reliance deal and asked them not to violate the EA order.

► The court, which directed the presence of Biyani and others before it on 28 April, also ordered attachment of their properties and asked them to file an affidavit detailing their assets within one

month.
► Besides, it asked them to show cause as to why they were not detained under civil prison for 3 months for violating the emergency arbitrator's order.



them to file an affidavit detailing their assets within one month.

Besides, it asked them to show cause as to why they were not detained under civil prison for 3 months for violating the emergency arbitrator's order.

The court held that the EA is an arbitrator for all intents and purposes and had rightly invoked the Group of Companies' doctrine in relation to the Future Group companies. It said the respondents have raised a vague plea of nullity without substantiating the same.

The high court imposed a cost of Rs 20 lakh on Future Group and others associated with it and directed them to deposit the amount in Prime Minister's Relief Fund within two weeks for providing Covid-19 vaccines to senior citizens of below poverty line (BPL) category.

The high court's order came on Amazon's plea seeking direction to order enforcement of the award by Singapore's EA on 25 October 2020, restraining FRL from going ahead with its Rs 24,713-crore deal with Reliance Retail.

Future Group and Amazon had been locked in a battle after the e-commerce giant FRL into the emergency arbitration over alleged breach of an earlier contract between them.

The court, which directed the presence of Biyani and others before it on 28 April, also ordered attachment of their properties and asked

in order to ensure sustainability of the product as well as to protect the interests of policyholders of the underlying product, the circular said.

The status report needs to be submitted by 30 September of every financial year to the authority along with board's suggestions and corrective actions to be taken.

The status report for 2020-21 should be filed by 30 September 2021, as per the regulator. Irdai has also directed the insurers to ensure that policy wordings are simple so that policyholders can understand it easily.

From 1 October this year, all insurers have also been directed to follow a standard format for policy contracts in clear heading so as to draw the attention of policyholders.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty slumped 163.45 points

up opening on positive global cues, domestic equities fell sharply for the fifth consecutive day as sharp rise in coronavirus cases in the country made investors jittery. The mounting concerns of possible fresh economic restrictions made enthusiasm of dovish commentary from Federal

accordance with "consolidated guidelines on product filing in health insurance business" issued in July last year.

"Addition of new benefits/upgrade of existing benefits may be offered as add-on covers or optional covers with a standalone premium rate to ensure an informed choice to the policyholders," Irdai said in the circular this week.

Further, the regulator has asked appointed actuaries to review the financial viability of every health insurance product at the end of a financial year.

The report of such a review should be submitted to the insurer's board along with an analysis of favourable or unfavourable experience of each product as well as recommended corrective action

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commentary from Federal

Reserve short-lived for domestic markets.

"Additionally, a fresh spike in 10-year US treasury yield to 1.72 per cent also weighed on investors' sentiments. Notably, investors' wealth got eroded by over Rs 3 lakh crore today and around Rs 9 lakh crore in last five trading days,"

per cent. After its two-day policy meeting, the US Federal Reserve reassured investors that it expects to keep its key interest rate near zero through 2023, as it projected robust growth of the US economy this year.

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The Afghan parties interested in the national reconciliation can reach peace only through negotiations and compromises

RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SERGEY LAVROV
AT THE START OF A PEACE CONFERENCE FOR AFGHANISTAN ON THURSDAY

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 19 MARCH 2021

09

Suu Kyi payments claimed as junta raises pressure

The military had tried to implicate Suu Kyi in corruption, alleging she was given \$600,000

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MANDALAY, 18 MARCH

A Myanmar construction magnate with links to military rulers said he personally gave more than half a million dollars in cash to deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi in a broadcast on state television aimed at discrediting the ousted civilian government.

The statement by Maung Waik could pave the way for more serious charges against Suu Kyi, who has been detained since the 1 February military takeover while security forces increasingly use lethal force against a popular uprising demanding the restoration of democratically elected leaders.

The military has already tried to implicate Suu Kyi in corruption, alleging she was given USD 600,000 plus gold



Protesters hold umbrellas as they gather for a protest against the military coup in Mandalay. ■ AGENCIES

bars by a political ally.

She and President Win Myint have been charged so far with inciting unrest, possession of walkie-talkies and violating a pandemic order limiting public gatherings.

In the latest salvo of allegations, Maung Waik, who has previously been convict-

ed of drug trafficking, told state TV he gave cash to government ministers to help his businesses. He said the money included USD 100,000 given to Suu Kyi in 2018 for a charitable foundation named after her mother, USD 150,000 in 2019 for which he did not specify a reason, USD 50,000

last February and USD 250,000 in April, again with no purpose specified.

The country's Anti-Corruption Commission is investigating the allegations and vowed to take action against Suu Kyi under the Anti-Corruption Law, the state-run newspaper Global New Light of Myanmar reported Thursday.

Meanwhile, a court has issued an arrest warrant for the country's United Nations ambassador, Kyaw Moe Tun, on charges of treason, the newspaper reported.

The charge stems from his remarks 26 February at United Nations headquarters, in which he condemned the coup and appealed for the strongest possible action from the international community to restore democracy in his country.

Also charged with treason

was Mahn Win Khaing Than, the civilian leader of Myanmar's government in hiding, the newspaper said.

The acting vice president and member of Suu Kyi's political party on Saturday had vowed to continue supporting a revolution to eject the military from power.

On Thursday, residents of a Yangon suburb set street barricades ablaze to block riot police.

Video showed large palls of smoke rising over the Tha Mine area in the city's Hlaing township, with another barricade burning fiercely in the middle of a residential area.

One resident, who did not want to be named for fear of retaliation, told news agency Associated Press that protesters set them alight after hearing that a column of police trucks was on their way.

Time for India and Pakistan to bury past, move forward: Gen. Bajwa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, 18 MARCH



ment to politically motivated bellicosity, he said.

The powerful army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 70 plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the matters of security and foreign policy.

Gen Bajwa's remarks came a day after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan made a similar statement at the same venue.

Prime Minister Khan said on Wednesday said India will benefit economically by having peace with Pakistan as it will enable New Delhi to directly access the resource-rich Central Asia region through Pakistan territory.

"India will have to take the first step. Unless they do so, we cannot do much," Khan said while delivering the inaugural address at the launch of the two-day Dialogue.

Central Asia, in the modern context, generally includes five resource-rich countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Pakistan Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa said on Thursday that it was time for India and Pakistan to "bury the past and move forward" as he asserted that peace between the two neighbours would help to "unlock" the potential of South and Central Asia.

Addressing a session of the first-ever Islamabad Security Dialogue here, Gen Bajwa also said that the potential for regional peace and development always remained hostage to the disputes and issues between the two nuclear-armed neighbours.

"We feel it is time to bury the past and move forward," he said, adding that the responsibility for a meaningful dialogue rested with India.

India last month said that it desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence. India has said the onus is on Pakistan to create an environment free

Indian composer embroiled in copyright dispute over Singapore's national song

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SINGAPORE, 18 MARCH

Mumbai-based composer Joseph Mendoza has been accused of copying one of Singapore's most iconic National Day songs, "Count On Me Singapore".

"Count on Me Singapore"

was composed by Canadian Hugh Harrison, arranged by Jeremy Monteiro and performed by Clement Chow, both Singaporeans, in 1986. The Straits Times reported on Thursday that Mendoza has claimed that he wrote his version "We Can Achieve", in 1983. He also said that he

only found out about "Count On Me Singapore" a few days ago.

The two songs are virtually identical, except for small changes to the lyrics where "Singapore" was changed to "India" or "Mother India", according to the Singapore daily report.

In a statement to the media on Tuesday, Mendoza claimed that 250 orphans had performed the song in 1983 after he had written it while teaching music at the Bal Bhavan orphanage in Mumbai, where he is based.

He also claimed that the original tapes of his compo-

sition were swept away in the 2005 Mumbai floods.

Although Mendoza acknowledged similarities between the two songs, he insisted that there was no way he could have known about "Count On Me Singapore" as there was no Internet in those days.

"Count on Me Singapore"

composer Harrison responded on Wednesday in the YouTube comments of the song, claiming now in 2021 that he is the original creator of the song, implying "I copied the song from him, is a direct attack on my integrity and professionalism."

Japan to end virus emergency in Tokyo

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO, 18 MARCH

Japan on Thursday will approve ending a months-long state of emergency in Tokyo set up to curb the spread of the coronavirus, despite concerns of a resurgence ahead of the spring party season and next week's Olympic torch relay.

Experts on a government-commissioned panel moved to end the emergency this coming Sunday, underscoring the government's eagerness to minimise burdens on businesses and keep the economy going. However, some experts warned that although



Tokyo has managed to bring down the rate of new infections, the decline has levelled off and could rebound.

Tokyo and three neighbouring prefectures have

closed at 8 p.m. and take preventive measures, as well as asking companies and employees to do more remote work. Similar emergency measures were lifted in six urban areas late last month.

Japan has managed to keep virus cases and deaths relatively low without enforcing a hard lockdown, with deaths related to Covid-19 at about 8,700 people.

Yasutoshi Nishimura, the minister in charge of pandemic measures, said indicators such as daily new cases and

hospital bed occupancy rates have come down to levels that allow the emergency to be lifted in Tokyo, Kanagawa, Chiba and Saitama prefectures. He said Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga would make a formal announcement later Thursday.

"We will be lifting the measure while still keeping our guard high," Nishimura said. Shigeru Omi, a doctor on a government panel of coronavirus experts, said cautionary measures after the end of the emergency will be crucial.

Despite ties, UAE stays clear of Netanyahu election maneuver

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUBAI, 18 MARCH

As Israel heads to the polls next week for the fourth time in two years, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has sought to capitalise on his new partnership with the United Arab Emirates in his desperate campaign to stay in power.

But the UAE has been mostly muted and perhaps unimpressed in response to Netanyahu's ebullient descriptions of billions in Emirati commercial investments and promises of a historic meeting with the powerful Abu Dhabi crown prince.

One Emirati official said the federation will not get involved in Israel's electioneering, now or ever."

The conflicting signals from the countries, which normalised relations in a breakthrough US-brokered agreement last fall, have set off a firestorm of specula-

tion, highlighted the political differences between the sides and undermined Netanyahu's talking points about the Gulf Arab sheikhdom's friendly embrace.

The honeymoon ended quickly, Abdulkhaled Abdulla, a prominent Emirati political scientist, tweeted on

Thursday.

Locked in a tight re-election battle, Netanyahu repeatedly has tried to score a lightning trip to Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, to brandish his diplomatic achievement.

The visit promised little of substance beyond a valuable photo-op for Netanyahu, who

has sought to present himself as an indispensable statesman uniquely qualified to turn Israel's enemies into allies and guide his nation through turbulent times.

After coronavirus restrictions foiled his plans several times, Netanyahu attempted a hasty visit last Thursday.

Tanzania's President John Magufuli dies at 61

NAKURU, 18 MARCH

President John Magufuli of Tanzania, a prominent COVID-19 skeptic in Africa whose populist rule often cast his East African country in a harsh international spotlight, has died. He was 61 years old.

Magufuli's death was announced on Wednesday by Vice President Samia Suluhu, who said the president died of heart failure.

Our beloved president passed on at 6 p.m. this evening," said Suluhu on national television. All flags will be flown at half-mast for 14 days. It is sad news.

The president has had this illness for the past 10 years.

The vice president said that Magufuli died at a hospital in Dar es Salaam, the Indian Ocean port that is Tanzania's largest city.

NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139

■ Toll Free Nos. 1800112511

■ SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54957, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

■ ISBT (General Inquiry): 2368836, 23865181

■ Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403

■ Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23253230

■ Port 011-25671580; Terminal I-B 25671576, Palam Road 25671579, 18001803838

■ JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 39841111

■ EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and Reservation 33773377

■ AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001803838, Call Centre 09910383838, Reservation 18001803838, Indigo Airlines Airline 43513186; Indigo Airlines Reservation 23466262 (City) 25656421/25656431

■ Air France Flight Inquiry and Reservation 41528181

■ Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

■ Sd/- Executive Engineers Electric Division/PDCL Reasi

No. DIP-J-5010-P/Dated :- 18-03-2021

E-NIT No: 42 of 2020-21 Dated 16.03.2021

SHOR TERM TENDER NOTICE

e-NIT No: 42 of 2020-21 Dated 16.03.2021

Invitation: For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Executive Engineer Electric Division/JPCL, Reasi, hereinafter referred as "Employer", invites online e-bids from reputed Companies or registered Electrical Contractors having valid A Class Electrical Contractors License issued by Jammu and Kashmir Govt. for "Survey, Design, Supply, Transportation/Carriage, Erection, Testing And Commissioning for Replacement of damaged/wooden/undersize poles and barbed wire/normout stranded conductor of LT Lines in Zeehalari Mari, Vilaypur, SarMegha, Ser Sundwan, Sarangdar, Sujandhar, Lamora-Fandhar, Bidda villages of Reasi sub division in District Reasi (JK)"

Bidders are advised to study the Bidding Document carefully. Submission of e-Bid against this SBD shall be deemed to have been done after careful/conscious study and examination of the procedures, terms and conditions of the Standard Bidding Document with full understanding of its implications.

1. The tender document is available at website <http://jk.tenders.gov.in>. Interested bidders may view, download the e-Bid document, seek clarification and submit their e-Bids online up to the date and time mentioned in the table below:

1. Sale of Bid Document (Start) :- 16.03.2021 (05:00PM)

2. Sale of Bid Document (end) :- 27.03.2021 (04:00PM)

3. e-Bid submission (start) date & time :- 16.03.2021 (05:00PM)

4. e-Bid submission (end) date & time :- 27.03.2021 (04:00PM)

5. Clarifications start date :- 16.03.2021 (05:00PM)

6. Clarifications end date :- 22.03.2021 (02:00PM)

7. Pre bid meeting date :- 22.03.2021 (at 02:00PM) in the office chamber of Executive Engineer Electric Division Reasi.

8. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time :- 29.03.2021 at 03:00PM

9. Submission of Hard Copy of Tender Fee :- 29.03.2021 at 02:00 PM

10. Cost of e-bid document :- Rs. 1000.00 (Non-refundable)

11. Tender value :- Rs. 41.33 Lacs

12. Easement Money/Security Deposit :- Rs. 82670.00

13. Online Financial e-bid opening date and time :- Will be communicated to the Technically Qualifying Bidders

No. DIP-J-5010-P/Dated :- 18-03-2021

TENDER

Government of Jammu and Kashmir

*...the US outreach is a time-delaying trick...North Korea would keep discarding... offers for talks unless Washington withdraws its hostility*

CHOE SON HUI, NORTH KOREA'S FIRST VICE FOREIGN MINISTER

AFTER THE USA SAID IT REACHED OUT TO PYONGYANG FOR DIALOGUE ON DENUCLEARISATION

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	32	25 H
HONG KONG	25	22 H
TOKYO	17	6 H
LONDON	10	5 H
DUBAI	32	22 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	12	8 H
NEW YORK	8	6 R
MOSCOW	2	-3 H

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

THUMBNAILS



New York Governor Andrew Cuomo is vaccinated at a church in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City on Thursday. ■ AGENCIES

Copter crash: A helicopter crash overnight has taken the lives of at least nine Afghan military personnel in a central province, the defense ministry said. It said that four crew members of the MI-17 helicopter along with five security personnel were killed in the crash, in Maidan Wradak province. AP

US storms: Storms that left splintered homes and broken trees across Alabama and Mississippi moved into Georgia and Florida on Thursday, rousing residents with early morning warnings as forecasters said the threat of dangerous weather would move up the south Atlantic seaboard. AP

Spain passes euthanasia law: Lawmakers voted on Thursday to make Spain the seventh country in the world and the fourth in Europe to allow physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia for long-suffering patients of incurable diseases and people with unbearable permanent conditions. AP

Immigration Bills set to get US House nod

WASHINGTON, 18 MARCH

Democrats seem poised to claim victory in the House's first votes this year on immigration, but moving legislation on the divisive issue all the way through Congress to President Joe Biden is an uphill fight.

The House was set to vote Thursday on one bill giving over 2 million young "Dreamer" immigrants and others legal status and a chance for citizenship. A second measure would do the same for around 1 million immigrant farm workers. Both seemed certain to pass.

But party divisions and solid Republican opposition mean pushing legislation through the Senate on immigration remains difficult, especially for Biden's goal of a sweeping measure helping all 11 million immigrants in the U.S. illegally become citizens. The partisan battle shows little promise of easing before next year's elections, when Republicans could use it in their effort to regain House and Senate control.

Work on the legislation comes as the number of migrants attempting to cross the border has been growing since April and has hit its highest level since March 2019. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Tuesday that figure is on track to reach a 20-year high.

Scores of groups supporting the bills include the US Chamber of Commerce. Among those arrayed in opposition is the conservative Heritage Action for America. GOP lawmakers have been singularly focused on the growing wave of migrants, including children, trying to enter the US from Mexico. AP

US-China ties face new test in Alaska meet

Difficult discussions are anticipated over trade, human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong, Xinjiang region, Taiwan and Chinese assertiveness in SCS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 18 MARCH

The United States and China will face a new test in their increasingly troubled relations when top officials from both nations meet in Alaska.

Ties between the world's two largest economies have been torn for years and the Biden administration has yet to signal it's ready or willing to back down on the hard-line stances taken under President Donald Trump. Nor has China signaled that it's prepared to ease the pressure it has brought to bear. Thus, the stage is set for a contentious first face-to-face meeting Thursday.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan will meet China's top two diplomats, State Councilor Wang Yi and Chinese Communist Party foreign affairs chief Yang Jiechi. Just a day before the meeting, Blinken announced new

in Anchorage, Alaska. Difficult discussions are anticipated over trade, human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong, China's western Xinjiang region, Taiwan, Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea, and the coronavirus pandemic.

No agreements are expected.

This really is a one-off meeting, said a senior administration official. This is not the resumption of a particular dialogue mechanism or the beginning of a dialogue process. The official briefed reporters ahead of the meeting on the condition of anonymity.

Blinken will attend the meeting having just come from Japan and South Korea, where he and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin were promoting the Biden administration's commitment to its treaty allies in Asia.

Just a day before the meeting, Blinken announced new



South Korean President Moon Jae-in with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin. ■ AGENCIES

sanctions on officials over China's crackdown on pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong. In response, the Chinese stepped up their rhetoric opposing US interference in domestic affairs.

China, not unexpectedly, slammed the US criticism of the move to give a pro-Beijing committee power to appoint more of Hong Kong's law-

makers, which reduces the proportion of those directly elected and ensures that only those determined to be truly loyal to Beijing are allowed to run for office effectively shutting opposition figures out of the political process.

The imposition of sanctions fully exposes the US side's sinister intention to interfere in China's internal affairs, dis-

rupt Hong Kong and obstruct China's stability and development, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters at a daily briefing Wednesday.

The White House set low expectations for Blinken and Sullivan's meeting, which officials say will be an initial opportunity to address intense disagreements.

The senior administration official described the talks as a chance for the two sides for taking stock in the relationship. The official said the two sides would not deliver a joint statement following the meeting and no major announcements are expected to come out of the talks.

China's ambassador to the US also downplayed expectations for the Alaska meeting in comments to Chinese media on Wednesday, while holding out hopes it would pave the way for better communication.

Naturally, we don't expect

one round of dialogue will resolve all the issues between China and the US and we don't hold overly high hopes, Cui Tiankai said in a transcript of his comments posted on the embassy's website.

The Chinese are not backing down.

On Wednesday at the United Nations, they blasted the US human rights record, citing what they called US failures against Covid-19 that cost hundreds of thousands of lives, as well as racial discrimination, police brutality and an evil past of genocide.

Jiang Duan, a counselor at the Chinese mission in Geneva, voiced the criticism at the end of an examination of the US rights record at the UN Human Rights Council.

The administration has held a series of talks with Pacific allies, including Biden's virtual summit with the leaders of the Quad - Australia, India, Japan and the United States - before engaging in high-level talks with China.

Indian-American healthcare workers hold demonstration

WASHINGTON, 18 MARCH

A group of Indian-American healthcare workers languishing in the Green Card backlog held a demonstration in front of the US Capitol urging lawmakers and the Biden administration to end the per capita country-specific quota.

A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the country.

Indian IT professionals, most of whom are highly skilled and come to the US mainly on the H-1B work visas, are the worst sufferers of the current immigration system which imposes a seven per cent per country quota on allotment of the coveted Green Card or permanent legal residency.

"We are frontline Covid warriors, and we are here to tell how we have been short changed into a life of perpetual indentured servitude. Each of us has a story. We are here from all over the country asking for justice. Justice that has precluded us for decades now," Dr Raj Karnataka, an infectious disease and critical care physician and Dr Pranav Singh, a pulmonary and critical care physician, said.

Most of us are from India. We trained in the US and took oath as physicians to serve the sick and needy. Most of us are serving the rural and underserved areas. We are in a Green Card backlog due to archaic country caps that allow no country to get more than seven percent of employment-based green cards, said the two Indian American doctors' organisers of the peaceful protest said. PTI

Blinken urges China to convince N Korea to denuclearise

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL, 18 MARCH

Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke at the end of security talks in Seoul, hours after North Korea said it will ignore a US offer to resume negotiations because of its hostile policy

Choe called the US outreach a "time-delaying trick" and said North Korea would keep discarding similar offers for talks unless Washington withdraws its hostility. What has been heard from the U.S. since the emergence of the new regime is only a lunatic theory of threat from North Korea and groundless rhetoric about complete denuclearisation," she said.

Asked about Choe's statement, Blinken said he was aware but said he's more interested in the comments and thoughts of US allies and partners while he was making a regional tour.

US-led diplomacy focusing on North Korea's nuclear weapons remains stalemate for about two years because of disputes over US-led sanctions. Experts are debating whether the United States and its allies should settle for a deal that would freeze North Korea's nuclear activities in return for relaxing sanctions to prevent its arsenal from growing.

Earlier this week, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un threatened to abandon rapprochement with South Korea and warned the United States to refrain from causing a stir, while criticising regular US-South Korean military drills that the Atlanta-based Asian American Advocacy Fund, which

LI'L CONFUSED



A child looks at her mother (not pictured) as she holds an Irish flag while posing for pictures on Saint Patrick's Day in Dublin, Ireland. ■ AGENCIES

Atlanta attack: Asian Americans grieve, organise

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 18 MARCH

Asian Americans were already worn down by a year of pandemic-fuelled racist attacks when a white gunman was charged with attacking three Atlanta-area massage parlours and killing eight people, most of them Asian women.

Hundreds of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders turned to social media to air their anger, sadness, fear and hopelessness. The hashtag #StopAsianHate was a top trending topic on Twitter hours after the shootings that happened Tuesday evening.

"I think the reason why people are feeling so hopeless is because Asian Americans have been ringing the bell on this issue for so long ... We've been raising the red flag," said Aisha Yaqoob Mahmood, executive director of the Atlanta-based Asian American Advocacy Fund, which

identified targets owned by Asians, said Margaret Huang, president and CEO of the Southern Poverty Law Center, which tracks hate groups. The gunman was very clearly going after a targeted group of people.

Being Asian American herself, Huang said the shootings felt personal. She is worried that not classifying the attack as a hate crime will absolutely discourage others from coming forward and seeking help.

She also cringed at the comments of a sheriff's captain who said of the gunman, It was a really bad day for him.

The remark appeared to be trying to explain and justify the suspect's actions. Hopefully it was a misstatement, Huang said.

Mahmood said Asian American business owners in the Atlanta area were already fearful because of incidents

like graffiti and break-ins. The shootings will raise that worry to new heights.

A lot of Asian American business owners in the beauty parlour industry and food service these are often the most visible front-line faces in the community, Mahmood said.

Her organisation is partnering with other groups like the Atlanta chapter of Asian Americans Advancing Justice to offer resources in multiple languages, including mental health assistance, self-defense training and bystander training.

Meanwhile, from Phoenix to Philadelphia, Asian American organisations nationwide organized events aimed at showing unity.

Asian Americans United, the Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance and several other partner groups held a vigil Wednesday afternoon in Philadelphia's Chinatown neighbourhood.

Italy honours Covid dead with living monument



Footage of the army convoy snaking its way through Bergamo's roads on 18 March, 2020

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ROME, 18 MARCH

Italy inaugurated a living monument to its Covid-19 dead Thursday as it marked the anniversary of one of the most haunting moments of the pandemic: when Bergamo's death toll reached such heights that an army convoy had to transport coffins out because its cemeteries and crematoriums were full.

Premier Mario Draghi visited the northern city on

the many victims," Draghi said. This place is a symbol of the pain of an entire nation." At the Wood of Memory, Bergamo Mayor Giorgio Gori said the city had decided against a memorial or a piece of artwork to commemorate its

losses. We decided to honour victims with a work that is alive, with a monument that breathes," he told the handful of dignitaries gathered on a windy lawn surrounded by the first 100 freshly planted saplings.

The anniversary came as much of Italy including Bergamo is under new lockdown, with schools and restaurants shuttered, amid a new surge of infections blamed on variants. And it comes as Italy's halting vaccination campaign has slowed down further because of the suspension of AstraZeneca shots pending review.

Draghi laid a wreath at Bergamo's cemetery and inaugurated a forest named in honor of the more than 100,000 victims in Italy, the first country in the West to be hit by the outbreak. This wood doesn't only contain only the memory of

Footage of the army convoy snaking its way through Bergamo's roads on 18, 2020 remains one of the most heart-wrenching and iconic images of the pandemic, in a year that saw many. It joined the photo of an exhausted Cremona nurse collapsed on her computer keyboard after a shift, and more recently, an image of a Rome-area bistro owner sitting hunched over in her restaurant kitchen after the latest lockdown was imposed.

For Bergamo, though, the army convoy was early evidence of the outsized toll the first weeks of the outbreak had on what would become the hardest-hit province in the hardest-hit region of Lombardy: By March 18, 2020, Italy had recorded 2,978 deaths, nearly 2,000 of them in Lombardy.

Today, Italy's official toll stands at more than 103,000, the sixth highest in the world and the second highest in Europe after Britain with hundreds more dying every day, amid continuing questions about what has gone wrong with Italy's response, particularly in Lombardy.

AP

EU regulator reviews AstraZeneca

LONDON, 18 MARCH

The world is awaiting a decision from Europe's top medical regulator on whether its initial investigation into whether there is any evidence to show the AstraZeneca coronavirus vaccine is linked to a small number of blood clots reported in people across the continent.

The European Medicines Agency's expert committee is set to announce the results of its investigation later Thursday.

Earlier this week, more than a dozen countries including Germany, France, Spain and Italy suspended immunization using the AstraZeneca vaccine after reports of unusual blood clots in several people among the 17 million who have received at least one dose in Europe.

AP

Dutch caretaker PM Rutte inches towards a fourth term

ASSOCIATED PRESS
THE HAGUE, 18 MARCH

Dutch voters pushed Prime Minister Mark Rutte toward a fourth term in office in Wednesday's general election that bolstered his conservative party's position as the biggest in parliament and boosted a key ally into second place, an exit poll suggested.

With Rutte's bloc and other mainstream parties thriving, the far-right failed again to make a major breakthrough despite its hopes of appealing to populist sentiments and capitalising on the severe economic downturn and pandemic that has killed more than 16,000 people in the Netherlands.

Rutte, 54, has now won four elections in a row. He has been in power for more than a decade at the head of three different coalitions and could become the country's longest-serving prime minister if he manages to form a new government.

He said voters had given

his party an overwhelming vote of confidence and it is humbling. It is also forcing us to do everything we can to make a success out of it.

"The agenda ahead of us is enormous," Rutte said in his first reaction to the poll results. "We have to lead the Netherlands through the corona crisis".

The Ipsos exit poll for national broadcaster NOS, updated to include early results from vote counting, forecast that Rutte's People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, or VVD, would win 35 seats, up from 33 in the last election, of the 150 seats in the lower house of parliament. This shows that the Netherlands trusts the VVD and Mark Rutte to continue in this unprecedented crisis, said VVD lawmaker Sophie Hermans. The poll forecast that the centrist D66 party, which was part of Rutte's last coalition, won 26 seats seven more than at the last election to become the country's second largest party.

No love for Nolan...again

Nominations for the 93rd Academy Awards were announced earlier this week, with one high-profile omission

ABHIRAJ GANGULI

W here there is life, there are stories. Stories that distract us from the darkness around and give respite, even if for a little while. And is there a better way to marvel at the magic of storytelling than the movies? Even though the year past brimmed with hopelessness, a handful of movies made the world bearable, if only for a few hours.

As is the wont of the movie industry, convention dictates that the ones deserving accolades have a means to get them. The most publicised, and arguably the most popular, awards show on the planet announced its list of nominations earlier this week. The 2021 Oscars marks the 93rd edition of the annual extravaganza and, in this year of years, the Academy of Motion Pictures, Arts and Sciences selected films that provided succour to tired hearts or left an indelible impact on anxious minds. The winners will be declared to the public on 25 April in a delayed ceremony that will be held both at the Dolby Theatre and Los Angeles' main railway hub, Union Station.

A cursory glance at the list of nominees shows that this year the Academy has embraced diversity. Two female filmmakers – Chloe Zhao for *Nomadland* and Emerald Fennell for *Promising Young Woman* – have found space in the Best Director category for the first time in Oscar history. Nine of the 20 acting nominees also come from ethnic minority backgrounds. That said, David Fincher's *Mank*, a biographical drama about the washed-up and alcoholic original screenwriter of *Citizen Kane*, with a predominantly white cast and based on the traditional Academy-favourite theme of looking inwards at the Hollywood behemoth received the highest number of nods at 10.

Curiously enough, the omissions from the nominee list raise as many eyebrows as the ones that made it. Of them, the most glaring absentee this time around is Christopher Nolan's mind-bendingly complex and gorgeously shot time-travel/sci-fi action epic, *Tenet*. It has been kept out of the

"biggies", as they are called, and been recognised in only two technical categories – Production Design and Visual Effects.

Before diving into the whys of the affair, one should mention that snubbing Nolan isn't a caprice on the Academy's part. Time and again, in his 20-odd-year career, the blockbuster director of cerebral money-spinners like *Memento*, *The Dark Knight Trilogy*, *The Prestige*, *Interstellar*, *Inception* and *Dunkirk* has failed to find a chair on the high table of Oscardom. Crowd-pleasing auteur and, give or take a few names, the "superstar filmmaker" of his generation, he has only been nominated once in the Best Director category – for his World War II masterpiece, *Dunkirk*.

Nolan isn't the first master director to be snubbed by the Academy on numerous occasions. Steven Spielberg famously didn't receive an award for such era-defining movies like *E.T.*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, even after being nominated for each one. Only with the harrowing Holocaust yarn *Schindler's List* did he receive his first Best Director award, two decades after being in the movies.

Alfred Hitchcock never won a Best Director award despite being nominated for masterworks like *Rear Window*, *Psycho*, *Spellbound* and *Rebecca*. The same goes for Stanley Kubrick who received nominations for landmark movies like *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Dr Strangelove* and *Barry Lyndon* without winning a statuette for helming a film.

And that might be because, historically, the Academy has considered science fiction, horror, comedy and superhero movies as essentially "B-grade movies", while having a soft spot for dramas, biopics and war films. It has been miserably short-sighted as movies that failed to find favour on awards night were often deemed classics by posterity.

Nolan's latest had a lot riding on it apart from just box office figures. *Tenet*, shot in Mumbai among other places, was the first major global

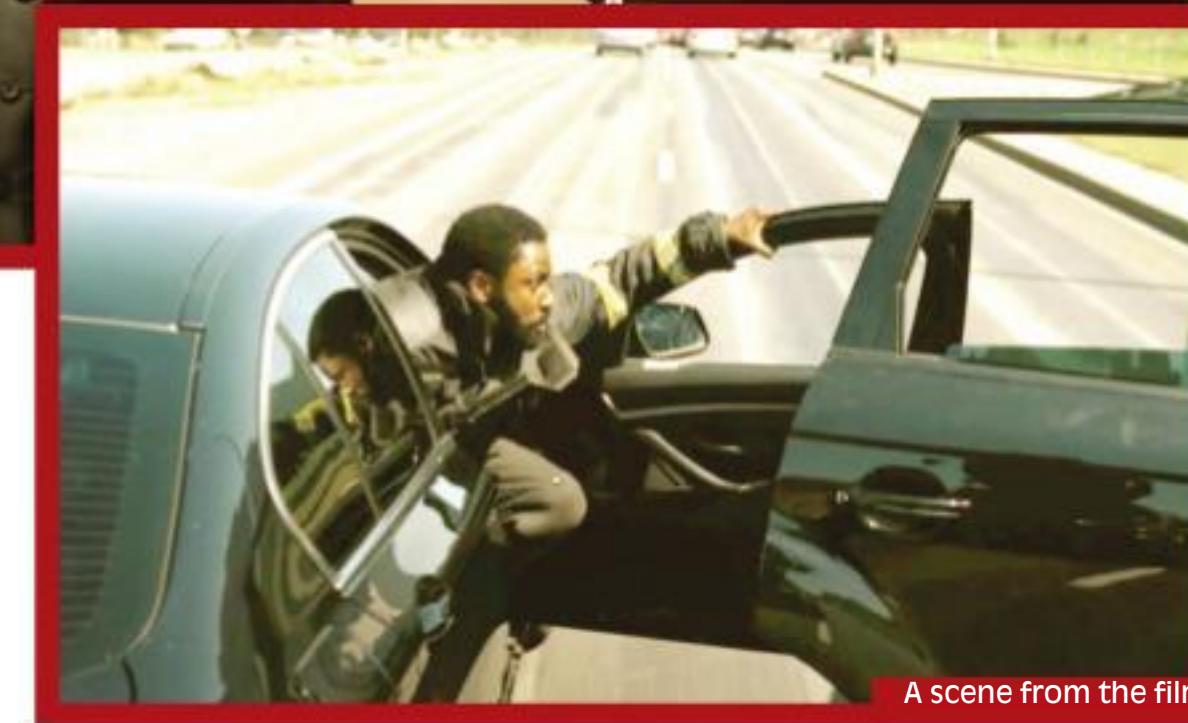


Christopher Nolan (right) on the set of *Tenet*

movie release in theatres since the pandemic hit. Industry insiders felt no other name than his on posters could make people shed their fears of going out and say yes to the movie-theatre experience amid a raging pandemic. Tom Cruise, recognisable even in a face mask, watched a screening of the film in London during its initial theatrical run last August. Quite literally, America's lockdown-induced comatose movie ecosystem needed a severe jolt to get on its feet again, and they pinned their hopes on *Tenet*.

Ironically, that might be one of the reasons why the film got no love from the Academy. Consisting mostly of men in their 60s and 70s, Academy members probably didn't appreciate Nolan's bullish insistence on releasing *Tenet* only in theatres, notwithstanding the grave health risk for viewers. The director is one of the few remaining people in Hollywood to still shoot on film and has gone on record to say that his creations can only be enjoyed on the largest of screens. Notably, established names like Fincher, Spike Lee and Aaron Sorkin released their films on streaming platforms last year.

Leaving aside the externalities, *Tenet* deserved a nomination in the Original Screenplay category, because it is, without an iota of doubt, Nolan's finest work as writer. Packing the kinetic force of a miniseries into a two-hour feature film is no easy task, but he has done it with aplomb. Not a single sequence is wasted in the grand scheme of things as the plot opens in layers to reveal its beating heart. It grapples with far-reaching themes from environmental disaster to one's disparate selves in the past



A scene from the film

and future.

One criticism regularly levelled at Nolan's screenplays is their propensity for exposition through dialogues and scenes. Although *Tenet* has its explanatory passages, it leaves more to subjective interpretation than any of the director's previous films. With the main character just named The Protagonist, one can well imagine how enigmatic the film really is.

That might be another reason for the Academy to snub *Tenet* – it is not easy viewing; one has to be clued in at all times or important plot details will be missed. In this regard, the film is an evolution from Nolan's *Memento* and *Interstellar* as both dealt with upending time and the laws of nature. It is worth mentioning that *Memento* and *Inception* are his only films to receive nominations in the Original Screenplay category.

Visually, *Tenet* is a treat and must be watched to be believed. Nolan has always pushed the envelope of cinematic possibility and this film is his most ambitious. The half an hour at the end builds up to a climax that is visually and aurally arresting, to say the least. The heart-pounding score elevates the jaw-dropping action set pieces several notches. Ludwig

Göransson deserved a nod for his incredible work as composer.

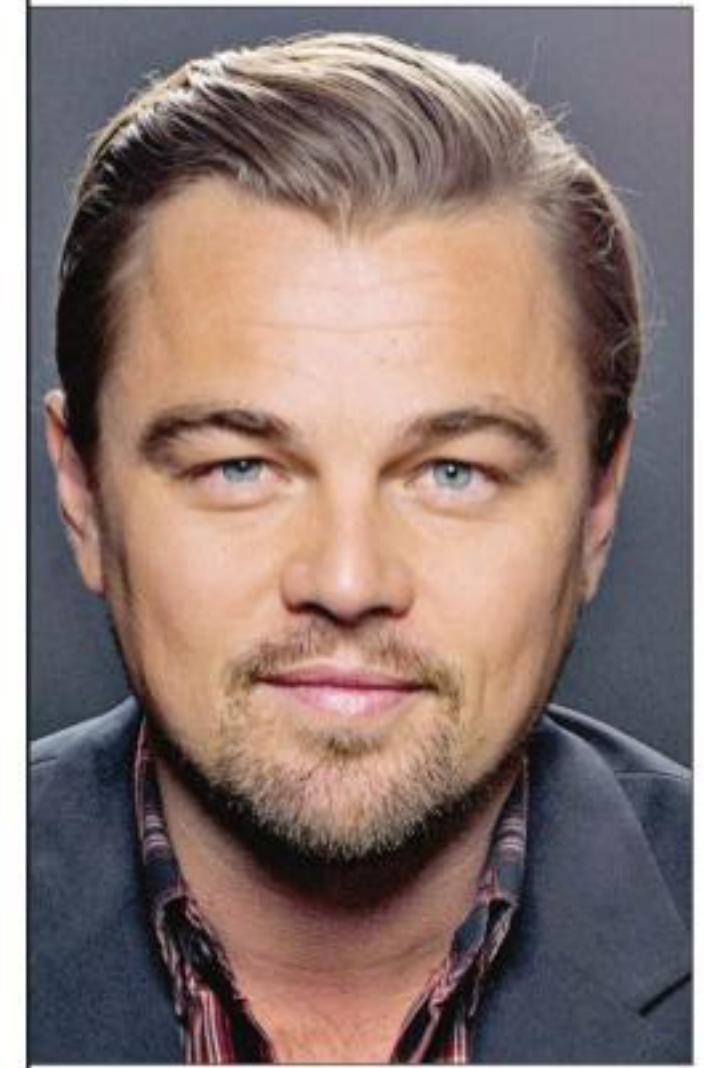
In a time-travel movie, the editing needs to be seamless; but in *Tenet*, it feels like watching one whole piece, even though there are thousands of cuts. Nolan said before the film's release, "Working for the first time with editor Jen Lame was a real pleasure. I joked with her when she first came on that this might be the hardest movie any editor has ever had to cut – and I'm not sure she would dispute that now... Working out all the aspects of portraying time running in different directions meant going beyond what was on the page, as the execution lay with a successful translation of the visual." Lame surprisingly missed out as well.

All said and done, Nolan's singular cinematic achievements have had a seminal influence on the Academy. The number of movies eligible for Best Picture every year was increased from five to a maximum of 10 entries after a furor in 2008 when *The Dark Knight* wasn't nominated. Eight are on the list this year but it should have been nine.

The writer is a senior sub-editor, Features, *The Statesman*, Kolkata

SNIPPETS

Shared universe



A meta theory has suggested that the Quentin Tarantino film *Django Unchained* is actually a film within a film.

A few *Reddit* users have wondered whether the 2012 Western film, starring Jamie Foxx and Christoph Waltz, is actually a film that was made and released in the same world as the director's most recent film, *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*.

This would mean that, in the world of the film, villainous character Calvin Candie is not actually played by Leonardo Di Caprio, but the actor's *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* character Rick Dalton.

The theory suggests that *Django Unchained* would have been another release to star Dalton alongside his other film and television projects, including *Lancer*, *Operazione Dyn-o-mite!* and *The Fourteen Fists of McCluskey*.

In *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*, Dalton plays the villain in *Lancer* who actually has some similarities to Candie, so it's no stretch to assume Dalton could have been cast in that role.

The theory states, "We have no clue as to today what happened to Dalton after *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood*. Tarantino said that after 1969 he was a pretty big name."

Another theory suggests that *The Fourteen Fists of McCluskey*, which shows Dalton playing a character who kills Nazis with a flamethrower is actually a film inspired by the events seen in 2009 film *Inglourious Basterds*.

In 2019, it was announced that Tarantino was developing a sequel to *Django Unchained*.

The project will be an adaptation of a comic book miniseries he wrote that showed what the character got up to years after events seen in the 2012 film.

Earlier this year, Tarantino also revealed the reason why he thinks his "most ambitious" film flopped at the box office.

—THE INDEPENDENT

Fitness challenge



Actress Vaani Kapoor says she has always tried to be fit but her upcoming film *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* pushed her to work harder.

"I have always tried to be fit but *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui* is a film that has really pushed me to work harder and to my limits. To pull off my role, I put myself through a grind that was not easy. It was what (director) Abhishek Kapoor saw me have on-screen and I dived headlong into the process of achieving this body type for the film," said Kapoor.

The actress claims the film is a huge milestone in her career. "I wanted to give it all. It required me to achieve a body type that I never had before. Of course, I wanted to nail this role and took this challenge head-on. I needed to appear like a really fit girl. I literally exhausted myself training," she said.

She added, "After a difficult lockdown period and with almost no training, I had to spring back with rigorous workout sessions every day, but when I saw myself on the monitor, I felt it was all worth it".

Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui is set to release on 9 July.

RECOGNISING AN INNOVATIVE STYLE

Rabindranritya needs to be acknowledged as a prominent dance form of India for its revolutionary emergence and reflection of cosmic wisdom

cannons of classical dance and hand movements (*hasta mudras*) have no place in Rabindranritya. For it to be classified as a dance form, Vashishtha insisted that the facts of the symposium along with the drawn up syllabus be sent to the Union ministry of culture and Sangeet Natak Akademi.

Indrani Mukhopadhyay, principal of Sangit Bhavana, Visva Bharati, said that in 2014, Rabindranritya was introduced as a major subject in the institute. The form is intricately developed, expressing the deep emotions of life. The initiation of Rabindranritya was a revolutionary step, at par with the changes that were reshaping Bengal, focusing on aspirations of love, tolerance, respect and peace.

To choreograph Tagore's songs, it is necessary to possess a thorough knowledge of their background, since most of them have been written in a particular context. The universal nature of his dance has its origin in the macroscopic and microscopic world, drawing sustenance from nature and celestial bodies. Sruti Bandopadhyay, dance director of Sruti Performing Troupe, said that one needs to know the poet's perspective and purpose behind the songs he penned.

Just like there are fixed notations for every Tagore song, his dance numbers should also have specific rules. According to Mukhopadhyay, Tagore's dance ideas have been expressed time and again in his songs like *Nrityo Tale Tale* and *Dui Haate Kaler Mandira* among others.

Santidev Ghosh, who taught music and dance in Santiniketan, visited different countries to explore

their dance movements and used them in Rabindranritya. Dance teachers who came to Santiniketan taught their unique styles, which too were incorporated to express *bhava*. Elements of Kandyam dance can also be found on Rabindranritya, giving rise to a perfectly unique rendition.

Basanta Mukhopadhyay, a Rabindranritya choreographer in Santiniketan *dhara* dance form, said that the poet was against stereotypical ideas. Dance teachers in Santiniketan pay meticulous attention to *Angika Abhinaya* of Rabindranritya and develop in their students' aesthetic sensitivities through the awareness of body movements. He demonstrated how descriptions, incidents and events in dance dramas like *Chandalika*, *Mayar Khela* and *Shyama* are showcased through rhythm.

Emphasis is laid on gestures rather than on facial expressions. The *rasa* theory of Rabindrasangeet has been suitably translated into dance too.

According to Manipuri dancer Priti Patel, choreographing a dance on Rabindrasangeet can be challenging because of its philosophical ideas. She recommended the need for its formalisation.

Research scholar Sinam Basu pointed out that the real tradition of *Rabindrik* dance can be seen in Santiniketan during Basanta Utsav, when the ashramites dance in a procession to the composition *Ore Grilhabasi* in Manipuri Chali style. Manipuri form lends buoyancy to Rabindranritya. Basu observed that in Santiniketan, Manipuri and Kathakali dance forms were mainly followed. Bandopadhyay further said that it were the Manipuri renditions on Padavali compositions,

which attracted Tagore to the form.

Khangembam Khoni of Sangit Bhavana said that Tagore's contribution to the philosophy of Indian dance was an endeavour to enhance the cosmic implications of Nataraja, the lord of dance. She said that Guru Jitendra Singh innovatively blended several dance forms in Chitrangada, with Manipuri being the dominant one. He choreographed the song *Rodono Bhora E Basanto* in typical Manipuri style with the right hand raised at the shoulder level and the left positioned at the waistline, while taking a full circle. This was in keeping with the character, theme and ideology conveyed. There the holistic and symbolic technique of Manipuri dance was found to be the most appropriate.

In the wedding scene of Chitrangada and Arjun, Singh presented an aesthetic blend of Java, Bali, Manipuri, Bharatanatyam and Kathakali. Manipuri dance was preferred by Tagore for its tenderness, grace and lyricism. Both Manipuri exponents Guru Amubi Singh and Guru Jiten Singh have commented on Tagore's lack of enthusiasm for *hasta mudras*. However to express *bhava*, rhythms could be used.

Dancer Kamalini Asthana said that the dance dialect of Rabindranritya needs to be formalised into an academic course by which there can be a proper understanding of Tagore's vision. This idiom calls for openness in structure and the dance form must be accepted as Rabindranritya in the line of Rabindrasangeet. In the tradition of *Abhinaya Angika*, *vachika*, *aharya* and *satuika* are the basis of all dances. They can help the presentation of Rabindranritya in a well organised manner.

Amartya Mukhopadhyay from Santiniketan summed up the basic tenets of Rabindranritya as visualised by Tagore. Rabindranritya spells out the characteristic spirit of Bengali culture, which manifests in their attitudes and aspirations. Tagore created a body of literature, deep rooted in philosophy and the religion of humanity. Rabindranritya was born from those values, which lends the form its novelty.

The writer is a senior dance critic



TAPATI CHOWDHURY

Union ministry of culture to recognise Rabindranritya as a legacy and a dance form of India.

Rishi Kumar Vashishtha, director, Centre for Cultural Resources and Training, Union ministry of culture, considered this workshop important because it threw light on the refined age-old dance form of Rabindranritya.

It was Tagore who introduced this fusion dance form to the elite members of Bengali society. He had envisioned a mellow and subtle dance style, where different movements blend with one another while expressing the emotions in his lyrics. Rigid



REAPING THE WHIRLWIND
A Borussia Monchengladbach coach has been ordered to take charge of women's training sessions as punishment for abusing officials. Gladbach's U-23 squad coach Heiko Vogel (photo, left) was sanctioned for unsporting behaviour towards a referee and his assistants during a youth match in January.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Covid scare: India's badminton team have pulled out of the All England Open after a person travelling on their flight tested positive for Covid-19. They will be put in quarantine for 10 days from the date of their flight, the Badminton World Federation confirmed.

Firm stand: Robert Lewandowski could miss Germany's World Cup qualifier against England as Bayern Munich may not let him go to London owing to Covid-19 restrictions. Rules state that people returning to Germany from the UK have to be quarantined.

Pak squad: Only one out of 35 members of Pakistan's Africa-bound squad tested positive for Covid-19, the Pakistan Cricket Board said on Wednesday. Pakistan are scheduled to tour South Africa and Zimbabwe from 26 March. Pakistan will play two Tests in Zimbabwe.

Wanted spectators: European football's governing body Uefa is working on a plan to ensure every match at this year's delayed Euros will be staged in front of fans. Held over from 2020 due to the coronavirus pandemic, the show is to be held in 12 different countries.

Major failure: England's Football Association is guilty of inexplicable "institutional failings" in delaying the implementation of child safeguarding measures between 1995 and 2000, says a review. Convictions should have served as the catalyst for change, the report says.

Aubameyang talks: Mikel Arteta has held "positive" talks with Arsenal captain Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang after dropping him for a breach of club discipline, but refused to guarantee the Gabon forward will get his place back against Olympiakos on Thursday.

Spurs & Son: Tottenham boss Jose Mourinho has cast doubts over whether Son Heung-min will be released to play for South Korea against Japan. Son is named in South Korea's squad for the friendly on 25 March despite limping off during the London derby.

Tokyo turmoil: Tokyo Olympic chief creative director Hiroshi Sasaki has resigned after making derogatory remarks about a popular female Japanese entertainer, dealing another blow to the postponed Olympic Games with four months to go for the opening ceremony.

Girls censured: Women's cricket team coach WV Raman said on Wednesday India "lacked mental stamina and cricketing fitness" after their 1-4 one-day series loss to South African women. The Indian women lost the fifth and final match to the Proteas by five wickets.

Taylor out: New Zealand batsman Ross Taylor has been ruled out of the opening game of the one-day series against Bangladesh with a small tear in his left hamstring. The first match is scheduled to be held on Saturday in Dunedin. Mark Chapman fills the breach.

Tent pegging: The Indian tent pegging team has secured a place in ITPF (International Tent Pegging Federation) World Cup after a stupendous show at the qualifiers. Out of seven competitions held at qualifiers, India claimed six gold medals and one bronze.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD, 18 MARCH

Suryakumar Yadav (in photo) smashed a blistering maiden fifty and powered India to 185 for 8 in their fourth T20 International match against England here on Thursday.

Suryakumar, who replaced an injured Ishan Kishan, struck six fours and three sixes in his 31-ball 57 to top score for India after being asked to bat. He debuted in the second T20I but did not bat in that match. He did not play in the third game.

India did not have a big partnership but quickfire knocks from Shreyas Iyer (37 off 18 balls) and Rishabh Pant (30 off 23) took the hosts to their highest total of the series.

England again opened the attack with leg-spinner Adil Rashid but Rohit Sharma (12) clobbered him for a six in the first ball of the match and then followed it up with a four.

But Rohit's promising innings was cut short in the fourth over as he was caught and bowled by Jofra Archer, who took career-best figures of 4/33. Suryakumar hit Archer for a six in the first ball he faced in international cricket, picked up the gaps and found the scoreboard moving, though the England bowlers were by no means wayward.

India's 45 for 1 after the powerplay was not a top-notch effort but Suryakumar smacked Rashid for a six and a four in the seventh over to overtake opener KL Rahul (14).

The home side suffered a double blow in the form of Rahul and captain Virat Kohli as they were pegged back to 70 for 3 in the ninth over.

Rahul continued his struggle as he offered a simple catch to Archer at mid-off the bowling of Ben Stokes while Kohli was stumped out as he danced down the track to smash Rashid in an uncharacteristic show of aggression

early in his innings. India were 75 for 3 at halfway mark with Suryakumar going great guns. He reached his maiden international fifty from just 28 deliveries, with a four off Rashid in the 12th over.

Pant joined the party as he hit two fours off Stokes in the 13th over, taking India's score to 104 for 3. But Suryakumar was unlucky to have been given out in the 14th over after repeated replays of Dawid Malan's catch off Sam Curran by the TV umpire. A part of the ball seemed to have touched the ground but the TV umpire did not overturn the on-field umpire's decision due to lack of conclusive proof.

Ben Stokes took a blinder of a catch to get rid of Hardik Pandya in the 19th over and Washington Sundar was given out in the last over after repeated replays by the TV umpire.

Earlier, England had won the toss and elected to bowl. Spinner Yuzvendra Chahal was dropped from the Indian squad for Rahul Chahar while

At the time of going to print England were at 15/0. England need 171 runs in 104 balls with the required RR of 9.86. The current RR was at 5.62

Suryakumar Yadav replaced Ishan Kishan, who captain Virat Kohli said has a groin strain.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA INNINGS	
R Sharma	c & b Archer
KL Rahul	c Archer b Stokes
S Yadav	c Malan b Curran
V Kohli	st Buttler b Rashid
R Pant	b Archer
S Iyer	c Malan b Archer
H Pandya	c Stokes b Wood
S Thakur	not out
W Sundar	c Rashid b Archer
B Kumar	not out
Extras:	(lb 5, w 4)
TOTAL:	(20 Ov, RR: 9.25) 185/8

BOWLING: A Rashid 4,1,39,1
J Archer 4,0,33,4 M Wood 4,1,25,1
C Jordan 4,0,41,0 B Stokes 3,0,26,1
S Curran 1,0,16,1

The Statesman Sport

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

Suryakumar's fifty takes India to 185/8



Bayern, Chelsea reach quarter-finals

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
BERLIN, 18 MARCH



Title-holders Bayern Munich beat Lazio 2-1 and 6-2 on aggregate to reach the Champions League quarter-finals a record 19th time. Robert Lewandowski converted a first-half penalty and substitute Eric Maxim Choupo-Moting got the second for Bayern who had effectively sealed the tie with a 4-1 win in Rome last month.

Munich broke a tie with Barcelona as they reached the last-eight record 19th time since the elite event was rebranded the Champions League in 1992-3. Chelsea completed a 3-0 aggregate success over Atletico Madrid with a 2-0 victory, thanks to Hakim Ziyech and Emerson.

The visitors had Stefan Savic sent off in the 81st. Bayern and Chelsea completed the quarter-final field which includes Liverpool, Manchester City, Borussia Dortmund, record winners Real Madrid, last year's finalists Paris Saint-Germain and Porto. The draw for the quarter-finals and the semi-finals is set for Friday. Alexander Nuebel got a rare start between the posts in snowy Munich to replace the ill Manuel Neuer, and Bayern with their

At Stamford Bridge, Atletico

three-goal cushion controlled the action as Leroy Sane curled just inches wide on the left in the 13th minute.

Sergej Milinkovic-Savic came up with a dangerous header for Lazio but Bayern were on top in the 33rd when Lewandowski sent the ball into the bottom left corner from the spot after Leon Goretzka had pulled down by Vedad Iuriqi. Lewandowski hit the left post in the 66th, left the pitch five minutes later for Choupo-Moting, who needed only two minutes to make it 2-0 by lobbing home off David Alaba's long ball. Marco Polo headed a late consolation goal for Lazio off a free-kick but Italy now has no team left in the competition as Juventus and Atalanta also went out in the last 16.

At Stamford Bridge, Atletico

Dhanalakshmi beats Hima Das

PATIALA, 18 MARCH

SDhanalakshmi of Tamil Nadu, who had stunned Dutee Chand in the 100m final, on Thursday beat another star athlete Hima Das in the 200m semifinal heats by running a meet record time of 23.26 seconds in the Federation Cup National Senior Athletics Championships here on Thursday.

Dhanalakshmi's time bettered PT Usha's long-standing meet record of 22.80 seconds set in Chennai in 1998.

Having run 24.05 seconds when finishing third in the Federation Cup here two years ago, Dhanalakshmi had recorded a 23.47 in the Tamil Nadu

State Championships in Sivakasi on January 24, thus making it the second time she was dipping in under 23.50 seconds.

Returning to competition after a long break, Swapna Barman won the heptathlon event with a total of 5636 points, her 1.82m high jump marking up for the 2:29.98 in the 800m. Mareena George (Kerala) finished second, a poor shot put performance denying her a shot at beating the 2018 Asian Games champion in the gruelling seven-event challenge. PTI

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Having run 24.05 seconds when finishing third in the Federation Cup here two years ago, Dhanalakshmi had recorded a 23.47 in the Tamil Nadu

State Championships in Sivakasi on January 24, thus making it the second time she was dipping in under 23.50 seconds.

Returning to competition after a long break, Swapna Barman won the heptathlon event with a total of 5636 points, her 1.82m high jump marking up for the 2:29.98 in the 800m. Mareena George (Kerala) finished second, a poor shot put performance denying her a shot at beating the 2018 Asian Games champion in the gruelling seven-event challenge. PTI

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