

'REJECT THE CORRUPT DMK-CONG COMBINE'

## WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 36 and 13 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 64% Min: 13%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 35.5°C (+2) Min: 11.7°C (-7)

SUN RISES

06:07 hrs

MOON RISES

01:59 hrs

SUN SETS

18:41 hrs

MOON SETS

11:25 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



AGENCIES

**Five jawans killed in Maoist encounter:** Five security personnel were killed and a few others injured on Saturday in an encounter with Maoists at a forest in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district. Some Maoists are also suspected to have been killed during exchange. "The gunbattle broke out in Tarrem area when a joint team of security forces was out on an anti-Naxal operation," Chhattisgarh DGP DM Awasthi said.

**NIA custody of Waze extended till 7 April:** A Mumbai court on Saturday extended the NIA custody of suspended police officer Sachin Waze till 7 April in the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near Mukesh Ambani's house and businessman Mansukh Hirani's death. The NIA has found that an amount of Rs 26.50 lakh was withdrawn from the joint bank account of Waze and his aide on 18 March after his arrest.

**Kovind's health improving:** President Ram Nath Kovind's health condition is improving and he has been shifted from ICU to a special room in AIIMS, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. Kovind, 75, on Tuesday underwent a cardiac bypass surgery at the AIIMS, New Delhi.



MYANMAR'S CIVIL STRIFE

P4

P6

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION  
TROUBLE MOUNTS FOR NEPAL PM AS OPP SEEKS RESIGNATION

THE KOHLI TEAM THAT ALWAYS COME UP SHORT

P11



P12

# Covid nos skyrocket to nearly 90k in 1 day

Highest daily rise in almost seven months with 714 deaths in last 24 hours

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

**India** on Saturday recorded 89,129 new Covid-19 cases in a day, the highest daily rise in around six-and-a-half-months, taking the nationwide tally of infections to over 1.23 crore, according to the Union Health Ministry data on Saturday.

The death toll increased to 1,64,110 with 714 more fatalities in a day, also the highest since 21 October. Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 47,913, followed by 4,991 in Karnataka and 4,174 in Chhattisgarh.

Twelve states - Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Karnataka, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala - are displaying an upward trajectory in daily new cases, the health ministry said.

Eight states - Maharashtra, Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh, are witnessing a steep rise in daily new Covid-19 cases and account for 81.42 per cent of the infections reported on Saturday, the Union Health Ministry said.

India's tally of Covid-19 active caseload also increased to 6,58,909 and now comprises 5.32 per cent of the total infections. In a day, there has been a net rise of 44,213 active cases.

Maharashtra alone accounts for 59.36 per cent of the total active caseload of the country.

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Thirteen states and UTs have not reported any

Ten districts - Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur, Thane, Nashik, Bengaluru Urban, Aurangabad, Delhi, Ahmednagar and Nanded - account for 50 per cent of the total active caseload of the country. Maharashtra has reported the highest daily new cases at 47,913, followed by 4,991 in Karnataka and 4,174 in Chhattisgarh.

Maharashtra has shown a nine-fold jump, the maximum increase in the number of active cases in the last two months. In percentage terms, Punjab has reported the maximum increase in active cases, the Ministry data said.

India's cumulative recoveries stand at 1,15,69,241 with 44,202 recoveries being registered in a day.

Thirteen states and UTs have not reported any

Covid-19 deaths in a day. These are Odisha, Assam, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, Tripura, Sikkim, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Arunachal Pradesh.

In a significant development in the fight against Covid-19, cumulatively, the cumulative number of vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 7.3 crore mark.

These states and UTs "of grave concern" were advised to take up immediate steps to ensure containment of active cases and daily deaths through enhanced testing, prompt contact tracing and enforcement of Covid-appropriate behaviour.

**3,567 cases, 10 deaths in Delhi:** Amid the continuing surge in coronavirus infections, Delhi today recorded 3,567 Covid-19 cases while 10 more people succumbed to the contagious, deadly virus in the city, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

## FACT FILE

TOTAL CASES  
1,23,92,260ACTIVE CASES  
6,58,909NEW CASES  
89,129NEW RECOVERIES  
44,202TOTAL DEATHS  
1,64,110

UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8:00 A.M. SATURDAY 03 APRIL 2021

ries that have been reporting a very high rise in daily cases and fatality because of Covid-19 in the last two weeks.

These states and UTs "of grave concern" were advised to take up immediate steps to ensure containment of active cases and daily deaths through enhanced testing, prompt contact tracing and enforcement of Covid-appropriate behaviour.

**3,567 cases, 10 deaths in Delhi:** Amid the continuing surge in coronavirus infections, Delhi today recorded 3,567 Covid-19 cases while 10 more people succumbed to the contagious, deadly virus in the city, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Referring to the Singur movement of 2006-08 that forced Tata Motors to move out its proposed small car Nano's production unit from there, Modi said the Trinamul used the place for political purposes and then left the people to fend for themselves.

"Didi and her party's obstructionist mindset blocked several industri-

al, infrastructure and connectivity projects. I have never seen a party which takes pride in stopping industries and developments after taking money.

The Prime Minister also mocked Banerjee for her frequent criticism of the Electronic Voting Machines and the Election Commission. "She keeps criticising EVM, the EC... If players keep criticising umpsires, you should know their Khela shesh (the game's over)" he told an election rally here in Hooghly district.

Seeking to punch a hole in the TMC's poll plank of Bengal pride, Modi claimed Banerjee hurt people's self-respect by claiming they attend BJP rallies after taking money.

"Didi has got jittery after sensing defeat. That's why she is criticising everybody and everything, from EC to EVMs. She is abusing me. But while abusing me, she has hurt the self-respect of the people of Bengal by saying they are taking money to attend our rallies."

West Bengal chief min-

'Mamata used Singur for political gains': Didi hits back with 'outsider' barb



She keeps criticising EVMs, the Election Commission. If players keep criticising umpsires, you should know their *Khela shesh* (the game's over)

PM NARENDRA MODI  
ELECTION RALLY IN HOOGHLY DISTRICT

ister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday accused the BJP of engineering communal strife in the state to win the Assembly elections.

The TMC chief, while addressing an election rally in Raldighi in South 24 Parganas district, also called upon Muslims not to "fall in the trap of a BJP-aided party from Hyderabad and Bengal ally that are out to polarise votes."

Her jibe was aimed at Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM and Abbas Siddiqui's ISF. The ISF is fighting the elections in alliance with the CPI(M) and Congress.

The TMC supremo also urged Hindus to be on the guard against the BJP's attempts to "instigate communal clashes" and called upon them to chase away outsiders sent to foment trouble in their localities.

## 'Puzzled at cacophony over not being invited at Biden's climate summit'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL



Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has not taken kindly to the comments and interpretations being made in newspapers and the social media on US President Joe Biden ignoring him while inviting 40 world leaders to the "Leaders' Summit on Climate" he will hold virtually on 22-23 April.

Khan took to Twitter today to say, "I am puzzled at the cacophony over Pak not being invited to a climate change conf! My govt's environment policies are driven solely by our commitment to our future generations of a clean & green Pakistan to mitigate the impact of climate change."

Khan tweets notwithstanding, Islamabad appears clearly upset that its leadership was ignored by the American leader for the much-anticipated summit.

US Special Presidential

Envoy for Climate John Kerry, who will be in South Asia next week, has also chosen to visit New Delhi and Dhaka but will skip Islamabad.

Pakistan Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri had earlier said that his country's commitment to addressing the climate change crisis was "well accepted and appreciated around the world."

"No trade with India under current scenario": PM Imran Khan decided that Pakistan cannot go ahead with any trade with India under the current circumstances after holding consultations with key members of his Cabinet on importing cotton and sugar from the neighbouring country, a media report said.

The panel, after investigation, submitted its report in a sealed cover to the apex court recently. The CBI, in its probe, had held that the then top police officials in Kerala were responsible for Narayanan's illegal arrest.

The case also had its political fallout, with a section in the Congress targeting the then chief minister late K Karunakaran over the issue, that eventually led to his resigna-

## POETRY IN MOTION

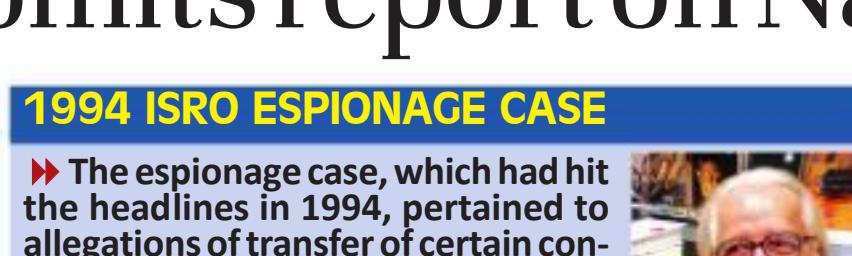


Artistes perform during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's rally ahead of third phase of Assam Assembly elections, in Baksa district on Saturday. AGENCIES (See Page 5)

## Panel submits report on Nambi's illegal arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL



The espionage case, which had hit the headlines in 1994, pertained to allegations of transfer of certain confidential documents on India's space programme to foreign countries by two scientists and four others.

► Dr Nambi Narayanan was arrested when the Congress was heading the government in Kerala

tion. Over a period of almost two-and-a-half years, the panel headed by Justice Jain examined the circumstances leading to the arrest.

The espionage case, which had hit the headlines in 1994, pertained to allegations of transfer of certain confidential documents on India's space programme to foreign countries by two scientists and four others, including two Maldivian women.

The 79-year-old former scientist, who was given a clean chit by the CBI, maintained that the Kerala Police had "fabricated" the case and the technology he was accused to have stolen and sold in the 1994 case did not even exist at that time.

Narayanan had approached the apex court against a Kerala High Court judgement that said "no action needed to be taken" against former DGP Siby Mathews, who was then heading the SIT probe team, two retired superintendents of police, K K Joshua and S Vijayan, and the then Deputy Director of Intelligence Bureau, R B Shreemukar, who were later held responsible by the CBI for the scientist's illegal arrest.

The apex court in its judgement had said, "The obtain-

ing factual scenario calls for constitution of a committee to find out ways and means to take appropriate steps against the erring officials."

"The criminal law was set in motion without any basis. It was initiated on some kind of fancy or notion," a bench headed by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra had said.

"We are of the view that the appellant was arrested and he has suffered custody for almost 50 days. His arrest has been seriously criticised in the closure report of the CBI. From the aforesaid report, the harassment and mental torture faced by the appellant is obvious," the bench added.

## Alert bus driver saves lives of passengers before death in HP

SANJEEV KUMAR

SHIMLA, 3 APRIL

Timely action and alert thinking of a driver of private bus in Paonta Sahib in Sirsa district of Himachal Pradesh, around 220 km from here, saved the lives of 15 passengers after he suffered heart attack while driving.

The driver turned the bus towards bushes on the roadside, otherwise the vehicle would have veered off the road and fell into deep gorge which might have resulted in many casualties.

Deputy Superintendent of Police, Paonta Sahib Bir Bahadur said the incident took place on Friday evening when the private bus was on its way to Paonta Sahib from Satala.

Police said all the passengers escaped unharmed in the accident and further investigations in the case were on.

## Taiwan thanks India for showing solidarity over railway disaster

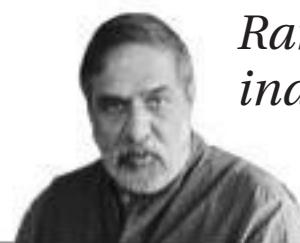
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

Taiwan today thanked India for expressing solidarity with the East Asian island in the wake of yesterday's gruesome rail tragedy in which 51 people were killed and over 150 injured.

"Thank you@MEAIndia for the expression of solidarity and support. This genuinely friendly gesture will touch the people, & bring Taiwan and India closer in a real & lasting manner," Taiwan Foreign Minister Joseph Wu tweeted.

India and Taiwan do not have formal diplomatic ties but since 1995, both sides have maintained representative offices in their capitals that function as de facto embassies.

S

Ranjan Gogoi's nomination undermines  
independence of judiciarySENIOR CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON ANAND SHARMA  
OPPOSING THE FORMER CJI'S NOMINATION TO THE RAJYA SABHA

# Virus surge: Capital records 3,567 new cases, 10 deaths

Delhi's Covid positivity rate rises to 4.48 per cent, number of active cases mount to 12,647

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

Amid the continuing surge in coronavirus infections, Delhi today recorded 3,567 Covid-19 cases while 10 more people succumbed to the contagious, deadly virus in the city, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital's Covid positivity rate continued to rise. It rose to 4.48 per cent today from 4.11 per cent a day ago, the health bulletin said. The positivity rate has mounted from below 1 per cent to 4.48 percent in the last two weeks, as per the official data.

The number of active cases today rose to 12,647 from yesterday's 11,994. The fresh cases were detected out of 79,617 tests, including 57,296 RT-PCR tests, the health bulletin stated.

Delhi's coronavirus case-load mounted to 6,72,381 while its Covid toll climbed to 11,060, the bulletin said.

The number of people under home isolation rose to 6,569 from 6,106 a day ago. The containment zones rose to 2,618 from yesterday's 2,338.

Of the 5,947 beds set aside for coronavirus patients in government and private hospitals in the city, 3,506 were unoccupied, according to official figures.

Delhi had yesterday reported 3,594 cases, the highest daily count this year. It had reported 2,790 cases last Thursday,



During the Covid vaccination at UPHC Darya Ganj dispensary in the Capital on Saturday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

1,819 cases on Wednesday, 992 cases on Tuesday, and 1,904 cases on Monday.

On 3 December, the city had recorded 3,734 cases while on 4 December, the count was 4,067, according to official data. The number of daily cases had started to come down sharply in February. On 26 February, the month's highest daily count of 256

cases was recorded. The daily cases began to rise in March and have been steadily increasing over the last few weeks.

Delhi has currently been grappling with the "fourth Covid wave" but the government was not considering imposition of a lockdown in the city now, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said yesterday, even as he urged the Centre

to allow states to undertake mass vaccination regardless of age "on a war footing".

If there is a need for a lockdown in the future, a decision will be taken after due public consultation, Kejriwal said, claiming that the fourth wave was less serious than the previous ones as there were fewer deaths and hospitalisations this time.

The CM said, "It's a matter of concern since Covid-19 cases are rising exponentially. But there is no need to panic."

The government is monitoring the situation and taking all necessary steps," even as he appealed to the people to wear face masks, maintain social distancing and regularly wash hands to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

## JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

## LEGAL NOTICES

COURT NOTICE  
(U.O 5 Rule 202 CPC)  
IN THE COURT OF  
SH. PUNEET MOHINI  
Civil Judge (Junior Division),  
Ludhiana  
CNR No. PBLD02-003202-  
2020  
Next Date: 06-05-2021  
Suman Kaur  
Versus  
Inderjit Singh  
Publication issued to:  
Inderjit Singh Jassowal, son  
of Late Sh. Ajit Singh:-  
Resident of 103-C, Bhai  
Randhir Singh Nagar, Ludhi-  
ana and also 31 Gosfield Drive,  
Brampton, on LGR 357, Cana-  
da

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through advocate on 06-05-2021 at 10:00 am.  
For details log on to  
[https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?r=district\\_notice&district=Ludhiana](https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?r=district_notice&district=Ludhiana)  
Dated, this day of 18-03-  
2021.  
Civil Judge  
(Senior Junior Division),  
Ludhiana  
Seal of the Court

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## The Sunday Statesman

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## Labourer held for killing brother-in-law over money dispute in Delhi's Narela

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

A 57-year-old labourer was arrested for allegedly killing his brother-in-law over a money dispute in north Delhi's Narela, police said on Saturday.

The arrest comes after the body of Karan Kumar (36) with his face burnt was found inside a vacant flat in Narela.

There were injury marks on Kumar's neck and hands, and his face was burnt to hide his identity.

After investigation, police arrested the accused, identified as Panna Ram, who also borrowed Rs 29,000 from Kumar and was unable to return the money. Kumar used to insult him in front of his family members and other relatives over the issue, police said.

The accused had also registered a case against the victim for kidnapping and other offences.

"We aim to vaccinate all the citizens of Delhi by May 3-4, once the Delhi government receives a good number of COVID-19 vaccine doses from the central government," Sisodia said in a statement.

"I request the Government of India to increase the supply of COVID-19 vaccines in Delhi and begin the vaccination drive for citizens below the age of 45, if we want to stop the spread of the virus," he added.

"The only way to fight and overcome the virus is by vaccinating people of all ages, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

Sisodia, who along with his spouse received the first dose of Covaxin, thanked doctors and scientists in a tweet.

"Got vaccinated with my family today @HospitalLok! Thankful to our brilliant scientists, medical teams & everyone who worked tirelessly for making vaccines for us. Centre Govt should provide vaccine for all without age restriction," Sisodia said.

"Let's fight #Covid together!" he said.

Presently, people aged 45 years and above are being administered the COVID-19 vaccines in the country.

"The only way to swiftly break the chain of the COVID-19 virus is to vaccinate people of all ages, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader said.

"Sisodia, who along with his spouse received the first dose of Covaxin, thanked doctors and scientists in a tweet.

"He also appealed to the Delhites aged 45 years and above to get vaccinated, saying it is the only way to fight the virus.

Last month, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took the jab, along with his parents, at the government-run LNJP hospital.

## Sisodia takes Covid jab

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia took the coronavirus vaccine jab at the Maulana Azad Medical College here on Saturday and requested the Centre to start the inoculation of people under the age of 45 years.

He also said mass vaccination is key to defeat COVID-19.

"We aim to vaccinate all the citizens of Delhi by May 3-4, once the Delhi government receives a good number of COVID-19 vaccine doses from the central government," Sisodia said in a statement.

"I request the Government of India to increase the supply of COVID-19 vaccines in Delhi and begin the vaccination drive for citizens below the age of 45, if we want to stop the spread of the virus," he added.

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*They will divide West Bengal and its people. Remember how they deleted the names of 14 lakh Bengalis and 2 lakh Biharis in the updated NRC in Assam*



MAMATA BANERJEE  
WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER

# Covid: St Stephen's inner campus out of bounds

The college's move comes after 13 students, 2 staffers test Covid + ve following an educational trip

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

**T**he "inner perimeter" of the St Stephen's College campus in the national capital has been rendered out of bounds after 13 resident students and 2 staffers tested Covid-19 positive, according to a notice issued by the college's principal.

The notice, issued yesterday, said necessary and stringent measures have been put in place by the dean's office to ensure isolation and social distancing for "all residents".

The dean of residence-cum-college chaplain and mass steward (security officer), both of whom have tested positive for coronavirus infection, had taken a group of students, including hostellers, of the premier Delhi college for an educational trip to Dalhousie in Himachal Pradesh in the last week of March.



"The inner perimeter of the college is out of bounds for all, unless specific clearance is given by the principal on a case by case basis. The outer

perimeter of the college may be accessed by those with relevant and regular work after due process at the security counter," the notice states.

Faculty who are scheduled to come to college may defer their coming till a notification informs them of an improvement in the condition," it added.

Yesterday, St Stephen's College governing body member Nandita Narain wrote to the college's principal, John Varghese, asking several questions related to the reports of students testing Covid positive and their Dalhousie trip.

In the letter, Narain asked the principal whether the college administration took permission from the Delhi University and the Delhi government for the trip or opening hostels and allowing "over 200" students to return in the last few months.

"Why was this trip organised by the college officials in the times of COVID pandemic? Was the trip authorised by the principal? Was the consent of parents of the stu-

dents taken for going on this trip? Was the permission of the University of Delhi and the state government taken for organising such a trip in pandemic times?" the governing body member asked.

In his reply, Varghese, besides confirming the positive test reports of the students and the staff members, said the trip in question was authorised by him and that the consent of students' parents was also taken for the same.

"As for the other questions, I shall answer them when I have a little more time to spare. You will agree that handling the situation is the priority now. Please be informed that the Dean's Office is aware of the situation and necessary steps have already been taken in consultation with medical and civic authorities," the principal replied to Narain.

Delhi has been reeling under a surge in Covid cases for the past few weeks.

## Covid: Himachal issues guidelines for educational institutions

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 3 APRIL

The Himachal Pradesh government on Saturday issued guidelines for educational institutions which will remain closed up to 15 April owing to surge in Covid cases in the state.

A State Executive Committee (SEC), Disaster Management official said all educational institutions schools, colleges, universities, institutions will remain closed up to 15 April as precautionary measure keeping in view the rises in Covid-19 cases.

He further stated that the educational institutions that were earmarked as examination centres shall be properly sanitized prior to being used as examination centers.

and nursing, medical, dental colleges will remain open.

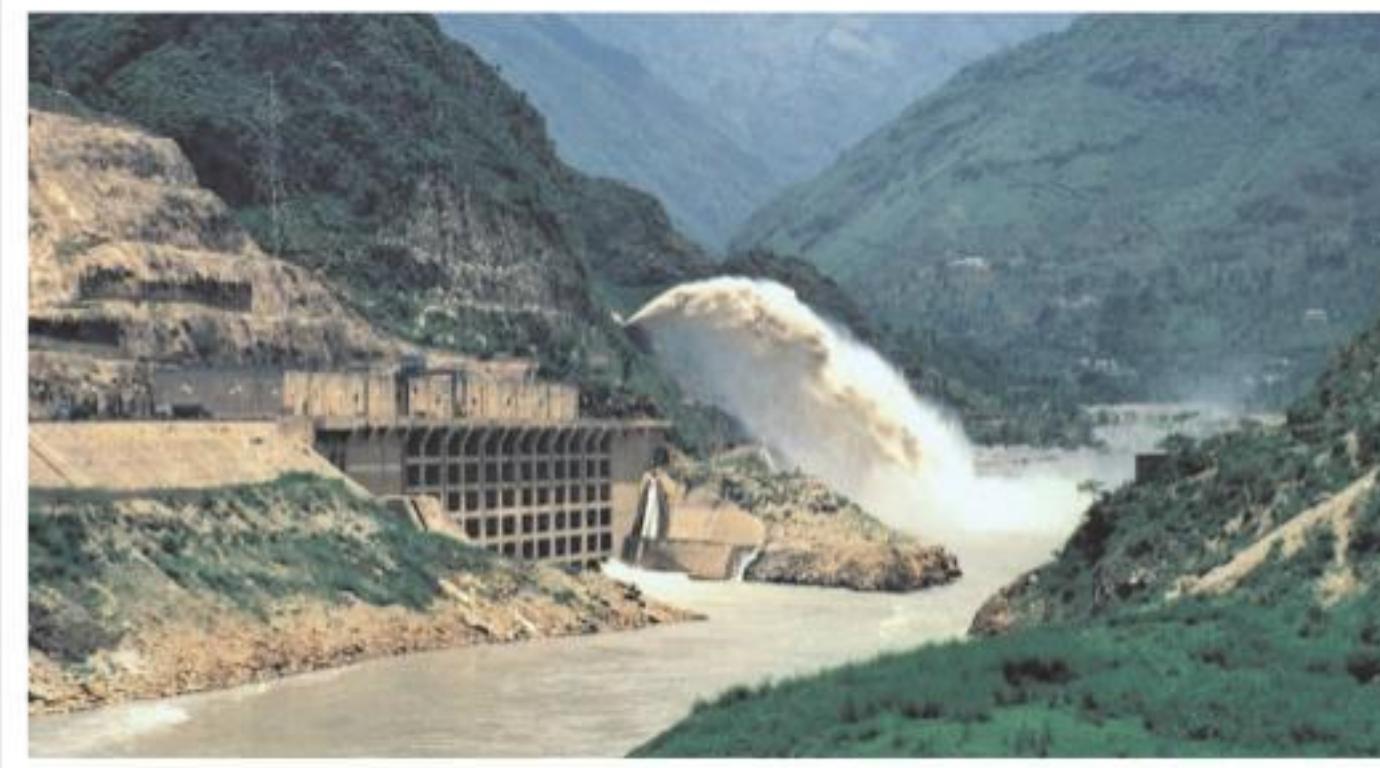
But these coaching centres will ensure observance of the Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) issued by the government from time to time.

Besides this, schools/institutions having residential facilities need not close their hostel facilities but must observe SOPs issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India for Covid-19 prevention and Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

"All such schools/educational institutions also must appoint a compliance officer for this purpose," he added.

The official added all the departments and organisations of the government, district magistrates, police officers, officials and local authorities of the state had been directed to ensure strict compliance with the directions of the SEC and various SOPs.

## BBMB tops 11,000 million units of power generation



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 APRIL

The Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) has generated 11,482.051 million units of energy upto 31 March 2021 from all its Power Houses against target of 9600 million units fixed by the Central Electricity Authority.

An official spokesperson said till date BBMB Power Houses have generated 19.60 percent more energy than the

target. "This has been possible due to judicious operation of reservoirs as well as efficient operation and maintenance of the generating units of its six power plants," the spokesperson said.

"Plant load availability of generating machines in BBMB Power Houses has been 97.04 per cent which is one of the highest in the country. The transmission availability has been registered as 99.82 per cent which is much more

than normative availability of 98.5 per cent for hydro generating stations," the spokesperson added.

The BBMB chairman Sanjay Srivastava, lauded all the employees of BBMB for maintaining high excellency even during the grave situation of Covid-19 pandemic. He congratulated the team of BBMB for their untiring efforts for surpassing the CEA target by generating 19.60 per cent more energy.

## Jai Ram flays Cong for raking up 'non-issues' to misguide people

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 3 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Saturday criticised Congress leaders for raking up "non-issues" and charged that the Opposition party was "misguiding" the people by diverting their attention from core issues of development.

Addressing public meeting in Solan for Municipal Corporation (MC) polls that are scheduled to be held on 7 April, Thakur said the opposition parties were misleading the residents of the rural areas included in the Municipal Corporation for imposing many taxes.

"Rumors are being spread among the people that in the areas of the villages which had



been included newly constituted Solan MC, there will be heavy taxation on rearing

of Gaumata and land. The people should not pay attention to these rumors

as no tax of any kind will be levied in these areas for the next 5 years," he added.

He thanked the residents of all the villages adjoining Solan for constituting the Municipal Corporation, with whose support the Solan MC had been formed.

The Chief Minister said the present state government had ensured balanced and equitable development of all areas of the state with special focus on those areas which remained neglected during the previous Congress regime.

He also accused the Congress leaders for misguiding the people of the state, by raking up non issues in a bid to divert attention of the people from core issues of development.

The state government has constituted Municipal Corporation for the betterment of the people and everyone would be benefited by the formation of a Municipal Corporation.

In the 2021 census, the population of Solan would be more than 50,000 and in that case, if the residents of rural areas included in the Municipal Corporation want to be outside the periphery of Corporation, then the government will respect their intent," he said.

Thakur further stated that the state government had constituted 3 new Municipal Corporations for the planned development of fast growing cities and the claim of Solan city was the strongest for the MC in terms

of population and rapid development.

He urged the people to vote for Bharatiya Janata Party candidates in the elections of the Municipal Corporation Solan.

In the 2021 census, the population of Solan would be more than 50,000 and in that case, if the residents of rural areas included in the Municipal Corporation want to be outside the periphery of Corporation, then the government will respect their intent," he said.

He added BJP was working with dedication to make development accessible to the people and the victory of BJP candidates in Municipal Corporation Solan will herald a new era of development in the region.

HP BJP chief Suresh Kashyap said the former Congress government did not give Municipal Corporation status to Solan due to vested interests but the BJP government had fulfilled this long-awaited demand under the leadership of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur.

**BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI**  
4<sup>th</sup> FLOOR, JEJAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001

Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.

In the matter of: O.A. No.925/2019  
LIC Housing Finance Ltd. ....Applicant

Versus  
RAJESH KUMAR SHARAN AND ORS. ....Defendants

D-2, M/S. AVJ DEVELOPERS (INDIA) PVT. LTD.  
D-237, 1st Floor, (Back Side) Vivek Vihar, Phase-I, Delhi-95

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal 23.04.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

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

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

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

(ii) "Meeting ID" and "Password" for the next date of hearing qua

cases to be taken by Registrar / Recovery Officer-I and Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. "drt.gov.in" under the Public Notice Head.

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

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of March 2021.

SEAL OF COURT

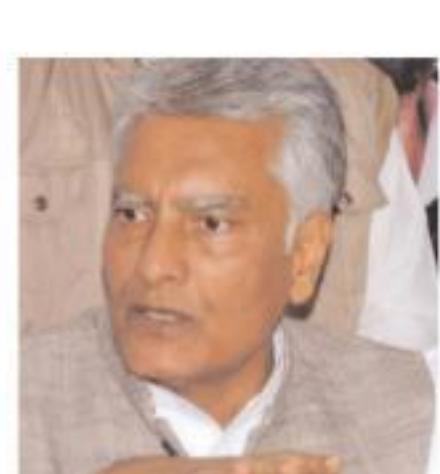
BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL

## Centre trying to take away free power from Pb farmers: Jakhar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 APRIL

Accusing the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Centre government for "viciously" targeting Punjab and its farmers on "one ridiculous pretext or another", Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Saturday alleged that the true motive of the proposed amendments to the Electricity Act 2003 was to take away free power from Punjab farmers and handover electricity distribution to corporate houses.

Punjab is one region where our farmers get free electric-



ity, Jakhar said while speaking to reporters.

He said BJP is also harassing Punjab for standing against

Centre's diktat in forcing three anti-farmer laws upon the nation.

While pointing out that central BJP leadership including defence minister Rajnath Singh and food minister Piyush Goyal had asked farmers to trust them on electricity issue as it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's word, Jakhar asked who will trust the PM now.

Jakhar said BJP regime is also planning to bring Seed Bill, which would directly put farmers at whims and fancies of private players who would have sole control of produc-

tion and sale of seeds.

BJP which had won elections on the plank of teaching Pakistan a lesson has forgotten that and instead has now trained its guns on Punjab and Punjabis who have stood up against the draconian regime of the saffron party.

Jakhar urged all political parties in the state to come together to fight BJP's anti-Punjabi agenda.

In a word of advice for the BJP, Jakhar said its leaders must apprise the PM of prevailing ground reality and growing resentment against his party

at the earliest.

Just like people had forced SAD into hiding after the sacking incidents, BJP leaders will meet the same fate over farm laws, he added.

On direct bank transfer, Jakhar slammed Centre for creating one obstacle after another in wheat procurement process.

Centre is trying to harass the farmer and divert his anger against the state government.

This is also a bid to undermine the time tested and successful Mandi (grain market) system, he said.

## MHA slams linking of its letter on human trafficking to farmers' stir

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

ter has also been forwarded to the Secretary, Union Ministry of Labour and Employment with a request to carry out a sensitisation exercise in all states to check the duping of vulnerable victims at the hands of unscrupulous elements.

Secondly, some of the news reports about the letter have juxtaposed in a totally unrelated context to conclude that the MHA has framed "grave charges" against the farmers of Punjab and has also connected this with the ongoing farmers' agitation, the statement said.

Farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, have been protesting on the borders of Delhi against three central agri laws since late November, with the deadlock persisting even after several rounds of talks.

The home ministry said the letter clearly and only states that human trafficking syndicates hire such labourers and they are exploited, paid poorly and meted out inhuman treatment besides luring them with drugs to extract more labour, affecting their physical and mental health.

Keeping in view the multidimensional and overwhelming enormity of the problem, this ministry has only requested the state government to take suitable measures to address this serious problem, the statement said.

In its communication dated March 17, the home ministry has conveyed to the Punjab government that 58 mentally challenged people belonging to Bihar and UP were found to be working as "bonded labourers" in the border districts of the state and asked it to take appropriate action to deal with the "serious" problem.

In the letter to the Chief Secretary of Punjab, the home ministry said the Border Security Force (BSF) has found that these 58 people, who were brought to Punjab with the promise of good salary but exploited, were given drugs and forced to work in inhuman conditions once they reached Punjab.

The home ministry said the BSF has informed that these labourers were apprehended from the border areas of Gurdaspur, Amritsar, Ferozepur and Abohar in Punjab in 2019 and 2020.

The opposition Shiromani Akali Dal, which had snapped ties with the BJP-led NDA over the issue of agri laws, had on Friday questioned the Centre's missive, alleging it was an attempt to defame the farmers of the state.



Delhi Police commissioner S N Shrivastava on Saturday held a meeting of police officers through video conferencing to review the law & order situation as well as action taken with regard to implementation of Covid safety protocols in the national capital, according to a press release issued by the city police.

SNS

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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



Those who tried to sabotage survival, growth of Kerala now speaking of development

KERALA CHIEF MINISTER PINARAYI VIJAYAN

LASHING OUT AT THE CONGRESS AND BJP OVER THEIR POLL PROMISES

**India**

THUMBNAILS



Police take a person for random Covid-19 testing who was not wearing face mask, in Jammu on Saturday.

AGENCIES

**Explosion:** Eight persons were seriously injured when an LPG cylinder exploded in a building here in Maharashtra, police said on Saturday. The injured are undergoing treatment at the district civil hospital.

PTI

**Shridhar Deshpande dies at 82:** Senior CPI-M leader Shridhar Deshpande died of a brief illness in Maharashtra's Nashik city on Saturday, family sources said. Deshpande, 82, breathed his last at a private hospital and his last rites were performed today afternoon.

PTI

**Woman given two doses of vaccine:** An auxiliary nursing midwife (ANM) was on a phone call as she administered two shots of Covid-19 vaccine to a woman at a primary health centre in Akbarpur area of Kanpur Dehat district, officials said on Saturday. As the news reached the family, they created an uproar at the centre and later senior officials including the district magistrate and chief medical officer were informed about the alleged negligence.

PTI

# Reject the 'corrupt, dynastic' DMK-Cong combine, says Shah

Home Minister says, only AIADMK-BJP alliance can protect those who believe in the culture of Tamil Nadu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI/TIRUNELVELI, 3 APRIL

**U**nion Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday attacked the DMK-Congress combine over "corruption and dynasty" and said only the AIADMK-BJP alliance can "protect" those who believe in the culture of Tamil Nadu.

Seeking votes for NDA candidates with a promise of all round development of the state, Shah said its top leaders, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu chief minister K Palaniswami, had grown from humble beginnings while those in the DMK and Congress are from "dynasty."

"Only the AIADMK-BJP alliance can protect Tamil Nadu's fishermen, unemployed youth, women and all those having faith in Tamil Nadu's culture," he told.

Single phase polling to 3g party-third generation-M Karunanidhi, after him Stalin and now Rahul Gandhi," he said.

The DMK party-its 3g

and now Stalin is risking the

entire future of Tamil Nadu by trying hard to make Udhayanidhi CM," Shah said.

The Maran family,

Karunanidhi family and Gandhi family "are dynasty, family parties whereas BJP and AIADMK are parties that elevate grassroots workers to the posts of PM and CM," he added.

While Modi was worried about Tamil Nadu's farmers, unemployed youth and fishermen, Stalin was keen on making Udhayanidhi chief minister. "People of Tamil Nadu should decide to go



Amit Shah during a roadshow in Tamil Nadu's Thousand Lights constituency with Kushboo Sundar in Chennai on Saturday.  
AGENCIES

with whom-with those who care for them or those who want their son to become chief minister," he said.

Taking exception to some alleged controversial remarks made by Udhayanidhi against late BJP leaders Sushma Swaraj and Arun Jaitley, Shah said "probably Stalin forgot" the Tamil culture of not making such statements against deceased people.

Taking on DMK leader A Raja, without naming him, Shah said "breaking all traditions, they made such remarks against the demised

mother of CM Palaniswami. DMK should be ashamed of all of these," Raja had earlier courted controversy for making alleged disparaging remarks against Palaniswami's mother during an election rally.

Taking note of a complaint from the ruling AIADMK, the Election Commission barred Raja from campaigning for 48 hours and also removed him from his party's list of star campaigners.

Observing that Modi and Palaniswami "understood the pains of the common man," he recalled that is why the state government had twice waived farm loans, while the Centre was implementing an income support scheme of Rs 6,000 annually to the ryots.

On the bull tampering

jallikattu, Shah said the Modi government had earlier allowed its resumption following a ban and expressed fears that Congress and DMK may stop if they are voted to power.

## No relaxation in K'taka's new Covid-19 guidelines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BENGALURU, 3 APRIL

about 5,000 cases per day and 3,500 of them are from Bengaluru alone.

"The technical advisory committee has said this will be there for another two months, till the Mayend and the graph will start declining from June first week. If we don't take measures and something untoward happens, won't it be the government's responsibility?" he asked.

Aimed at curbing Covid-19 with the spike in cases, the government on Friday in a new set of guidelines had ordered the closure of gyms and swimming pools while capping the seating capacity in theatres at 50 per cent in certain districts. It has also ordered apartment complexes to shut common facilities such as party halls and clubhouses.

The new restrictions imposed by the government through the guidelines will be in force till 20 April.

Noting that the government has issued guidelines after getting several reports from the technical advisory committee, and after consulting senior officials and ministers, Sudhakar said it was not done at one go.

IGNITED MINDS



Students wearing face masks walk near Anand Vihar railway station, amid coronavirus pandemic, in New Delhi on Saturday.  
AGENCIES

## Rahul: Why does PM never say 'CPI(M) Mukt Bharat'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KOYILANDY (KER), 3 APRIL

Attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his 'Congress Mukt Bharat' jibe, Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the BJP leader seems to have issues only with the grand old party and not with the CPI(M).

"Wherever the Prime Minister goes, he keeps saying Congress Mukt Bharat (Congress Free India). When he gets up in the morning, he says Congress Mukt Bharat and when he goes to sleep he says 'Congress Mukt Bharat'. Why does the PM never say 'CPI(M) Mukt Bharat'?"

Modi never says that. Somehow he does not have a problem with the Left front and has a problem with the Congress," the Wayanad MP, who reached Kerala on the final phase of campaigning for the 6 April Assembly polls, said today.

While the Congress was a unifying force, the Left front was divisive, he said adding "wherever we go, we unify everybody. We are a unifying force. Wherever we go we identify everybody and unite them and make them strong".

Taking on the RSS, he said they understand that the real threat to them comes from those who unite everybody.

"And they understand very well, just like them, the Left front is also a divider of society. The Left front is also an ideology of

## Captain opposes DBT to farmers, saying Arthiyas are not middleman

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 3 APRIL

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking continuance of the existing system of payment to farmers till a consensus can be evolved on the issue of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

This ideology has delivered development for many decades now and will continue to do so for many decades to come.

"Whatever progress you see in India today, whatever institutions you see today have all come out of the congress ideology. The success of India so far has come as a result of the people of India and the Congress party," he said.

Attacking the LDF for political violence in the state, he said the Left was tame and again killing Congressmen.

"Congress workers will, however, never kill anyone. That's the difference between us and them," Rahul said.

Reaching out to the fishing community, Gandhi said he understands their difficulties and said the LDF government had "backstabbed" them, referring to the controversial Rs 5,000 crore MoU signed by the government with US based firm EMCC over deep sea fishing, which was criticised by Opposition.



Asserting that Arthiyas (grain commission agents) are not middlemen between the farmers and the procurement agencies, but are service providers, the CM urged the Prime Minister to ensure that the livelihood of the farmers and all others involved in the smooth procurement of food grains is not jeopardised.

In a letter to the Prime Minister, Amarinder also sought meeting to apprise him about the concerns of various stakeholders about changing the existing payment system "before the situation gets out of hand."

On behalf of the government of Punjab, he assured Modi of his complete support towards evolving a consensus amongst the stakeholders for long-term durable reforms. Expressing concern over recent efforts to "rock" the legally sanctioned, and well-established institutional and social arrangements through some guidelines and

evolve and reform, and as the political leadership of the world's largest democracy, we have to continuously think of improving, but I strongly believe that reforms are most successful and sustainable if carried out through a consultative process with all stakeholders, ensuring ownership of all," said the CM

Amarinder stressed that any reforms, including reduction in the time of transfer of the payment to the farmer or direct payment to the farmers by the procurement agencies should be first discussed with all the stakeholders viz; farmers, Arthiyas and the procurement agencies, "as any sudden changes that disturb the existing arrangements may jeopardise the procurement operations, thereby not only affecting the food security of the nation, but also threatening the livelihood of millions of farmers, farm-workers and even traders."

Pointing to the mutually dependent relationship between the farmers and the Arthiyas that has developed over generations, the CM said it had helped the agrarian system, which was primitive and based on rudimentary literacy, to grow to the present levels. In fact, the relationship between the farmers and the Arthiyas is a pivot on which the seamless procurement rotates, he noted.

"While I fully endorse the views that as a society, and as nation we have to continuously

## 'Second wave of Covid-19 spreading fast in Pondy'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 3 APRIL

An appeal was on Saturday made by the Director of Health and Family Welfare Services S Mohan Kumar to the people to adhere to safety protocols as, he said, the second wave of coronavirus is spreading fast here.

In his video address, Kumar said the virus was spreading at an alarmingly large-scale and people should not lower their guard.

Basic measures such as wearing of masks, washing hands and maintaining social distance should be followed.

Kumar said a free Covid-19 vaccination camp was inaugurated earlier in the day by Lieutenant Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at the Venkateswaran Medical College at Ariyur on the Puducherry-Villupuram route.

As many as 1,000 people received the first dose of vaccine within three hours of commencement of the camp at 8 a.m, he said.

## Neck-and-neck fight in Thrissur constituency

EVMS and Balachandran will win the seat.

Congress candidate Padmaja Venugopal, daughter of former CM K Karunakaran, is a familiar face in Thrissur and Congress leaders say political equations at present in favour of the UDF and Padmaja would definitely wrest the seat from CPI this time.

The entry of actor-cum-politician Suresh Gopi in the election fray has changed the entire proposition of the polls for both UDF and LDF in Thrissur. It is a fact that Suresh Gopi is making waves in the constituency and it cannot be said now whether this wave will turn into votes.

The LDF leaders said the goodwill created by the LDF government through welfare schemes will reflect in the

## BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI

4<sup>th</sup> FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA BUILDING, PARLIAMENT STREET, NEW DELHI-110001  
Notice under Section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rules) 1993.  
In the matter of: O.A. No. 906/2019  
LIC Housing Finance Ltd. .... Applicant

VIPUL SHARMA AND ANR. .... Defendants

D-1. SH. VIPUL SHARMA, S/O. SH. KULDEEP RAJ SHARMA  
R/o. MIG Flat No.252-F, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110027.

D-2. M/S. SUPERTECH LTD.  
Regd. Office: 1114, Hemkund Chambers, 89, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal 23.04.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

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

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

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

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

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

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 16<sup>th</sup> Day of March 2021.

BY ORDER OF THE TRIBUNAL  
SEAL OF COURT

## TENDER

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
SEWERAGE & DRAINAGE DIVISION (WEST), JAMMU**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

e-NIT No. 23 of 2020-21 dated 27-03-2021

Executive Engineer S&D Division (West) Jammu on behalf of Lieutenant Governor of J&K UT, invite tenders by e-tendering mode from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K State Govt, CPWD, MES and Railways for the following works.

S.No. 1 Name of Work :- Covering of all Hydraulic units of 4STP for treatment of five no. Nullahs on the left side of River Tawi at Balicharana Rakh Raipur Jammu on EPC Mode. Contract No SDJ/W/46/2020-21.

Estimated Cost (Rs.) :- 37,00,000/-, Cost of document (Rs.) :- 2000/-, Date of opening of tender :- 15-04-2021 at 1100 hrs, Class of Contractor:- A & B.

1. Date of Publishing from 27-03-2021 to 1800 Hrs

2. The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://jkttenders.gov.in> from 29-03-2021 to 12-04-2021 upto 1800 Hrs. The bids received will be opened at 1100 Hrs on 15-04-2021 online.

No. DIP/J-27/21  
Dated: 03.04.2021

Sd/- Executive Engineer  
Sewerage & Drainage Division (West), Jammu

## No question of Yediyurappa resigning as CM: K S Eshwarappa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SHIVAMOGGA(KTK), 3 APRIL

There is no question of B S Yediyurappa resigning as the Chief Minister of Karnataka, senior Minister K S Eshwarappa said on Saturday, as he termed his letter to the Governor as an administrative matter.

He said Congress leader Siddaramaiah was demanding Yediyurappa's resignation, under the illusion of becoming the CM.

Following Eshwarappa

has rejected him, he was defeated in Chamundeshwari (constituency in 2018), he lost the CM post. He is now under the illusion that if Yediyurappa resigns, he will become the chief minister," Eshwarappa said. The former CM is unable to digest our organisational strength, he added.

K'taka CM should sack Eshwarappa: Shivakumar The Karnataka Congress President, DK Shivakumar

have rejected him, he was defeated in Chamundeshwari (constituency in 2018), he lost the CM post. He is now under the illusion that if Yediyurappa resigns, he will become the chief minister," Eshwarappa said. The former CM is unable to digest our organisational strength, he added.

The CM should sack him immediately or Eshwarappa should submit his resignation voluntarily, he said.

paper . thestatesman . com



A DAY AFTER STONES WERE ALLEGEDLY PELTED AT THE CONVOY OF RAKESH TIKAIT IN RAJASTHAN

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

The Sunday Statesman

NEW DELHI, 04 APRIL 2021



Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia receives the first dose of Covid vaccine, Maulana Azad Medical College in New Delhi, on Saturday.

IANS

**UP nun harassment row:** Three people have been arrested for breach of peace and misbehaviour in connection with the last month's alleged harassment of nuns in Jhansi, police said. All three were produced before the court of city magistrate from where they were shifted to a jail for 14 days.

PTI

**Local BJP leader killed:** A 52-year-old local BJP leader, a contestant in the panchayat elections in Narayanpur in Uttar Pradesh, was shot dead while he was returning home after attending a public meeting, police said on Saturday. Three people were detained following the killing of Brijesh Singh on Friday night.

PTI

**Ex-CMD of JK Bank held:** The Anti Corruption Bureau on Saturday arrested the high-profile former chairman-managing director of the Jammu and Kashmir Bank Parvez Ahmad Nengroo allegedly for illegally allocating housekeeping to a Mumbai-based company.

SNS

**Cop dismissed over sexual favours:** Taking more harsh action against Kailash Bohra, who was given compulsory retirement from the Rajasthan Police Service for demanding sexual favours from a rape survivor last month, the state government has ordered his dismissal. The order was issued on Friday after obtaining the approval from the government.

PTI

# PM urges Assam militants to join mainstream

Accusing the Cong, Modi said, It is our responsibility to ensure the rehabilitation of those who have returned to the mainstream after years of struggle

SNS/PTI  
TAMULPUR, 3 APRIL

**B**uyed by a raft of peace agreements with underground outfits in the Northeast, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday made a fervent appeal to militants in Assam who have not surrendered yet to return to the mainstream as they are needed to create an 'Atmanirbhar Assam'.

Addressing an election rally here in Bodoland Territorial Region's (BTR) Baksa district, the prime minister said people of the state have rejected violence for development, peace, unity and stability.

Accusing the Congress of encouraging violence, Modi said, "It is our responsibility to ensure the rehabilitation of those who have returned to the mainstream after years of struggle."

"Also appeal to those who are yet to surrender to return for the future of the state and for their own future, too, as they are needed to create an 'Atmanirbhar Assam,'" he said.

Referring to the huge crowd of women present at the rally, the Prime Minister said during his last visit to Kokrajhar in BTR on Thursday, he was surprised to see women in large numbers and asked a political analyst about the reason, and was told "mothers are now sure their children will not pick up weapons and go away to



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a public rally ahead of third phase of Assam Assembly Elections, in Baksa district on Saturday.

the jungle again".

"Assure every mother and sister of the BTR that the dreams of your children will be fulfilled and they do not have to pick up weapons and go to the jungles or fall victim to bullets," he said.

Every child is special to their mother but their tears do not stop once the child picks up a gun and goes to the jungle, he said, adding the NDA is

committed to ensuring that this does not happen again.

The NDA is committed to moving ahead on the path of development through "peace and goodwill" and it is this that has led to the signing of the historic Bodo Accord, he said.

The NDA government, he asserted, formulates policies that are non-discriminatory and for all sections of society.

"It's unfortunate that those

who divided society and threw crumbs of development at particular sections for their vote bank politics are said to be practising secularism while we, who ensure that development reaches all, are termed communal," Modi said, attacking the Congress over long years of violence in the state.

"The NDA government has strived to holistically empower every section of society with our mantra 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas'. This game of secularism and communalism has hurt the nation a lot," he said.

During the last five years, the "double engine" NDA governments at the Centre and in the state have resulted in "double benefit" for Assam, the prime minister said.

"Whenever we think of any scheme, we think of everyone without any discrimination. We want that the benefits of the schemes reach every section of the society, irrespective of whether they are from a vote bank or not, literate or illiterate. We are here to work for the nation and to change the lives of people," he said.

The Prime Minister said it is for the first time that special attention has been given to holistic development of 100 districts and out of these, seven are in Assam.

The people of Assam have realised this and the "Mahajotka Mahajootha" (the Grand lies of the Grand Alliance) has been exposed with people

reposing faith in development, stability, peace, goodwill, harmony and unity," he said.

Modi came down heavily on those claiming what people will form the next government will look like and wear. He was apparently referring to the comments by Abdur Rahim, the son of AIUDF founder and MP Badruddin Ajmal, a Congress ally, who Friday asserted "dadihi, topi and lungi wallahs" will form the next government in the state.

"There cannot be a bigger insult to Assam. The people of Assam will not tolerate those who insult Assam's pride and identity and will give them a befitting reply through the ballot," he said.

The people of the state have decided to vote the NDA power again, he asserted.

"I say this on the strength of my political experience, the love, affection and enthusiasm they have shown for the NDA in the two phases of polling already held. They are with development, stability, peace, harmony and unity," he added.

The NDA government has been moving forward on the path of peace and prosperity with every partner of Assam, stated Modi urging the youth (particularly first time voters) to vote in large numbers. He pointed out that their mandates would determine how far ahead Assam would be when India celebrates 100 years of independence.

cent behind men voters with 80.94 of the 36,09,959 women electorate exercising their franchise as against 81 percent of the total 37,34,537 male electorate and 5.9 per cent of the 135 third gender voters.

The Congress, a part of the Grand Alliance, has put up nine women candidates with its allies the AIUDF, Rashtriya Janata Dal and Bodoland Peoples Front giving tickets to one women candidate each. The Grand Alliance's total of 12 women candidates in this poll is lower than the 16 women given tickets by the Congress in 2016 election.

The BJP has given tickets to seven women candidates, one more than the last polls, while its alliance partner, the Asom Gana Parishad has put up two aspirants, the same as in the last elections.

The newly floated Assam Jatiya Parishad has given tickets to seven women candidates while the other new party Rajior Dal has put one women candidate. Among the nine candidates of the Congress, there are three new faces. The BJP also has four new faces - Surabhi Rajkonwar (Sivasagar), Nandita Garlosa (Haflong), Moon Swarnakar (Algapur) and Hasinara Khatun (Baghbor) - in the fray.

## Election: 74 women candidates in fray

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
GUWAHATI, 3 APRIL

Political parties have made promises galore to woo the 49.35 per cent strong women electorate but only 74 women candidates are in the fray for the three-phase Assam Assembly elections in 2021.

The number of women candidates in this year's Assembly election is less compared to the last two state assembly polls.

In the 2016 Assam Assembly election, there were 91 women candidates in the fray with eight of them winning while in 2011, 85 women contested and 14 made it to the assembly, the highest so far elected to the House. The 74 candidates comprise a mere 7.82 per cent of the total 946 candidates in the fray for the 126 member Assembly.

Notwithstanding their poor representation, women came out in large numbers, outnumbering men in the first phase with 76.07 per cent of the total 40,32,481 female electorate exercising their franchise while 75.79 per cent of the 40,77,210 male voters and 11.29 per cent of the 124 third gender cast their vote.

In the second phase, women were a mere .06 per

## Covid+ve NC chief shifted to hospital from home isolation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 3 APRIL

Former chief minister and veteran politician, Farooq Abdullah, who was recently tested positive for Covid, was on Saturday shifted to a hospital from home isolation as a precautionary measure.

Taking to Twitter, his son Omar Abdullah said: "Based on the advice of doctors to enable them to better monitor my father, he has been admitted to hospital in Srinagar. Our family remains grateful to everyone for their messages of support & their prayers".

The 85-year-old National Conference president tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday. He was kept in

home-isolation initially, but doctors on Saturday decided to shift him to a hospital for better medical care. Several leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, wished him speedy recovery after news of his testing positive for the disease came to light.

He received his first dose of vaccine on 2 March. The number of those testing positive in Jammu and Kashmir is steeply rising day by day but the authorities have yet to become strict in implementation of preventive measures. Large number of people can be seen moving on the streets without wearing a mask or maintaining social distance even in the capital cities of Jammu and

Srinagar.

Three teachers of a girls school in north Kashmir's Sopore were on Saturday tested positive. Five CRPF personnel posted at Srinagar's High Court have also been tested positive. The count of virus infected persons has crossed 1.32 lakh and with five deaths on Friday, the death toll has reached 2003.

Meanwhile, vaccination has picked up in the UT of Ladakh where 2434 persons in the age group of 45 to 59 received the first dose of vaccine on Saturday in the Kargil district.

The administration of the UT has urged people not to spit in public places and has ordered a fine of Rs.500 on those violating the directive.

He was admitted to the hospital on March 30 after he experienced abdominal pain.

## Sharad Pawar discharged from hospital

MUMBAI, 3 APRIL

NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who recently underwent a procedure for a gall bladder issue, was discharged from a hospital here on Saturday, a party leader said.

"Pawar (80) is in good health and is recuperating at home," said NCP state minister Nawab Malik.

Earlier in the day, a team of doctors checked Pawar and concluded that his condition was stable. Malik said doctors have advised seven-day rest for Pawar. "If his health parameters remain stable after the next 15 days, surgery of his gall bladder will be performed," he added.

He was admitted to the hospital on March 30 after he experienced abdominal pain.

## UP gang-rape accused shot as he tries to escape

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MEERUT, 3 APRIL

One of the four men accused of gang-rape of a class 10 girl in Sardhana area of UP's Meerut district has been shot by the police and he and his accomplice attempted to escape.

Lakhan and Vyas were arrested earlier today and were being taken to court. However they tried to snatch the pistol from one of the policemen and tried to flee.

The Police said that an encounter followed and

**Lakhan and Vyas were arrested on saturday and were being taken to court. However they tried to snatch the pistol from one of the policemen and tried to flee.**

Lakhan opened fire and Lakhan was shot in the leg by the cop's return fire.

As per Section 376D, 302, 328 of IPC and POCSO was registered against accused in Sardhana police station on

## TEMPORARY CANCELLATION / DIVERSION / RESCHEDULING OF TRAINS DUE TO NON-INTERLOCKING WORK

It is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to undertake Non-Interlocking work in connection with the provision of Construction of 3rd Line with Electrification, Laying and Linking of Track between Kolanoor - Potkapally in Kazipet - Balharsh section of Secunderabad Division. Consequently, the following trains will temporarily be Cancelled, Diverted and Rescheduled as per the detail given against each of them:-

### CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Date(s) of Cancellation (from originating stations)
06249 Yesvantpur Jn. - H. Nizamuddin Superfast Festival Express Special	10, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21 & 23.04.2021
06250 H. Nizamuddin - Yesvantpur Jn. Superfast Festival Express Special	10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20 & 22.04.2021
02251 Yesvantpur Jn. - Korba Festival Express Special	09, 16 & 23.04.2021
02252 Korba - Yesvantpur Jn. Festival Express Special	11, 18 & 25.04.2021
02683 Yesvantpur Jn. - Lucknow Festival Express Special	12.04.21 & 19.04.21
02684 Lucknow - Yesvantpur Jn. Festival Express Special	15.04.21 & 22.04.21
05023 Gorakhpur - Yesvantpur Jn. Express Special	13.04.21 & 20.04.21
05024 Yesvantpur Jn. - Gorakhpur Express Special	15.04.21 & 22.04.21

### DIVERSION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Existing Route	Diverted Route	Skipping Stoppages	Date(s) (from originating stn.)
02591 Gorakhpur - Yesvantpur Jn. - Balharsh - Itarsi Jn. - Manikpur - Prayagraj Jn.	Secunderabad Jn. - Varanasi Jn. - Danapur	Kazipet Jn., Ramagundam, Manchiryal, Bellampalli, Sirpur	12, 17 & 19.04.2021	
02592 Yesvantpur Jn. - Gorakhpur Express Special		Purna Jn. - Akola Jn. - Khandwa - Itarsi Jn.	12, 15, 19 & 22.04.2021	

### RESCHEDULING OF TRAIN

Train No. & Name	Date of Origination	Scheduled Departure	Rescheduled Departure
02692 H. Nizamuddin - KSR Bengaluru Superfast AC Exp. Spl.	23.04.2021	19:50	22:20

## BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-I, DELHI

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OA No. 1159/2019

CANARA BANK

VS

M/S. PREETI GULATI & OTHERS

## Towards Open Sesame?

Yet another embroidery of the Trump era has been jettisoned by President Joe Biden on All Fool's Day. Abrogated on April 1 was the non-immigrant visa that allows companies in the United States to employ foreign staff in what they call "specialty occupations" that require theoretical or technical expertise. While, according to surveys, the ban had little or no impact on domestic employment in America, the IT sector in India is reported to have welcomed the move. The White House has allowed a ban (imposed in 2020) on H1-B skilled workers and certain other temporary visas to expire on March 31. H1-B visas, that are used more by Indian professionals than any other citizens abroad, were suspended by Mr Biden's predecessor in June last year, ostensibly to protect American jobs, that had languished because of the pandemic. It is quite another story that efforts, if at all, to contain the dreaded disease and minimise the casualty toll were by and large ineffectual under Mr Donald Trump. Also affected by the ban were visas for intra-company transfers (L1), exchange visitors (J1), temporary non-agricultural workers (H-2B) and dependents of H1-B holders (H4). In a word, this is a cross-section of potential visa-holders, notably those who would visit the US on State Department programmes, or junkets if you will. While a large section of foreigners faced the prospect of closed doors, it is open to question whether Biden's decision to let the ban "expire" will translate to open sesame across the Atlantic. The White House did not make an official statement on the abrogation chiefly because President Biden was in Pittsburgh on Wednesday to unveil his \$2 trillion American Jobs Plan - an eight year scheme pertaining in the main to infrastructure. Jobs and migration are closely intertwined. While the stated reason why Trump had banned this category of visas was to protect American jobs in the face of unprecedented unemployment last year, the ban did not have its intended impact, according to the preliminary findings of a *Wall Street Journal* survey. Businesses employing foreigners "struggled to fill jobs (aka the burgeoning vacancies)" despite very high domestic unemployment.

The Indian IT industry entity, NASSCOM, said it applauded the decision to let the visa ban expire. According to a statement issued in the immediate aftermath of the decision: "...allowing the suspension to lapse makes great sense for the United States. As the courts seemed to agree, there was no credible evidence that the visa holders do harm to the US labour market. Quite the contrary, these individuals are a vital part of the US workforce and their presence enhances and helps enable the US economy, innovate, and grow jobs across the country. NASSCOM believes this will help US businesses access talent critical to the economic recovery phase in the post-Covid world." Mr Biden has choreographed a bold decision to spruce up the economy of the United States of America and the job market generally.

## Myanmar's civil strife

Exactly two months after the Myanmar military seized power post an election that Aung San Suu Kyi had won yet again, the screws have been turned on her with almost brutal severity. The latest charge against her is that she violated the beleaguered country's secrecy law. And one of the well-guarded secrets of the state is why for the past three decades the omnipotent military has been loath to allow Suu Kyi wield power, concordant with the certitudes of democracy. The charge has been levelled a day after she appeared in court by video link in connection with earlier charges. She has now been charged with breaking a colonial-era official secrets law, the most serious charge filed against her thus far. Her lawyer was informed about the allegation just two days ago, one that carries a jail term of up to 14 years. The comeuppance is no less critical than imprisonment for life. Suu Kyi was arrested on 1 February when the military grabbed power in a coup. It alleges that a general election last year, which saw Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) win by a landslide, was fraudulent, though there is no evidence to substantiate the charge. Myanmar has been rocked by weeks of protests since the coup. The upsurge, most particularly in Yangon and Mandalay, has been countered with increasingly violent military crackdowns. More than 500 people - including 40 children - have been killed so far. Suu Kyi has not been seen publicly since her arrest. Suu Kyi, along with three of her deposed cabinet ministers and a detained economic adviser, Sean Turnell, has been charged under the official secrets law. The military authorities have been less than explicit in spelling out the provisions of the law and the violation thereof. The 75-year-old ousted leader already faces charges of corruption, with the military alleging that she accepted \$600,000 in cash and 11 kg of gold. She has also been charged with violating the country's Natural Disaster Law and with possessing illegal walkie-talkies. Myanmar's military seized power after overthrowing the government and declared a state of emergency. Just days later, the civil disobedience movement began to emerge with professionals refusing to return to work in protest. The movement quickly started to gain momentum and it was not long before hundreds of thousands of people began taking part in street protests. But there has increasingly been an escalation of violence between the police and civilians. According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, more than 500 people have been killed since the military crackdown began. The Tamidaw (military) ought to have been explicit in disclosing the violation of the official secrets law. The world in general and hoi-pollio in Myanmar have been kept guessing. Suffice it to register that Myanmar bears witness to a political conflict between the people and the military, a civil strife if ever there was one.

# Means and Ends

In many instances, noble cause corruption has its genesis in systemic arrogance. Many police officers mistakenly start believing that they have the right to decide what is good or bad and punish the wrongdoers accordingly. But systemic arrogance has no place in policing and generates an organisational culture that legitimises abuse of authority



The term "Noble cause corruption" was first used in Edwin Delatre's book "Character and Cops - Ethics in policing" published in 1989. It has now become a standard phrase for characterising police action to abuse and misuse power and authority for achieving apparently noble objectives. The concept has a classical origin.

In Plato's Republic, the philosopher king justifies the use of noble lies to advance the welfare of the city. Herein lies a dichotomy. Whereas, Plato's noble cause does not imply anything more than use of lies or other forms of deception to advance a worthwhile cause, many a police officer justifies blatant abuse of authority and violation of human rights of the suspects for achieving the so-called desirable objectives. They believe that sometimes it is necessary to adopt illegal means for achieving ends which are beneficial for society and such a course of action should not be equated with corruption for sordid personal gains. Unfortunately, this kind of flawed logic is touted not only by just the bad apples in the organisation but, at times, by many senior and conscientious officers.

One common and frequent form of noble cause corruption is testimonial corruption to secure conviction of criminals by improving on evidence by the police. It is a euphemism for perjury. When the police adopt this philosophy, they erroneously think that the end justifies the means and illegal methods, if necessary, have to be adopted to imprison those who prey on the society.

Moreover, besides padding evidence, the police also resort to other palpably illegal tactics like custodial violence, fake

encounters, etc. against dreaded criminals and terrorists, who defy law and the criminal justice machinery. Due to the malfunctioning of the criminal justice system, there is also public approval of the dubious police work and operations.

The idea of noble cause corruption finds powerful exposition in a film called "Dirty Harry". In the film, the police officer, Inspector Harry Callaghan in order to rescue a kidnapped girl, inflicts pain and torture on her kidnapper, who persistently refuses to disclose her whereabouts. The conflict of emotion of the Inspector depicted in the film is emotionally compelling. But it is also true that in many cases policemen resort to torture or high-handed methods not for rescuing a girl or for any other laudable objectives.

On the contrary, the motivating factor is the disposition on the part of the police to perform such acts. Such coercive methods and strong-arm tactics clearly violate the rights of the suspects and corrode the moral fibre of the police. In many instances, noble cause corruption has its genesis in systemic arrogance. Many police officers mistakenly start believing that they have the right to decide what is good or bad and punish the wrongdoers accordingly.

But systemic arrogance has no place in policing and generates an organisational culture that legitimises abuse of authority. Many senior officers approve and, at times, encourage adop-

tion of such illegal means in order to get rid of hardened criminals. Therefore, unless senior officers take a decisive stand against these forms of illegal practises and patterns, dishonest law enforcement in pursuit of so-called noble ends will continue.

Admittedly, justification of noble cause corruption implies faith in the concept that the end justifies the means. But the difficult problem in this case is that in police work, it is often seen that ends are not that important and serious to justify adoption of brazenly illegal means. In policing, detection of crime and conviction of criminals is no doubt important, but what is far more important in a liberal democratic order is to uphold the constitutional rights of the citizens. The fact of the matter is that wrong means ultimately pervert the end and thus, proportionality of the means has always to be kept in view.

It has been observed that disproportionate use of force in operations against the terrorists and criminals has proved to be counter-productive. Hence, to break the law in the name of law enforcement is objectionable because it becomes arbitrary as a process and random in its effects. In a democratic polity, order maintained through illegality leads to ultimate disorder.

However, in many countries, in order to combat war against terrorism, torture has been justified and viewed as noble cause corruption. While President Bush condemned torture as an instru-

ment for fighting terrorism, the US Department of Justice issued notorious "torture memos" that sought to restrict the definition of torture to serious physical injury and justified some milder forms of ill treatment as "stress and distress" techniques on grounds of paramount security of the state.

But torture does not become permissible by euphemistically calling it something else. Moreover, using torture sparingly has never worked out. There is the danger of the "slippery slope" and the difficulty of knowing where to draw the line.

Writers like Delatre have held the view that when the police take important decisions between the choice of ends and means, the responsibility has to rest with a senior officer enjoying greater authority, experience and discretion. But it has to be borne in mind that this kind of referral is not always possible in tense and fast-moving situations. It is also to be kept in mind that the police, though a top-down command organisation, allows exercise of considerable discretion by its officers down the line.

Hence, field officers seeking to exercise noble cause corruption while handling a case have to carefully ponder if the end justifies the means because acts of noble cause corruption are often caused by a degree of moral negligence. The police have to keep in mind the rights of the victims as well as the suspects.

Therefore, there is need for training police officers and men in humane and ethical policing. The police have to develop sensitivity for those who are policed. In policing, mechanical application of discretion does not help. Discretion is not license. Though grounded on rules, it is a form of judgment rather than mere following of rules.

Yours, etc., Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai, 1 April.

### FOOD AND COMMERCE

SIR, In these days of more and more demand for commercial production for food and non food items, we are steadily and gradually losing our basic concern for preservation of nature. The most precious components of our mother nature is Water which we are wasting in every second without pausing for a moment that it will ultimately ruin our future. Scientists have already warned that by the year 2040 the world will have half the water it needs and for India the tragedy may take place by 2030. In our country directly and indirectly crores of rupees are spent for Election and related political issues. People from all strata are willfully getting engaged and involved in this all

absorbing politics but very few bother about water preservation. Now a days electronic Medias are relentlessly highlighting the political issues depicting the ups and downs of political parties' fortunes but eh alarming issues of degradation of biodiversity as well as preservation of water are getting a skip from their telecast. Enormous amount of Industrialisation which is obvious for sustenance of our ever growing population develops huge amount of industrial waste which most unfortunately get dumped into water bodies. Everyday these millions of toxic effluents are being drained into our seas, rivers, ponds as the water bodies are ultimate absorber of Human civilization which we boast of. When water preservation is absolute need for our survival instead we are engaged in toxic ting the bounties of our Mother nature.

Solutions lie in our realisation, in our awareness. All of us should take an initiative for the cause. The day is not far when water rationing will prove little to combat the situation. With our basic instinct to grab more and more with cheaper and cheaper we are pumping money into corporate which eventually destroying the nature. The production of one kilogram of meat takes about the water used in bathing for one year.

One commodity releases more than a bucket of water. Present day what we eat, what we wear, what we use, all are industrial products which require huge quantity of water. Unless we change our lifestyle, our feeding habits, our likings, we are surely to be plunged into the age of water crisis, thus endangering the very existence of our civilization.

Yours, etc., Arindam Ray, South 24-Parganas, 22 March.

### IMRAN'S RESPONSE

SIR, Please refer to your today's report 'Pak desires peace; Imran writes to Modi'. Responding to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's letter greeting Pakistan on its national day, Pakistan's PM, Imran Khan, has claimed that his country seeks "peaceful, cooperative relations with all neighbours, including India". Mr Khan also said that durable peace and stability in the region was contingent on resolving all issues between India and Pakistan, "in particular, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute". He added that the creation of "an enabling environment" was "imperative for a constructive and result-oriented dialogue".

There are two ways to interpret this letter. The first, sceptical, view can see it as an attempt by Pakistan to hold the ties hostage to the J&K issue yet again, without confronting the issue of terrorism. The logical conclusion of such a reading would be that there is little merit in engaging with Pakistan. A second way to read the letter is to focus on why Mr Khan has said what he has, and what he has not said. A reference to J&K is imperative for any Pakistani leader to survive domestically. The fact that despite relentless propaganda over the past year-and-a-half against India's moves in J&K, Pakistan has not made any tangible demands other than mentioning an "enabling environment" leaves space for diplomacy. This reading would lead to a different conclusion, specifically of the merits of engagement.

Yours, etc., Khokan Das, Kolkata, 31 March.



BASAB DASGUPTA

**W**hen I was a graduate student in physics at the University of Wisconsin in the early seventies there was a disproportionate number of Indian and Chinese students in our department. One of my fellow students jokingly used to say that "eventually there would only be Chinese and Indians in this world".

It was not a difficult prediction, simply by looking at the total population of China and India and their growth rates compared to the rest of the world. It is no wonder that these two ethnic groups are now dominant forces in the USA.

There have been a few unforeseen developments since my graduate studies days. The number of engineers from India in the area of Information Technology (IT), a majority of whom are only temporarily in this country on H1B visas, has been increasing dramatically. China has become a very wealthy nation and a source of virtually all manufacturable goods throughout the world. The educational system in high schools in the USA has faltered for a number of different reasons and schools are simply not producing a sufficient number of qualified students to fill the demand for technical personnel.

On the technology front, there has been a major global revolution going on since the introduction of internet. Internet commerce has enormously boosted valuations of many internet-based companies but at the same time, helped corporations to streamline their operations and reduce headcount in many ways. The inherent analytical skills of Indian engineers, coupled with inexpensive learning tools (basically a high-powered laptop computer) and more openness of the Indian government to international trade have led to a massive army of IT engineers who have excelled in supporting the IT infrastructures of companies, not only in the US but throughout the world. The H1B visa arrangement turned out to be a mutually convenient arrangement for both Indian engineers and their American employers.

It is not just the engineers on H1B visas, but the first-generation immigrants who had already become US citizens and were engaged in technological areas in Silicon Valley, Seattle, Austin and similar hubs who excelled in the new computer related fields. Their achievements were epitomized by Satya Nadella and Sundar Pichai, who became the CEOs of Microsoft and Google, respectively. More recently, Arvind Krishna became the CEO of IBM. The remarkable common aspect of these three brilliant Indian technologists is that they are first-generation Indians, having received their undergraduate degrees from schools in India.

# Insights from tutoring Chinese students

I was so overwhelmed by pride by these achievements that I started to believe that the future of Silicon Valley companies and other high-tech companies in the US would be determined by Indian-Americans in the near future. They will decide the product line, locations of new facilities, hiring practices of workers and strategy for future growth.

The Chinese are also very good in software development and other skill sets necessary in IT and are employed in massive numbers by high-tech companies. However, they do not have two skills compared to their Indian counterparts – fluency in English and people management skill – which are essential to move up the ladder. That observation cemented my belief about Indians taking over. I even used to joke that it is fortunate Indians are peace-loving people because otherwise, if they wanted to, all the Indians in upper echelons of technological companies could collude and bring the US to a screeching halt.

After my retirement, I have been tutoring high school and introductory college level students in physics and mathematics. I live in Orange County, California and most of my students are from the Irvine area. For some reason, Irvine is very popular with the Chinese immigrants and I ended up tutoring many Chinese students.

My first Chinese student was Daniel Wang. He needed my help in Advanced Placement (AP) calculus course. Daniel attended the "University High School", supposedly the best school in the area. I was confident because I have a PhD in theoretical physics. I soon realized that it was a very difficult course and Daniel was an extremely smart and serious student. The fact that I did not have a calculus book at home and was out of touch with academia for the past 35 years did not help.

I developed a rapport with his mother – a friendly lady who called herself "Lily". I was constantly anxious that I would not be able to solve a problem correctly or take an unusually long time thinking about it. Finally, I decided to be upfront with Lily. I told her that I would be more effective if I had the same book at home that Daniel followed and asked where I could find a copy. Lily understood the situation, but said that a new book would cost \$225. It was a very thick hard-cover book, but I was still shocked by the price.

I was overwhelmed by Lily's generosity when she handed me a book she got from e-Bay the next time I



saw Daniel and told me that I could keep the book as a "gift". Clearly Lily was ready to do almost anything for better grades for Daniel so that he could get admission to a good college and money was not an issue.

The book did not go into too much detail on any topic; it relied heavily on a few worked out "examples". The expectation was that students would learn by doing the exercises. The number and variety of problems at the end of each chapter were exceedingly large. I spent literally hours in preparation. In the process I realized that the course covered topics that we learned in second or third year of college and a few in M.Sc. I even learned some new subjects and techniques that I had never learned before.

I also had several conversations with Lily which gave me a sense of how Chinese families thought about their children's education. It seemed that behind every student there was a "tiger mom" watching every step, every grade and every activity and pushing them to excel all the time. It was apparent from the way they spoke that they had virtually ruled out non-Chinese students from their group of worthy competitors. Finally,

they were ready to spend whatever money it took.

At the end, both Lily and Daniel were satisfied with my job. I had similar experience with a few other Chinese students I have tutored since. This experience opened my eyes to a cultural phenomenon going on in this country. A lot of Chinese people (those living in China as well as in USA) made tons of money from the soaring Shanghai stock market and this money has been making its way to USA, mainly in the form of real estate investment. As a result, they have "invaded" upscale neighborhoods in places like Irvine, Pasadena, San Francisco and Dallas with good schools. Even people who are still living in China are sending their kids to USA for education.

One of the universal goals of everyone is to get a solid education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) subjects. From what I see among the children of my Indian friends and colleagues, second-generation Indians are not that focused on STEM subjects. It seems that medical fields, business schools, economics, journalism and even law school are more popular. Secondly, while Indian parents certainly

impose a high expectation on their children as far as their academic achievements are concerned, they do not seem to have the same kind of zeal and regimented approach that I saw in Lily in driving their kids. Also, they probably are reluctant to spend money on tutoring, perhaps because they think that it is an unnecessary expense and they can tutor themselves if necessary.

I do not get too many Caucasian students. The ones I have tutored all seemed to have some issues such as attention deficiency disorder, some type of addiction, extra-curricular activities or low expectations set by parents.

My view has changed. Now my conviction is that Silicon Valley will eventually be run by the second-generation Chinese. They will not have the handicap in language or people interaction like the first generation. Of course, there will still be hundreds of Indian engineers on H1B visas, but not the kind with a futuristic vision and commitment to the company or country. I feel a certain degree of sadness at this realization.

The writer, a physicist who worked in academia and industry, is a Bengali settled in America.

## It ain't over till it is over

SHAMSHAD MORTUZA

**C**ovid-19 is back and it is back with a vengeance, as if to puncture the false confidence we were assuming about the antidotes. The rate of being cured made some of us think of the disease as nothing more than a regular flu, some kind of media sensationalism and corporate conspiracy. We forgot the way bodies were dumped in the streets, family members were abandoned, and ventilators were not to be found last year, this time around. We started herding in parties and in public places as if our proximity would ensure immunity and consequent indemnity. Our zestful celebrations will dethrone the crown-shaped virus. We did not hesitate to display our collective irresponsibilities on social media.

Maybe one of these days, we will have enough "netlore"—stories, memes, jokes and urban legends circulated over the internet—to laugh away the disease with its unbearable lightness of being, just like stories of the First World War superseded the Spanish Flu. People hardly talk about the 1918 pandemic that killed 50 million people worldwide against the 8.5 million people who died in the Great War. There are so many war stories to tell us about human courage,

resilience, betrayal, love and hate. The sickness during the war, in contrast, appears to be a footnote in the grand scheme of history, and a reference point for our ongoing havoc.

We have lost more than a year to this invisible enemy. Soon enough, we would like to forget this experience like a cricketing tour to Kipli land where we saw black caps all over us. Surely, there are benefits in forgetting too. Neuroscientists believe that forgetting is an essential memory management system that sets aside unused memories to store new memories. This is called the active model of forgetting; the passive model is suggestive of biological decay of neurons that happen naturally.

But the way we are forgetting what we are preaching during this pandemic is tantamount to passive aggression. The routine circulars that inundate the media show that there is no coordination among different branches of administration. The tally of deaths is on the rise, the infection rate is on the rise. The curve is showing no sign of flatness as it swings back to climb new heights. The human miseries behind the pitiless data, however, remain unforgettable.

The forgetfulness-remembrance binary is best evident in our administrative paradoxes. How can one min-

istry say there will be no exams, while there is another ministry taking MBBS admission tests? How can one ministry say there will be no public gathering, while there is another one arranging national events? What kind of message does this forgetfulness suggest: a damage in the ageing brain or a memory management to keep the system running? On the glorious golden jubilee of Bangladesh, all our focus has been on remembering. Ironically, it seems forgetfulness is creeping into the system. What lessons have we learnt in the last one year? What algorithm did we use to predict the rate of infection?

The lack of sincerity has made many of the good efforts that controlled the disease in its early phase become futile and meaningless. Imagine all your health service frontline workers being forced to be in a crowded examination hall for proctorial duties, knowing that the contamination rate has shot over 22 per cent. Who will treat you if these service providers are affected?

In the last one year, many of the educational institutions have learned to adapt to the online system. Schools, colleges and universities are trying to deliver lessons. I do not know of any initiative to monitor the process - at least in the institution I

am affiliated with - from the government level, apart from sending occasional lip service and survey questionnaires. Yet there has been a ban on exams till May 23. Our job is to take the horses to the riverbank, but not to let them drink water. How will we bring the semester system to a fruition if there is no exam? Your guess is as good as mine.

The rest of the world has successfully designed and devised various online protocols for assessments.

If one can adopt to the virtual teaching and learning model, then why can't one do the same with assessment? In the private system, the entirety of assessment/evaluation is done by individual teachers. We have relied on their professionalism, regardless of the examination modalities. So why stop now? Because students will cheat. How about the government decision to pass everyone without any exam whatsoever? It is interesting the way we selectively remember and forget.

We remembered to increase the fare of buses, forgetting that the coronavirus safety protocol was never lifted in the first place. We forgot to come up with safety gadgets or protective gear for ride sharing services during this entire year. And suddenly we remembered that strangers should not ride in such close proximity. Then, the bike riders and passengers blocked the city roads to

remind us that it was inhumane to stop services or clamp extra charges without any forewarning and contingency plan.

We forgot to address the social inequalities that allowed the disease to spread fast. The privileged group that cursed the protesters occupying the streets demanding basic transportation services or livelihoods, forgot the others who endanger their lives to be exposed to the wrath of the disease while being on the streets. There are structural discriminations that lie deep within the system that needed to be addressed to make our celebrations meaningful.

We also need to remember the ones who chalked the disease up to media sensationalism, downplaying the intensity of the disease. The callousness, forgetfulness and negligence are hurting us all.

Last week, I received an email from a designer who was supposed to deliver a web product for me: all five of his team members are affected, with two losing their family members. I am trying to forget the harsh email that I sent earlier to remind him of his professional lapses. The sooner we can forget this pandemic, the better. But let us not forget the ones who we have lost during this battle. And let us not forget: it ain't over 'till it's over.

The Daily Star/ANN.

NO 28873

NOW AND AGAIN

## Following an example

TIRTHANKAR MITRA

**I**abor standing in queues. A last minute visit to a cinema house to see the "opening day, opening show" was either preceded by requests to friends to purchase an advance ticket for me or paying through the nose to a ticket "blackler" in the back alley.

There were other occasions of standing behind neighbours and strangers. The former often took pity on me and collected our family's ration cards and bags to spare me from what I considered to be an ordeal.

But this jumping of queues had its fallout. There were quite a few others in the queue who objected to the "neighbourly act" and hurled invectives at me and my collaborators.

Friends, relations and neighbours often chided me for my inability to wait. There were accidents which I tried to pass off as adventures.

There was an occasion where I missed my foothold trying to board a running bus and would have been crushed beneath its wheels had not a passerby held me by my collar and dragged me away. On another occasion, I lay sprawled on the pavement after having overlooked an auto rickshaw which hit me as I was in a hurry to cross a road.

But I have learnt to wait since the 1989 parliamentary elections. Armed with a pass empowering its holder to walk into any polling booth, I was about to use it to cast my vote when I stood transfixed in my tracks.

I stopped after I caught sight of an old man in crumpled dhoti kurta. He was asking another voter not to jump the queue no matter what pressing assignment he had.

It was Ganesh Ghosh. His identity as a freedom fighter who had British troops in the crosshairs of his gun in the Jalalabad hills during the Chittagong armoury raid far preceded his persona as a legislator and MP in post-independence India.

The scars of nearly 90 winters lined his face as he stood in the sun. It was indeed a momentous occasion as he waited for his turn to vote in an election where a prime minister after coming to power with a mammoth majority five years earlier was seeking the people's verdict in the wake of charges of corruption.

Time lay heavy in our hands. Somebody offered Ghosh, a living legend in our locality, a chair which he politely refused.

Instead the veteran freedom fighter preferred to stand holding the shoulder of the man preceding him in the queue. There were several volunteers and a small knot of people gathered round him.

Men in uniform rose to disperse the small crowd around Ghosh but decided against it. It had suddenly dawned on them that they were seeing a man who had written history and whose acts ought to have been written in letters of gold.

His turn to vote came. Ghosh exercised his franchise and left with folded hands. As his footsteps receded, my long nursed habit of being unwilling to wait left with him.

100 YEARS AGO

MAYO HOSPITAL

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - I beg to bring to your notice the great poverty of the Mayo Hospital. It is the oldest Hospital in Calcutta, having been founded in 1792 and never since closed. It is at present in debt to the extent of Rs 7,348 per annum, and it has been found necessary to close the Ripon Street Dispensary as money is not forthcoming. Unless there is a substantial increase in the funds other serious retrenchments will be necessary. The building itself has not been repaired or redecorated for six years, and sadly needs both. The total yearly number of patients treated is well over 130,000, with a daily average of 734. It was hoped that a further Government grant would be given to the institution, but this has been refused. Can you possibly help us by an urgent appeal to your readers to give all they can to support this oldest of the Calcutta Hospitals?

PAUL K. GILROY,  
Surgeon-Superintendent and  
Secretary, Mayo Hospital,  
Calcutta.

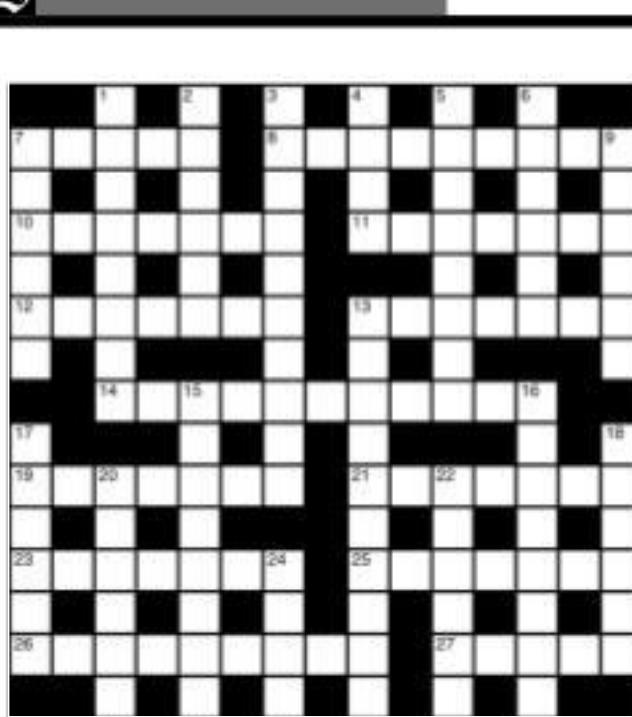
RANCHI'S AMENITIES

To The Editor Of The Statesman

SIR, - I am a mere visitor to Ranchi, but on behalf of the permanent residents, I trust you will give publicity to two facts, which, in my opinion, are a standing disgrace to a station, chosen as the summer headquarters of the Bihar Government. Firstly, as regards the lighting of the streets. Without any exaggeration it can be said to be practically non-existent. Where there are lights, they are so far apart and so bad, as to be a menace rather than an aid to traffic. The other point is in connection with railway communications. It seems incredible, but nevertheless it is true, that a passenger travelling from Bombay to Ranchi, must spend several hours at one or other of the salubrious spots - Sini, Chakardarpore, or Purulia, because the Bombay-Calcutta mail, has no train connecting it with the Purulia-Ranchi express. So the traveller, can look forward this time to 24 restful hours at Sini.

UN SYMPATHISTE.

CROSSWORD



SOLUTION FOR 28 MARCH

**ACROSS**

- 7 Snatch of metal caught on the radio (5)
- 8 Bent coppers i.e. people in deep may be shown up by this (9)
- 10 Fella briefly engaged in dodgy activity to make some bread (7)
- 11 AC-12's coppers showing signs of stress (7)
- 12 Country's crime data evenly distributed (7)
- 13 Report from snout reportedly being discussed (2,5)
- 14 Police leader probing strange deaths (3,8)
- 19 Most smooth, detailed poet from the east has India at

**DOWN**

- 1 heart (7)
- 2 Copper's bringing posh Spanish banker in for questioning (7)
- 23 Acclaimed, but first to be dismissed and charged (7)
- 25 Beaming traitor keeps lead from Di Fleming? (7)
- 26 After coupling with another, tech billionaire stretches (9)
- 27 Innocent Methuselah framed by villain on tape (5)
- 4 Federal investigators over the pond uncovered something in the water (4)
- 5 Operation's legal proceedings repeatedly failing to get answers (1-7)
- 6 At least 100 coppers or plods (6)
- 7 Friendly note on beauty treatment has lowered tone (6)
- 9 Preview clip with culprit

finally sent down ... this calls for a celebration (6)

13 Isn't it arch working for the enemy? (10)

15 Fancy riding in gear some time? (8)

16 Isolated police officers brought back to catch wicket one (8)

17 New recruit covering up corruption? (6)

18 Superintendent sets example, arresting sucker (6)

20/24 Criminal due to fly in for police show featuring 14 (4,2,4)

22 Worker in community armed DS Arnott regularly (3,3)

24 See 20

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



*Ather Energy will treble its annual capacity to around 3 lakh units by the end of FY23 if the current demand trend continues*

TARUN MEHTA  
CO-FOUNDER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AHER ENERGY

## THUMBNAILS

**Ficci plea:** Industry body Ficci has urged the government to ramp up Covid testing across the states and open up the vaccination for the age group 18-45 years, while assuring it of the complete support of the industry in fighting the pandemic. "We are currently testing about 11 lakh samples a day, while we had reached the level of testing 15 lakh samples a day in January. Further, there is capacity of performing much more tests with 2,440 labs in the country operational for Covid testing, including more than 1,200 from the private sector," Ficci president Uday Shankar said in a letter to the Union health & family welfare minister Harsh Vardhan.

PTI

**ACC Networks buy:** ACC Networks on Saturday said it has completed the acquisition of 76 per cent stake in Z Services HQ DMCC. In March, ACC Networks had said its subsidiary ~ Black Box Holdings ~ will acquire a majority stake in Z Services HQ DMCC for about \$3.94 million (around Rs 26 crore).

PTI

**Jio game:** Jio in partnership with an arm of mobile chip maker company Qualcomm announced hosting of online shooting game Call of Duty Mobile Aces Esports Challenge on the JioGames Esports platform. Call of Duty game, published by US based Activision Publishing, is a competitor of PUBG that is banned in India. Jio and Qualcomm CDMA Technologies Asia Pacific Pte have started registration for the first e-contest of "Call of Duty" in India with a prizepool of Rs 25 lakh.

PTI

**Coal India contribution:** Coal India Limited has signed a MoU with Shri Kedarnath Uthyan Charitable Trust, Badrinath, and will contribute Rs 19 crore for a road development project at Badrinath-Joshimath in Uttarakhand, according to a Press release from the mining major.

PTI

# 'Gas producers continue to bleed as prices remain low'

Domestic gas price notified at \$1.79 per million British thermal unit for six months beginning 1 April

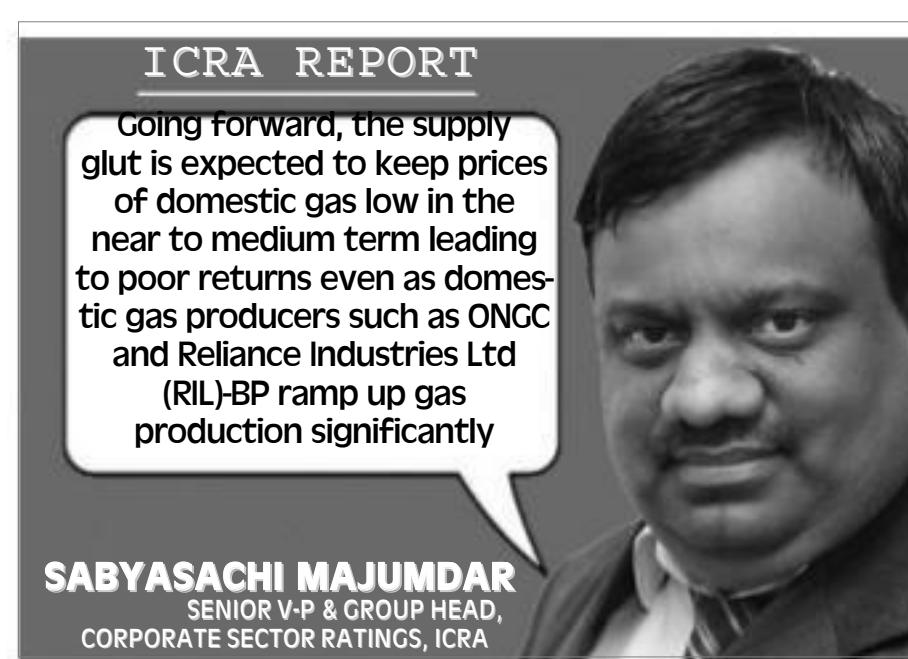
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

**N**atural gas production remains a loss-making proposition for most fields for the Indian upstream producers as government-dictated gas price remains at its lowest level, rating agency ICRA has said.

The domestic gas price notified at \$1.79 per million British thermal unit for the six months beginning 1 April remains the lowest since the institution of the modified Rangarajan formula.

Additionally, the ceiling on price for gas produced from deep water, ultra-deepwater, high temperature and high-pressure fields has also been announced at \$3.62 per mmBtu for April-September 2021-22 which is 10.8 per cent lower than the price ceiling of \$4.06 for October-December 2020-21 which would dampen the development of such projects.

"While this is unfavourable for domestic producers, it will benefit gas consumers. The consumers will also benefit in



## ICRA REPORT

Going forward, the supply glut is expected to keep prices of domestic gas low in the near to medium term leading to poor returns even as domestic gas producers such as ONGC and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)-BP ramp up gas production significantly

the long run from the expectations of continued supply overhang," ICRA said commenting on the gas price notified by the government earlier this week.

As per an ICRA note, at such low gas prices, gas production remains a loss-making proposition for most fields for the Indian upstream producers notwithstanding some decline in oil field services/equipment costs.

However, the depreciation of Indian rupee against US dollar, would aid the realisations

of the gas producers but only to an extent.

Sabyasachi Majumdar, senior vice-president & group head, corporate sector ratings, ICRA, said: "Going forward, the supply glut is expected to keep prices of domestic gas low in the near to medium term leading to poor returns even as domestic gas producers such as ONGC and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL)-BP ramp up gas production significantly."

The absence of a floor and sustained low prices as has

been seen in the past few years post implementation of the modified Rangarajan formula make exploration and production unviable even for benign geologies, ICRA noted.

"Accordingly, low natural gas prices remain negative for the upstream sector adversely impacting revenues, profitability and cash accruals and the incumbents have petitioned the Government of India to provide a floor price for gas prices."

Spot LNG prices had breached \$30 per mmBtu in February 2021 due to increase in oil prices, unplanned outages at export facilities in several countries, multiple cold waves, high shipping rates and delays in the Panama canal.

Though spot prices have come down to \$6-6.5 per mmBtu levels, low inventory levels as winter ends are set to support prices, as well as demand, as North Asia and Europe look to refill gas storage.

Nevertheless, the supply overhang remains with about 37.6 million tons per annum

liquefaction capacity added in 2019 and 27.8 MTPA in 2020, besides which capacity additions till 2025 would be in excess of incremental demand which will weigh on gas prices, ICRA said.

From the consumers' perspective, the low domestic gas price is a positive.

"The continuation of the low domestic gas prices would lead to a competitive cost of generation for the domestic gas-based power generation projects," it said.

Given the cost-plus nature of the power purchase agreements tied up by the gas-based power projects, the benefit is expected to be passed on to the customers, mainly the state distribution utilities (discoms).

However, the extent of the benefit would be limited for the discoms, given the subdued utilisation of the gas-based power plants in the country with annual average plant load factor (PLF) of 22-25 per cent for the gas-based capacity at all-India level, amid the inadequate supply of domestic natural gas.

## GMR Group unveils new vertical to foster innovation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HYDERABAD, 3 APRIL

Infra major GMR Group today launched a new business vertical dedicated to fostering and driving innovation ~ GMR Innovex ~ with a vision to create an enabling framework for innovation across all aspects of the business.

GMR Innovex will operate on an "open innovation" model, acting as an "innovation exchange" to partner with startups, corporates, innovation platforms, research institutions and academia to bring innovative ideas and solutions to life and help to nurture and sustain a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, a Press release from GMR said.

The future of air travel is one of passengers just walking through an airport in a fully paperless way. GMR Airports has been the first airport to launch the e-boarding service and today 90 per cent of passengers use this method. GMR Innovex will become an excellent hub to train talent for various specialised jobs across the aviation industry.

Speaking on the occasion, Pradeep Singh Kharola, secretary, ministry of civil aviation, said during Covid-19 times the aviation sector was hit hard, but has emerged stronger and many new technologies took shape during this period and were all aimed at making the industry robust.

"The continuation of the low domestic gas prices would lead to a competitive cost of generation for the domestic gas-based power generation projects," it said.

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Somesh Kumar, Telangana chief secretary, said: "We are glad that GMR innovation is stationed in our state. With its strategic presence around the globe and being in one of the key sectors, GMR innovation hub is going to make a difference."

## Forex reserves fall to \$579.28 billion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 3 APRIL

The country's foreign exchange reserves declined by \$2.986 billion to reach \$579.285 billion in the week ended 26 March, RBI data showed.

In the previous week ended 19 March, the forex kitty had increased by \$233 million to \$582.271 billion. Forex reserves had touched a record high of \$590.185 billion in the week ended 29 January 2021.

In the reporting week ended 26 March 2021, the fall in reserves was on account of a decrease in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves. FCA declined by \$3,226 billion to \$537,953 billion, as per weekly data by the Reserve Bank of India.

Expressed in dollar terms, the gold reserves increased by \$276 million to \$34,907 billion in the reporting week, the RBI data showed.

The special drawing rights (SDRs) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) dipped by \$9 million to \$1.49 billion. The country's reserve position with the IMF declined by \$27 million to \$4,935 billion in the reporting week, according to the data.

Bajaj Electricals today said it has declared lay-off at its manufacturing unit located at Shikohabad in Uttar Pradesh.

The lay-off is with effect from 3 April 2021, until further notice, the company said in a regulatory filing.

"We have to inform you that the company has declared lay-off, as per the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, at the company's manufacturing unit located at Shikohabad, Uttar Pradesh, w.e.f. 3 April 2021 until further notice," the company said.

The board of Bajaj Electricals on 25 March 2021, had approved rolling out of a VRS for 281 permanent employees, in the "workmen and staff" category at Shikohabad unit.

PTI

## Bajaj Electricals declares lay-off at UP unit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

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PTI

## Exports jump by 58% in March

Drop 7.4% in FY '21

year 2020-21, however, dipped by 7.4 per cent to \$290.18 billion compared to \$313.36 billion in fiscal 2019-20, the data showed.

Imports during April-March period of financial year 2020-21, however, dipped by 7.4 per cent to \$290.18 billion compared to \$313.36 billion in fiscal 2019-20, the data showed.

Imports during 2020-21 contracted by 18 per cent to \$388.92 billion compared to \$474.71 billion during fiscal 2019-20.

In March 2020, the exports stood at \$21.49 billion, which was a decline of about 34 per cent over March 2019 due to global slowdown induced by the Covid-19 crisis.

2020. The trade deficit during the month widened to \$14.12 billion as against \$9.98 billion in March 2020.

In March, oil imports grew by 1.22 per cent to \$10.17 billion. During 2020-21, oil imports dipped by 37 per cent to \$82.25 billion.

Non-oil imports in March were up by 777.12 per cent to \$37.95 billion. During the full fiscal, the imports con-

tracted by 10.89 per cent to \$306.67 billion.

Gold imports jumped to \$7.17 billion during the month under review.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal in a tweet said: "Make in India, Make for the World: Merchandise exports in March 2021 grew by 58 per cent year-on-year to USD 34 billion, the highest ever in Indian history. PM @NarendraModi ji's policies have propelled Indian economy to historic new heights, despite the pandemic".

Federation of Indian Exports Organisations (Fieo) director-general Ajay Sahai said that despite issues related with container shortage and movement of ships in Suez Canal, the exports have crossed \$290 billion.

"It is extremely good growth looking into Covid-19 challenges," he said.

## NEWSFEED

### Foundation Stone laid for the Extension of Terminal Building at Gorakhpur Airport in Uttar Pradesh



Shri Nand Gopal Gupta, Minister of Civil Aviation, Uttar Pradesh; Shri Ravinder Shyamnaran Shukla 'Ravi Kishan' MP (Lok Sabha); Shri Shiv Pratap Khukla, MP (Rajya Sabha) and Dr. Radha Mohan Das Agrawal, MLA Gorakhpur Urban (U.P.) Shri Anuj Agrawal, Chairman, AAI, and other senior officials of AAI were also present on this occasion.

The ceremony took place in the august presence of

### IRFC came up with a 20-year bond issue on 26th March 2021

The 20-year bond issuance of IRFC has been very competitively priced at 6.80%, (annualized) which is the lowest ever in this segment.

The aforesaid bond issuance received a very good response from the investors comprising long term / ultra-long-term investors including primarily the provident funds. The issue was over-

subscribed by six times as compared to the base issue size of Rs. 500 Crore.

PTI

### BHEL forays into Lump-sum Turn Key (LSTK) business of Process Package for Downstream Oil & Gas Sector

Against stiff international competitive bidding (ICB), Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has bagged a major order for a Sulphur Recovery Unit from IOCL.

Significantly, with this order, BHEL has made an entry into the downstream oil & gas process package business.

The package, valued at over Rs.400 Crore, envisages setting up a 525 TPD Sulphur Recovery Unit at

KOCL's Paradip Refinery in Odisha. Notably, the company's diversification strategy into non-coal based business areas has begun paying dividends and this is a milestone order for BHEL as part of its new growth areas initiative.

With the execution of this order, BHEL will establish itself as an LSTK player for process packages in the downstream oil & gas sector.

Kalyan Jewellers has plans to

### Kalyan Jewellers announces first phase of network expansion post IPO

Kalyan Jewellers, one of India's largest jewellery companies, has today announced that the brand is planning to increase its retail footprint by 13% in the first quarter itself.

The company plans to enhance operations across seven states and will add 14 new showrooms, all on April 24th, 2021. While the brand has plans to scale up existing operations in the tier-1 cities, it will also focus on the tier-2 and tier-3 markets, with mid-size showrooms. In the tier-1 cities, Kalyan Jewellers has plans to

launch a total of five new outlets including a flagship showroom. Keeping in mind the overwhelming response the brand received in 2015 for its Chennai outlet, the company plans to open yet another flagship store in the very heart of Chennai's shopping destination - North Usman road.

The company will also be strengthening its presence in Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad, with a showroom each in Dwaraka, Matunga, Lower Parel Phoenix Palladium and Dilshukhnagar.

### NHPC takes over Jal Power Corporation Ltd.



NHPC, India's premier hydropower company took over Jalpower Corporation Ltd. on 31st March 2021 after payment of resolution amount of Rs. 165 Crore into the Lenders designated account. The Handing Over / talking over ceremony was carried out in the presence of Shri R.P.Goyal, Director (Finance), NHPC,

The splendour and richness of Jammu came alive once again on the second day of "Fulkari 2021" a two days festival of folk, colours and music organized by the Directorate of Tourism Jammu in collaboration with Atlas Event Management Company. The musical evening at Gulshan

PFC and REC reduce lending rates

PFC and REC, Navratna CPSEs under Ministry of Power, are the prime financiers of Indian Power Sector capturing a significant market share in financing Indian Power Sector. PFC and REC as group companies have been aligning operations to realise synergies.

As a part of such effort, PFC and REC have now decided together to reduce lending rates upto 2%. This initiative was undertaken to offer competitive rates, in line with the rates being offered by peers in the market. This will also help PFC and REC to continue their business growth going forward in addition to maintaining reasonable spreads. The lending rates will be effective from 1st April, 2021.

### NTPC Dadri

</div

# Night curfew returns amid COVID surge in western Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

**W**ith the resurgence of coronavirus positive cases in western parts of the state bordering Chhattisgarh, the Odisha government on Saturday decided to enforce night curfew in 10 districts with effect from April 5.

District authorities in Kandhamal and Kalahandi have already declared certain areas as micro containment zones.

Meanwhile Odisha on Saturday recorded yet another steep spike in Coronavirus with 452 positive cases in the last 24 hours. The state capital Bhubaneswar has also witnessed a rise with 71 cases.

The COVID graph has been on the climb over the last few days.

The active cases have jumped to 2,821 with today's

steep jump in positive cases. The positivity rate of 26,700 samples tested in 24 hours stood at 1.69 per cent.

A notification issued by the Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) today stated that the night curfew will be clamped in Sundergarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Nuapada, Bolangir, Kalahandi, Nabarangpur, Koraput and Malkangiri.

The night curfew restrictions will come into effect from April 5 from 10 PM to 5 AM.

The 10 districts reported 248 positive cases, accounting for 54% of total infections reported today in the State.

People in border districts in both the states are interdependent and the inter-state movement of locals to carry forward the economic activities is a daily ritual here. Thus transmission of virus from the COVID-affected pockets to Odisha's bordering districts is

a distinct possibility.

The small district of Nuapada sharing border with Chhattisgarh has been reporting the highest number of cases in the past two weeks.

Despite the daily spike in infections, the state's coronavirus death toll continues to remain static at 1,921 with no fresh fatality reported in the past 24 hours.

The State's recovery rate currently stands at 98.59% with as many as 3,37,212 patients cured of the disease so far.

The state has so far tested 91,30,648 samples for COVOD-19 including 26,700 on Friday.

The State government which had set the target of 2 lakh beneficiaries per day inoculated 2.52 lakh on April 2.

So far a total of 28,66,255 people have been given vaccine shots, said the health officials.

Public health experts say that

the number of positive cases are bound to rise in the coming weeks as RT PCR tests are aggressively done and the mathematical models indicate a continued rise in cases.

Kalahandi district has reported 249 cases in the past 10 days including 26 during the past 24 hours. A college, market complex in Junagarh, two panchayats have been declared a micro containment zones.

The sarpanch of Brundabahal declared Limser village as containment zone as six cases were detected and villagers alleged that one infected person who was on home isolation had died.

District collector Harshad Parag Gavali appealed to people to strictly follow Covid guidelines. The vaccination drive has been stepped up at 40 centres of the district and over the last three days 28846 people were vaccinated.

Amid the hullabaloo the CAG report and a few bills were

# Tumult in Odisha Assembly, 3 BJP MLAs suspended, Budget session ends

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

The budget session of the Odisha Assembly came to a tumultuous end, five days ahead of the schedule, today.

Earlier the ruckus which witnessed hurling of headphones, papers etc led to the suspension of three BJP MLAs—Mohan Majhi, Jayanarayan Mishra and Bishnu Sethi for the session.

The BJP MLA's denied the charge of flinging slippers and squatted on protest dharna near the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in the Assembly premises.

Repeated adjournments by the Speaker S N Patro failed to restore calm.

Trouble started in the morning with the Congress MLA's protesting against the rejection of their notice for adjournment on the mining lobby controlling state policies.

During the unruly scenes headphones, dustbins and slippers were allegedly hurled.

Speaker Patro called for the video recording and invited the Leader of Opposition, Leader of Congress party, government chief whip and parliamentary affairs minister



moved.

Outraged by this as well as the charge that the Leader of Opposition P Naik (BJP) was not allowed to speak, the BJP members staged a noisy protest.

Repeated adjournments by the Speaker S N Patro failed to restore calm.

Talking to reporters outside the Assembly, Leader of Opposition Pradiptha Naik said the house was being conducted in an undemocratic manner.

The bills were hurriedly passed without any discussion and the notice for adjournment on the mining issue was rejected, he pointed out.

Government Chief Whip

to his chamber to examine the recording.

Following this, the ruling BJD members demanded action against the BJP MLA's who had lowered the dignity of the House.

Government chief whip Ms Pramila Mallick moved a motion requesting the Speaker to suspend the members for their unruly behaviour.

The Speaker said the members were placed under suspension after the video clipings showed that these three members hurled six articles at the Speaker's podium.

The rules clearly state that a bill cannot be passed without discussion when the House is not in order.

With the passage of the Bills and submission of the CAG report, the Speaker adjourned the House sine die.

The Budget session came to an end five days ahead of its scheduled closure.

The BJP MLA's continued with their protest beneath Gandhiji's statue even after the house was adjourned. The said the protests will continue through the night.

## Tribals living in harmony with nature staved off the pandemic: Vice President

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:



We have a lot to learn from the tribal communities who live a simple life in harmony with nature and it is this that had resulted in the tribal population of Odisha being largely untouched by the COVID 19 pandemic, said Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.

Addressing the Convocation of Utkal University here today, the Vice President called upon the youth to lead the fight against social evils like castesim, communalism, corruption and violence.

Referring to the tribal dominated areas of Odisha, he said a study by Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Research and Training Institute (SCSTRTI) revealed that the tribal population in Odisha was largely untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unique customary practices and traditions of tribals have been credited for keeping the infection at bay.

The study notes that by habit, the tribals walk most-

ly in rows, instead of in groups; and while walking, they maintain a reasonable distance from one another. Such safe distancing and hygiene norms, rooted in the tribal culture coupled with the natural food have helped them stay safe during being".

He called upon the youth to fight against corruption, communalism, casteism and violence.

The VP also stressed on making disaster management an integral part of the education from early days.

Talking about the transition from the campus to the outside world, the VP said the abil-

ity to face the world with confidence is by way of building character and creating holistic well rounded individuals.

"We should bring back this great Indian tradition to create well-rounded and innovative individuals who will have the distinctive ability to transform the country both socially and economically", he said.

He congratulated RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, Girish Chandra Murmu, CAG, Orissa HC judge Justice Sanju Panda, Dr. Ajit Kumar Mohanty, Director, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and Dr. Bijaya Kumar Sahoo, Advisor, Government of Odisha for being conferred Honors Causa by the university today.

Odisha Governor Prof Ganesh Lal, state higher education minister Dr Arun Sahoo, vice chancellor of the university Sabita Acharya were present.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Sabita Acharya presented the university report. A total of 40 Ph.D. degrees and 90 Gold medals/endowment prizes were awarded.

## RDC probe reports gather dust

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

Odisha government had ordered as many as 16 administrative probes by Revenue Divisional Commissioner, Northern Division in the past three decades. However the State government is yet to initiate action on the recommendations made by the RDC-headed inquiries, alleged a RTI activist.

Since 1990 till 2016, the RDC had conducted inquiries into 16 cases relating mostly to law and order issues in western Odisha on directions of the government. The RDC had furnished reports within a year. However the government sat over the report and failed to implement the recommendations made in the reports, said Pradip Pradhan, RTI activist.

The reports include chlorine gas leak at Sambalpur in 2005, firing by pvt security at Burla, in 2002 etc, charged Pradhan.

## Jagannath Temple shut on Sundays for disinfection

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

In view of the surge in COVID-19 cases in Odisha, the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) has decided to close the Puri Jagannath Temple for devotees in order to undertake disinfection on every Sunday.

Issuing a revised Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for containing the spread of the virus, the SJTA stated that

## Woman allegedly stripped naked and beaten up

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Kendrapara, 3 April:

A 24-year-old married woman was allegedly stripped naked and beaten up in Korua village under Nikirai police station in Kendrapara district on Saturday by her in-laws.

The victim was medically examined. Police have recorded her statement. All the accused persons have fled from the village. A case has been registered and further investigation is underway. A special squad has been constituted to nab the offenders, the official added.

the holy shrine will remain open on all days of the week except Sundays. The decision on the closure of the temple for devotees on Sunday will be implemented from tomorrow.

There will be complete sanitization of the temple premises on every Sunday. Night time sanitization of the temple premises will be conducted twice a week, after closure of temple for public darshan.

## Cong appeals to switch off power for 30 min today

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

OPCC chief Nirjan Patnaik appealed to party workers and the general public to switch off lights for 30 minutes from 6.30 to 7 pm tomorrow as a mark of protest against the power tariff hike.

The BJD government has effected a 50 paisa per unit hike in power tariff within a span of seven months, said Patnaik while describing it as a cruel blow to people at large who are reeling under the economic impact of the pandemic.

## Sexual harassment charge against cop

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Jajpur, 3 April:

A special team of Jajpur district police have launched an investigation into a sexual harassment complaint lodged by a woman against a police officer.

Jajpur SP, Mr Rahul P R ordered the probe after the victim met him and narrated her ordeal on Wednesday.

She complained that the OIC of Jhumpuri police beat house, BK Swain had touched her inappropriately and sought sexual favour when she had gone to lodge a complaint. She with her family had been to the police beat house but Swain asked the family to wait outside when he misbehaved with her and sought sexual favours to register her complaint.

"The probe is underway and we will submit the finding to the SP after its completion," said Additional SP Mr Behera.

## Govt decides to rehabilitate sea-erosion-hit families

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Kendrapara, 3 April:

vant documents to come under rehabilitation plan.

Each of the beneficiary family will be provided with 10 decimals of land and Rs 1.5 Lakh subsistence allowance. The resettlement colony is equipped with all basic amenities. It has emerged as a model village for human habitation.

The decision to relocate 571 families living at the vulnerable coastal villages had been taken in 2008 at a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The project in Kendrapara district is incidentally the State's first-ever rehabilitation and resettlement project for people displaced by sea erosion.

ious districts. The one by the villagers of Satabhaya and Kanhpur was on the contrary for displacement. People here wanted to be displaced and rehabilitated as sea made steady advance towards their villages.

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The project in Kendrapara district is incidentally the State's first-ever rehabilitation and resettlement project for people displaced by sea erosion.

## CAG raps Odisha government on failure to monitor drug supply

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Bhubaneswar, 3 April:

valued at Rs 4.18 crore during April 2017 to May 2019.

"During the course of audit of OSMCL for the period 2016-19 revealed that there was inordinate delay in finalisation of annual procurement plans for drugs, medical consumables Equipment, Instrument and Furniture (EIF)", the CAG report pointed out.

The OSMCL is an independent procurement agency officiating under the Department of Health and Family Welfare shoulders the responsibility of procurement and distribution of drugs, medical con-

sumentables and equipment.

OSMCL could supply only 49 per cent of the indented/approved quantity of drugs and medical consumables to health institutions during 2016-19. Non-supply of indented quantity resulted in non-availability of essential drugs in health institutions, the report says.

Owing to which the health institutions procured locally and incurred excess expenditure. During 2018-19, test checked health institutions had incurred excess expenditure of Rs 98.12 lakh (44 per cent) in procuring medicines

worth Rs 2.24 crore".

Similarly, OSMCL could procure only 43 per cent EIF against the approved quantity during 2016-19. As of June 2019, 19 per cent of the procured EIF had not been installed and were lying unutilised with different indenting agencies.

The government was unsuccessful in providing an unbroken supply of essential drugs to patients in public health institutions as per its own prescribed Essential Drugs List, the CAG report concluded.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



#### SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1 Travel charge (4)

3 Sheltered side (3)

8 Eye-lash make-up (7)

9 Middle ear bone (5)

10 Stratum (5)

11 Give evidence (7)

12 Coins (5,6)



*This is a president who obviously loves history and has used history all of his life and his career.*

PRESIDENTIAL HISTORIAN MICHAEL BESCHLOSS

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 R
HONG KONG	26	22 CL
TOKYO	17	13 CL
LONDON	11	02 CL
DUBAI	30	24 S
SAN FRANCISCO	13	9 CL
NEW YORK	13	5 S
MOSCOW	7	-2 CL

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

## THUMBNAILS



Demonstrators hold a banner march leaving Hyde Park during a 'Kill the Bill' protest in London. The demonstration is against the contentious Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

AGENCIES

8 killed in Mexico cartel battleground: Eight bullet-ridden, mutilated bodies have been found in a western Mexico township where drug cartels have been waging tenacious turf battles. The prosecutors office in Michoacan state said late Thursday that the eight bodies, all men, were found in the township of Aguililla.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 3 APRIL

A deadly breach of the US Capitol's perimeter could delay the gradual reopening of the building's grounds to the public just as lawmakers were eyeing a return to more normal security measures following the January 6 insurrection.

The driver, identified as 25-year-old Noah Green, was shot and killed after he got out of his car and lunged at police with a knife.

The incident came fewer than two weeks after the Capitol Police removed an outer fence that had cut off a wide swath of the area off completely from vehicular and police traffic, an effort to secure the complex after thousands of former President Donald Trump's supporters marched on the building January 6 and around 800 of them broke inside.

That violence led to five



deaths, including a Capitol Police officer.

While lawmakers hated the fencing in bipartisan fashion with some calling it an overreaction, the police who took the brunt of the siege that day have still left an inner fencing perimeter intact, as they try to ensure the safety of the complex and the lawmakers who work there.

The tall, dark fencing parts of it covered in razor wire until recently was not only a

nuisance to those who lived in the area, blocking major arteries that cross the city, but also a stark symbol of the fear many in the Capitol felt after the violent mob laid siege to the Capitol.

Lawmakers said the seat of American democracy was meant to be open to the people, even if there was always going to be a threat.

But after Friday's incident, lawmakers said they needed to proceed with caution.

It's an eyesore, it sucks, Democratic Rep. Tim Ryan of Ohio, the chairman of a House spending committee that oversees security and the Capitol, said of the fencing in the hours after Officer Evans and the driver were killed. Nobody wants that there.

But the question is, is the environment safe enough to be able to take it down? In the meantime, maybe that fence can prevent some of these things from happening.

Ryan stressed that no decisions had been made, and that lawmakers would be reviewing everything after Friday's breach. His committee, along with others, is looking at not only the fence but at the staffing, structure, and intelligence capabilities of the Capitol Police. The scab got ripped off again here today, Ryan said. So we've got to figure this out.

The breach happened inside the perimeter, as the driver slipped through a gate that had opened to allow traffic in and out of the Capitol and rammed a barrier that had protected the building long before January 6. And there was no evidence that Green's actions were in any way related to the insurrection.

While the indoor parts of the building have been closed for the last year because of the coronavirus pandemic, the plazas, roads and sidewalks that surround the Capitol were only closed after the insurrection keeping the public away from the area completely.

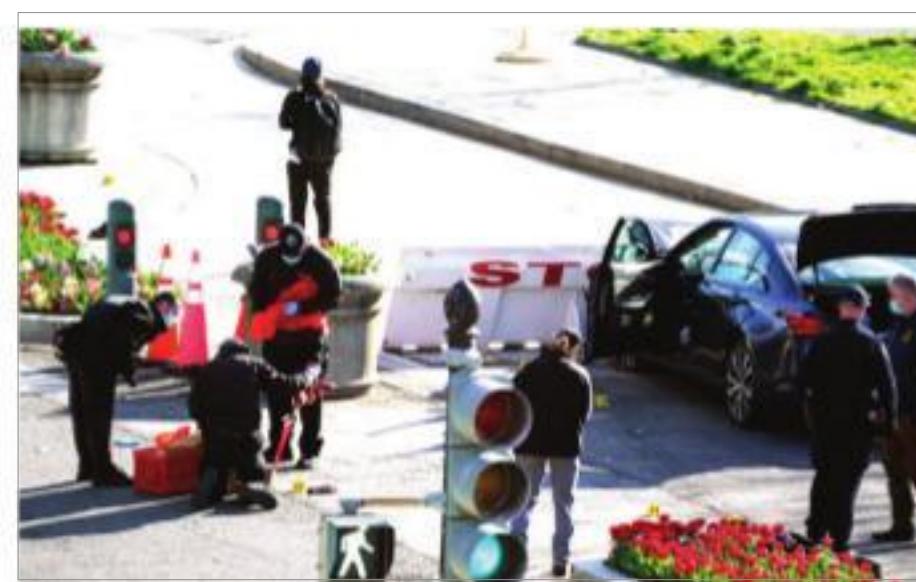
I would like to see it come down at the earliest possible moment, Wexton said of the fencing. While lawmakers were initially supportive of the fencing to secure the area, and the thousands of National Guard troops sent to the Capitol to back up the overwhelmed police force, they soon said they were ready for a drawdown.

It's just ghastly, it's an embarrassment, said Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, the No. 2 Senate Republican. If there's a better way to protect us, I want to see it. I want to work to get it. Security officials, though, say that the Capitol can't return to status quo. In February, Capitol Police Chief Yoganand Pittman testified that even before the 9/11 attacks, security experts, including former chiefs of police, argued that more needed to be done to protect the Capitol complex. The Capitol's security infrastructure must change, she said.

# World

## Deadly breach could delay Capitol fencing

Police officer William Billy Evans, an 18-year veteran of the force, was killed on Friday when a man rammed his car into a barrier



deaths, including a Capitol Police officer.

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## ROBO ART



Artworks of Sophia on display at Hanson Robotics studio in Hong Kong. Sophia, a robot of many talents, speaks, jokes, sings and even makes art. Recently she caused a stir in the art world when a digital work she created as part of a collaboration was sold at

## Germany faces 'crisis of trust' amid pandemic

FRANKFURT, 3 APRIL

President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said that Germany is enduring a crisis of trust and urged the country to pull together as it weathered a second Easter amid pandemic restrictions and dissatisfaction over the government's response.

In the text of an address to be broadcast Saturday, Steinmeier conceded that there have been mistakes regarding testing, digital solutions and vaccinations.

Trust - in a democracy it rests on a very fragile understanding between citizens and the state: You, state, do your part, I, citizen, do mine,' he said. I know that you, the citizens, are doing your part in this historic crisis. You have done much and you have gone without much.

Your expectation for those in government is, 'get it together.'

## AstraZeneca vaccine safe: UK medicines regulator



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 3 APRIL

The UK's medicines regulator has confirmed seven cases of blood clot-related deaths in people who received the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine against COVID-19, but stressed on the safety of the jabs as there is no evidence of a causal link.

The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said in its latest Yellow Card monitoring of the coronavirus vaccine programme this week that of the 18.1 million people who had the Oxford vaccine in the UK, 30 people developed blood clots and seven had died as of 24 March.

Its official advice continues to be that the benefits of the vaccine, which is also being produced as Covishield by the Serum Institute of India, far outweigh any risks.

Our rigorous review into the UK reports of rare and specific types of blood clots is ongoing. Up to and including 24 March, we have received 22 reports of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis and 8 reports of other thrombosis events with low platelets, out of a total of 18.1 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine AstraZeneca given by that date, the MHRA report said. On the basis of this ongoing review, the benefits of the vaccines against COVID-19 continue to outweigh any risks and you should continue to get your vaccine when invited to do so, it said.

The regulator said that investigations are underway to determine if there is a link or if the cases are a coincidence and reiterated that increased adverse reaction or ADR reports reflect the increase in vaccine deployment.

The number and nature of suspected adverse reactions reported so far are not unusual in comparison to other types of routinely used vaccines. The overall safety experience with both vaccines is so far as expected from the clinical trials, it adds.

The MHRA added that there were no blood clot reports for the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, the other jabs being rolled out in the UK.

Concerns had been raised about blood clots after a small proportion of cases arose among millions who received the Oxford/AstraZeneca jab across Europe. Some countries, such as Germany, have restricted its use to certain ages but the European medicines watchdog and the World Health Organisation (WHO) both continue to advise that it is safe and effective.

As an additional measure, the British Society for Haematology has issued new guidance for doctors, amid concerns cases of blood clotting could be linked to a condition known as thrombocytopenia. At the moment, any causal association with coronavirus vaccination has not been established. However, if you identify patients with this syndrome in proximity to coronavirus vaccination, it is very important that you complete the online Yellow Card this will trigger a request from MHRA for further details, their guidance notes.

The MHRA has previously said that anyone who has had the vaccination and who then has a headache that lasts for more than four days afterwards, or bruising beyond the site of the vaccination after a few days, should seek medical attention.

## Aiming big, Joe Biden is looking to restore faith in govt

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 3 APRIL



As President Joe Biden preaches patience but acts with urgency, his vision of the powers of the Oval Office is quickly taking shape, modelled after Democratic predecessors who dramatically expanded the reach of government to confront generational crises.

In a recent meeting with historians and in private conversations with advisers, Biden looked to the examples set by Presidents Franklin D Roosevelt and Lyndon Johnson as he aims to use the levers of executive authority to create opportunities and break down barriers.

Unlike Roosevelt and Johnson, who enjoyed formidable Democratic majorities in Congress, Biden has had to operate with a no-margin-for-error edge in fiercely partisan Washington.

Born soon after Roosevelt's New Deal and having first

aware that the moral trajectory of the United States has made a difference in both domestic and foreign policy. Over his first two months in office, Biden has signed into law USD 1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief bill and, this past week, proposed an even larger USD 2.3 trillion infrastructure and tax plan that is the first installment of a two-part legislative package meant to reshape the American economy.

His team's guiding principle is that the United States must push past the pandemic and the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol to rebuild the economy in an equitable way that shows the nation can still make good for its citizens as it faces a threat from autocratic states, including China, for global economic supremacy.

There's a lot of autocrats in the world who think the reason why they're going to win is democracies can't reach consensus any longer; autocrats do, Biden said Wednesday when he announced his infrastructure plan in Pittsburgh.

That's what competition between America and China and the rest of the world is all about. It's a basic question: Can democracies still deliver for their people? Can they get a majority? Biden continued. I believe we must. The president has urged action despite a very narrow Democratic majority in the House and a 50-50 split in the Senate that requires Vice President Kamala Harris to break ties. No Republican lawmakers voted for the COVID-19 relief bill, although it was popular among voters of both parties.

No Republicans appear likely to support the infrastructure plan.

To this point, the White House has refused to enter the debate that often bedevils presidents who know their party traditionally loses

seats in their first midterm elections: play it safe to try to preserve power or go big?

Biden's bet for the latter is clear, banking that voters will ignore big price tags and reward tangible results on vaccines, roads, broadband and more while forcing Republicans to defend a tax structure that benefits ultra-wealthy companies.

Even so, the progressive forces in the Democratic Party that helped elect Biden are already pushing the president to go bigger still, demanding immediate action on gun control, immigration and climate change.

Biden is asking for patience, keenly aware of the arithmetic of the Senate and the headwinds he'll face on some issues. But the 78-year-old president also has pressed for urgency, knowing that his party's hold on Congress is tenuous and reiterating that now is the moment to restore a wary public's faith in government.

## US Labour Dept seeks public input on determining H-1B wage levels

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 3 APRIL



The US Department of Labour has sought feedback from the public in the next 60 days on determining the wage levels for the employment of various immigrants and non-immigrants, including those on the H-1B visas, the most sought-after work visa among Indian professionals.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows the US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

In a federal notification published on Friday, the US Department of Labour urged the public to respond to its request in the next 60 days.

The request by the department's Employment and Training Administration follows a prior announcement by the department proposing an 18-month delay in the effective date of a final rule changing on calculating the prevailing wage levels for certain immigrants and non-immigrant workers.

Published in January 2021, the final rule affects employers seeking to employ for-

specific occupations and geographic areas, complete necessary system modifications and conduct public outreach.

The rule is a carry-over from the Trump administration, which had proposed revisions mandatory salaries after losing a court battle to organisations including the Bay Area Council over an initial version. According to the Department of Labour, the proposed rules delay in effective date will result in the reduction of transfer payments in the form of higher wages from employers to H-1B employees.

Additionally, the proposed rule would delay the potential for deadweight losses to occur in the event that requiring employers to pay a wage above what H-1B workers are willing to accept results in H-1B caps not to be met, it said.

The Department has observed that the annual H-1B cap was reached within the

first five business days each year from fiscal 2014 through fiscal 2020.

In February, the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, the federal agency which screens and allocates H-1B applications, said it received a sufficient number of petitions needed to reach the Congressionally-mandated 65,000 H-1B visa regular cap and the 20,000 H-1B visa US advanced degree exemption, known as the master's cap, for fiscal year (FY) 2021.

The Biden administration in February announced that it was delaying the H-1B policy of the previous Trump administration on the allocation of the popular foreign work visas by continuing with the lottery system until December 31, 2021, to give the immigration agency more time to develop, test and implement the modifications to the



*Every office and court will be closed during this lockdown but industries and mills will continue their operation on rotation*

FARHAD HOSSAIN

BANGLADESH STATE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

The Sunday Statesman

NEW DELHI, 04 APRIL 2021

11

## Trouble mounts for PM Oli: Oppn seeks his resignation

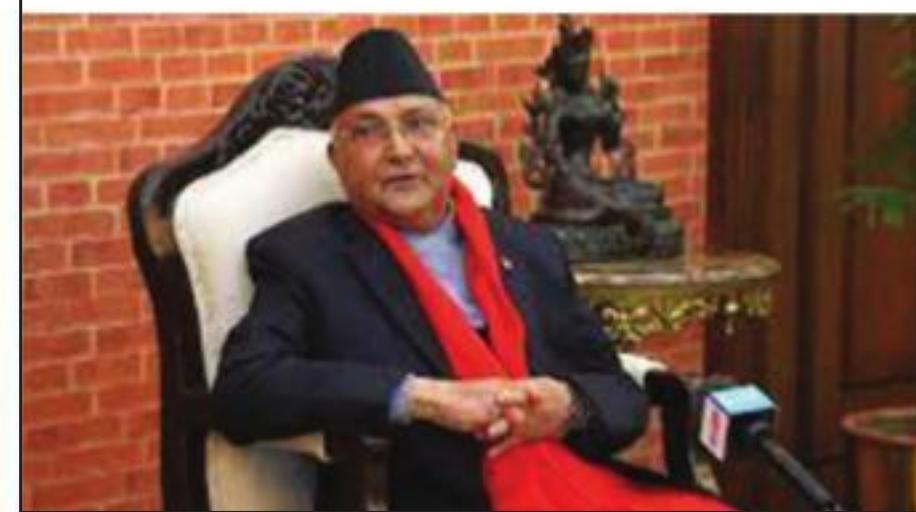
Prime Minister Oli himself is in a difficult position inside his own party

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

KATHMANDU, 3 APRIL

**N**epal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli who is in trouble inside his own party, is likely to face tougher days ahead as the primary opposition, Nepali Congress (NC) has decided to seek his resignation and initiate the formation of a new government under its leadership. The decisions were taken at a Central Working Committee (CWC) meeting of the NC.

NC spokesperson Bishaw Prakash Sharma said the party has decided to seek Oli's resignation as he has not taken any initiative of a way forward despite the House of Representatives, which he dissolved in December 2020, being restored. Prime Minister Oli himself is in a difficult position inside his own party, Nepal Communist Party-UML.



A section of the party led by former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal is forming parallel party structures within the UML after Oli suspended four senior leaders, including Nepal, for six months. Oli accused Nepal and other leaders for being involved in anti-party activities and violating rules and norms. After Oli dissolved the House on December 20, 2020, a section of party leaders upped the ante against the

Prime Minister and sought his resignation. On February 23, the Supreme Court of Nepal reinstated the House but Oli refused to step down. The apex court on March 7 dropped another bombshell invoking the 2018 party merger between Oli's UML and Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda's Nepal Communist Party-Maoist Center-Nepal, who was earlier close with Prachanda, returned to his mother party but Oli refused to incorporate them

for supporting Dahal when the party was united under the banner of Nepal Communist Party. After Oli refused to welcome Nepal and his faction inside the old party, the Prime Minister's party has once again landed in fresh trouble.

After the Supreme Court split the Nepal Communist Party into two, the UML and Maoist Center, now, the Prachanda-led Maoist Center is also preparing to withdraw support lent to Oli in 2018 before the party unification.

If Maoist Center withdrew its support, Oli's party will automatically reduce to a minority government.

In that case, either Oli has to take a vote of confidence or face a no-confidence motion. Nepali Congress's decision to seek Oli's resignation is a welcome step and time has come to remove Oli, former Prime Minister Baburam Bhattarai said on Saturday.

Time has come for other opposition parties to play their role, Bhattarai said, adding, today our foremost priority is to remove Oli. Meanwhile, Oli said that he was also aware of what the opposition are doing. "First withdraw your support to the government.

"Then I will resign," he said, adding that this is not the first time that his resignation has been sought. "I cannot resign to meet each and every demand." Meantime, the Nepali Congress' decision to seek Oli's resignation and unseat him, could create a new political equation in Nepal. If three opposition parties, Nepali Congress, Maoist Center and Janata Samajbadi Party come together, they will easily unseat Oli. And party leaders have said that now time has come to expedite talks between the opposition to unseat Oli.

## B'desh to impose 7-day nationwide lockdown amidst spike in COVID-19

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DHAKA, 3 APRIL

The Bangladesh government on Saturday decided to impose a week-long nationwide lockdown from Monday as COVID-19 cases and deaths surged across the country.

Road Transport Minister Obaidul Quader made the announcement at a media briefing in Dhaka on Saturday, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

Bangladesh on Friday logged 6,830 new cases of the coronavirus, the highest count in a day, taking the tally of infections to 624,594. The death toll climbed by 50 in 24 hours to 9,155, according to data released by the government. In a bid to arrest the spread of the coronavirus, the government has decided to enforce a seven-day lockdown from Monday as the coronavirus cases and deaths are surging across the country. Quader, also the general secretary of the ruling Awami League, said.

However, the order does not



apply to utility and emergency services.

Factories will remain open and workers can work shifts by following hygiene rules, the report said.

Every office and court will be closed during this lockdown but industries and mills will continue their operation on rotation, State Minister for Public Administration Farhad Hossain was quoted as saying by the Dhaka Tribune. Asked why industries will not be closed, the minister said: If we close the mills then the workers may have to leave their workstations and head for home.

Bangladesh on Wednesday

registered a massive jump in new COVID-19 cases with 5,358 infections, the highest single-day increase since the pandemic broke out in the country in March last year, it said. On Monday, the Prime Minister's Office issued an 18-point directive, including a ban on all public gatherings in areas with high rates of infections. In a gazette notification, it asked to limit gatherings in all types of events, including social, political and religious. It also said that buses will not be allowed to carry passengers more than half of their seating capacity and have to maintain the safety COVID-19 safety guidelines.

## Mending fences : South Korean foreign minister meets Chinese counterpart

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 3 APRIL

South Korea's foreign minister met his Chinese counterpart in the southern Chinese city of Xiamen on Saturday, as Seoul seeks to improve ties with its top trading partner even as US-China relations remain strained.

Ahead of the trip, South Korea's newly appointed Foreign Minister Chung Eui-yong told reporters that he expected North Korea to be a key issue in talks with Wang Yi. In his opening statement, Wang said China and South Korea will seek a process for a political resolution of the Korean Peninsula issue, as part of pursuing policies for

permanent peace amid North Korea's nuclear standoff with Washington.

Chung said both China and South Korea share the goal of complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

He said South Korea asks China to continue serving a constructive role in the stable management of the situation on the Korean Peninsula and achieving substantial progress in the Korean Peninsula peace process.

The Foreign Ministry in Seoul said the meeting started at around noon. South Korea's JoongAng Ilbo newspaper speculated that China's decision to host Chung in Xiamen, a city close to the self-ruled island of Taiwan, was

intended to send a message to Washington against attempting to shore up a U.S.-led anti-China coalition."

The Biden administration has stepped up efforts to bolster cooperation with allies South Korea and Japan, focused on China's growing influence and the North Korean nuclear threat.

On Friday, Biden's national security adviser Jake Sullivan hosted his South Korean and Japanese counterparts in the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland for discussions on the countries' three-way partnership and Washington's policies on North Korea.

The United States and China are at odds over a range of issues from trade to human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong and China's western Xinjiang region, as well as over Taiwan, China's assertiveness in the South China Sea and the coronavirus pandemic. China has also been accused of lax enforcement of U.N. sanctions aimed at curbing North Korea's nuclear program.

The worsening relations between Washington and Beijing have raised concerns in Seoul that it would become squeezed between its main security ally and biggest trade partner.

Earlier this week, Wang also met his counterparts from four Southeast Asian countries Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

### FERVENT PRAYER



Pope Francis lies down in prayer prior to celebrate Mass for the Passion of Christ, at St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, Friday, April 2, 2021, during the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic.

## Sri Lanka tightens church security ahead of Easter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, 3 APRIL

Security at churches across Sri Lanka have been beefed up ahead of Easter, police said on Saturday, ahead of the second anniversary of the April 2019 coordinated attacks on tourists and minority Christian community in the country in which 270 people, including 11 Indians, were killed.

"We have tightened security of churches by deploying over 12,000 security personnel, Senior Deputy Inspector General and police spokesperson Ajith Rohana told reporters here.

The security personnel include 9,350 police officials and 2,542 troops from the tri forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), he said.

Rohana said some 111 churches in the western coastal town of Negombo would be provided security, along with 107 churches in the neighbouring coastal town of Chilaw and some 98 churches in the eastern town of Batticaloa.

The St Sebastian's Church at Negombo's Katuwapitiya was the worst-hit in the Easter Sunday blasts that rocked the island nation in 2019 with 114 people dying in the church



attack. As many as 270 people were killed and around 500 others injured when six near-simultaneous and coordinated explosions, carried out by local jihadist group National Thowheeth Jamaath (NTJ) linked to the Islamic State (IS), rocked three churches and three luxury hotels frequented by tourists in Sri Lanka on April 21.

While describing the horrific scene at the St Sebastian's

Church, a top priest had said that pieces of flesh were thrown all over the walls, on the sanctuary and even outside the church. The church, built in 1946, is one of the many churches in Sri Lanka dedicated to St Sebastian who is considered a martyr in the Catholic Church history.

The head of the church, Malcolm Cardinal Ranjith, has recently expressed his disappointment over the probe

in the blasts, cautioning the government that if justice is not served, he would approach international organisations.

According to him, the investigations have only focused on failure to prevent the attack and not on the possible masterminds of the blasts.

The previous government headed by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe was blamed for its inability to pre-

vent the deadly attacks despite the prior intelligence made available on the impending terrorist strikes. The Buddhist-majority nation was about to mark a decade since ending a 37-year-long Tamil separatist war in May 2009 when the suicide bombings in 2019 rocked the country. The churches have been observing 'Black Sunday', demanding justice for the families of the victims.

Authorities initially reported 51 deaths but revised the count down by one on Saturday. The truck's emergency brake was not properly engaged, according to the government's disaster relief center.

## Taiwan prosecutors seek arrest in deadly train crash that killed 50

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HUALIEN COUNTY, 3 APRIL

Prosecutors in Taiwan on Saturday sought an arrest warrant for the owner of an unmanned truck that rolled onto a rail track and caused the country's worst train disaster in decades that killed 50 people and injured 178.

The train was carrying 494 people at the start of a long holiday weekend on Friday when it smashed into the construction truck that slid down a hillside above the tracks, the Taiwan Railways Administration said.

Many passengers were crushed just before the train entered a tunnel, while some survivors were forced to climb out of windows and walk along the train's roof to safety.

Authorities initially reported 51 deaths but revised the count down by one on Saturday. The truck's emergency brake was not properly engaged, according to the government's disaster relief center.

Yu Hsi-duan, chief prosecutor in eastern Hualien County, where the train derailed, said they were seeking an arrest warrant for the truck's owner, who was questioned along with several others. She didn't offer details citing an ongoing investigation.

President Tsai Ing-wen visited hospitals near the crash instead of the site itself so as not to interfere with rescue work, her spokesperson said.

This heartbreaking accident caused many injuries and deaths. I came to Hualien today to visit the injured and express my condolences to the deceased passengers' families, Tsai said. "We will surely help them in the aftermath. Tsai told reporters Friday that she asked the Transportation Safety Committee to conduct a strict investigation.

Many passengers were crushed just before the train entered a tunnel, while some survivors were forced to climb out of windows and walk along the train's roof to safety.

When such a thing happens, I feel very sorry and I will take full responsibility, Lin said after touring the site.

Workers removed the two rear-most cars from the tracks Saturday morning. However, a third could not be moved before tracks are repaired while the other five cars were still wedged into the tunnel. Two large construction cranes could be seen drawn up next to the train in a remote wood-

ed cliff area on the island's east coast. The operation should be done within a week, said Weng Hui-ping, head of the railway administration's news group.

During the repairs, all east coast trains will run on a track parallel to the one damaged in the accident, causing delays of 15 to 20 minutes, he said.

The National Fire Service said the dead included the train's young, newly married driver and the assistant driver. The government's disaster response center said it was the worst rail disaster since a train caught fire in 1948 in suburban Taipei, killing 64 people. Train travel is popular during Taiwan's four-day Tomb Sweeping holiday, when families often return to hometowns to pay respects at the gravesites of their elders.

Taiwan is a mountainous island, and most of its 24 million people live in the flatlands along the northern and western coasts that are home to most of the island's farmland, biggest cities and high-tech industries. The lightly populated east where the crash happened is popular with tourists, many of whom travel there by train to avoid mountain roads.

## Myanmar death toll mounts amid protests, military crackdown

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANGON, 3 APRIL

The civilian death toll in the crackdown by the Myanmar junta has reached 550 since the Feb. 1 coup, a human rights group said Saturday. Of those, 46 were children, according to Myanmar's Assistance Association for Political Prisoners. Some 2,751 people have been detained or sentenced, the group said.

Threats of lethal violence and arrests of protesters have failed to suppress daily demon-

strations across Myanmar demanding the military step down and reinstate the democratically elected government. Late Friday, armed plainclothes police took five people into custody after they spoke with a CNN reporter in a Yangon market, local media reported, citing witnesses. The arrests occurred in three separate incidents. Two women reportedly shouted for help as they were being arrested, Myanmar Now news service reported. One police officer, who was carrying a gun,

asked if anyone dared to help them, a witness told the news service. They pointed their pistols at passersby and at people in the store, a witness said of two police officers who forcibly took away two other women in the market. Meanwhile, the Karen National Union representing the ethnic minority rebel group that has been fighting the government for decades condemned non-stop bombings and airstrikes against villages and "unarmed civilians in

their homeland along the border with Thailand. The attacks have caused the death of many people including children and students, and the destruction of schools, residential homes, and villages. These terrorist acts are clearly a flagrant violation of local and international laws, the group said in a statement. In areas controlled by the Karen, more than a dozen civilians have been killed and over 20,000 displaced since March 27, according to the Free Burma Rangers, a relief agency operating in the region. About 3,000 Karen fled to Thailand, but many returned under unclear circumstances. Thai authorities said they went back voluntarily, but aid groups say they are not safe and many are hiding in the jungle and in caves on the Myanmar side of the border.

More than a dozen minority groups have sought greater autonomy from the central government for decades, sometimes through armed struggle. Several of the major groups including the Kachin, the Karen and the Rakhine Arakan Army have denounced the coup and said they will defend protesters in their territories. After weeks of overnight cut-offs of internet access, Myanmar's military on Friday shut all links apart from those using fiber optic cable, which was working at drastically reduced speeds. Access to mobile networks and all wireless less costly options used by most people in the developing country remained blocked on Saturday.



**'CRICKET IS CRIMINALISED'**

Former captain Aminul Islam (*in photo, left*) has said Bangladesh cricket has collapsed on the team's disastrous tour of the New Zealand, where they have lost both the One-Day Internationals and Twenty20 series by 3-0 margins. He alleges a lack of transparency, saying domestic cricket has been criminalised.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

**THUMBNAILS**

**Big boys:** SunRisers Hyderabad's David Warner and Kane Williamson have landed in Chennai and are undergoing a week's quarantine, the franchise confirmed on Saturday. The Australia opener and the New Zealand captain were speaking on Twitter.

**Pietersen's tip:** Kevin Pietersen on Saturday said cricket boards should not schedule any series during the Indian Premier League since it is the game's biggest tournament. Some of the Proteas' IPL-bound players will leave the Pakistan series after the second match.

**Jones elected:** Former Australia player Mel Jones has been a full member representative of the International Cricket Council women's committee. Jones has been a member of the Cricket Australia board since November 2019. "It is a tremendous honour," she said.

**Spanish experiment:** The Desert Springs Cricket Ground, part of a luxury resort in the Andalusia region of Spain, has been awarded venue accreditation by the International Cricket Council to host official One-Day International and Twenty20 international matches.

**Texas Open:** In San Antonio, Anirban Lahiri battled to a three-under 69 to move up to tied eighth after the second round of the Valero Texas Open, five shots behind leader Cameron Tringale. After turning in 35 with a birdie on two, he endured a rollercoaster back nine.

**Swimmer dead:** Clara Lamore Walker, who swam for the USA at the 1948 Olympic Games in London, won three national championships, and later in life set hundreds of national and world swimming records in several masters age groups, died on Friday of natural causes.

**Cup final:** Athletic Bilbao and Real Sociedad were to feature in their first-ever duel in a Copa del Rey final at the Estadio de la Cartuja on Saturday. The 2020 final was postponed because of the coronavirus crisis, with both teams preferring to wait until this April.

**Ronaldo armband:** The captain's armband which Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo threw away angrily during a World Cup qualifier against Serbia was bought by a betting company at a charity auction purportedly to help fund life-saving surgery for a six-month-old baby.

**Asian weightlifting:** Former champion Mirabai Chanu will lead the Indian challenge in the women's 49kg category at the Asian Weightlifting Championships to be held at Thakht in Uzbekistan from 16 April to 25 April. The competition is an Olympic qualifying one.

**Big win for RRG in Sood Cricket:** Fine knock by Ankush Bains (82 runs, 74 balls, 1x6, 9x4) and fabulous bowling by off-spinner Neeraj Yadav (3/36) enabled Rohtak Road Cynchana to beat Team AIML by 33 runs to enter the pre-quarters of the 31st All India Hitkary Om Nath Sood Memorial Cricket Tournament being played at RSKP ground, Pitampura in Delhi today.

**Chelsea slumps 5-2 vs West Brom:** Struggling West Bromwich Albion caused a big Premier League shock on Saturday by winning 5-2 at fourth-place Chelsea after the home team had Thiago Silva sent off in the first half at Stamford Bridge.

**Dubai Para Badminton:** Indian shuttlers Pramod Bhagat and Suktan Kadam stormed into the finals of their respective categories in the 3rd Dubai Para Badminton Tournament here on Saturday.

# Of under-achievers led by Kohli

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

**H**aving welcomed exciting new players, including Australia's all-rounder Glenn Maxwell and New Zealand paceman Kyle Jamieson, perennial under-achievers Royal Challengers Bangalore will hope to battle hard in their bid to win the elusive Indian Premier League trophy.

Balance problems in the squad, injuries and an over-reliance on skipper Virat Kohli (\*\*in photo\*\*\*) and AB de Villiers reduced RCB's chances last season. Having got off to a brilliant start, they ran out of steam towards the fag end of the tournament, losing five games in a row to bow out in the Eliminator.

Having released 10 players ahead of the auction, the team management focussed on strengthening the batting and pace bowling units this time around.

Here is an analysis of the side that will take on defending champions Mumbai Indians in the tournament's first match, fixed for 9 April.

**Strengths**

RCB have assembled a strong batting line-up. Kohli, with his impressive record as an opener in the league, has confirmed he will be in the top order. Parting Kohli will be the Devdutt Padikkal, who impressed everyone last season. Wicketkeeper-batsman Mohammad Azharuddin, who had a strike rate of 194.54 in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, and New Zealand's



Finn Allen are other attacking options at the top.

De Villiers and Maxwell add the firepower to the middle order while Sachin Baby, the experienced Daniel Christian and Washington Sundar add to the squad's depth. RCB possess a potent spin battery and it is good for them that they will be playing a major chunk of their matches on the slow tracks in Chennai and Ahmedabad.

Leg-spin option.

Ate magic with the ball. He will be joined by off-spinner Sunil Narine, Kohli's go-to man in the powerplay sessions last season. The two will be assisted by Maxwell while Adam Zampa is another leg-spin option.

No experience of playing in India. The other options include medium-pacer Harshal Patel, and the Australian trio of Christian, Daniel Sams and Kane Richardson.

**Weaknesses**

The RCB pace department does not inspire confidence. Navdeep Saini and Mohammad Siraj lack white-ball experience and tend to leak runs. Jamieson has struggled in T20Is and has

continued last year despite big signings.

Squad: Virat Kohli (captain),

AB de Villiers, Devdutt Padikkal, Yuvendra Chahal, Mohammed Siraj, Kane Richardson, Washington Sundar, Pavan Deshpande, Finn Allen, Shahbaz Ahmad, Navdeep Saini, Adam Zampa, Kyle Jamieson, Glenn Maxwell, Rajat Patidar, Sachin Baby, Mohammed Azharuddin, Daniel Christian, KS Bharat, Suyash Prabhudessai, Daniel Sams, Harshal Patel.

## Hyderabad selected

MUMBAI, 3 APRIL

The Board of Control for Cricket in India has listed Hyderabad as an optional venue for Indian Premier League matches in view of rising Covid-19 infections, with Maharashtra on the verge of a lockdown.

"Hyderabad has emerged as a back-up venue option, should one or more of the six designated host cities not be able to hold their matches," a website report said today. None of the franchises has been spoken to by the board about a venue change. While the first phase of the

appointment in the IPL so far.

**Threats**

Maxwell is central to RCB's scheme of things. If he tanks with the bat, it could have disastrous consequences. The team's over-reliance on Kohli and de Villiers continued last year despite big signings.

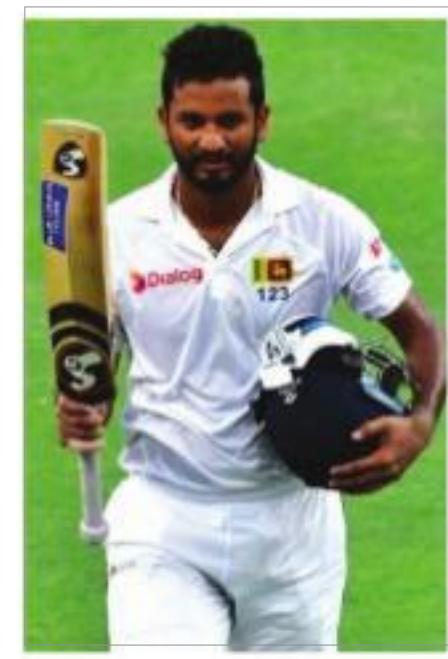
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## Test and series end inconclusively

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ANTIGUA, 3 APRIL



A century opening partnership between Lahiru Thirimanne and captain Dimuth Karunaratne (*in photo*) helped Sri Lanka bat throughout the final day to draw the second Test against the West Indies and the two-match series.

Sri Lanka entered the final day on Friday 347 runs behind the West Indies after trailing by 376 when the home team declared their second innings on Thursday at 280-4.

Karunaratne made 75 and Thirimanne 39 in a 101-run opening stand. When they were out, Oshada Fernando and Dinesh Chandimal combined to bat Sri Lanka to 193-2 when stumps were drawn early. Fernando was 66 not out and Chandimal 10 not out in an innings which had lasted 82 minutes. The West Indies dominated the match, mainly through the efforts of captain Kraigg Brathwaite who made 126 in the first innings - his ninth test century and first as captain - and 85 in the second.

The hosts scored 354 after being made to bat first and dismissed Sri Lanka for 258 to take a first-innings lead of 96. Brathwaite's assertive declaration came late on the fourth day with the hope the West Indies bowlers might make early inroads into the Sri Lanka top order. But they found Thirimanne and Karunaratne immovable. The Sri Lanka openers reached 29-0 before stumps on the fourth day and batted through all of the rain-affected first session on Friday to put the tourists on the path to a draw. By lunch Sri Lanka was 93-0 and Karunaratne and Thirimanne had given the tourists the solid foundation they needed to avoid almost any possibility of defeat. Their chances of chasing down such a substantial fourth-innings target

Brief scores: West Indies 354 & 280/4 drew with Sri Lanka 258 & 193/2 (D Karunaratne 75, O Fernando 66 not out).

## Rishabh Pant is an absolute match-winner: Ganguly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly (*in photo*) says he is "obsessed" with Rishabh Pant's game and calls the swashbuckling India wicket-keeper-batsman "an absolute match-winner". The former India captain added that he loves watching the likes of Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

"There are some fantastic players and I think as President of the Board I should not say who is my favourite player. All are favourite to me but I enjoy Kohli, I enjoy Rohit Sharma," Ganguly said during an interactive session organised by Classplus, a platform for educators to go digital.

"There is immense cricketing talent in India. When (Sunil) Gavaskar was there people used to think what will happen after him, then came (Sachin) Tendulkar, (Rahul) Dravid, Anil

an absolute match-winner. Jasprit Bumrah is good, Mohammed Shami is good, I like Shardul Thakur a lot because he has got the courage and guts.

"I consider my 1992 series as a failure. To be honest I didn't get much opportunities to play and I came back from the tour of Australia, but I was young. That (series) actually helped me to become a better cricketer. I came back stronger mentally. I was not fitter, I understood what internation-

al cricket was all about. I started to train myself over the period of 3-4 years not just physically but mentally also on how to handle the pressure," he recalled.

"My series in Australia in 1992 actually helped me become a better cricketer. When I went to England in 1996, I was much stronger. I knew what it takes to score runs in international level. I had another four years of domestic cricket under my belt where I kept scoring runs. Those four years I think was a blessing in disguise for me. Failures makes you better cricketer." Ganguly, who underwent two rounds of angioplasty at a Kolkata hospital in January after complaining of chest pain, said he is Hale and hearty now. "I am absolutely fit and fine and back to work, doing everything as I did before."

Ganguly, when Tendulkar, Dravid, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, Rishabh Pant took over," he said.

"There is so much talent for cricket in India that I think it will produce world beaters in every generation," Ganguly, who was picked for India's tour of Australia in 1992 but didn't get a single game, recalled how that experience Down Under and the hard work that followed in the subsequent years made him a better cricketer.

"I consider my 1992 series as a failure. To be honest I didn't get much opportunities to play and I came back from the tour of Australia, but I was young. That (series) actually helped me to become a better cricketer. I came back stronger mentally. I was not fitter, I understood what internation-

## Umesh hopes he will play in final match

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 3 APRIL

India paceman Umesh Yadav (*in photo*) says he can drag his body for another two or three years and wants to make a match-winning contribution to the World Test Championship final against New Zealand in June.

He has played 48 Tests in a stop-and-start career and is part of arguably India's best-ever pace attack, which includes Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Jasprit Bumrah. Despite having done well over the past three years, Umesh is not a sure starter considering the competition which has got stiffer with the emergence of Mohammad Siraj.

"I am 33 now and I know that I can mostly pull my body

for another two or three years, and there will be some youngsters who will be arriving (to play). I feel this is just healthy, because it ultimately benefits the team. When you have five or six fast bowlers on a tour of four or five Tests, you can play each one of them for two games to help reduce their stress and workload, so it helps that pack (of fast bowlers) play for longer," Umesh told a cricket-specific website.

Umesh has bowled more at home than overseas but feels experience helps him perform in all conditions.

"I haven't played much overseas, and I haven't had much experience of those wickets. But I've played a fair amount of Tests so far and learnt with experience how a particular surface will behave. As

far as the rest of my career is concerned, thank God that relatively I haven't had that many injuries.

And that is satisfying as a fast bowler, because once a fast bowler starts getting injured (regularly), he starts struggling which ultimately reduces his (playing) life. After an injury, there is the recovery, and then you need a rehab, which consumes a lot of time, which you can never get back. But I have lost very little time to injury periods, which has kind of helped me lengthen my career.

"So I haven't had to compromise a lot on my pace as well," he said. Umesh had suffered a calf injury in Australia but returned to the squad for the final two Tests against England at home. However, he did not get a game.

## The six-of-the-best show, the shame of it

PULAKESH MUKHOPADHYAY

To watch as India took in six goals from the United Arab Emirates was to pass through a spectrum of emotions, leading finally, as often, to a sense of emptiness. First, humour. Our worthies were so hopelessly outclassed the two teams seemed to be playing two different games, akin to a surreal dialogue in which neither knew his interlocutor's language.

It also reminded - the hop-

being short - one of PG Wodehouse's short stories, \*\*\* Up From the Depths, \*\*\* in which conflicting loyalties had resulted in tennis being described as "outdoor ping-pong" and golf, as "cow-pasture pool."

Had the comic genius seen India in action in that empty stadium, well might the Indian variety of football have come to be described just as jocularly as tennis and golf. But pathos is seldom very far from these moments of synthetic, unfelt mirth - which

is where life splits from literature - in which we try cerebrally to distance ourselves from what we love, which is Indian football, and fail to come to terms with its degeneration, planned, organised and institutionalised by the national federation.

When what you call your No 1 tournament is a matter of so many crores being pocketed annually by the company that bankrolls you, this is inevitable, quite as much as the coach calling for overseas Indians in his

team after the boots-and-brains shock. And India's football decline is so well-documented that it shocks nobody

**SHORT POINT**

anybody. Which is sad.

But Indians abroad do feel hurt, and very badly so, witnessing or reading about these periodic drubbings.

So when the unexpected happens, admittedly once in

a blue moon, they go wild. In an edition of the Asian Football Confederation Cup, when East Bengal left Jordan's Al

poorly attended game - and later showing up at the hotel to enlarge and deepen what would be their cherished memories of an unforgettable day. The victory was important because East Bengal had not really been counted on to win.

But they played with verve and vigour, tutored by Aloke Mukherjee, who was tethered to no theoretical dogmatism, and the second goal, a pile-driver from Alvito D'Cunha, was good enough for any level of the game, anywhere. It sent the

Indian expatriates into raptures, making the match their own discovery of a bold, you-can't-stare-me-down India. It showed we could be triumphant abroad too. But few people in the national federation's portals of power love the game more than life's tangible gifts as exemplified by, well, this and that. So there will always be these six-of-the-best experiences and the shame, moved on from without batting an eyelid. Tomorrow, of course, is always yet another day.