



'VACCINE POLICY DISCRIMINATORY'



BLACK LIVES MATTER



CW REPORT: RACISM AGAINST INDIAN WWI MARTYRS



AFTER KOLKATA KNIGHTS RODE FOR A FALL

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky with very light rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 35 and 20 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 73% Min: 38%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 34.0°C (-4) Min: 18.7°C (-4)

SUN RISES

05:47 hrs

MOON RISES

14: 49 hrs

SUN SETS

18:52 hrs

MOON SETS

04:01 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee arrives in a helicopter for an election campaign rally in South Dinajpur, on Thursday. AGENCIES

**India-US 'clean energy' partnership:** India and the United States are launching a clean energy partnership initiative to mobilise investments and enable green collaborations, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Thursday, as he pitched for concrete action at a 'high speed and on a large scale' globally to combat climate change while addressing a US-hosted virtual climate summit, attended by 40 global leaders. P4

**India joins Indonesia's hunt for submarine:** The Indian Navy on Thursday deployed a deep submergence rescue vessel to support the Indonesian Navy's hunt for an attack submarine that went missing with 53 people on board. According to Indonesian authorities, the KRI Nanggala-402, a German-made submarine, went missing during a military exercise around the Bali Strait on Wednesday. P9

**India orders inquiry against Param Bir Singh:** The Maharashtra Home Department has ordered an inquiry against former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh in connection with the allegations of corruption levelled against him by an inspector, sources said on Thursday. As per the orders, Maharashtra DGP Sanjay Pandey has been asked to probe the allegations against Singh, they said.

Didi: Centre's vaccine plan anti-people

KOLKATA 22 APRIL

Terming the Centre's new vaccination strategy as "highly discriminatory and anti-people", chief minister Mamata Banerjee today wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to ensure everyone gets free vaccinations for the coronavirus.

Miss Banerjee alleged that there is "bias in favour of the market against the interest of common people."

In her letter today, Miss Banerjee has also questioned the Central government's decision to supply the vaccines to states at different rates than those procured by the Centre.

"Why should the prices of vaccines be different in cases of state governments? GOI gets the vaccines from manufacturers at Rs 150 per dose, while you have fixed for us, the states, a price of Rs 400 per dose! States need to pay 167% extra over and above the rates that the GOI has fixed for itself," she wrote.

Miss Banerjee said that such a peculiar differentiation of rates is unheard of in Indian history and this is "anti-federal", "anti-poor" and "anti-youth".

Serum Institute of India had on Wednesday announced that its Covishield vaccine will cost private hospitals Rs 600 per dose and state governments Rs 400, a rate which will also apply to central government procurement once the existing contract for Rs 150 a dose ends.

## After HC rap over Covid-19 norms, EC bans roadshows, bike rallies in Bengal

SNS & PTI  
KOLKATA, 22 APRIL

The ECI has full power, but the EC totally failed to implement the Covid guidelines on the voting day and during campaigning time  
CALCUTTA HIGH COURT

force from 7 pm on Thursday.

Earlier in the day, Calcutta High Court had come down heavily on the Election Commission for not taking proper action over not following of Covid-19 guidelines on the voting day and during campaigning time.

Hearing three public interest litigations (PILs) seeking enforcement of Covid protocol during the elections, a divi-

sion bench presided by Chief Justice T B N Radhakrishnan said issuance of circulars and holding meetings on Covid safety were not enough and sought an affidavit by Friday on steps taken to enforce the norms.

The court observed that ECI has full power, but it failed to do this.

The PILs expressed concern that people participating in the ongoing election campaigns were not adhering to Covid norms which may result in a serious spike in Covid-19 cases in Bengal.

But the ECI totally failed to implement the Covid-19 guidelines, the court observed.

remaining arrests were for violating various sections of the IPC. In this phase, the commission received a total of 1,992 complaints. North 24-Parganas recorded the maximum incidents of violence.

In Bagda, there was an incident of police opening fire following an attack from a crowd that had gathered at the premises of a polling station. Initially, an altercation had ensued when police tried to disperse the crowd and later the crowd attacked police. As a last resort, police fired three rounds. A section officer and a constable have sustained injuries. Seven people were arrested in this connection.

The highest polling percentage was recorded in Nadia

(82.67) followed by East Burdwan (82.15), North Dinajpur (77.76) and North 24 Parganas (75.94). Voters complained of EVM malfunctioning in many booths of Tehatta in Nadia and Habra

in North 24-Parganas during the first few hours of voting. Clashes broke out in Ashoknagar between TMC and BJP activists, in which bombs were reportedly hurled and a vehicle carrying Central secu-

## 'Delhi Covid situation precarious'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Delhi High Court on Thursday observed that the Covid-19 situation in the national capital has turned precarious with many hospitals running out of oxygen and directed the Centre to ensure the gas is supplied to the city as per the planned allocation and without any hindrances.

"We all know that this country is being run by god," observed an anguished bench

can even make heaven meet earth, it said.

The high court directed all the authorities concerned, which are bound by the order passed under the Disaster Management Act, to ensure strict compliance of the Centre's direction that there shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods,

including medical oxygen. The bench made it clear that non-compliance of the order will be viewed seriously since it is going to result in grave loss of lives and will invite criminal action.

We also direct the Central Government to ensure allocation of oxygen takes place as planned and transportation of the tankers takes place unhindered, the bench said and added that they shudder to think what will be the condition in other states.

It also directed that adequate security be provided to lorries transporting oxygen so that they move without obstructions and dedicated corridors be made for transportation of oxygen to hospitals.

clashed outside polling booths. Both the parties accused each other of trying to rig votes. Several incidents of crude bombs exploding were reported in the Barrackpore industrial belt and two persons were arrested. Incidents of clashes between rival party workers and ransacking of camp offices were recorded in Kanchrapara and Khardah. In the Halisahar area of Naihati constituency in the district, BJP activists alleged that bombs were hurled at the residence of a local BJP leader, whose mother and younger brother are known to have suffered injuries. In the Titagarh area of Barrackpore constituency, clashes broke out between the Trinamul and

## Clashes, bombings mar sixth phase ; 79.09 per cent turnout

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 22 APRIL

Incidents of clashes between rival political groups and allegations of bomb explosions were reported in some parts of the 43 Assembly constituencies where voting was held during the sixth phase of polling today that recorded an overall voter turnout of 79.09 per cent till 5 p.m.

The CEO will hold a video conference with the Election Commission of India tomorrow to deliberate on whether the remaining last two phases of polls on 26 and 29 April can be clubbed together or not. A total of 587 people were arrested today of which 392 were preventive arrests and

People queue up to cast their votes at a polling station, during the 6th phase of Assembly elections at Krishnanagar. AGENCIES

in North 24-Parganas during the first few hours of voting. Clashes broke out in Ashoknagar between TMC and BJP activists, in which bombs were reportedly hurled and a vehicle carrying Central secu-

VOTING PERCENTAGE  
NADIA 82.67  
EAST BURDWAN 82.15  
NORTH DINAJPUR 77.76  
NORTH 24-PGNS 75.94

rity forces was also vandalised. The Trinamul Congress alleged that Central forces posted outside booth number 79 in Tangra area opened fire, leaving two of their activists injured after a few party workers protested against BJP candidate Tanuja Chakraborty's visit to the area. The ECI however dismissed allegations. Violence was also reported from the Bijapur constituency in North 24-Parganas, where TMC and BJP supporters

the BJP supporters, following which bombs were hurled at each other, leading to severe injuries to five BJP activists. Film director-turned-TMC candidate Raj Chakraborty was gheraoed in the Barrackpore constituency by BJP supporters, who accused him of influencing voters. Chakraborty however denied the allegations. In the Amdanga, country-made crude bombs were recovered by police personnel.

Barring some sporadic incidents, polling in the sixth phase was peaceful in all the nine Assembly constituencies in North Dinajpur district. As many as 1,071 companies of central forces have been deployed to ensure fair polling.



## Centre invokes DM Act to streamline supply of oxygen

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

### O2 DEMAND

► States cannot impose any restrictions on the free movement of life-saving medical oxygen required by Covid patients

► Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, exercising powers under the Disaster Management Act, asked the states to ensure the free movement of oxygen

► The District Magistrates, SSPs and SPs "will be personally liable for implementation" of the order

those exempted by the government, was prohibited from today. Exercising powers under the Disaster Management Act as Chairperson, National Executive

Committee, Bhalla said the states would instruct the transport authorities to ensure free inter-State movement of oxygen carrying vehicles.

No restrictions shall be imposed on oxygen manufacturers and suppliers to limit the supplies only to the hospitals of the State/UT in which they are located," the order said.

There shall be free movement of oxygen carrying vehicles into the cities, without any restrictions of timings, while also enabling inter-city supply without any restriction, the order said.

States shall strictly abide by the supply plan of medical oxygen prepared by the Empowered Group II, which is mandated to coordinate logistics like the supply of medical oxygen.

## Modi chairs high-level meet on oxygen supply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

that the supply of life-saving gas to states has been steadily increasing.

Against the present demand from 20 states of 6,785 MT/day of liquid medical oxygen, the Centre on Thursday asked top officials to work rapidly on increasing its production, boosting the speed of distribution and using innovative ways to provide oxygen support to health facilities.

It was noted that in the last few days, the availability of liquid medical oxygen has been increased by about 3,300 MT/day with contributions from private and public steel plants, industries, oxygen manufacturers as well as through prohibition of supply of oxygen for non-essential industries.

PM calls off WB campaigning: PM Modi will not be visiting Bengal on Friday to address poll meetings as he will be chairing high-level meetings in New Delhi to review Covid situation, he tweeted.

## Covid shadow over country



The family of a Covid patient rest outside a government-run hospital, in Kolkata

### Odisha offers help other states

Amid shortage of medical oxygen for treatment of Covid-19 patients in different parts of the country, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik spoke to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and offered all cooperation including ramping up of oxygen production to assist the needy states. "It is a war-like situation and Odisha will extend all cooperation in the fight against Covid-19 at the national level including ramping up oxygen production to assist other states in this emergency situation," Patnaik told the PM.

### Yechury's son dies of Covid

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury's son Ashish died of Covid-19 at a Gurgaon hospital on Thursday. Ashish was recovering well at Gurgaon's Medanta Hospital, people close to the family added, describing his sudden death as a shock.

### UAE bans travel from India

The UAE has banned travel from India for 10 days from Sunday due to the worsening Covid-19 situation in the country. The travel ban will come into effect from 11.59 pm on Saturday, 24 April.



BJP went for demonetisation and lockdown in the country but without any good to the people

WEST BENGAL CHIEF MINISTER MAMATA BANERJEE  
AT AN ELECTION RALLY AT HABIPUR

# Delhi hospitals continue to gasp for oxygen with limited supplies

Delhi's Covid situation precarious, notes HC, asking the Centre to ensure oxygen supply to hospitals; city faces acute shortage of oxygen, trying to airlift its quota from Odisha, says CM Kejriwal

SNS & PTI  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL



Convinced by the horrors of the raging Covid storm, many private and Delhi government hospitals were said to be running out of oxygen and beds even today, with a number of hospitals reportedly having oxygen supplies only for a few hours.

Several small hospitals in Delhi struggled to replenish oxygen supply for coronavirus patients on Thursday morning, even as some big healthcare facilities received fresh stock overnight.

The administration at Shanti Mukund Hospital, a 200-bed facility in East Delhi, put up a notice at the entry gate, reading: "We regret we are stopping admission in hospital because oxygen supply isn't coming."

Several private hospitals complained their suppliers had not been responding to their calls, forcing them to use their backups.

Officials at Saroj Hospital in Rohini said they have run out of oxygen supply. "The backup, too, won't last long. Of the 120 patients in the hospital at pre-

sent, 70 are in a critical condition," an official said, adding that many lives will be lost if oxygen supply did not reach the hospital in time.

An official from Shanti Mukund Hospital said they have not been able to get in touch with their oxygen supplier. "There are 110 coronavirus patients in the hospital right now. We have no option but to send patients to other hospitals," he said.

The Delhi High Court today observed that the Covid situation in the national capital has turned precarious with many hospitals running out of oxygen and directed the Centre to ensure the gas is supplied to the city as per the planned allocation and without any hindrance.

"We all know that this country is being run by god," observed an anguished Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli which was of the view that all measures should be taken for removing obstructions in the transportation of oxygen.

On his part, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal again said the city was facing an acute shortage of medical-grade oxygen and that he, along with deputy CM Manish Sisodia and health minister Satyendar Jain, had been constantly in touch with the officials concerned to ensure that the required oxygen reached the city's hospitals in time.

Addressing an online press briefing, Kejriwal said the Delhi government had estimated that the city's daily requirement was 700 tonnes of oxygen. The Central government had earlier capped its quota at 378 tonnes. However, yesterday the Centre increased Delhi's quota to 480 tonnes.

Kejriwal pointed out that it was the Centre which decided the oxygen quota of each state as also the manufacturing plant from where states have to get their oxygen supply. Delhi does not have any oxygen produc-

tion plant. The newly increased quota of oxygen is to be supplied mainly from Odisha, which would take a long time to reach Delhi in the normal course. Owing to this factor, the Delhi government was trying to airlift oxygen from Odisha.

He said the six-day lockdown period would be utilised by the Delhi government to overcome the shortage of oxygen, hospital beds, medicines and other things to strengthen the health infrastructure in the city.

Kejriwal said, "With the rise in coronavirus cases in Delhi and the rest of the country, demands for oxygen cylinders, medicines, vaccination and other things have increased substantially. We, in Delhi, have also faced an acute shortage of oxygen cylinders. We have spent sleepless nights trying to arrange oxygen for hospitals and other Covid care centres. The problem is that the states where the oxygen production plants are located are not allowing oxygen cylinders to be transported to Delhi. They argue they want to use their oxygen in their own hospitals. We are thankful to the Central government and the

Delhi High Court for their help in this situation. Trucks have slowly started reaching Delhi."

He said some time back a truck that had to restock the oxygen supply at GTB Hospital was stopped. "I remember we immediately got in touch with a Central minister and he got the truck released. We are constantly in touch with officials trying to ensure that the entire process moves smoothly. We are all working 24x7 for this purpose," he said.

"This is a colossal crisis the country is faced with. If we decide to look at ourselves as Haryana, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and West Bengal, India will not survive. There is need to unite as Indians, as human beings. This is the only way India can overcome this crisis," the CM reportedly said.

"It is my promise as the Chief Minister of Delhi that if we have surplus medicines, oxygen cylinders and other supplies, we will send these to states that need them. When the coronavirus problem is under control in Delhi and doctors are required in other states, we will send them there," Kejriwal added.

Delhi logs 26,169 virus cases and highest-ever 306 deaths

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Many Delhi hospitals treating Covid patients continued to reel under a grave medical oxygen crisis, even as the city continued to be inundated by a ferocious Covid wave.

Delhi today recorded 26,169 fresh coronavirus cases and 306 deaths — its highest-ever single-day Covid fatality count — according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city's positivity rate was 36.24 per cent while the active cases tally soared to 91,618, the health bulletin said.

Delhi's Covid caseload rocketed to 9,56,348 while its death toll spiked to 13,193, the bulletin stated.

Delhi had yesterday recorded 24,638 coronavirus cases and 249 deaths, while its positivity rate was 31.28 per cent. The national capital had on Tuesday recorded 28,395 coronavirus cases — its highest-ever single-day infections tally — and 277 Covid-related deaths.

## Covid care centre with 500 oxygen beds to be reopened in Delhi, to be run by ITBP

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

A Covid care centre equipped with 500 oxygen beds will be operationalised in Delhi and it will be run by the doctors and paramedics of border guarding force ITBP, officials said on Thursday.

"The Delhi government had sought medical officers and para-medical staff from the Ministry of Home Affairs to

man the Sardar Patel COVID Care Centre at Chhattarpur, which is being re-operationalised."

The Ministry of Home Affairs has designated ITBP as the nodal force for operating the facility, a home ministry spokesperson said. Delhi has been witnessing a surge in coronavirus cases. Over 24,000 fresh COVID-19 cases and 249 deaths were recorded on Wednesday amid a growing clamour for oxygen and hospital beds in the city.

ITBP director general SS Deswal told PTI that the force is putting together the manpower for the facility located at Radha Soami Beas in south Delhi and they will be in place as soon as the infrastructure at the centre is ready. "We will have sufficient manpower. If needed, we can deploy more of our doctors and medical staff to enhance beds at this centre that will be made operational with 500 beds initially," he said.

He had represented Geeta Colony assembly seat for his first three terms and later won from Laxmi Nagar as Geeta Colony ceased to be an assembly seat

## Delhi Congress leader A K Walia dies of Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL



Senior Congress leader and former Delhi government minister, AK Walia, died of COVID-19 at a city hospital in the early hours on Thursday. He was 72.

Delhi Congress leaders said that he was admitted to the Apollo Hospital a few days ago after testing positive for COVID-19.

He had represented Geeta Colony assembly seat for his first three terms and later won from Laxmi Nagar as Geeta Colony ceased to be an assembly seat

Anil Kumar mourned his death, saying that "The Congress family has suffered irreparable loss by losing a dedicated, soft-spoken, sociable and hard-working leader like Dr. AK Walia." "So much development work done by Dr. AK Walia, it is not possible for anyone to do that much work. He will be remembered as a development man," said Kumar, describing the works done by Walia in several key sectors such as Health, PWD, Higher Education and Finance while being a minister over many years.

दिल्ली सरकार  
आप की सरकार

**Get vaccinated to protect yourself from Corona**  
**Stay Safe**

Once again Corona figures in Delhi are increasing rapidly, so if you're eligible please visit your nearest health center and get yourself vaccinated. Come, let us together defeat this pandemic.



Please follow all safety measures to prevent Corona

For more information related to Corona log on to [delhifightscorona.in](http://delhifightscorona.in)

DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF HEALTH SERVICES, GOVERNMENT OF NCT OF DELHI



Wash Your Hands Frequently with Soap and Water



Follow Social Distancing



Continue to Wear Masks



sample tested positive, amid a growing clamour for oxygen and hospital beds in the city.

Only 18 ICU beds for COVID-19 patients are available in hospitals across Delhi as of 11 pm Wednesday, according to government data.

Yatender Kumar, who runs a pharmacy store in Pragati Vihar, also confirmed a steep rise in the demand for oximeters and steam inhalers over the last few days. There is also a huge demand for preventive care online with Snapdeal's sale of steam inhalers going up by "three times" compared to the pre-pandemic levels.

"We are seeing a significant rise in orders for devices, including oximeters, thermometers and electric steam inhalers. In fact, the demand for electric steam inhalers has been high all throughout this period and is three times more than the pre-pandemic levels.

"There is a four-time spike in the search for Kadha, Giloy and Amla juice and other immunity-boosting products. However, we are also working within the limitations of various lockdowns and prioritising delivery of the orders that users have said are required urgently," a Snapdeal spokesperson told PTI.

Amid reports of an oxygen shortage, the "oxygen concentrator" is drawing the attention of people, especially those from the affluent sections of the society.

It is a portable medical device used for delivering oxygen to individuals with breathing-related disorders. It filters the surrounding air, compressing it to the required density, and then delivers purified medical-grade oxygen into a pulse-dose delivery system or continuous stream system to the patient.

"If you have a patient who is not able to breathe properly and requires oxygen, and is unable to find space in the hospital, then a concentrator can be helpful," Dr Richa Sareen, consultant pulmonologist at the Fortis Hospital in Vasant Kunj here, said.

Delhi recorded 24,638 fresh COVID-19 cases and 249 deaths due to the viral disease on Wednesday while the positivity rate stood at 31.28 per cent, meaning almost every third



*Two of my party colleagues are injured after bullets fired by central forces personnel hit them in their legs.*

TRINAMUL CONGRESS CANDIDATE NARAYAN GOSWAMI  
CLAIMING HIS COLLEAGUES ARE UNDERGOING TREATMENT

# Free Covid jabs above 18 in govt hospitals in HP

HP govt also decides to constitute mobile teams at block level to provide better treatment to Covid patients under home isolation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 22 APRIL

The Himachal Pradesh government on Thursday announced that it will provide free Covid jab to all persons in the age group of 18 to 44 years, who will opt for vaccination in government-run hospitals in the state from 1 May.

The decision was taken during a state Cabinet meeting held here today under the chairmanship of chief minister Jai Ram Thakur, HP parliamentary affairs minister Suresh Bhardwaj said.

Bhardwaj said the state government will soon come up with a plan as to how to provide free Covid jabs to those persons who will opt for vaccination in government hospitals.

"The government has decided to constitute mobile teams at block level to provide better treatment to Covid-19 patients under home isolation and one vehicle would be provided exclusively to shift the serious patients."

Besides, each Medical Col-



lege will have a dedicated team headed by a senior doctor to supervise the Covid-19 cases for better treatment of patients in hospitals," he said.

Bhardwaj stated that the state government will provide an incentive of Rs 200 per shift to outsourced employees engaged against the Covid pandemic and in addition,

nutrition kits will be given to persons recuperating under home isolation to ensure their proper medical care.

"The state government is making efforts to provide best healthcare facilities in medical colleges, regional hospitals and Covid Care centres. Apart from this, senior officials have been directed to

ensure that senior doctors are monitoring healthcare facilities in all Covid facilities and the patients are being treated under their supervision," he said.

He stated that all other guidelines issued earlier to contain the spread of Covid will remain the same. However, the Deputy Commis-

sioners concerned had been empowered to take decisions in the districts as per the prevailing conditions.

But they have to consult the state government and take senior government officials' permission before implementing these decisions in a district, he said.

He added the state government has also decided to regularise the services of the contractual employees who had completed 3 years of service on 31 March or by 30 September 2021.

Likewise, the services of part-time employees completing 8 years of service on 31 March or by 30 September 2021 will be converted into daily wages while daily and contingent workers completing 5 years of service on above mentioned dates, will be regularised and given posting against available vacant posts in the department concerned.

The CM and Cabinet ministers contributed their one month salary towards CM Covid Fund and the cheques were handed over by Thakur to chief secretary Anil Khachi.

## People's cooperation in fight against Covid missing in second wave: Jai Ram

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 22 APRIL

"Steps must be taken to ensure that migrant labourers do not face any inconvenience and are motivated to stay back," he said while urging ULBs representatives to come forward to motivate the people to get themselves vaccinated.

ple of their respective areas regarding any misconception about vaccination.

They must come forward to distribute face masks, hand sanitizers and food kits to the poor and needy, besides, sanitary workers must be provided proper protection gears to ensure that they do not catch infection, the CM said.

He said steps must be taken to keep a better vigil on industrial areas of the state so that the migrant labourers do not get infected. Apart from this, regular sanitization must be carried out in the towns and municipalities and steps should be taken to ensure that not more than 50 people are allowed to attend any social functions.

The Health department should provide information regarding Covid patients to the councilors so that they could contact their family members and the councilors at their own level also must keep an eye on any Covid patient in their areas.

"It is the duty of any elect-

ed representative to ensure welfare and wellbeing of the people of his or her area.

The Corona pandemic this time is not only spreading at a faster pace but was also more fatal.

The number of cases and deaths during the last two months have increased at a rapid pace and as many as 250 deaths have been reported in the last 2 months," he added.

He added the state government had taken some stringent steps to check the spread of this virus and devotees/pilgrims will not be allowed in major temples from today with only routine puja will be allowed in these temples till further orders.

Besides, buses will ply with 50 per cent seat capacity and only 50 people will be permitted in all religious, social and other gatherings.

It becomes the duty of the elected representatives to ensure effective implementation of the guidelines and SoPs, laid down by the state government from time to time, he stated.

## HP Cong leader offers premises for use as Covid care centre

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 22 APRIL



Former HP minister and All India Congress Committee secretary Sudhir Sharma on Thursday offered his premises located in Kangra district for utilization as a Covid care centre.

Sharma, in a letter to Deputy Commissioner Rakesh Kumar Prajapati, said in view of the rapid spike in cases of Covid pandemic in the state and shortage of Covid care/isolation centres, it is necessary to increase the capacity to deal with more and more cases.

"In the coming months, the load on district health-care infrastructure is only expected to increase which will require help and work on

private/social solutions.

Therefore, I would request you to accept my premises/home situated at Rakkar in Dharamshala area to be engaged/utilised as a COVID care or isolation centre.

The premises can accommodate around 50 Covid patients and it can be readied for use within 10 days," he added.

## Haryana approves policy for welfare of abandoned, surrendered children

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 22 APRIL

Haryana Cabinet, which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday, approved a policy for upliftment of abandoned and surrendered children.

This policy, "HARIHAR" (Homeless Abandoned and Surrendered Children Rehabilitation Initiative Haryana) aims to provide employment, educational and financial benefits to abandoned and surrendered children who have completed the age of 18 years from the child care institutions of the state and were abandoned before the age of five years or surren-

dered before the age of one year.

The aims and objectives of the policy include to provide jobs on compassionate grounds and economically weaker section (EWS) status to abandoned and surrendered children, who were admitted to child care institutions before the age of five years (as abandoned) and before the age of one year (as surrendered) and who have completed the age of 18 years in child care institutions, upto the age of 25 years, and who possess the required qualification.

It also aims to provide free school and higher education including technical education, skill development and industrial training and

after care stay, rehabilitation and financial assistance upto the age of 25 years or marriage, whichever is earlier and one time interest free loan for purchase of a house in Haryana to abandoned and surrendered children who have completed the age of 18 years while living in child care institutions and have obtained admission in such courses.

According to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 abandoned and surrendered children are placed in children homes and specialized adoption agencies (SAAS) by the child welfare committee. These children qualify for adoption, however, if not adopted and on completing

the age of 18 years they need assistance for settlement in their life's and live with dignity.

Meanwhile, to encourage monetization of locked properties of the municipal bodies, the Haryana government has made a policy for sale of shops and houses by municipal bodies where possessions of such properties are with entities other than the municipal bodies or its predecessors for a period of 20 years.

This policy will not only strengthen the financial position of the municipal bodies but will also grant the small shopkeepers and other Patidar to the ownership of the said properties under their possession, an official spokesperson said.

## Haryana govt launches 'Covid Emergency Loan Scheme'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 22 APRIL

The Haryana government has launched a 'Covid Emergency Loan Scheme' for new and old entrepreneurs supplying medicines, oxygen and other medical facilities to Covid-19 patients in the state. For this, the state government has set up a fund of Rs 500 Crore.

Giving information, an official spokesperson said that under this scheme, the Haryana government will help businessmen, presently working in the state, to increase their current production or to set up new units to meet the above requirements. The scheme will come into effect from the date of notification and will remain in effect across the state.

He said during the Covid-19 pandemic, the already functioning units which provide oxygen, beds, ventilators etc. will be helped to increase their production.

## Himachal CM condoles demise of journalist

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 22 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday condoled the demise of senior journalist Chanchal Pal Chauhan who was working as a deputy editor with a national newspaper in New Delhi.

Hailing from Kotkhai area of Shimla district, Chauhan was the brother of Chetan Chauhan, national editor of a national daily.

Chauhan had previously worked in Shimla and Chandigarh and later shifted to Delhi where he worked with several media organizations.

Thakur said that with the death of Chanchal Pal Chauhan, the state had lost a bright journalist and a thorough professional.

He prayed to the Almighty to give peace to the departed soul and strength to the family members to bear this irreparable loss.

## Haryana ensuring supply of medicines, oxygen for Covid patients: Khattar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 22 APRIL

Haryana Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, on Thursday said adequate arrangements have been made in the state to ensure uninterrupted supply of medicines, oxygen and other facilities to the patients suffering from Covid-19 infection.

Addressing a Press conference after chairing the meeting of the state Cabinet today, the CM said though some difficulty was reported in the supply of Oxygen to Haryana, Delhi and other states from Panipat Plant, but now the problem has been resolved.

The CM said a roster has been made for the filling of oxygen cylinders and then loading these cylinders in the trucks from Panipat Oxygen Plant. "From now on, one truck will be loaded for Haryana and one truck each for Delhi and Punjab. This entire process at Panipat plant is being closely monitored by me," he added.

He also informed 170 metric tonnes (MT) of oxygen is being supplied to Delhi from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. today from the Panipat Plant.

Khattar said the Panipat plant has a capacity of producing 260 MT of oxygen per day, out of which 140 MT is supplied to Delhi, 80 MT is supplied to Haryana and about 20 MT is for Punjab. He said Haryana is also supplied 20 MT of oxygen from Bhawali plant in Rajasthan.

On the status of availability of beds with ventilators for Covid-19 patients

in the hospitals across the state, the CM said the facility of availability of beds has been made online in Gurugram and Faridabad districts.

Besides this, about 500 beds have been arranged at SGT Medical College, Gurugram, 150 beds are being arranged in the industrial area and 50 more beds have been arranged today.

Khattar said Indian Army has also taken the initiative of helping the state and is also making arrangements of 500 beds each in Panipat and Hisar for Covid-19 patients.

On wasting of Covid-19 vaccine doses, the CM said in Haryana, the wastage of COVID-19 vaccine is only 1.5 percent, which is within the prescribed limit. "Once a dose is opened for vaccination, only 20 to 40 injections are utilised. Sometimes because of the difference in the number of doses opened and administered also becomes a reason for wastage," he informed.

Responding to a question regarding blackmarketing of Remedesivir injection, Khattar said if someone is doing blackmarketing, strict action will be taken against those involved in this crime.

He further informed that as per the infrastructure facilities offered in private hospitals, the charges of ventilator beds are fixed from Rs 8000 to Rs 18,000.

The CM further clarified that this time because of the ongoing pandemic, no industrial unit would be shut down.

## Noida hospitals with 600 Covid patients face O2 crisis

PTI  
NOIDA, 22 APRIL

Two private hospitals in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar with around 600 COVID-19 patients on Thursday said they were facing shortage of oxygen supply and the quantity they had with them would not last till Friday.

Officials of the Kailash Hospital in Sector 27 said they have already "overstretched" their resources and healthcare workers were working beyond duty hours to tackle the influx of patients due to the pandemic, while patients at the Prakash Hospital in Sector 31 were also left in lurch due to oxygen shortage.

Kailash Group Medical Director doctor Ritu Vohra said they have around 450 patients across their four facilities in the district while the Prakash Hospital, which has two facilities, in a statement said it has around 150 patients under treatment who need medical oxygen. "We have oxygen for seven-eight hours. Since morning, all our group hospitals need oxygen replenishment. We have stopped new admissions due to oxygen shortage. In this hospital (Sector 27), we have oxygen that would be sufficient only for four-five hours," Vohra said around noon.

"We have been told that the hospital has oxygen that will last only two to three hours and that patients should be taken to some other hospital," a patient's attendant standing outside the hospital told reporters.

Another senior citizen said, "My daughter is in the hospital since the past few days and now they are saying take her somewhere else. Where do we take her! They should tell me where I should take her, I would do that. It's such a failure."

Gautam Buddha Nagar Chief Development Officer Anil Singh, who visited Prakash Hospital, said he has been told about the difficulty in procurement of medical oxygen from Haryana and the district administration is making efforts to resolve the issue.

On patients being asked to move to other facilities, Singh told reporters, "If such a situation arises, then we will make all facilities for it."

Besides, Kailash and Prakash hospitals, attendants at some other hospitals, in Noida and Greater Noida also claimed difficulty in finding oxygen for their patients battling COVID-19 infection.

## Pb daily wager wins ₹1 cr lottery with first ticket

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 22 APRIL



A daily wager in Punjab has won a Rs One Crore lottery with a Rs 100 ticket bought by him for the first time.

The daily wager, Bodh Raj, a resident of Pathankot, said his decision to buy a lottery ticket of Rs 100 changed his life forever. He has won the first prize of Rs One Crore of Punjab State Dear 100 Wednesday Weekly Lottery.

Residing in village Akhrota, Bodh Raj (38) was struggling to earn livelihood for his

family and meet their daily needs, but now, these harrowing situations are the stories of the past.

Exalted with the winning lottery, the lucky winner said

that he had never thought in his wildest dream to earn such a big amount in life as he earned around Rs.10,000 per month with whole day hard-work.

"On the insistence of my friend, who went to Pathankot to buy a Punjab State Baisakhi Bumper ticket, I bought a lottery ticket first time in my life, as I had no money to buy a Baisakhi Bumper ticket of Rs 500 so I chose to buy a ticket of Rs 100. I was not interested in spending my hard-earned money on the lottery, but God created a way

for me," he said.

After submitting the winning lottery ticket and required documents for encashment of prize with the department of lotteries at Finance and Planning Complex, Sector-33, Chandigarh, the lucky winner said that he is still in dreams. Father of two school going daughters, Bodh Raj now is planning for their better future. He said that he will spend a large share of the winning amount on the study of his daughters, besides taking care of financial liabilities of his family.

On the status of availability of beds with ventilators for Covid-19 patients



A health worker does thermal check on voters at a polling station during the 6th phase of West Bengal State Assembly polls at Khardha, North 24 Parganas, on Thursday. ■AGENCY

**Oxygen tank leak:** The tank from which liquid oxygen leaked at a civic-run hospital in Nashik, killing 22 Covid-19 patients, was operationalised on 31 March, just 21 days before the incident, an official said on Thursday. ■PTI

**Nithyananda bans Indians:** With rising Covid-19 cases across the world, self-styled godman Nithyananda banned devotees from India and travellers from Brazil, European Union and Malaysia from entering 'Kailasa' - the nation founded by him in 2019. ■AGENCY

## Indian Navy rescue vessel dispatched to assist Indonesia in tracing its missing submarine

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Indian Navy today dispatched its Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel (DSRV) to assist Tentara Nasional Indonesia-Angkatan Laut (TNI AL - Indonesian Navy) in search and rescue efforts for the Indonesian Submarine KRI-Nanggala which was reported missing on Wednesday.

On 21 April, an alert was received by Indian Navy through the International Submarine Escape and Rescue Liaison Office (ISMEROL), regarding the missing Indonesian submarine. The submarine was reportedly exercising in a location 25 miles North of Bali with a crew of 53 personnel.

Submarine rescue is required to be undertaken when a submarine is reported to be

# Climate change is a lived reality: PM

Announces India, US clean energy agenda partnership

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today announced that India and the US were launching a "India-US climate and clean energy Agenda 2030 partnership" to help mobilise investments, demonstrate clean technologies, and enable green collaborations.

Emphasising the importance of lifestyle change in climate action, he called for concrete action by the global community to combat climate change at a high speed, on a large scale and with a global scope.

"Climate change is a lived reality for millions around the world. Their lives and livelihoods are already facing its adverse consequences," he said addressing the two-day "Leaders' Summit on Climate" convened virtually by US President Joe Biden. Nearly 40 other world leaders are participating in the summit. They represent countries which are members of the Major Economies Forum (India is a



member), and those vulnerable to climate change, among others.

Modi thanked President Biden for taking the initiative at a time when humanity was battling a global pandemic. The summit, he said, was a timely reminder that the grave threat of Climate Change has not disappeared.

The Prime Minister told the gathering that his government was doing its part to combat climate change. "Our ambitious renewable energy target of 450 Gigawatts by 2030 shows our commitment."

He said that despite India's development challenges, his government has taken many bold steps on clean energy, energy efficiency, afforestation and bio-diversity." That is

why we are among the few countries whose NDCs are 2-degree-Celsius compatible."

He said India has also encouraged global initiatives like International Solar Alliance, LeadIT, and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

"As a climate-responsible

developing country, India welcomes partners to create templates of sustainable development in India. These can also help other developing countries, who need affordable access to green finance and clean technologies," he added.

He said India's per capita carbon footprint was 60 per cent lower than the global average. It was because the lifestyle of Indians was still rooted in sustainable traditional practices. "So today, I want to emphasise the importance of lifestyle change in climate action..."

He recalled the words of Swami Vivekananda who had called on humankind to "arise, awake and stop not until the goal is reached". "Let's make this a Decade of Action against climate change," he added.

## Guj hospital staff caught extorting money for bed

AHMEDABAD, 22 APRIL

missing or sunk and specialised equipment is required for underwater search to locate the disabled submarine and rescue the personnel who are trapped inside the submarine.

India is amongst the few countries in the world capable of undertaking Search and Rescue of a disabled submarine through a DSRV. Indian Navy's DSRV system can locate a submarine up to 1000 m depth utilising its state-of-the-art Side Scan Sonar (SSS) and Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV).

Two employees of the Rajkot Civil Hospital have been caught extorting Rs 9,000/- from the relative of a Covid-19 patient for making available a bed through the backdoor.

An attendant and a sweeper at the hospital made the relative of a patient to withdraw money from a nearby ATM to

pay them in lieu of getting the ailing man admitted. In a video recording of their conversation, the agents have been heard about sharing the money with 'higher ups', but it is not clear whether the 'cut' goes to doctors or hospital administrators. The Crime Branch of the Rajkot Police have arrested the duo and are investigating who all are involved in the 'bed allotment racket' at the Civil Hospital.

In Ahmedabad, one youth was arrested for selling spurious perfumes disguised as 'hand sanitisers'. Having worked in a chemical unit earlier, he had acquired some knowledge about perfumes and alcohol. He had mixed some fluids with perfumes and sold the concoction as 'sanitisers'. ■SNS

<b>NORTHERN RAILWAY</b>	
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE</b>	
The Executive Signal & Telecom Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, New Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender for the following work:-	
<b>1 Name of Work &amp; Place</b>	Outdoor Signalling work in connection with Provision of Loop line with Telecom accessories and shifting of LC-41 at MOZ station iow doubling work of MOZ-TPZ in Delhi Division of "Northern Railway"
<b>2 Completion Period :</b>	03 (Three) Months from the date of issue of LOA
<b>3 Approx. Cost :</b>	₹ 54,43,637.41
<b>4 Earnest Money Amount:</b>	NIL
<b>5 Last date of upload and Date of Opening of Tender :</b>	Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 04.05.2021 to 18.05.2021 at 11.30 hours. Tender will be opened immediately after close of uploading of tender.
<b>6 Sale/availability of Tender document on Rly. Website:</b>	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. <a href="http://www.reps.gov.in">www.reps.gov.in</a> from 04.05.2021 to 18.05.2021 upto 11.30 hrs.
<b>No.570-Sig-PS-Tender-114</b>	Dated: 22.04.2021
900/2021	

<b>SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE</b>	
<b>NORTHERN RAILWAY</b>	
<b>E-TENDER NOTICE No. ELS_KJGJY_SRE_T-17 RT Dtd. 22.04.2021</b>	
Open tender through E-tendering are invited by Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/TRS, Electric Loco Shed, Khanalampura Yard, Northern Railway, Saharanpur (Ambala Division) or and on behalf of the President of India from the registered tenderer on web site <a href="http://www.reps.gov.in">www.reps.gov.in</a> for the following work upto 11.00 hrs on the date of closing shown against the work and will be opened thereafter:-	
<b>Open Tender No.</b>	ELS_KJGJY_SRE_T-17 RT
<b>Name of Work</b>	Repairing and overhauling of ELGI make TRC 1000 MN and TRC 1000 MNUG main compressors of WAG-7 Locomotives for one year.
<b>Date of Closing/Opening</b>	12.05.2021
<b>Approx. Cost</b>	₹17,88,675.00
<b>Earnest Money</b>	NIL
<b>Completion period</b>	12 Months
<b>Validity period</b>	45 days
<b>Cost of tender form</b>	Free of cost
1. Tenderer(s) should have Class-III Digital Signature Certificate to participate in E-Tendering of Works Tenders.	
2. Tenderer are required to upload self-attested scanned copies of all related eligibility documents as per conditions.	
3. Taxes & Charges will be applicable as per extant rule.	
4. For details, please log on IREPS website <a href="http://www.reps.gov.in">www.reps.gov.in</a>	
899/21	

**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

vehicles will completely destroy the authenticity and originality of these historic vehicles," Singhania told Gadkari.

"To enable the transparent registration of vintage motor vehicles, a Self-Certification/Declaration/Indemnity by the owner, of the required registration particulars, should suffice, just as in the case of Income Tax Returns. There may be no need for a representative from any private automobile association, club or committee to be involved in the process of approval or rejection for registration of a vintage motor vehicle, as such involvement of private representatives in the different state committees may create unnecessary red tape and provide scope for corruption and influence peddling," the letter stated.

"Vintage motor vehicles older than 30 years from the date of manufacture may kindly be permitted to be registered under the draft Rules 'Special Provision for Registration of Vintage Motor Vehicles' as these vehicles are very small in number and are an important part of our national automotive heritage," Singhania urged Gadkari.

"No commercial use whatsoever may be permitted but free use of these vintage motor vehicles may be allowed for personal purposes, with no other purpose restrictions," he stated in the letter.

"The important exemptions requested from (i) emission compliances, (ii) obtaining pollution under control certificate and (iii) obtaining a certificate of fitness...may kindly be granted and the exemption be specifically provided for as these historic vehicles cannot be mechanically modified or altered or expected to meet the new emission/fitness/pollution norms, applicable to later production cars. Any modification or alteration to historic

*This is a time when we have to follow state policy, not politics.*

FORMER RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER VASUNDHARA RAJE

ON HANDLING OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

i  
ndia

## TENDER

Himachal Pradesh  
Jal Shakti Vibhag  
CORIGENDUM

The offline tenders called vide this office letter No. JSV-JSVDB-CB-Tender/2020-30298-397 dated 16-03-2021 and further tender opening dates was postponed upto 23-04-2021 vide this office corrigendum No.IPH-IDB-EA-I-NIT/2021-204-305 dated 07-04-2021 is hereby once again postponed due to some administrative reasons.

Last date of submission of tender 03-05-2021 upto 11.00 AM

Last date of sale of tender from divisional office 01-05-2021 upto 2.00 PM

Executive Engineer  
Jal Shakti Division  
Bilaspur

**HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

"Office Order"

The tender for the work "Construction of Jawahar Lal Nehru Govt. Engineering College at Sundernagar (Sh: Landscape development of area in front of Block-D &E)" called vide this office letter No. PW-SNR-CB-E-Tender/ Girial/2020- 310-20 dated 09.04.2021 (R.O. No. 0256/2021-2022 Classified) R.O. Dated 18.04.2021 is hereby cancelled due to administrative reasons.

Other terms and conditions of the NIT shall remain unchanged.

Executive Engineer,  
Sunder Nagar Division,  
HP.PWD., Sunder Nagar

EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. : 155303

0399/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

0387/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

**HPPWD NOTICE INVITING TENDER BHARWAIN DIVISION HPPWD BHARWAIN TEHSIL AMB DISTRICT UNA (H.P.).**

Sealed tenders on item rates basis are hereby invited on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh by the Executive Engineer Bharwain Division, HPPWD, Bharwain Tehsil Amb District Una (HP) from the eligible consultants empanelled for "preparation of detailed project report of roads and Bridges with HPPWD. The tender shall be received in his office on or before 28.05.2021 up to 10.30 AM and shall be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of contractors / firms or their authorized representatives , who wish to be present at the time of opening of tenders. The tender applications shall be entertained and tender form shall be sold up to two days before the date of opening of tender i.e. 26.05.2021 up to 12.00 Noon. Draft Notice Inviting Tenders/ Drawing/ Specifications can be seen in the office of the Executive Engineer on any working day between 11.00 A.M. to 4.00 P.M. Ambiguous / Telegraphic / Conditional tenders or tender by Fax shall not be entertained/ considered in any case. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving Certificate / Time Deposit Account / FDR in any of the Post Office in H.P. / Nationalized Bank duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer must be accompanied with the application. Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will not be rejected. The contractor shall accompany his enlistment/ renewal orders with his application for obtaining the tender documents. The Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject the tender without assigning any reasons. The work will be completed by the contractor within the stipulated period. The contractor will have to submit his registration under the H. P. General Sale Tax Act 1968 and also labour licence under contract Act 1970 from the competent authority. The contractors/ firms are requested to insert the rate of each item in words as well as figures, failing which XEN reserves the right to accept/ reject any or overall tenders. The tender shall only be issued to those contractors/ firms, who are found eligible/ suitable and competent as per the above conditions. The offer shall remain valid up to 45 days after the opening of tender. If any of the date mentioned above happens to be Local / Gazetted Holidays the same shall be process on next date.

Sr. No.	Name of work.	Estimated cost.	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Form No.	Cost of Form
1	C/O Play ground at Govt. Senior Secondary School Ghanari Tehsil Ghanari (SH: C/O Play ground to use as Helpd) Deposit work.	295000/-	5900/-	One month	PWD-8	350/-
2	C/O Boundary wall of play ground at Govt. Senior Secondary School Gondpur Banehra (Deposit work)	395000/-	7900/-	One month	PWD-8	350/-
3	C/O Pucca Path main road to Shamshan Ghat Ward No.2 Bhanjal Upper Tehsil Ghanari( Against Deposit)	480000/-	9600/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
4	C/O Ambulance road from Gagret Daulatpur road to Mohala Bagwall Shere Ki Hatti Abadi Kabirpanthan Mohal GP Sanghni (SH: Providing & laying interlocking paver block 80mm thick at km 0/0 to 0/194) against DC deposit	345300/-	6950/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
5	C/O Ambulance road approach main road to Ward No.3 near Shiv Mandir(SH: C/O 3.00meter span RCC slab culvert at RD 0/0) against DC deposit.	285300/-	5750/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
6	Rain damages on Gondpur Banehra to Nangal Jarialian road km 0/0 to 2/600 under VKVNY	475000/-	9500/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
7	C/O rain damage on Nakroh Sunkali road to house of Naveen to house of Roshan Lal Ward No.1 Nakroh under VKVNY	125000/-	2500/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
8	C/O link road Harjan Basti Bhaira to Harjilan Basti Saluri km 0/0 to 1/800 (SH: C/O 900mm dia RCC Hume pipe culvert at RD 0/700. 0/870 & 1/250) under SCCP	487300/-	9700/-	Three month	PWD-8	350/-
9	Improvement of road safety on Nehri Mari Polian Prohiton road km 0/0 to 10/0 (SH: Providing & fixing metal beam crash barrier between RD 3/0 to 5/700)	450000/-	9000/-	Two months	PWD-8	350/-
10	C/O link road from Duhal Bangwallow road near house of Sh. Suresh Kumar to village Thanikpura up to Gugga Mandir Radhey Shyam Mandir km 0/0 to 1/500 (SH: C/O Breast wall at RD 0/210 to 0/225) under MNP	487600/-	9800/-	Two months	PWD-8	350/-
11	Improvement of road safety on link road Bharwan to Chintpuri road km 0/0 to 3/120 (SH: Providing & fixing metal beam crash barrier between km 2/90 to 3/070)	300000/-	6000/-	Two months	PWD-8	350/-
12	Restoration of rain damages on link road Harjan Basti Badoh km 0/0 to 1/915 (SH: C/O Breast wall at RD 1/40 to 1/060 & C/O U-shape drain with edge wall at RD 0/405 to 0/505	473882/-	9500/-	Three months	PWD-8	350/-
13	A/R & M/O NMT road km 64/5 to 72/555 (SH: Repair/ re-erecting of "W" metal brash barrier at various RDs)	149937/-	3000/-	Two months	PWD-8	350/-</



Crisis is not just due to Corona, but due to the anti-people policies of the Centre. Don't give false celebrations and hollow speeches, give the country a solution

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI  
SLAMMING THE CENTRE OVER INDIA'S GRIM SITUATION



A woman walks with an umbrella during fresh snowfall near Gangotri in Kashmir on Thursday. **IANS**

**Security guard injured:** A security guard was injured on Thursday as three militants dressed in hazmat suits looted a bank branch in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir, police said. The militants armed with pistol, looted the Jammu and Kashmir bank at Khore Sherabad in Pataan area of North Kashmir, a police official said. **PTI**

**Infiltration bid foiled:** The BSF thwarted an infiltration bid by three Pakistani intruders along the India-Pakistan international border in Pathankot, officials said on Thursday. BSF personnel fired when they noticed suspicious movement of three people trying to enter the Indian territory around 10:15 pm on Wednesday. **PTI**

**Train rams into vehicles:** Five people were killed and one person was injured on Thursday after a train rammed into some vehicles at a manned level-crossing whose gates were allegedly not closed when the train came hurtling in, police said. **PTI**

**UP panchayat polls:** The Uttar Pradesh police has taken preventive action against around 60,000 people in the last one month to ensure the peaceful conduct of panchayat elections in Ballia, a senior official said Thursday. About 5,200 did not appear in the court and did not sign the bond. **PTI**

## Classified

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

Mrs. Neha Mehra  
8130171575

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Slightly fire & water damaged stock of 13 M.T. MATS lying at Hardiyar are for sale "ON AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". Interested buyers can inspect and participate online auction along with EMD - 2,00,00/- Auction will be held on 26th April 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm on our website: www.salvageweight.in Surveyor details: Mr. Col Bagga - 7678218305 Auctioneer details: Mr. Devendra Kumar Monga 8130771032

15 days from the date hereof or otherwise Certified Copy of the said Deed will be treated as Original Deed for all purposes which please note.

Shyamal Kumar Jana  
Advocate  
10, K.S. Roy Road  
Second Floor  
Kolkata-711101  
Mobile No.: 9831639731

Mobile No.: 9831639731  
**CORRIGENDUM -**A mistake has inadvertently occurred in the Public Notice issued on 22nd April, 2021 in respect of C.S. No. 75 of 2021. Please read the suit property as flat 5C instead of Flat 5B on the 5th floor, 3,

Hungerford Street, Kolkata-700017.  
C.K. Saha  
Advocate

#### CHANGE OF NAME

I, MD SHAKIL Razzaque, S/o. late Abdul Razzaque, R/o. Premises No. 10B, Bolai Dutta Street, Kolkata-700073, do hereby declare that "Shakil Razzaque" and "Md. Shakil Razzaque" is same and identical person, who affixed his seal before Metropolitan Magistrate Court at Calcutta, dated 19.02.2020.

## The Statesman

**KOLKATA**  
Statesman House,  
4, Chowinghee Square  
Kolkata-700 001  
Tel: (033) 22127070-76,  
(033) 41071700  
Fax: (033) 2212-6181 / 7107-1780  
Email: thestatesman@vsnl.com  
thestatesmandclassified@gmail.com

**DELHI**  
Statesman House,  
148, Barkahkama Road,  
New Delhi-110 001  
Tel: (011) 2331 5911  
Ishan House (2nd floor)  
A-90, Sector II, NOIDA,  
UP 201 301  
Tel: (0120) 4171421  
Email:  
delhi@thestatesmangroup.com  
delhi@thestatesmangroup.com

**BHUBANESWAR**  
Plot 3A, Zone B, Sector A,  
Mancheswar Industrial Estate,  
Bhubaneswar-751 010.  
Tel: (0674) 2588060/61/62/2586371,  
Telefax: 0674-2588061  
Email:  
bhubaneswar@thestatesmangroup.com  
statesmanbbsr@gmail.com

**SILIGURI**  
13A, Dabgram Industrial Growth  
Centre,

**AIR-SURCHARGE:** Kathmandu - Re. 2, Eastern Region - Re. 1  
All other stations in India - Re. 1

# Vaccine registration for 18+ from 28 April

Inoculation process, documents to be submitted to get jab remains the same

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Registration for vaccination against Covid for all those aged above 18 will begin on the CoWIN platform and Aarogya Setu app from 28 April, officials said on Thursday.

The inoculation process and documents to be submitted to get the jab remains the same as before.

The Central government announced that the vaccination for those above 18 years will begin across the country from 1 May as part of the third phase of inoculation drive. "It is clarified that #CoWin portal will be made ready for 18+ beneficiaries by 24 April. Registrations for 18+ citizens to book appointments (from 1st May) will begin on 28th April," the Union health ministry tweeted.

From 1 May, the present system of private vaccination centres receiving doses from the government and charging up to Rs 250 per dose will cease to exist and private hospitals will procure directly from vaccine manufacturers.

According to the Liberalised Pricing and Accelerated National Covid Vaccination Strategy, Covid vaccination will continue to be free for eligible population groups comprising healthcare workers, frontline workers and people above 45 years of age in government vaccination centres, which receive doses from the government of India.

Vaccine manufacturers would make an advance declaration of the price for 50 per cent supply that would be available to state governments in the open market before May 1. Based on this price, states, private hospitals, industrial establishments may procure vaccine doses from manufacturers.

Private hospitals would have to procure their supplies of vaccine exclusively from the 50 per cent supply earmarked for other than the government of India channel. "While the Centre has liberalised the vaccination policy, it does not mean that vaccines will be sold in pharmacists or chemist shops in the open market," health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said.

The price charged for vaccination by private hospitals would be monitored, he said.

"The present dispensation where private vaccination cen-

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the new Covid vaccine policy, terming it as arbitrary and discriminatory and urged him to intervene immediately to reverse it.

Why is the government allowing a policy that reeks of "insensitivity", she said in the letter to the Prime Minister. The Congress chief alleged that the new vaccine policy implies that the central government has abandoned its responsibility of providing free vaccine to all Indians between 18 and 45 years of age.

"This is complete abandonment of the Government's responsibility towards our youth," she said.

Noting that any reasonable person will agree on the benefit of a uniform price for vaccination, she said, "I would urge you to intervene immediately and reverse this ill-considered decision."

She said the nation's goal must be to ensure that everyone over 18 years is given the vaccine, regardless of their economic circumstances.

Gandhi said she is writing to him to convey the deep concern and sense of

trees receive doses from the government and can charge up to Rs 250 per dose will cease to exist," the Union health ministry said. Vaccine manufacturers will supply 50 per cent of their monthly Central Drugs Laboratory (CDL) released doses to the government of India and would be free to supply the remaining 50 per cent doses to state governments and in the open market.

For government of India vaccination centres, the eligible population would be the same, which exists today, that is healthcare workers (HCWs), frontline workers (FLWs) and population above 45 years of age. For other than the government of India channel, the eligibility would be all adult citizens of the country, the document said.

Vaccination will continue to



People wait to be vaccinated in Mumbai on Thursday.

anguish that the new Covid vaccination policy has caused

amongst the people.

"It is surprising that despite the harsh lessons of last year and the pain inflicted on our citizens, the Government continues to follow an arbitrary and discriminatory policy, which promises to exacerbate existing challenges," she said in her letter.

The Congress president claimed that as a consequence of this policy, vaccine manufacturer - Serum Institute of India has announced a differential pricing mechanism - Rs 150 per dose for the Central Government, Rs 400 per dose for State Government and Rs 600 per dose for private hospitals.

This means that citizens will be compelled to pay

these high rates to be vaccinated, she alleged, adding that this will also bleed the finances of state governments.

"In these unprecedented times, how can the Government permit such brazen profiteering from people's misery? At a time when medical resources are scarce, hospital beds are unavailable, oxygen supply and availability of essential medicine is dwindling rapidly, why is your Government allowing a policy that reeks of such insensitivity."

"Even with regards to the fifty percent quota for vaccination available with the Central Government, the allocation must be transparent and equitable, in line with the spirit of cooperative federalism," Gandhi said.

**RADHA MOHAN DAS AGRAWAL**  
GORAKHPUR MLA  
@adarpoonawalla  
You are worse than a dacoit. @PMOIndia @AmitShah @olsanthosh @drharshvardhan should acquire your factory under epidemic act~

**G S KULKARNI**  
Mumbai HC JUSTICE  
Door-to-Door vaccination policy needs a relook by experts. You cannot leave old people to die. Centre must consider the plight of old people and the disabled.~

**AMIT CHAVDA**  
GUJARAT PCC PRESIDENT  
PM talked a lot about the Gujarat model, but neither could health infrastructure nor other things be improved. The Gujarat model has only been of publicity~

**SACHIN PILOT**  
CONGRESS LEADER  
Politics & elections come & go but future generations will not forgive us if the public does not get vaccinated in time and all the patients do not get oxygen and life-saving medicines~

be free for eligible population groups in all those government vaccination centres which receive vaccine doses from the central government. The division of vaccine sup-

ply, which would mean 50 per cent to the government of India and 50 per cent to other than the GoI channel would be applicable uniformly across for all vaccine manufactured in the country.

# Nat'l emergency-like situation: SC



Covid victims being cremated at Bhairav Chat Hindu Crematory in Kanpur.

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

The Supreme Court on Thursday termed the Covid situation as almost a "national emergency" while agreeing to hear Vedanta's plea for opening of its Sterlite copper unit in Tamil Nadu on the ground that it would produce thousand tonnes of oxygen and give it free of cost to treat patients.

A bench headed by Chief Justice S.A. Bobde was unimpressed with the objection of Tamil Nadu government which initially sought hearing of Vedanta's plea on Monday and opposed its opening on various grounds including that it has been rejected by the apex court earlier. "We understand all this. We will ensure compliance of all environmental norms by the plant and its oxygen producing facility would be allowed to operate. We are on the oxygen plant," the bench, also comprising Justices L Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat, said when senior advocate C. S. Vaidyanathan, appearing for Tamil Nadu, objected to the plea of the company. "There is almost a national emergency and you (Tamil Nadu) don't put spokes in the solution. We will hear it (plea of Vedanta) tomorrow," the bench said in the hearing conducted through video conferencing.

"The country is in dire need of oxygen and the Centre is augmenting oxygen from whichever source. Vedanta wants to make its plant operational, but let Vedanta only make it operational to manufacture oxygen for health purposes," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said.

Between protecting environment and protecting human life, we must lean in favour of protecting human life, Mehta said.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, appearing for Vedanta, sought urgent hearing of the plea during the day itself and said people are dying on daily basis and we can produce and supply oxygen to treat Covid patients. "We can start in five to six days if you give a go ahead today. The company can manufacture tonnes of oxygen there everyday and is ready to supply them free of cost," Salve said.

The Tamil Nadu government, however referred to the records and said no oxygen production can be started by the Covid officials said. The yatra is scheduled to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on 28 June and culminate on 22 August. **PTI**

**500 doctors, health workers in Bihar infected:** More than 500 doctors and health workers of the two leading hospitals in Patna - AIIMS and Patna Medical College and Hospital - have been infected during the ongoing second wave, sources said. Altogether, 384 employees of AIIMS Patna, including doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, have been infected during the 2nd wave so far, its Medical Superintendent said. **PTI**

**Amarnath Yatra called off:** Registration of pilgrims for the annual pilgrimage to the cave shrine of Amarnath in Kashmir has been temporarily suspended on Thursday due to the Covid, officials said. The yatra is scheduled to start from the twin routes of Pahalgam and Baltal on 28 June and culminate on 22 August. **PTI**

**500 doctors, health workers in Bihar infected:** More than 500 doctors and health workers of the two leading hospitals in Patna - AIIMS and Patna Medical College and Hospital - have been infected during the ongoing second wave, sources said. Altogether, 384 employees of AIIMS Patna, including doctors, nurses, sanitation workers, have been infected during the 2nd wave so far, its Medical Superintendent said. **PTI**

**apex court.** Earlier, the interim plea by Vedanta was opposed by Tamil Nadu government which had claimed that the plant had been polluting consistently.

In August last year, Vedanta had moved the apex court challenging the Madras High Court order refusing to allow reopening of the Tutticorin plant.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one girl Name: Aarzoo, D/o: Guddu R/o: Gali No. 5, Harijan Basti, Mandoli, Delhi Age: 21 Years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long Built: Medium, Wearing: Cream colour Suit-Salwar and white Jutti in feet. Missing from her house since 03.04.2021 from the area of P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 20-A

Dated 04.04.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing girl please inform the undersigned.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-mail ID: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-24368639  
DP/716/NE/2021

SHO  
P.S. Harsh Vihar, Delhi  
Ph.: 011-22342074, 8750870734

## FOR THE SAKE OF LIFE



People wait in their cars for a drive through Covid testing, as cases surge in Ahmedabad, on Thursday. **IANS**

## Cop's witty reply to man wanting to meet girlfriend earns praise

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Mumbai police's humorous reply to a Twitter user, who wanted to meet his girlfriend during the ongoing coronavirus-induced restrictions imposed by the Maharashtra government, has won the hearts of netizens.

Against this backdrop, a Twitter user named Ashwin Vinod tagged the Mumbai police and tweeted that he wanted to meet his girlfriend, and asked which sticker he should use for his vehicle to move out.

"@MumbaiPolice what sticker should I use in order to go out and meet my girlfriend? I miss her~ Ashwin

Distance makes the heart grow fonder & currently, you healthier. P.S. We wish you lifetime together. This is just a phase~ Police reply

ed him to stay at home. "We understand it's essential for you sir but unfortunately it doesn't fall under our essentials or emergency categories! Distance makes the heart grow fonder & currently, you healthier. P.S. We wish you lifetime together. This is just a phase," the Mumbai police tweeted with the hashtag #StayHomeStaySafe.

The reply by the police was well received and widely appreciated by the users on the micro-blogging site.

|
<th
|  |

## Black Lives Matter

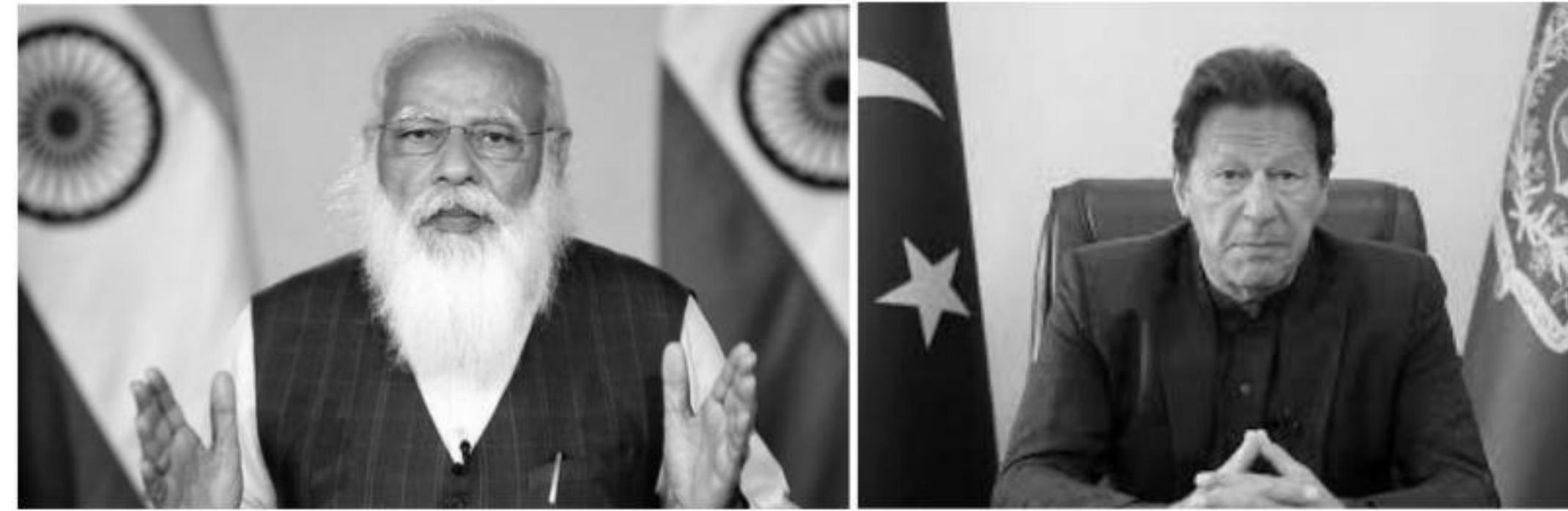
President Joe Biden and his second-in-command, Vice-President Kamala Harris, have severely condemned what they call "systemic racism" in America. The searchlight has been turned inwards in the aftermath of the court's verdict in a case against a white policeman who killed a black man in an exceptionally hideous instance of man's inhumanity to man. The enormity of the tragedy had ignited worldwide protests against racism and excessive use of force by the police. "The systemic racism is a stain on our nation's soul," was the President's high-minded lament. A 12-member jury found Derek Chauvin guilty of all three charges against him - second- and third-degree murder and manslaughter - after hearing three weeks of testimony and deliberating for just over 10 hours into the "manslaughter" of George Floyd. The timeline is suggestive of conclusive evidence relating to a crime that perhaps has few parallels in criminal jurisprudence, indeed one that has blighted the conscience of America and the world. Floyd's death, embedded in the colour of his skin, had crossed all limits of civility - more than most murders generally do - just as the more recent killing of six women in Atlanta confirmed the potentially mortal prejudice against Asians in the United States. It is a measure of the collective relief that the verdict brought cheering people to the streets and motorists honked their way in several major US cities, including Washington and New York. Indeed, unmistakable is the mood of spontaneous celebration that has greeted the court order against Chauvin, the killer of Floyd. Justice for Black America is justice for all of America. "This case is a turning-point in American history and sends a clear message that we hope is heard in every city and every state," read the statement advanced by Floyd's family. "I can't breathe, I can't breathe," were his last words as Chauvin pinned him down with his knee on the pavement of a south Minneapolis intersection. He faces up to 40 years in prison, though the sentence is expected to be pronounced only after eight weeks. For many, the sense of joy was blunted, however, by the tragedy of Floyd's death and awareness that racial inequality remains deeply rooted in American society. So too arguably does prejudice against those from Asia, one that has lent a gut-churning dimension to the death of Floyd. African Americans - not to forget Asian Americans - just want to be treated as humans. Is that asking for too much? The Blacks and Asians are tired of police brutality. Justice has now been meted out with remarkable promptitude. Never was the war-cry - Black Lives Matter - been so resonant in the echo chambers of the fountain-head of democracy.

## The good news

Here's a prediction. Now that the *New York Times* has carried a report on how the tiny kingdom of Bhutan has out-vaccinated most of the world with over 60 per cent of its citizens having been inoculated against Covid-19, the slavish sub-continental media will follow suit. What are known as follow-up stories in the jargon, complete with human interest features on the Bhutanese health workers who hiked through ice and snow to reach the remotest areas of this remote Himalayan country sandwiched between India and China, are surely on the anvil. Nothing wrong with that, of course; indeed, Bhutan has shown the way with the people-first approach of its state policy and the work ethic of its government officials who are truly public servants. The issue lies elsewhere. For, how many of these putative media reports will appreciate that each and every one of the aforementioned citizens of Bhutan has been inoculated against the coronavirus with vaccines provided by India is moot. (The NYT does, by the way.) All of which is a roundabout way of underlining the point that while criticism of the administration for not using the November 2020-April-2021 Covid-19 downtime, as it were, to better prepare for the second wave of the pandemic that hit countries across the globe is perfectly valid, critics ought to familiarise themselves with which aspects of India's pandemic response policy have proven beneficial and which have fallen short before going off half-cock. India's vaccine diplomacy or humanitarian outreach - the Vaccine Maitri initiative - has been an outstanding success and does not deserve the ill-informed commentary it is currently being subjected to. The lacunae in government policy over the past six months has been in not ramping up the production of medicines such as Remdesivir and Ivermectin required for treating Covid-19; taking the foot off the pedal in the manufacture of ventilators and oxygen; letting the urgency diminish in its drive to augment bed-capacity across hospitals and improve health infrastructure including in states which are notoriously callous in this respect and not setting an example in displaying coronavirus-appropriate behaviour especially in the campaign for the state polls. But to allege a shortage of vaccines drawing a direct correlation with the nearly 600 lakh doses exported by India to more than 60 countries of the global South is simply incorrect. That this allegation comes mainly from Opposition-ruled states is a significant factor; it gives rise to the suspicion that vaccine politics is in play. Given the storage requirements, initial vaccine hesitancy, limited requirement domestically due to the age-based inoculation phases, desire to avoid vaccine wastage, the confidence that both the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech (which manufacture the India-approved shots) could be asked to scale up production at short notice, and the prudence displayed by the government in listening to scientific advice by not rushing to approve vaccines cleared in other countries without insisting on bridge trials in India, those alleging a causal link between the export of vaccines and their reported shortage in India are playing a dangerous game.

# Fractured Ties ~ I

The decision of the two armies to adhere to the ceasefire agreement and strictly observe all the bilateral agreements and understandings was indeed a welcome move towards reduction of hostilities and violence along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir and was applauded by the mainstream political parties in the region, as people living near the LoC were the worst victims of ceasefire violations



A wind of change seemed to be blowing across the India-Pakistan border towards the end of February and in March, raising hopes for normalisation of relations between the two 'distant neighbours', as Kuldip Nayar had once described them. But that hope is disappearing fast. During his visit to Sri Lanka, Prime Minister Imran Khan, while addressing the Sri Lanka-Pakistan Trade and Economic Conference on 24 February, said that after being elected to the post in 2018 he offered India an opportunity to hold peace talks, but nothing came to pass. However he was hopeful; Pakistan's only problem with India is the Kashmir dispute and it can be resolved through dialogue, he said. "The only way the subcontinent can tackle poverty is by improving trade relations", he added. A sound judgement, though the realisation came a bit late. In response to the Pakistan Prime Minister's offer for holding peace talks, the spokesperson of the MEA said India desires normal, friendly relations with Pakistan in an environment free of terror, hostility and violence and added, "The onus is on Pakistan for creating such an environment" (*The Statesman*, 25 February, 2021).

A casual reading of these statements may imply that India and Pakistan were really engaged in a game of one-upmanship to show which side was more righteous than the other. But subsequent events generated hopes for the better. Because, quick on the heels of Prime Minister Imran Khan's speech at Colombo, on 25 February, in a joint statement issued by India and Pakistan it was declared that in the interest of achieving 'mutually beneficial peace along the border', the Directors-General of Military Operations (DGMOs), of the two states had "agreed to address each other's core concerns which have propensity to disturb peace and lead to violence", and to strictly observe all the bilateral agreements and understandings and cease fire along the LoC, with effect from the midnight of 24/25 February. Both sides also reiterated that the existing mechanisms of hotline contacts, and border flag meetings would be utilised to resolve any unforeseen situation or misunderstandings.

The joint statement is really an attempt by the two states to adhere to the ceasefire agreement signed in 2003 and is significant against the background of souring of India-Pakistan relations over the last few years that reached the nadir after the abrogation of Article 370 giving special status to the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and its bifurcation into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh - on 5 August 2019. Following this decision, Prime Minister Khan anno-

unced the decision to suspend bilateral trade with India and review bilateral agreements. He also suspended the Delhi-Lahore bus service and the Samjhauta Express train service - that were introduced to promote people-to-people contact. The diplomatic missions were downgraded and Pakistan made an all-out effort to isolate India diplomatically, and raised the issue in the UN Security Council, with help from its all-weather friend China, to put pressure on India to reverse its Kashmir policy. But Pakistan realised that bellicosity towards India has not brought it much benefits. The decision of the two armies to adhere to the ceasefire agreement and strictly observe all the bilateral agree-

ments and understandings was indeed a welcome move towards reduction of hostilities and violence along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir and was applauded by the mainstream political parties in the region, as people living near the LoC were the worst victims of ceasefire violations. It should also provide an opportunity for further negotiations for normalisation of India-Pakistan relations. It is important to remember that the joint statement of 25 February was not a sudden development; it was preceded by back-channel negotiations between the two sides that reportedly involved Ajit Doval, India's National Security Advisor and Moeed Yusuf, the Special Assistant to Prime Minister Khan. Both sides had their reasons to make such moves. For India, peace along the India-Pakistan border/LoC will provide breathing space for strategic planners and may reduce the possibility of a two-front war. In 2020, there were 5,100 instances of ceasefire violations along the LoC - resulting in the death of 24 security personnel and injury to 130, including civilians - at a time when Indian and Chinese forces were facing each other in eastern Ladakh. It is significant that the ceasefire agreement with Pakistan came weeks after the disengagement and withdrawal of Indian and Chinese forces from the flash points in eastern Ladakh.

Pakistan also had its own reasons for seeking to mend relations with India. For one, Pakistan's economy is in dire stress and it would be immensely beneficial for Pakistan if regional relations - particularly, India-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan relations - are stabilised. The pressure from the FATF to rein in terrorist groups is also an important factor, for if Pakistan's name is not

removed from the grey list at its next meeting to be held in June 2021, Islamabad may find it difficult to handle its multilateral economic relations, particularly relations with aid-givers, leading to over-dependence on China in matters both economic and political/diplomatic. If India-Pakistan relations improve, Pakistan will be able to argue that its moves against terrorist outfits is succeeding. Equally important has been the dramatic improvement in India-US defence and security relations in recent years, with strong bipartisan support. After the change of guard in Washington in January, the Biden Administration has been emphatic in its appreciation of India's "leadership role" in the Indo-Pacific and its growing engagement with "like-minded partners" across the region to promote shared goals, as was mentioned by Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin during his three-day visit to New Delhi in March. No less significant was the fact that West Asian partners of both the states - particularly, the UAE - also wanted the two South Asian neighbours to normalise relations for the development of peace in the region.

Within three weeks of the ceasefire agreement between the DGMOs of India and Pakistan, in mid-March, both Prime Minister Khan and the Chief of Pakistan's Army Staff, Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, spoke in favour of improvements in India-Pakistan relations. Speaking at the Islamabad Security Dialogue on 16 March, Mr Khan pitched for improvement in trade relations with neighbours, particularly India, as it will promote regional peace and prosperity; peace with Pakistan will also help India to access the resource-rich Central Asian countries, he said. He reiterated that although Kashmir was the most important problem in relations between the two states that had been severely jolted by India's decision to abrogate Article 370, he was hopeful that the problem could be resolved through dialogue.

Speaking at the same forum the next day, Gen. Bajwa went a step further and said Pakistan was keen to "bury the past" and move forward for improvement of bilateral relations with India through negotiations on all outstanding issues, including Kashmir. Significantly, neither Khan nor his Chief of Army Staff set any pre-condition for resumption of dialogue on Kashmir and other issues. Gen. Bajwa also talked about the CPEC and the opportunity it provided for economic

cooperation for the states in the region, including India. And to give a boost to these conciliatory gestures, friendly letters were exchanged between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Pakistani counterpart during the last week of March. On the occasion of Pakistan Day (23 March) Prime Minister Modi wrote to Imran Khan extending India's greetings to the people of Pakistan.

As a neighbouring country, India desires cordial relations with the people of Pakistan for which "an environment of trust, devoid of terror and hostility is imperative", he wrote. Greeting the people of Pakistan on Pakistan Day is, of course, a routine matter, but this year the Prime Minister's letter acquired special importance in view of the developments mentioned above.

In his reply to Mr. Modi's letter a week later, on 29 March, the Pakistani Prime Minister, while reciprocating India's desire for peace emphasised that durable peace and stability in South Asia "is contingent upon resolving all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, in particular the Jammu and Kashmir dispute", for which an "enabling environment" is imperative for a constructive and result-oriented approach. In the context of these developments, there was also speculation that Prime Minister Modi may visit Islamabad to attend the 19th SAARC Summit, which was scheduled to be held in Islamabad in 2016, but could not because of India's refusal to attend it after the attack on the Army Camp in Uri by Pakistan-based terrorists.

However, the possibility of an improvement in India-Pakistan relations received a jolt when the Pakistan Cabinet in a volte face rejected on 1 April, the recommendation of the Economic Coordination Committee to import cotton and sugar from India, which disappointed Pakistan's textile industry. The decision came a day after the high-powered committee under then Finance Minister Hammad Azhar decided (on 31 March) to import the two items from India virtually lifting a two-year old ban on their import. Explaining the reason behind the decision to import cotton from India, the Finance Minister said that Pakistan's textile industry would suffer because of a shortfall in cotton production in Pakistan.

Importing cotton from the neighbouring country - which is the world's largest producer of cotton - would help the Pakistani textile industry, a big exporter of textiles, and would also be cheaper compared to other sources, which is also true of import of sugar. This was a sound economic decision but was rejected by the Cabinet.

The obvious question is why did this happen?

(To be concluded)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Too many actors

SIR, Apropos your comment, "Testing time" (*The Statesman*, 20 April), first the British, then the Russians

and now the US head back home from Afghanistan. They will leave a military vacuum for the militant Tal-



iban to compound the strife. Iraq, a more cohesive and politically mature nation has been finding it hard to prepare for a post-US occupation scenario.

And, Afghanistan, resisting for eons foreign powers on her soil and insurgency against occupation forces, could never settle down to evolve a semblance of a national identity. These facts cannot be wished away.

The epicentre of the Afghan-Taliban insurgency has been moving into the North-western region bordering Pakistan, where even Pakistan has no great pretensions to control of its

own territory. With Taliban holding sway on Pakistani politics, it would like to tie us up on the Indo-Pak border and away from Afghan affairs. China poses most concern for us, now.

As it needs access to Afghanistan's natural resources and a detente with Taliban over its own ethnically sensitive provinces, it will keep leveraging Pakistan for a vicarious foothold in Afghan soil.

Our concern for stability and peace in the region, has involved us in the ebb and tide of our history with Afghanistan, dating back to 300 BC.

As the cauldron contin-

## UNHYGIENIC

SIR, It is embarrassing to bring to your notice that on account of apathy of the railways, unhygienic and semi-open urination by constrained passengers has been taking place at Baghajatin rail station for years. A semi-open, dry toilet was created at platform no.1 of Baghajatin station years ago and has been kept like that even today at this station that caters to passengers from EM bypass, Baghajatin and Santoshpur.

Such semi-open dry facilities create an unhygienic environment. The railways should take actions on priority either to modernise such facilities, or remove them altogether.

Yours, etc., Kunal Kanti Konar, Kolkata, 19 April.

ues to be on a boil, Joe Biden could soon enough see value in our role there for its shadow boxing with China, putting us in a classic Catch-22 poser. We contend with too many actors in the Afghan theatre.

Yours, etc., R Narayanan, Navi Mumbai, 20 April.

A MEMBER OF THE

**ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Biden's diplomacy of benign neglect

US President Joe Biden is very familiar with both Poland and Ukraine. His decades of service as a United States senator and his eight years as vice president under Barack Obama taught him that the two countries are among America's most devoted friends and allies.

Yet he waited until April 2 - just as Russian troops were once again massing on Ukraine's eastern border - to call Ukraine's president, and he still has not spoken to his Polish counterpart.

Biden's relative silence seems to speak of a policy of "benign neglect", a term coined by Daniel Patrick Moynihan when he was a domestic policy adviser to US President Richard Nixon. But whereas Moynihan wanted Nixon to avoid becoming entangled in America's racial issues, Biden's decision to keep Poland and Ukraine at a distance may seem surprising.

Although Poland is sliding from liberal democracy into populist dictatorship, Ukraine is desperately trying to consolidate its democracy despite constant Russian meddling and threats.

Moreover, even Poland's illiberal government still tries to position the country as if it was America's 51st state, with US Embassy in Warsaw playing a role similar to that of the Soviet Embassy before 1989.

During Donald Trump's presidency, a mere phone call or tweet from then-US Ambassador Georgette Mosbacher was enough to make Poland's Law and Justice (PiS) party suspend its plans to shut down critical media outlets like the private television network TVN24.

Ukraine, still at war with Russia and heavily reliant on US support (preferably in the form of military equipment or sanctions against Russia), is in a very different position. US support has indeed helped,

**H The Korea Herald**  
not least by halting the progress of "little green men" (Russian soldiers without insignia) in the eastern Donbas region after they had claimed some 7 percent of Ukraine's national territory back in 2014. As a result, Russia's strategy of aggression has not paid off.

Its occupation of Crimea and the Donbas - both economically devastated and cut off from the global economy - has come at a massive cost to its budget. More to the point, Russia has squandered centuries of goodwill among Ukrainians, who are now united around their national sovereignty.

Without Ukraine, Russia cannot be considered a global power - Russian President Vladimir Putin's goal in annexing Crimea and invading the Donbas in 2014. At home, Putin's approval ratings, which had been flagging, soared above 80 percent following that invasion. But these gains were only temporary. If Russia were to conquer Ukraine now, Poland would be next in line. For 250 of the last 300 years, Poland was also part of the Russian Empire.

The independence that Poland and Ukraine achieved with America's victory in the Cold War thus remains a lasting testament to US primacy. And yet, while Biden's election victory was met with euphoria in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelensky had to wait two months for a call. (The official reaction in Poland to Biden's election was more muted: After kowtowing to Trump for four years, Polish President Andrzej Duda was among the last foreign leaders to congratulate Biden.)

## PERSONAL

WITH profound grief and sorrow we inform that our beloved jethu, Dr. Basudeb Banerjee, left for his Heavenly Abode on April 14, 2021. We request your kindly presence on April 24, 2021, Apartment — 22/1/1, Lake Avenue, Kolkata-700026, for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

paper.thestatesman.com

SHASHANK SHUKLA

The concept of the Indo-Pacific and more specifically the "Quad" is the latest talking point in diplomatic circles and international relations think-tanks across the world. While most of the writing has focused on the novelty of the concept on the one hand or the newfound strategic importance on the other, few have focused on the fact that the Indo-Pacific is not a new concept but an unbroken reality for more than 1700 years of India's civilizational history.

More specifically, the Quad is an organic outcome of India's evolving foreign policy centred on maritime relations with South East Asia, which in itself harks back to our long civilizational legacy of being the net security provider in the Indian Ocean Region in particular and the Indo-Pacific in general. India needs to go back to the beginning and rediscover its historical role in the centre of the Indo-Pacific, in order to shed its inhibitions in taking up a pivotal role in shaping the regional security and economic architecture of the Indo-Pacific and in turn the world.

Colonial-era history would have us believe that protected by vast mountains and seas, the Indian sub-continent was a nearly complete and self-contained world with its religions, philosophies and social systems till the advent of the British. And yet, a closer reading of history belies this narrative and tells the tale of how an ancient land and its varied societies experienced prolonged and intense interaction with the peoples and cultures of East and Southeast Asia, Europe, Africa, and especially Central Asia and the Iranian plateau.

In his 2006 book, "The Language of the Gods in the World of Men", Indologist Sheldon Pollock posits the concept of "Sanskrit Cosmopolitan", referring to the enormous geographic sweep of Indic culture that stretched from Afghanistan through Vietnam to the East Indies and beyond into the contemporary South China Sea and which spanned a millennium from the fourth to the fourteenth century. Richard Eaton in his latest book, "In the Persianate World" describes the Sanskrit World as a culturally connected zone between Afghanistan's Kandahar and the city of Singhapura (Singapore), with Indian cultural influence visibly present till date in modern-day Cambodia, Thailand, and the Philippines.

The decline in the cultural significance of the Sanskrit cosmopolis from the turn of the millennium to the 14th century was juxtaposed by the simultaneous rise of the Persianate world in the Indian subcontinent. The Persian cosmopolis roughly

## Indo-Pacific has been India's age-old reality



corresponded to the periods 900 to 1900 A.D. wherein the Indian sub-continent's ties were further integrated with those of the Persian world with its epicenter in the Iranian plateau. During this period the cultural diffusion was so extensive that the epicenter of the Persianate world shifted from Khurasan in Iran to the courts of the Sultans of the Delhi Sultanate by the 13th century.

It is during this time under Mughal rule that India's cultural, military, and economic exchanges extended from the Iranian plateau to the west, to Central Asia in the north and to South and South East Asia in the east. In his study titled, "Mughal hegemony and the emergence of South Asia as a 'region' for regional order-building", Manjeet Pardesi puts forth the view that the region known as South Asia today emerged as the locus for order-building in the early modern period (1500–1750) as a "region" of Islamicate Asia. While the practices associated with the primary institutions of warfare, great power management, diplomacy, and political economy did not meaningfully differentiate South Asia from Eurasia in the pre-Mughal millennium, the deep rules associated with them marked South Asia off from Islamicate Asia after the rise of the Mughals.

The practices of these four primary institutions were co-constituted with Mughal hegemony and established

India as the pre-eminent power in the Indian Ocean Region, extending well into states bordering the Pacific.

The decline of the Mughal empire brought another oceanic power to the fore on India's shores in the form of the British East India company. By the turn of the 19th century, the East India Company was firmly entrenched in India by uprooting and subjugating earlier imperial orders like the Mughal empire. In the 20th century, British India extended again from Afghanistan in the West to Singapore in the east with the Royal Navy being the pre-eminent naval power in what is today termed as the Indo-Pacific. India was the centerpiece in the great game between the Russian empire and the British empire with the theatre of operations extending from the shores of Africa to the shores of China. India as the nucleus of the operations in the Indian Ocean region continued till the end of World War II.

Only post-independence in 1947 and the subsequent partition that India, pre-occupied with aggression on its western borders with Pakistan and northern borders with China, ignored its role as the nucleus of the Indo-Pacific with the Indian Ocean at its centre. The year 1991 marked a strategic shift in India's perspective of the world with the unveiling of the Look East policy. The Look East policy was an effort to cultivate extensive

economic and strategic relations with the nations of Southeast Asia to bolster its standing as a regional power and a counterweight to the strategic influence of the People's Republic of China.

It was developed and enacted during the government of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao (1991–1996) and rigorously pursued by the successive administrations of Atal Bihari Vajpeyi (1998–2004) and Manmohan Singh (2004–2014). The success of the Look East policy enthused the Mandarins of South-East Block to develop the policy into a more action-oriented project and outcome-based policy.

India's Act-East Policy, which was announced in 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration, became a successor to the Look-East Policy. The concept of the Indo-Pacific and now the "Quad" is an organic evolution of India rediscovering a role that it has played historically for at least 1,700 years and probably much more if we take into account the voyages made by our ancestors before the age of Christ.

The Indo-Pacific with the Indian Ocean at its centre matters today, arguably more than ever, for India and the world. The Indian Ocean is a major conduit for international trade, connecting the major engines of the international economy in the North-East Atlantic and Asia-Pacific. With its vast littoral, densely populated shores

comprising some of the world's fastest-growing regions and untapped sources of fishing and mineral resources; in the emerging great power competition between the United States and China, the theatre of operations will again be the Indo-Pacific with India being a frontline state. The dominance of the Indian Ocean Region will be the key not only to India's security and prosperity but also to the fortunes of a rules-based world order, in place since the end of World War II.

India and its allies including those in "Quad" and "Quad+" groupings, will have to evolve a comprehensive, mutually compatible and interoperable Indo-Pacific strategy that conforms closely to global priorities for preserving the Indo-Pacific, particularly the Indian Ocean Region and South China Sea as a shared resource in the form of an important channel for trade, a sustainable resource base, and a region secure from the heightened military competition, non-state actors, and catastrophic natural disasters. While the buzz around the "Quad" is a start, the clock for decisive action is already ticking for India to step up and shoulder its historic responsibility of 1,700 years and more!

The writer, who served in the Indian Air Force and as a banker and consultant, is a social entrepreneur, columnist, vlogger, and grassroots socio-political activist.

**100 YEARS AGO**

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

It is satisfactory to note that the Government of Bihar and Orissa have no intention of allowing publicity work to fall into the background. A board of twenty-five members may seem too cumbersome and agency for work which demands promptitude. The difficulty of overtaking a lie which gets twenty-four hours' start is proverbial. When misrepresentations have to be corrected, the true versions must follow hot on the heels of the false ones, and there is no time to wait for board meetings. Assuming, however, that due provision is made for this important department of publicity organisation, there seems every reason to expect good results from the system which has been for Bihar and Orissa. The Board will be composed of men who can speak with authority and whose aid will be of real value; and it will "direct its attention to the spread of useful information relative to matters bearing on the welfare of the people, such as cooperation, sanitation, and the improvement of agriculture," while at the same time it will undertake active educational work for the purpose of countering the harmful influences of the non-cooperation movement. Mischievous propaganda will be met in the most effective way possible by counter-propaganda which will open the eyes of the people to all that they have at stake and to all the opportunities for future progress now before them.

**NEWS ITEMS**

### TAKING THE CENSUS IN BOMBAY

So far as the ordinary enumeration staff is concerned the recent census was handicapped by the so-called non-cooperation movement, strikers, and the alteration of date of some important examinations which diminished the assistance that could be rendered by educational institutions. Besides the above circumstances the general rise in the cost of living, together with a growing spirit of personal independence, rendered it more difficult to obtain voluntary workers, by whose assistance the census of India has been carried out hitherto. This increased reluctance on the part of clerks and the outside public to do census work for nothing is an inevitable corollary to the rise in the cost of living and is a phenomenon which is likely to recur in 1931.

### LAWYERS WHO PRACTICE FURTIVELY

A considerable number of lawyers probably exceeding one hundred have suspended practice. The profession of law has lost its old time prestige entirely, and many lawyers who will continue to haunt the Law Courts are in full sympathy with the movement, but lack courage to join it. They continue the exercise of their profession furtively and with no pride. Indeed students, who still study in Government or Government controlled Colleges, are not over proud of the fact, many of them are discontented with their lot and yet are not prepared to leave their old colleges and join the non-cooperation movement. The calm atmosphere of study has entirely disappeared from the Government Controlled College.

### REDUCTIONS IN THE INDIAN ARMY

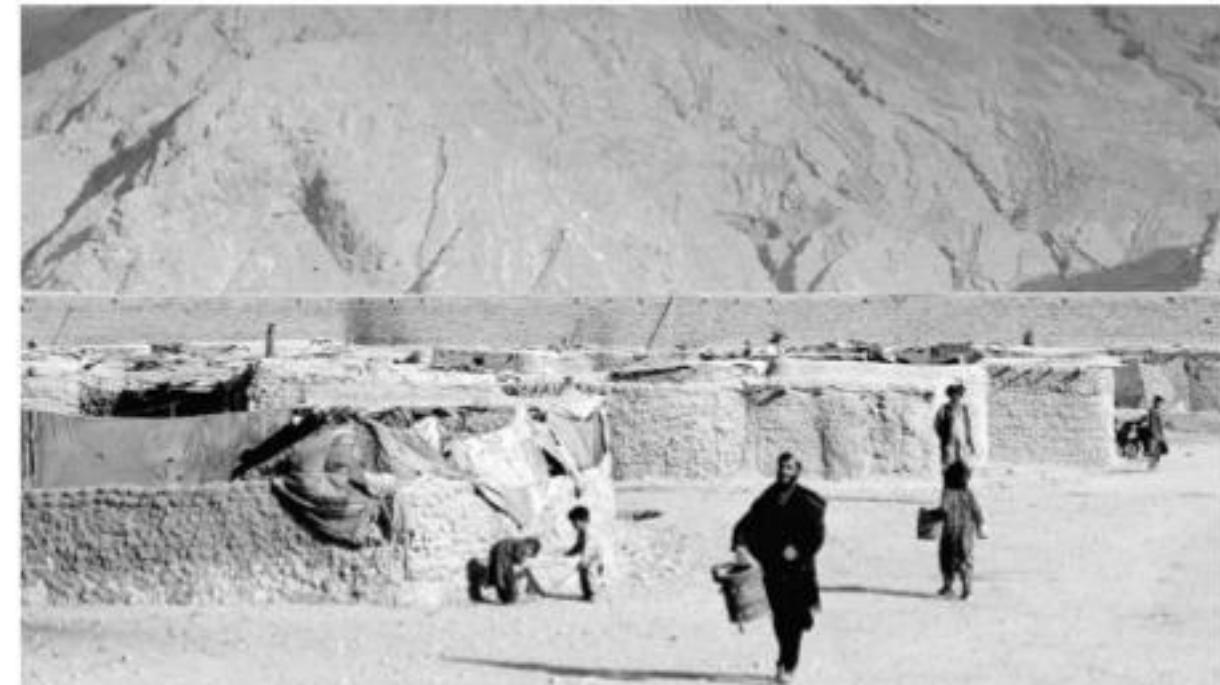
The Times, in the course of a leader, says that an examination of the list of the reduced units of the Indian Army seems to show that there is no cause for the anxiety expressed in some military circles that the Indian Army is being reduced below the level of safety. The Times points out that although the diminution may appear somewhat drastic the Government of India has so far reduced the army in much the same way, and something like to the same extent, as the Home Government reduced the British army after the war. As the British garrison in India is weaker than in 1914, it is evident that the war units raised in India could not now be retained without seriously disturbing the proportion of British and Indian troops laid down after the Mutiny.

### INDIAN PROGRESSIVE FEDERATION

Mr. Jehangir Bomanji Petit announces that his proposal for starting a new Political Party, called the Indian Progressive Party, has received support from various centres of India. It will be known as the Indian Progressive Federation. H.H. the Aga Khan is amongst the many who have consented to join the Progressive Federation and will lead the party for three years after his return to India. The rules and statement of policy are now under consideration and will be published in June next. Arrangements are being made to open propaganda work simultaneously in England and India. Mr. H.S.L. Polak will supervise the English office of the Federation as Honorary Secretary. The office bearers will be elected in June.

## Why greed is structural in Pakistan

RAFIA ZAKARIA



Pakistan is a country in which the accident of birth determines everything. The household you are born into, how rich or poor it is, who your parents are, what clan you belong to and what your ethnicity or faith is will decide the details of your life.

If you have the good luck to be born into a wealthy home, say, to a feudal family or to a father who is a high-ranking official in the military or belongs to a business conglomerate, your life will be good. You will be educated at excellent schools, where highly qualified teachers will invest in your future; you will go abroad to study spending four years footloose and fancy-free in some Western country with your travels funded by family money. When you return to Pakistan you will be handed a business or lands to manage or stock portfolios — in simple terms you will lead.

On the other hand, if you are born to a poor home, you're out of luck. Even if you manage to educate yourself, even if you work as hard as you can possibly work, if you use every opportunity you can to better your circumstances, the outcome will be the same and you will fail.

Most people already know these truisms even if they pretend that everything is a possibility for everyone. Last week, the United Nations Development Fund provided some numbers to prove these facts. Their

latest report, titled Power, People and Policy, reveals just how stark the disparity is. According to the data, economic privileges adding up to \$17.4 billion are divvied up between feudal landlords, the largely militarily owned corporate sector, and the political class. In the words of the report, "Powerful groups use their privilege to capture more than their fair share, people perpetuate structural discrimination through prejudice against others based on social characteristics, and policies are often unsuccessful at addressing the resulting inequity, or may even contribute to it."

In simple words, if you do not belong to one of these "powerful groups" you will inhabit an altogether different Pakistan, whose realities by

Municipal Corporation, for instance, is a pathetic \$149 million, a pittance compared to its similarly sized Mumbai counterpart, whose budget is \$4.6 billion. The consequences of this neglect are visible to each and every person who visits Karachi. Water scarcity, power shortages, illegal settlements, lack of waste disposal, urban pollution and land grabbing are all-pervasive, with no one making any effort or using any resources to improve the situation.

The focus on Karachi is important. According to the report, nearly 10 per cent of the country's population lives here and many people are in the city for the specific purpose of pursuing a destiny different from the one created by the circumstances of their birth.

Last year's monsoon season brought the city to a virtual halt, with people stranded on the roads, thousands of businesses and homes flooded, wastewater and sewage flowing into the streets and alleyways as a result of broken drains. It was a disaster that was acute and devastating in a city used mostly to disaster. In this new year, however, no efforts have been made at all to avert or prepare for a disaster of the kind we saw last year. Karachi fills the country's coffers with its tax offerings and yet all it gets is the country's offal. In this sense, Karachi is the poor man who gets the degrees, works hard, aims high and yet even contributes to it.

The budget of the Karachi

was supposed to solve Pakistan's problems has never materialised. If from the immense chasm between the country's wealthy — the feudal lords, who own 22 per cent of the country's arable land, the corporate class, which gets the largest share of privileges and entitlements, the military that has a dual role in the security and the corporate industrial complex — and the average person, a welfare state has not materialised it never will.

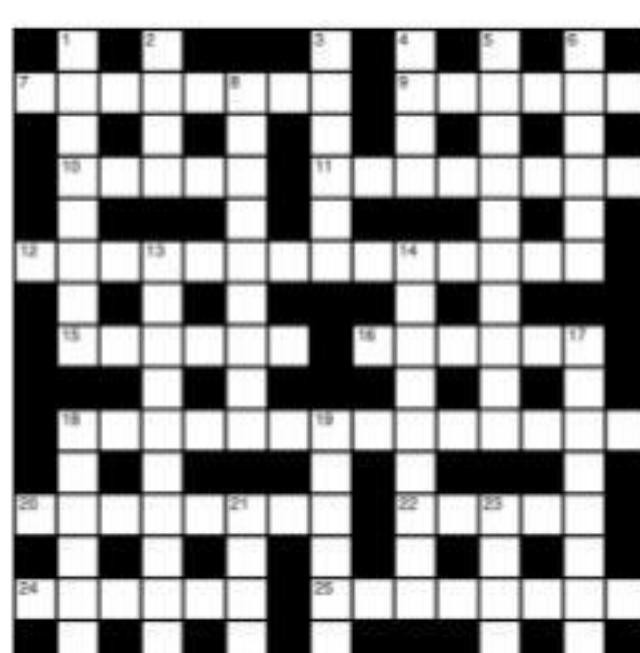
Numbers cannot be cruel, but they can tell cruel stories. The story that this latest UNDP report tells is of a country mired in cruelty, where the rich take from the poor, where the place that deserves the most attention and that produces almost 20 per cent of the country's GDP is left fetid and rotting and neglected simply because it is the home of the little guys and not the overlords. This is a shameful situation, but of course the elite robbers are so practised in justifying their corruption, hiding and covering their booty, that they no longer feel shame let alone guilt.

The consequence is a primitive state of affairs, where the wealthy, who are also the political class, the military elite, the corporate bosses, want things to stay the same and so they will indeed stay the same. One wonders whether another UNDP report is even necessary; as the graphs in this one show the only sure thing in the country is decline, a destiny where the poor are fed lies, robbed and left to count down the minutes to the end of their blighted existence.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28892

CROSSWORD



### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

SYCAMORE	EDITED	EOT	TECIAI	DAMSELFLY	VINES
EXTREME	TORPEDO	S R X	R D	MERE	IMAGINING
S Y S V R N N E	WHEATGERM	A L	A H M	LEATHER	DEEPSEA
OCRE	BALLADEER	L S Y I	I M W R	WENS	LIDA
SASHAY	HORNBEAM	S A S H A Y	H O R N B E A M		

### ACROSS

- 7 Mother taking husband into desert for test of endurance (8)
- 9 Church examination for singers ... (6)
- 10 ... such as me and nine more men? (5)
- 11 Petition to refuse ousting leader about indulgence (8)
- 12 Clean enteritis inflamed — my neighbour? (5,9)
- 13 Customer runs into no bar backwards (6)
- 14 Crime happily avoiding boy (4-4)
- 18 Dance item possibly a strain for dance specialist (6-8)
- 20 Fuel problem keeps airmen fidgeting initially (8)
- 22 Tracks almost completely dreadful (5)
- 24 Small problem on the internet? No great rush (6)
- 25 Present time allocated to match is satisfactory (8)
- 2 Body of water cheers navy (4)
- 3 Still to go North during end of day, not South (6)
- 4 Whisky maker often caught coming in drunk (4)
- 5 Pointer, perhaps warning better used about Government (10)
- 6 Piece still lacking odd bits, in the event (6)
- 8 Veggie fan? That woman's drill involves one source of veganism (9)
- 13 Look at a floodgate, ruined (3,1,4,2)
- 14 Say nothing with Phi's messy copy being tidied up (9)
- 17 American greeting English newspaper turning up in US National Park (8)
- 18 Reckon year with investment of gold is a good one (6)
- 19 Crazy being irritable after losing paint (6)
- 21 Congregation to collapse (4)
- 23 Descriptive prose not entirely an illegible mess? (4)

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



The recent surge in demand for housing is not pent-up but structural in nature and it will continue to stay.

DEEPAK PAREKH  
HDFC CHAIRMAN

**Surge in Covid cases won't derail economy, says Fitch**

NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

Fitch Ratings today affirmed "BBB-" sovereign rating for India, saying a recent surge in coronavirus cases may delay GDP (gross domestic product) recovery, but it won't derail the economy.

The rating agency maintained a negative outlook for the rating reflecting "lingering uncertainty around the debt trajectory".

"We forecast a 12.8 per cent recovery in GDP in the financial year ending March 2022 (FY'22), moderating to 5.8 per cent in financial year 2022-23, from an estimated contraction of 7.5 per cent in financial year 2020-21," said Fitch.

"However, a recent surge in coronavirus cases poses increasing downside risks to the FY'22 outlook. This second wave of virus cases may delay the recovery, but it is unlikely in Fitch's view to derail it."

The rating agency expected pandemic-related restrictions to remain localised and less stringent than the national lockdown imposed in 2020, as the vaccine rollout has been stepped up. PTI

## THUMBNAILS

**Cairn taxation case:**  
Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday reiterated that an international arbitration ruling on India's sovereign right to taxation sets the wrong precedent, but said the government is looking at how best it can sort out the issue arising out of New Delhi being ordered to return \$1.2 billion plus interest and cost to UK's Cairn Energy Plc. "We don't believe in retrospective taxation," she said at a webinar organised by *The Financial Times* and *The Indian Express*. "However, when issues are taken at arbitration... which question India's sovereign right to taxation, we are worried that it sets a wrong precedent." PTI

**Nasscom chairperson:**  
Nasscom on Thursday said it has appointed Accenture in India senior MD Rekha Menon as its chairperson for 2021-22. She is the first woman to take on the role of chairperson for Nasscom in the association's 30-year history. The decision to this effect was taken in a special managing committee meeting organised on 21 April 2021.

"We are also suggesting SLBC convenors to separately call meetings of all stakeholders, including chief medical officers and senior-level government officials, and deliberate on emerging situations in their respective states and issue advisories to the banks," IBA CEO Sunil Mehta

# Natural gas production set to jump by 52% by 2024

State-owned ONGC and Reliance Industries Ltd-BP combine set to raise output from the KG basin

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

India's natural gas production is projected to jump by 52 per cent to 122 million standard cubic metres per day by 2024 as state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Reliance Industries Ltd-BP combine raise output from the KG basin fields.

Natural gas production in financial year 2019-20 was 85 mmSCM, which is estimated to have fallen to 80 mmSCM in the following year, HDFC Securities said in a report.

The output is projected to rise in the current fiscal that started on 1 April to 93 mmSCM, 107 mmSCM in the following year and 122 mmSCM in 2023-24, the brokerage estimated.

The increase in production augurs well with the government plans for raising the share of natural gas in the country's energy basket to 15 per cent by 2030 from the current 6.2 per cent in a bid to cut emissions.

ONGC, which had in recent

### PROJECTED OUTPUT

► ONGC, which had in recent years seen output stagnate, is likely to see production rise to 67 mmSCM in financial year 2021-22 from 62 mmSCM in the previous year. This would rise to 69 mmSCM in FY'23 and 75 mmSCM in FY'24.

► Reliance-BP combine, which in December last year brought newer fields in their eastern offshore KG-D6 block to production,

years seen output stagnate, is likely to see production rise to 67 mmSCM in financial year 2021-22 from 62 mmSCM in the previous year. This would rise to 69 mmSCM in FY'23 and 75 mmSCM in FY'24.

Reliance-BP combine, which in December last year brought newer fields in their eastern offshore KG-D6 block to production, would lead to the rise in gas output by non-PSUs. Its output, which was 11 mmSCM in 2020-21, would rise to 38 mmSCM by FY24,



would lead to the rise in gas output by non-PSUs. Its output, which was 11 mmSCM in 2020-21, would rise to 38 mmSCM by FY24, the brokerage estimated.

It projected domestic gas demand to climb from 153.8 mmSCM in FY'21 (April 2020 to March 2021) to 215.5 mmSCM in 2024-25.

India's domestic gas production is inadequate to meet all its requirements and the deficit is met through imports in form of liquefied natural gas (LNG).

HDFC Securities said the KG-D6 consortium has sought bids from customers as it intends to sell an additional

5.5 mmSCM of gas from the Krishna Godavari (KG) Basin block, off the eastern coast of India.

The additional gas will be available for sale at the delivery point at Gadimoga, near Kakinada, tentatively from the last week of April or early May 2021.

ONGC has also floated the tender for prospective buyers to bid for gas supplies from its KG-D6N-98/2 field in the KG Basin offshore. The company will supply 2 mmSCM of gas

from the field to the Odalarev onshore terminal in Andhra Pradesh, which should commence from June 2021.

"This increasing gas supply from domestic sources should drive earnings growth and valuations for the Indian gas utilities, especially the gas transmission companies," it said. Tenders to sell gas from the KG Basin indicate that ramp-up in domestic gas production is faster than investor expectation, it said.

"The tenders from the KG-D6 consortium and ONGC to sell gas from KG Basin underscores our thesis of rising domestic gas production. These earlier tenders indicate a total increase of about 20 mmSCM (23 per cent of FY20 domestic supply) in the supply of gas from domestic sources over December 2020 to July 2021."

The KG-D6 consortium has already signed the gas sales and purchase agreement (GSPA) with buyers to sell 4.8 mmSCM and 7.5 mmSCM of gas from KG-D6 Basin in November-19 and February-21, respectively.

Lenders, they said, are still banking on "Plan A" which is asset sale to RIL.

So far, the consortium of lenders has approved the debt restructuring of Future Retail Ltd (FRL), Future Enterprises Ltd (FEL) and Future Supply Chain Solutions Ltd. The restructuring plans of FEL and FRL have received approval from the RBI-constituted expert panel, sources said.

Lenders of Future Retail last week agreed to extend repayment of loans by up to two years, while converting unpaid interest into a funded interest term loan. The penal charges too will be waived under the recast plan. The recast plan has been approved by a RBI-constituted expert committee headed by KV Kamath.

Banking sources said the debt recast is actually "Plan B" to help the nation's largest retailer stay afloat. The recast will kick in only if the deal to sell Future's retail, wholesale, warehousing and logistics assets to Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL) does not go through. If the Reliance deal goes through, the recast plan will be withdrawn.

rates, with deeply negative effects on lenders, S&P said. It expects banks may need years to fully recover.

Public authorities across Asia-Pacific have blunted the economic effects of Covid-19. This includes an unprecedented level of fiscal and monetary policy support for households and corporates and measures to encourage banks to lend and show forbearance toward stressed borrowers.

But for this support, the hit on the Asia-Pacific financial institutions would have been much more significant.

"Public authorities will likely continue to have a key effect on banking sector creditworthiness over the next six to 18 months. They must maintain a delicate balance of not withdrawing support too early or, alternatively, not overshooting," S&P added.

## Covid impact: Banking hours likely to be reduced

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

said in a letter addressed to heads of banks.

It is felt that localised advisories will be more practical and useful for the entire system, it said.

"While banking is an integral part of the economy and the services are needed to be continued to ensure smooth economic activities, there is a need to suggest steps to restrict services to ensure safety of banking staff as well as our customers who visit branches for their banking needs. This will also help in reducing pressure on the medical infrastructure," it said.

There are a growing number of cases in every bank and bankers are finding it difficult to get a bed and oxygen supply like any other citizens of the country, UFBU has said.

The United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), an umbrella body of nine unions, in a representation had asked IBA for restriction in services and reduction in public dealing time to around 3 hours per day till the situation improves to protect bank employees from the coronavirus infection.

"We are deeply distressed to constantly receive news about infections, hospitalisations and deaths of bank employees round the clock every day," the UFBU had said.

Last month, the IBA had written a letter addressed to secretary health and family welfare for inclusion of bank employees for vaccination on priority basis, given their important role in running the economy.

## S&P sees 11% GDP growth this fiscal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

economy could be substantial, depending on their length and scope," it said.

S&P Global Ratings today said the Indian economy is projected to grow at 11 per cent in the current fiscal, but flagged the "substantial" impact of broader lockdowns on the economy.

In its report on Asia-Pacificic Financial Institutions, S&P said the control of Covid-19 remains a key risk for the economy. New infections have spiked in recent weeks and the country is in the middle of a second pandemic wave.

"Our forecast growth of 11 per cent for India in 2021 is followed by a 6.1 per cent-6.4 per cent forecast increase for the next couple of years... Some targeted lockdowns have already been implemented and more will likely be needed. The impact of broader lockdowns on the



Covid cases in the country stand at over 22.91 lakh.

In the report, S&P said credit conditions have improved for Asia-Pacific banks over the past quarter.

Economies are recovering smartly, countries are rolling out vaccinations, and regional financing circumstances remain supportive. And yet, the pandemic has seriously set back the finances of households and corpor-

ates, with deeply negative effects on lenders, S&P said. It expects banks may need years to fully recover.

Public authorities across Asia-Pacific have blunted the economic effects of Covid-19. This includes an unprecedented level of fiscal and monetary policy support for households and corporates and measures to encourage banks to lend and show forbearance toward stressed borrowers.

But for this support, the hit on the Asia-Pacific financial institutions would have been much more significant.

"Public authorities will likely continue to have a key effect on banking sector creditworthiness over the next six to 18 months. They must maintain a delicate balance of not withdrawing support too early or, alternatively, not overshooting," S&P added.

## Pandemic hits 82% of small biz: Survey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Over three-fourths of small businesses in the country have shown an adverse impact on their health during the Covid-19 pandemic, with those in the manufacturing sector reporting more troubles, according to a survey.

The survey, conducted by data firm Dun & Bradstreet, has shown 82 per cent of businesses have experienced a negative impact during the pandemic year.

The survey was conducted among over 250 companies, evenly split between the manufacturing and services industries, having a turnover of Rs 100-250 crore yearly.

Over two-thirds of those surveyed, or 70 per cent, said it will take them nearly a year to recover demand levels prior to Covid-19.

Bank, SBI, Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, Titan, HUL, Asian Paints, Nestle India, UltraTech Cement and Tech Mahindra were among the laggards, shedding up to 2.75 per cent.

"A persistent rise in Covid-19 cases across the country and enhanced mobility restrictions imposed by number of states are expected to remain as key drags for the market in the near term. This has certainly started posing as a threat to corporate earnings recovery."

"Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 109.75 points or 0.77 per cent to finish at 14,406.15 points. ICICI Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging 3.60 percent, followed by HDFC, Bajaj Auto, HDFC

Bank, SBI, Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank.

After skidding 501 points in the opening session, the 30-share BSE Sensex pared all losses to end 374.87 points or 0.79 per cent higher at 48,080.67 points.

► Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty jumped 109.75 points or 0.77 per cent to finish at 14,406.15 points.



The rupee weakened further by 6 paise to close at 74.94 against the US dollar.

India registered over 3.14 lakh new coronavirus cases in a day, the highest-ever single-day count recorded in any country, taking the total tally of Covid-19 cases in the country to 1,59,30,965, as per the Union health ministry data updated today.

The oxygen crisis, precipitated by the second wave

which has left tens of thousands hospitalised, appeared to intensify with complaints of shortage from several states.

Sector-wise, BSE banking, finance, metal, realty and basic materials indices rose up to 2.14 per cent, while consumer durables, FMCG, IT and teck closed lower.

Broader BSE mid-cap and

small-cap indices rose up to 0.59 per cent.

Global markets were largely in the positive territory as investors monitored the vaccination progress and economic recovery in multiple countries, though the unabated rise in Covid-19 cases remained an overhang.

In Asia, bourses in Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended on a positive note, while Shanghai was in the red.

Bourses in Europe were trading with gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.51 per cent lower at \$64.99 per barrel.

The rupee weakened further by 6 paise to close at 74.94 against the US dollar.

As this was now an active case we are not making any comment, a Tata Steel spokesperson said today.

GFG Alliance, already under considerable pressure as it finds a way out of a financial crisis triggered by the collapse of its main backer Greensill Capital, declined to comment on the lawsuit but issued an update

# Ola to set up 1 lakh charging points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 22 APRIL

### E-SCOOTER IN JULY

► Ola Electric will bring its electric scooter to the Indian market in July this year.

Ola had announced a Rs 2,400-crore investment for setting up its first electric scooter factory in Tamil Nadu.

► The company is yet to disclose details like pricing of the e-scooter.

► Last year,

million units and then we'll ramp up ~ over the next 12 months ~ after the factory is set up... the sale will also start at the same time, so factory gets completed in June, sale starts in July," Ola chairman

and Group CEO Bhavish Aggarwal said.

The launch of the electric scooter is in line with Ola's global vision of moving mobility into a more sustainable, accessible and connected future.

The company is yet to disclose details like pricing of the e-scooter.

"To get adoption of electric vehicles, a strong charging network is required. Today, one of the key infrastructure gaps in our country is charging network... (Our) Hypercharger network will be the largest fast charging network for two-wheelers... (across) 400 cities and towns and we will be building more than 1,00,000 charging points as part of this network," he said.

In the first year, Ola is setting up over 5,000 charging points across 100 cities in India. The network will charge 50 per cent of the Ola scooter battery in 18 minutes for a 75 kms range.

These charging stations will be deployed as stand-alone towers as well as in popular locations such as malls, IT parks



*Iran and Pakistan, as two most important and effective neighbouring countries to Afghanistan, should increase cooperation and interaction for the development of the peace process in the country*

PAKISTAN FOREIGN MINISTER SHAH MAHMOOD QUERESH  
CONCLUDING HIS VISIT TO IRAN

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 23 APRIL 2021

09

## ECB leaves key stimulus programs unchanged

The ECB's \$2.2 trillion pandemic emergency bond purchasing programme will run until March 2022

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
FRANKFURT, 22 APRIL

The European Central Bank left its key stimulus programs unchanged with almost 900 billion euros of support still in the pipeline as the economy lags the United States and China in a drawn-out struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic.

The central bank for the 19 European Union member countries that use the euro left interest rates unchanged at record lows and made no adjustments to its 1.85 trillion euro bond purchase stimulus it says will run at least through March, 2022.

Just under half of that amount remains to be used in coming months.

The regular purchases using newly created money is a key power of central banks



ECB President Christine Lagarde speaks at a conference on reconfirming accommodative monetary policy stance. ©AGENCE

drive down longer-term borrowing costs for companies, consumers and governments.

At the last meeting on 11 March, ECB President Christine Lagarde said the bank would step up the pace of those purchases during coming months, answering concerns that some bond-market interest rates were creeping up.

On Thursday, Lagarde is expected to verbally underline

that the economy still needs plenty of support as ongoing lockdowns and a lagging vaccination campaign push back the recovery.

She will likely reiterate the message sent by top bank officials in recent weeks that the bank is nowhere near withdrawing any of its extraordinary measures, even if inflation jumps later this year.

Inflation is expected to

temporarily climb above 2 per cent annually in the later part of the year.

The bank says that will be the result of temporary factors such as the withdrawal of pandemic tax breaks and comparisons with an earlier period of very low oil prices and not a reason to withdraw any of its efforts to keep credit cheap for companies, governments and consumers.

Inflation in the eurozone was an annual 1.3 per cent in March. The bank's goal is close to but below 2 per cent.

The US Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell has taken a similar view, saying that price increases later this could be due to temporary factors and that the Fed would not begin raising rates until the recovery in jobs in hiring was effectively complete and that inflation appears on track to run moderately above 2 per

cent for some time.

The eurozone economy shrank by 6.6% last year and economists say it may have contracted in the first quarter of this year as well. Output is not expected to reach pre-pandemic levels until mid-2022, lagging well behind other major pillars of the global economy.

The US could reach pre-pandemic output as early as this month, according to an 14 April forecast from the Conference Board, while China was the only major economy to grow for the year in 2020.

The US rebound is being propelled by massive relief and stimulus spending by the federal government. European governments have also spent heavily on pandemic relief but their 750-billion euro recovery fund at the EU level will only start paying out for digital and green projects this year.

ted inside a car was detonated, said police. A fire brigade immediately arrived at the parking area to douse the flames. Firefighters were able to extinguish the fire.

The windowpanes of nearby Balochistan Assembly, High Court and other buildings were smashed due to the impact of the blast. The banned Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has claimed responsibility for the blast.

A spokesman for the TTP said, Our suicide bomber used his explosive-filled car in the hotel. However, police said that the initial investigation revealed that the explosive device was planted in a car that was parked in the hotel's parking area. Inspector General of Balochistan Muhammad Tahir Rai said

that police were still gauging the intensity of the blast.

## Car bombing at hotel in Pakistan kills five



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
KARACHI, 22 APRIL

A powerful bomb blast in the parking area of a luxury hotel in the restive southwestern Pakistani city of Quetta has killed at least five persons and injured 12 others, authorities have said, dismissing reports that the Chinese Ambassador was present in the building when the explosion occurred.

The blast took place in the parking lot of the Serena Hotel in Quetta on Wednesday night. A spokesman for the TTP said, Our suicide bomber used his explosive-filled car in the hotel. However, police said that the initial investigation revealed that the explosive device was planted in a car that was parked in the hotel's parking area. Inspector General of Balochistan Muhammad Tahir Rai said

that police were still gauging the intensity of the blast.

Chinese defence minister to visit Sri Lanka

COLOMBO, 22 APRIL

Chinese Defence Minister Gen Wei Fenghe will arrive in Sri Lanka next week on a three-day visit during which he will hold talks with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, the government information department said on Thursday.

Gen Wei, who will arrive on 27 April, would be the second high ranking Chinese official to visit the island nation after the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic.

During his visit, Gen Wei will hold talks with President Gotabaya, Prime Minister Mahinda and other senior government officials.

Gen Wei's visit is set to coincide with a ruling by Sri Lanka's Supreme Court, which is likely to be delivered early next week on the constitutionality of the administrative body of the Chinese built port city on reclaimed sea. Sri Lanka in recent years has also carried out various development projects.

## Covid-19: Singapore to block arrivals from India

THE STRAITS TIMES/ANN  
SINGAPORE, 22 APRIL

All long-term pass holders and short-term visitors who have travelled to India within the last 14 days will not be allowed to enter or transit through Singapore, as the country goes on "heightened alert" against Covid-19.

This move takes effect from 11.59pm on Friday, and includes people who have prior approval to enter Singapore, said Education Minister Lawrence Wong on Thursday.

In addition, people who have recently travelled to India and have not completed their 14-day stay-home notice (SHN) by 11.59pm on Thursday night will have to complete their additional seven-day SHN at a dedicated facility rather than their places of residence.

Meanwhile, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Thursday announced a 30-per cent reduction in flights coming from high-risk Covid-19 nations like India, following an alarming rise in cases in the country.

### UAE bans flights from India: Reports

DUBAI, 22 APRIL

The UAE has banned travel from India for 10 days from Sunday due to the worsening Covid-19 situation in the country, according to media reports on Thursday.

The travel ban will come into effect from 11.59pm on Saturday, and is subject to review after 10 days. Passengers who have transited through India in the last 14 days are also not permitted to board from any other point to the UAE.

## Pak court grants bail to Shehzad Sharif

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LAHORE, 22 APRIL

A Pakistani court on Thursday granted bail to the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) chief and Opposition leader Shehzad Sharif, nearly eight months after he was arrested by the country's top anti-graft body over his alleged involvement in money laundering and assets beyond means cases.

A three-judge bench of the Lahore High Court, headed by Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, gave a unanimous verdict in favour of Shehzad, the younger brother of Nawaz Sharif.

On 14 April, the PML-N celebrated after the two-member bench of the LHC granted bail to Shehzad. However, later it was transpired that it was a split decision with Justice Sardar Mohammad Sarfraz Dogar, who had headed the bench, accepting his bail petition, while the other

member, Justice Asjad Javed Ghulam, had opposed it.

On this, the chief justice constituted a three-member bench to decide the matter. Interestingly, Justice Ghulam had accused Justice Dogar of issuing the bail granting short order unilaterally.

Shehzad is expected to be released from jail on Friday.

## Israel says it strikes targets in Syria after missile attack

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JERUSALEM, 22 APRIL

A missile launched from Syria struck Israel's Negev desert region early Thursday, setting off air raid sirens near the country's top-secret nuclear reactor, the Israeli military said.

In response, it said it struck the missile launcher and other targets in neighbouring Syria.

The incident, marking the most serious violence between Israel and Syria in years, pointed to likely Iranian involvement.

Iran, which maintains troops and proxies in Syria, has accused Israel of a series of attacks on its nuclear facilities, including a recent fire at its Natanz nuclear facility, and vowed revenge.

The Israeli army said the missile landed in the Negev region and the air raid sirens were sounded in a village near Dimona, where Israel's nuclear reactor is located.

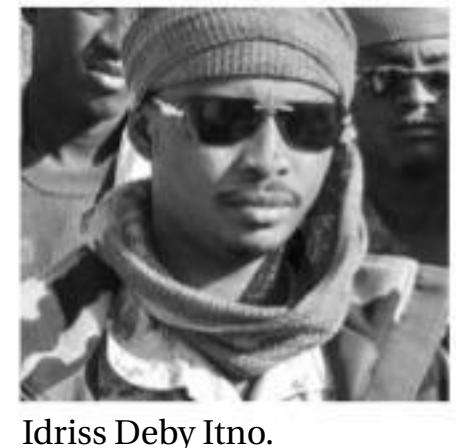
There was no word on whether anything had been struck, but explosions were reported across Israel. Israel and Iran are arch-enemies.

## Chadian opposition decries Deby's son as interim leader

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
N'DJAMENA, 22 APRIL

Chad's political opposition is saying the country suffered a coup d'état when power was handed to Mahamat Idriss Deby, arguing that the military did not follow constitutional rules for succession following the death of his father after more than three decades in power.

The mounting opposition to Chad's transitional government Thursday came as the international community also pressed for a democratic transfer of power following the killing of longtime President



Idriss Deby Itno.

The military said Deby died while making a visit to the front lines of the battle against rebels now threatening to advance on the capital.

However, the constitution calls for the National Assembly president to become the country's leader in the event a president dies in office.

The Chadian people do not want to continue with the same institutions that have created the current situation.

A military spokesman announced Idriss Deby's death on Tuesday and said in the same announcement that his 37-year-old son would serve as the head of an 18-month-long transitional government.

Neighbouring countries rushed their rescue ships to support the complex operation.

## Indonesia looking for submarine that may be too deep to help

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JAKARTA, 22 APRIL

Indonesia's navy ships on Thursday were intensely searching for a submarine that likely fell too deep to retrieve, making survival chances for the 53 people on board slim.

Neighbouring countries rushed their rescue ships to support the complex operation.

The diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 was participating in a training exercise Wednesday when it missed a scheduled reporting call. Officials reported an oil slick and the smell of diesel fuel near the starting position of its last dive, about 96 kilometers

north of the resort island of Bali, though there has been no clear evidence that they are linked to the submarine.

Indonesia's navy said it believes the submarine sank to a depth of 600-700 meters (2,000-2,300 feet) - much deeper than its collapse depth estimated at 200 meters (656 feet) by a firm that refitted the vessel in 2009-2012.

Ahn Guk-hyeon, an official at South Korea's Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering, said most submarines collapse if they go deeper than 200 meters because of pressure on the hull.

He said his company upgraded

ed much of the Indonesian submarine's internal structures and systems but it currently lacks information about the vessel because it hasn't been involved with any work on the ship in the past nine years.

Frank Owen, secretary of the Submarine Institute of Australia, also said the submarine

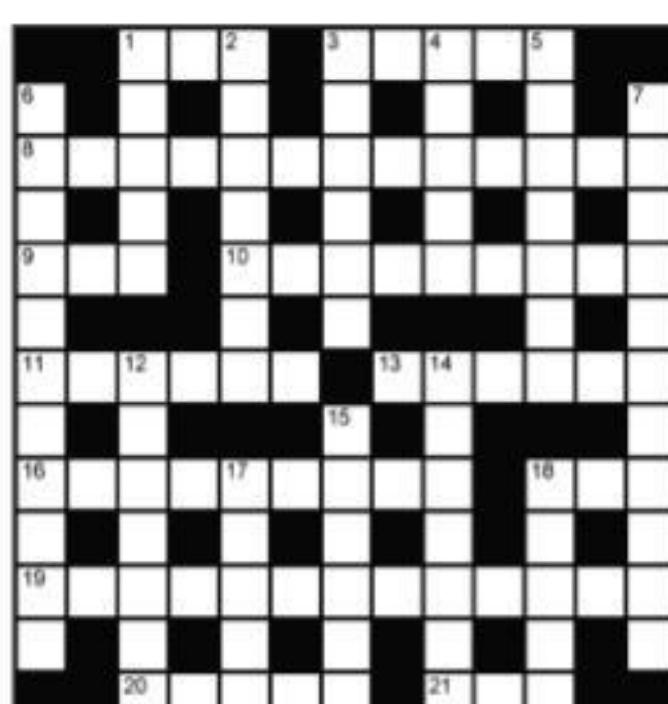
could be at too great a depth for a rescue team to operate.

Most rescue systems are really only rated to about 600 meters (1,969 feet), he said. "They can go deeper than that because they will have a safety margin built into the design, but the pumps and other systems that are associated with that may not have the capacity to operate. So they can survive at that depth, but not necessarily operate."

Indonesia's military said that five navy ships and a helicopter were taking part in the search while a hydro-oceanographic survey ship equipped with underwater detection capabilities is on its way to the site around the oil spills.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**

- 1 Health resort (3)
- 3 Cold symptom (5)
- 8 Vague (13)
- 9 Badminton tool (3)
- 10 Marathons (9)
- 11 Evening meal (6)
- 13 Famous dog show (6)
- 16 Right of possession (9)
- 18 Tree (3)
- 19 Exact likeness (Informal) (8,5)
- 20 Anesthetic (5)
- 21 Beast of burden (3)
- 22 Copy (7)
- 23 Exact copy (7)
- 24 Black eye (Informal) (6)
- 25 Vomit (5)
- 26 Accumulate (5)

**DOWN**

- 1 Edge along (5)
- 2 Entertainer (7)
- 3 Closed plane curve (6)
- 4 Workers' organisation (5)
- 5 Intercept (4,3)
- 6 French soup (11)
- 7 Fairground ride (6,5)
- 8 Thoughtful (7)
- 12 Thoughtful (7)
- 14 Exact copy (7)
- 15 Black eye (Informal) (6)
- 17 Vomit (5)
- 18 Accumulate (5)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**

- 12 Rare, 13 Oboe, 17 Boisterous, 20 Domestic, 21 Flaw, 22 Deity, 23 Asylum, 25 Warm, 26 Sweet, 27 Tiny, 28 Actually, 29 Toured, 30 Toured, 31 Creosote,

**DOWN**

- 14 Bashful, 15 Roan, 16 Forces, 18 Sweat, 19 Warm, 20 Asymmetrical, 21 Flaw, 22 Deity, 23 Asylum, 25 Warm, 26 Sweet, 27 Tiny, 28 Actually, 29 Toured, 30 Toured, 31 Creosote,

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

### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



© 2013 UFS, Inc. All rights reserved.

THE MEDICINE MAN TOLD ME TO BEND DOWN AND TOUCH MY TOES 25 TIMES EVERY MORNING



DOES IT MAKE YOU FEEL ANY BETTER?



NAW... JUST DIZZY... ONE... TWO... THREE...



SHEESH, LOOK AT THAT...

HOW COULD ONE SMALL BABY TURN BATH WATER FROM CLEAR TO BROWN?

BA BA BA BA OH, RIGHT...

I FORGOT ABOUT THE TOY DINOSAURS SINK INTO THE MOLASSES TAR PIT DIORAMA

### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

22586262, 22585007

#### RAILWAY INQUIRY

General Inquiry 139



To protect the environment is to protect productivity, and to boost the environment is to boost productivity. It's as simple as that.

CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

SPEAKING AT THE GLOBAL SUMMIT ON CLIMATE

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX (°C)	MIN (°C)
SINGAPORE	27	26 CL
HONG KONG	30	22 CL
TOKYO	18	14 CL
LONDON	13	02 CL
DUBAI	38	24 S
SAN FRANCISCO	13	09 CL
NEW YORK	11	04 CL
MOSCOW	15	07 CL

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

## THUMBNAILS



A baby Arabian carpet shark is transferred out of a water tank during a conservation project, at the fish quarantine facilities of the Atlantis Hotel, in Dubai. ■AGENCIES

**US Senate panel approves China strategic bill:** A powerful Senate committee has overwhelmingly approved the key China strategic competition bill which among other things supports the QUAD grouping and enhances security partnership with India. Known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Quad grouping comprises the US, India, Australia and Japan. ■PTI

**Turkey probes cryptocurrency:** Turkish prosecutors launched an investigation into a cryptocurrency exchange Thursday over allegations it may have defrauded some 390,000 investors of an estimated \$2 billion. ■AP

**Nice attack arrested:** Italian media say a 28-year-old Albanian wanted in connection with a 2016 truck attack in the French city of Nice that killed 86 people has been arrested in southern Italy. News agency LaPresse said police arrested the suspect, identified as Endri Elenzi, on Wednesday in Sparanise about 40 km north of Naples. ■AP

# Biden opens global summit on climate

Countries representing more than half the world's economy will commit to cut fossil fuel fumes to keep the earth's climate from warming

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 22 APRIL

Saying the United States and other big economies "have to get this done," President Joe Biden opened a global climate summit on Thursday aimed at getting world leaders to dig deeper on emissions cuts. The United States pledged to cut in half the amount of climate-wrecking coal and petroleum fumes it is pumping out.

"Meeting this moment is about more than preserving our planet, Biden declared, speaking from a TV-style set for a virtual summit of 40 world leaders. "It's about providing a better future for all of us, he said, calling it 'a moment of peril but a moment of opportunity.'

"The signs are unmistakable, the science is undeniable, the cost of inaction keeps mounting," he added.

Biden's administration is sketching out a vision of a prosperous, clean-energy United



States where factories churn out cutting-edge batteries for export, line workers re-lay an efficient national electrical grid and crews cap abandoned oil and gas rigs and coal mines.

His commitment to cut US fossil fuel emissions up to 52% by 2030 marks a return by the US to global climate efforts after four years of withdrawal under President Donald Trump. Japan, a heavy user of coal, announced its own new 46% emissions reduc-

tion target Thursday before the summit opened as the US and its allies sought to build momentum.

The Biden administration's pledge would require by far the most ambitious US climate effort ever, nearly doubling the reductions that the Obama administration had committed to in the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord.

The new urgency comes as scientists say that climate change caused by coal plants, car engines and other fossil fuel

use is already worsening droughts, floods, hurricanes, wildfires and other disasters and that humans are running out of time to stave off most catastrophic extremes of global warming.

But administration officials, in previewing the new target, disclosed aspirations and vignettes rather than specific plans, budget lines or legislative proposals for getting there.

Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris opened the Earth Day summit from the White House East Room before world leaders, including those from China, Russia, India, Gulf oil states, European and Asian allies and island and coastal nations already struggling against the effects of climate change. Pope Francis was also due to take part.

Biden planned to join a second session of the live-streamed summit later in the morning on financing poorer countries' efforts to remake and protect their economies against global warming.

## Japan raises emissions reduction target

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO, 22 APRIL

omy and environment and achieve strong growth.

Japan has been under pressure from environmental groups and European countries to do more than its earlier target of 26 per cent.

Suga, during a visit to Washington last week, agreed to cooperate in leading global efforts to reduce carbon emissions by promoting clean energy technologies and implementing the 2015 Paris

fossil fuels such as oil, coal and gas.

Energy experts are discussing revisions to the plan for 2030 and 2050. The 2050 emissions-free target would require drastic changes and likely prompt calls for more nuclear plant restarts.

About 40 per cent of Japan's carbon emissions come from power companies, and they must use more renewable sources of energy while stepping up development of technologies using hydrogen, ammonia and other carbon-free resources, experts say.

Suga has said he will speed up research and development of key technologies such as next-generation solar batteries and carbon recycling. He also promised to reduce Japan's reliance on coal-fired energy by promoting conservation and maximizing renewables.

## Russia orders troops back after massive drills in Crimea

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MOSCOW, 22 APRIL

Russia's defence minister on Thursday ordered troops back to their permanent bases following massive drills in Crimea that involved dozens of navy ships, hundreds of warplanes and thousands of troops in a show of force amid tensions with Ukraine.

After watching the drills, Russian Defence Minister Shoigu declared the maneuvers over and ordered the military to pull the troops taking part in maneuvers in Crimea and western Russia back to their permanent bases.

I consider the goals of the snap check of readiness fulfilled, Shoigu said. The troops have shown their defence capability and I decided to complete the drills in the South and Western military districts. Shoigu said the troops should return to their bases by May 1, but he also ordered to keep the heavy weapons



The photo released by Russian Defense Ministry Press Service, shows Russian military vehicles preparing for loading on to a plane for airborne drills during maneuvers in Crimea. ■AGENCIES

deployed to western Russia as part of the drills for another massive military exercise later this year.

Shoigu said they should remain at the Pogonovo firing range in the southwestern Voronezh region. The sprawling range is located 160 kilometers (about 100 miles) east of the border with Ukraine.

The Russian troop buildup near Ukraine that came amid increasing violations of a cease-fire in Ukraine's east has raised concerns in the West, which urged the Kremlin to pull its forces back.

The Russian military hasn't reported the number of additional troops that have been moved to Crimea and

parts of southwestern Russia near Ukraine, and it wasn't immediately clear from Shoigu's statement if all of them will now be pulled back.

The U.S. and NATO has said that the Russian buildup near Ukraine was the largest since 2014, when Russia annexed Crimea and threw its support behind separatists in

eastern Ukraine.

The Russian Defence Ministry said the maneuvers in Crimea involved more than 60 ships, over 10,000 troops, around 200 aircraft and about 1,200 military vehicles.

The exercise featured the landing of more than 2,000 paratroopers and 60 military vehicles on Thursday. Fighter jets covered the airborne operation.

Shoigu flew in a helicopter over the Opuk firing range in Crimea to oversee the exercise. He later declared the drills over, but ordered the military to stand ready to respond to any adverse developments during NATO's Defender Europe 2021 exercise.

Last week, Russia has announced that it would close broad areas of the Black Sea near Crimea to foreign navy ships and state vessels until November, a move that drew Ukrainian protests and raised Western concerns.

Russia also announced

restrictions on flights near Crimea this week, arguing that they fully conform with the international law.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba warned Tuesday that the Russian buildup across the border is continuing and is expected to reach a combined force of over 120,000 troops in about a week and urged the West to beef up sanctions against Moscow. Moscow has rejected Ukrainian and Western concerns about the buildup, arguing that it's free to deploy its forces anywhere on the Russian territory and charging that they don't threaten anyone.

But at the same time, the Kremlin sternly warned Ukrainian authorities against trying to use force to retake control of the rebel east, where seven years of fighting have killed more than 14,000, saying that Russia could be forced to intervene to protect civilians in the region.

German minister denies responsibility in scandal

BERLIN, 22 APRIL

Germany's finance minister denied any responsibility on his or the government's part for the scandal surrounding collapsed payment systems provider Wirecard, as he testified before lawmakers on Thursday.

Wirecard filed for protection from creditors through insolvency proceedings in June after admitting that 1.9 billion euros (\$2.3 billion) supposedly held in trust accounts in the Philippines probably didn't exist.

"The federal government does not bear responsibility for this large-scale fraud," Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said.

Asked whether he personally bears responsibility for the problems not being unearthed earlier, Scholz replied, 'No.'

## US House votes to curb power of presidency on travel bans

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 22 APRIL

The Democratic-led House passed legislation has designed to constrain a president's power to limit entry to the US, a response to former President Donald Trump's travel ban covering five Muslim-majority countries.

President Joe Biden reversed the travel restrictions from the Trump administration in one of his first moves in office, easing limits on Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, as well as North Korea and some government officials from Venezuela.

But Democrats say Congress has a responsibility to prevent future administrations from enacting similar broad restrictions.

The bill passed the House by a vote of 218-208. It is unlikely to advance in the



House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler ■AGENCIES

evenly split Senate, with Republicans broadly opposed.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said presidents from both parties have used their authority to exclude narrow groups of people from entering the US, such as certain North Korean officials.

But former President Trump abused this authori-

ty, twisting it in ways that were never intended. The White House announced its support for the measure earlier this week.

The prior Administration's haphazard misuse of this authority highlights the need for reasonable constraints, it said.

Trump had proposed a broad, all-encompassing Muslim ban during the presi-

tial campaign.

Within a week of him taking office in early 2017, the first travel ban was announced with little notice, causing chaos at airports and sparking protests across the nation.

The Trump administration was forced to revise its original order twice to resolve legal problems concerning due process, implementation and exclusive targeting of Muslim nations. In 2018, the Supreme Court upheld the ban in a 5-4 decision. It determined that the ban was within a US president's considerable authority over immigration and responsibility for keeping the nation safe.

Republicans said Trump's actions were not a Muslim ban. Rather, he was seeking to secure the United States from terrorists. They said the ban was limited to countries that were previously designated by

Congress or prior administrations as posing national security risks.

"Do not listen to repetitions and lies about Muslim bans when it is not true," said Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas.

The president said he was going to impose a Muslim ban, and he did, Nadler countered. Under the House bill, sponsored by Rep. Judy Chu, D-Calif., the secretaries of state and homeland security must first determine that the entry of certain aliens would undermine national security or public safety before the president could order a temporary travel restriction.

Republicans called that requirement a constitutional absurdity. You know, in this bill, the president may only act if the secretary of state allows him to act, and that is backwards, said Rep. Andy Biggs, R-Ariz.

## MARS FLIGHT



The image is from a video made available by NASA, the Mars Ingenuity helicopter hovers above the surface of the planet during its second flight. ■AGENCIES

## Commonwealth report finds racism against Indian WWI martyrs, UK Def Secy offers apology

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 22 APRIL

Entrenched prejudices, preconceptions and pervasive racism of contemporary imperial attitudes meant that nearly 50,000 Indian soldiers who died fighting for the British Empire during the World War I were not commemorated the same way as other martyrs, finds a new review released.

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), which commemorates the 1.7 million Commonwealth servicemen and women who died during the two World Wars, had created a Special Committee in late-2019 to investigate potential gaps in the commemoration of those who died during and after the World War I.

In its review released on Thursday, it found that an estimated 45,000-54,000 casualties, predominantly Indian, East African, West African, Egyptian and Somali personnel, were commemorated



ago and express deep regret that it has taken so long to rectify the situation. Whilst we can't change the past, we can make amends and take action, he said.

We are sorry for what happened and will act to right the wrongs of the past, said Claire Horton, Director General of the CWGC.

colonial rule, sent the largest share of Commonwealth soldiers to the war effort at over 1.4 million.

Shrabani Basu, historian-author of *For King and Another Country: Indian Soldiers on the Western Front, 1914-18* and one of the committee members behind the review, said the most shocking fact that came to light during the research was that nearly 50,000 Indian soldiers had not been commemorated in Mesopotamia, Palestine and Egypt and the sheer callousness with which an Indian Army general had advised the then Imperial War Graves Commission (IWGC), later changed to CWGC, saying that Hindu and Muslim soldiers placed no importance on their names being recorded on graves and therefore they could just be mentioned in memorial tablets.

From my research, I knew that this was not true at all. They wanted to be remembered, said Basu.

A Sikh soldier specifically tells his officer that he would understand if he couldn't be cremated and had to be buried, but he would like his name recorded on a headstone.

Another Dogra soldier says that if he is to be buried, his shoes should not be put in his grave. They were particular about how they were treated after their death, she said.

Among the several recommendations set out by the review, Basu highlights an urgent need to find the missing names of the dead and commemorate them.

Also, work must be undertaken with local communities in the relevant Commonwealth countries, such as India, to find not only the soldiers but also thousands of others who lost their lives in the war effort including cooks, cleaners and labourers, Basu said.

Memorials and museums in their memory, in the individual countries where they came from or in the regions

where they fought and died, should also be among some of the actions.

The CWGC said that in accepting the findings and shortcomings identified in the report and apologising unreservedly for them, the commission has committed itself to positive, proactive and inclusive action.

This report will enable us to continue and, ultimately, complete our work to commemorate and recognise all those who lost their lives in this catastrophic conflict, said Commonwealth War Graves Commission Vice-Chairman Lt. Gen. Sir Bill Rollo.

Where names can be found they will be. Where they cannot, the Commission, working directly with the communities affected, will seek alternative means by which their memory can be properly preserved. We will also widen the search to cover both World Wars, he said.

# Exploring the depths of lyricism

**Two events attempted to celebrate the innumerable intricacies underlying the traditional melodies of India**

MEENA BANERJEE

Kalakar Arts, a United Kingdom-based organisation operating under the guidance of vocalist Chandra Chakraborty, recently hosted an online event on Facebook featuring two women artists par excellence. It was interestingly designed with intermittent chats during live recitals.

The opening session saw Agra gharana exponent Sabina Mumtaz Islam Rahaman reminiscing her days of initial training by her father Janab Nurul Islam and later with Ustad Jainul Abedin, Pandit Sunil Bose, Vidushi Subhra Guha and Pandit Vijay Kichlu. She also discussed how, under her gurus' guidance, she imbibed the aesthetics of modifying the forceful gayaki of her gharana to suit a female voice.

To prove her point, she began with an elaborate *nom-tom alap* in *Gara*, a rarely heard raga. Her slow *ektaal khayan* traversed the well-sequenced *vistar, behlawa* and *taans* displaying different grains before turning to *dru teen tal* studded with fast-running *taans*. Her next choice was a famous composition in *raga Nat Bihag* called *Jhanjhajanhan payal baje*, replete with delightful *layakari, bolbaant* and *taans*. Later, a seasonal *Hori* set to medium-paced *deepchandi tala* led to a thrilling *tappa* in *Khamaj*. Ashish Paul's responsive tabla helped enhance the beauty of the presentation.

In the final session, sitarist Sahana Banerjee belonging to Rampur Senia gharana, began with a brief *aochar* in *raga Basant* and went ahead to play a medium-paced *gat* studded with *taans*. During her chat with Chakraborty, she admitted that her first love is vocal music because her mother Chhabhi Banerjee was a vocalist. Later, father Pandit Santosh Banerjee initiated her to sitar. As a result she was encouraged to adopt vocals in sitar, but gave importance to *tantrikari* even while playing compositions meant for vocal music.

To elaborate, she played *raga Yaman*'s *teental bandish, Main vari vari jaan* and showed how the *taan-based mukhda* blended instrumentalism beautifully. The composition was decorated skillfully with fast-paced *taans* of different varieties. She concluded in a lighter mood set by *raga Tilak Kamod*. The brief introduction delightfully covered three octaves and

enhanced the meandering gait of the *raga*. After a *deepchandi*-based composition, she concluded with a fast *teental*. All these short but sweet pieces were sensitively supported by Amit Banerjee's tabla.

#### Reviving lost values

Srinandan, the musical kingdom of Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty, recently organised its third consecutive annual *thumri* festival. The first and second ones were held at Rabindra Sadan, Kolkata at a grand scale, but this year due to the pandemic situation, it was streamed live from the Guru Jnan Prakash Ghosh Sanctum within the Shrinandan premises. The motto of the festival remains "Ras bhav rang, thumri ke sang".

It is true that the essence of *rasa* (sentiments), *bhav* (expression) and *rang* (colouration) go hand in hand in *thumri*. Chakrabarty is striving to revive and rejuvenate this essence by holding these festivals with much pomp. He knows that introducing lay listeners to classical music appreciation is quite challenging. Moreover, even the most renowned vocalists as well as their seasoned listeners are not always able to follow the rich lyrics of genres like *dhrupad* and *khayal*, let alone predominantly literature-based idioms like *thumri, kajri, chaiti* etc. Thanks to the modern education system, the Hindi-speaking belt is as ignorant of the spirituality governed by culture, seasons, seasonal festivals, rituals, relationships (with or without social sanctions) and dialects of the Ganga-Yamuna region – the birthplace and playground of Indian classical music and especially *thumri*.

In *thumris, raga*, the intangible king, reigns supreme with its intrinsic *rasa*, the mood which is another intangible but empirical subject. Hugely influenced by their joint impact, even erudite vocalists often undermine the importance of the *sahitya* of *bandish* or the lyrics of compositions – the only medium which actually defines the tangible beauty of the *raga*, at times by crossing the boundaries of its inherent mood.

This tangible world, obviously, is much more interesting because it portrays age-old Indian culture, with its spiritual, ritual, social, familial and moral values that still exist in the remote rural pockets of this vast land.



Sahana Banerjee

Sabina Islam Rahaman with Ashish Paul



Shantanu Bhattacharya

Suranjana Bose with Soumen Sarkar and Jyotirmoy Banerjee

Atri Kotal

Sanjukta Biswas

Maybe, to cling on to the old heartwarming values, even the top-ranking instrumentalists resort to sing the lyrics of compositions meant for vocalists. And even if they don't sing, their playing techniques emote the vocalised form with the same stress points, the same way of bending notes and by using the same phraseology.

To emphasise the importance of the *sahitya* or the melodic literature of Hindustani classical music, such *thumri* festivals will go a long way. The handicapped artists of the evening mesmerised audiences with colourful presentations. Young vocalist Atri Kotal sang a *thumri* in *Mishra Khamaj*. Her confident and melodious rendition was beautifully accompanied by Soumen Sarkar and Jyotirmoy Banerjee on tabla and harmonium respectively. Asmita Mitra was on tanpura.

It was followed by the recital of *khayal* and *thumri* exponent Sanjukta Biswas, a worthy disciple of Vidushi Subhra Guha. She presented compositions in rarely heard *ragas*. Commencing with a *thumri* in *Pancham se gara*, her next performance was a seasonal *Hori* in *Sindhura Kafi* and she concluded with *Bin piya nindiya na aaye ho Rama*, a famous *chaiti*. Deep emotions flowed through all her renditions which were sensitively supported by Ashoke Mukherjee's tabla, Gourab Chatterjee's harmonium and Parami-

ta Roy's tanpura.

*Khayal* and *thumri* singer Shantanu Bhattacharya, the sole male participant of the evening, began his rendition with a *thumri* in *Pilu* and followed it up with another *thumri* in *Khamaj* that turned into a *bandish* *thumri*. After yet another *thumri* in *Manjh Khamaj*, he concluded with the *dadra* called *Koyeliya gaan thaama ebar*. Sudhir Ghorai (tabla), Chatterjee (harmonium) and Mita Bhattacharya (tanpura) provided him excellent support.

As the final artist of the evening, yet another renowned *khayal* and *thumri* exponent Suranjana Bose too

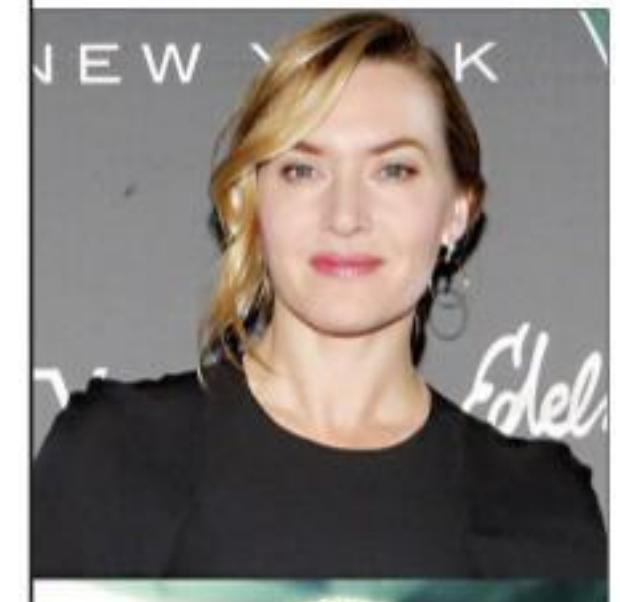
chose to begin with a *thumri* in *Pilu* but with a different composition (*Dhoon machi hai*) that celebrated the season. Her second piece was a *chaiti* and she concluded with *Jiyara na maane mora, a dadrā in Bhairavi*. The emotion charged with a languid and melodious approach remained her hallmark. Sarkar (tabla) and Banerjee (harmonium) once again rose to the occasion by providing superb support.

Vocalist Anol Chatterjee introduced all the singers and accompanists and conducted the programme in his melodious style.

The writer is a senior music critic

## SNIPPETS

### Proud mommy



Kate Winslet has spoken about her daughter's acting career in a new interview with Lorraine Kelly.

Mia Threapleton is the Oscar-winner's 20-year-old daughter, and has two film credits to her name, including as the lead in the 2020 independent film *Shadows*.

Appearing on *Lorraine*, Winslet said, "She's away just now in the Czech Republic about to start work on a TV series over there."

"That's been a wonderful thing," added Winslet, when asked about Threapleton following her career path. "I think I knew it was coming, I always suspected. And then few years ago she turned around and said, 'I think I would like to give it a go.'"

Winslet explained that her daughter's surname had been "really great" in helping distance her from her mother in auditions.

Threapleton's name is taken from filmmaker Jim Threapleton, Mia Threapleton's father and Winslet's ex-husband. The pair were married in 1998 and divorced in 2001.

"So that initial job out of the gate, she slipped right under the radar and the people who cast her had absolutely no idea she was my daughter," said Winslet. "And, of course, that was my biggest fear."

Winslet can next be seen in the HBO series *Mare of Easttown*.

—THE INDEPENDENT

### Stay healthy at home



Actress Shilpa Shetty Kundra opened up on the need to stay fit and healthy amid the stress caused by lockdown and other restrictions recently. The actress also highlighted the importance of keeping one's body safe from the effect of restricted movements.

"The restrictions due to the rising cases can lead to a lot of stress. But we have to stand united and do what we need to do. Foremost, we need to ensure our own bodies don't fall prey to the effects of restricted movements. #MondayMotivation," she tweeted.

"It's important to keep the muscles and joints flexible and agile, while tending to our immunity. So, I decided to make the routine a little tougher for myself. I chose to do the *Gatyatmak Uthita Padahastasana*, leading to *Naukasana*," she informed.

"This flow helps build core strength, stretches the hamstring, tones the abs muscles, and strengthens the muscles of the arms, shoulders and thighs. Do try this flow, but remember to only stretch as much as your body permits. Don't force anything," Shetty suggested.

She concluded with a reminder, "Stay safe, maintain social distance, and please mask up when you step out (if you have to)."

## SALVAGED BY WINNING PERFORMANCES

**Based on a Samarend Majumdar novel, *Ei Aami Renu* is an uneven but assured debut by director Soumen Sur**

**Film:** *Ei Aami Renu* **Director:** Soumen Sur **Cast:** Sohini Sarkar, Gaurav Chakraborty, Soham Chakraborty, Anindya Chatterjee, Alivya Sarkar and Kaushik Ganguly **Story:** Samarend Majumdar **Screenplay:** Padmanabha Dasgupta **Music & lyrics:** Rana Mazumder **Running time:** 116 minutes

on the detective character Arjun, from his series for adolescents and young readers.

In a few novels, Majumdar opens the story on a thrilling note and the narrative is filled with suspense, even though it may not be a thriller at all. *Ei Aami Renu* begins with some goons breaking into protagonist Sumit's room in the mess in which he lives and leaving it in tatters in search of some letters. What letters? Who has written them and whom are they addressed to? Why are the letters so important? The story begins to unfold as the plot goes back and forth in time and place between the heartbroken Sumit and the married Renu on one

hand, and the escapist Ashok who has no intentions of marrying Jhooma, on the other.

The story revolves around a pretty girl named Renu, played by Sohini Sarkar, who is pursuing a Master's degree at Calcutta University. One of her classmates, Sumit, essayed by Gaurav Chakraborty, is smitten by her and slowly, she begins to respond to his extremely subtle feelers. But only up to a point. She seems unwilling to take the relationship to any destination by rebutting all his suggestions to marry with the intriguing excuse, "I am a very bad girl."

They have two close friends – a couple Ashok (Anindya Chatterjee) and Jhooma (Alivya Sarkar) – whose values about love and sex are much more permissive but they are always ready with a shoulder to cry on. Since nothing more happens between Sumit and Renu, one finds that she has been married off to Barun, played by Soham Chakraborty, a successful businessman. When Sumit hears of this, he is devastated.

The thrill those hidden letters create do not really form the crux of the main story, but it helps to keep the suspense running. Viewers watch with bated breath to know what those letters are all about but in the end, they are not worth half the trouble. That said, they offer an insight into the unbridled loyalty of Sumit and his undying love for Renu while she, in turn, grapples in the relationship with her gentle and sophisticated husband Barun, who is slowly angered by her repeated rejections.

The technique is faulty in places. First, too many songs disturb, rather than take the story forward, and second, the overuse of tight close-ups,

SHOMA A CHATTERJI

S amarend Majumdar, a Sahitya Akademi Award recipient along with other prestigious honours, is a renowned post-colonial author of Bengali literature. The recent Bengali film *Ei Aami Renu*, directed by Soumen Sur, is based on one of his novels. Some of his works have been effectively adopted for cinema before. Among them are *Kaalbelia*, directed by Goutam Ghose; *Buno Haansh* directed by Anirudha Roy Choudhury, and a film based

especially in the beginning of the film, spoils the perspective. The third drawback lies in the fact that Sumit is not given a backstory at all. He was surely not born in the mess, was he? Without a backstory, the character seems to exist in a vacuum. The colour palette, on the other hand, is a bit too bright but the interiors of Sumit's room are designed quite well, including the messiness common among bachelors like him. The cinematography tries to focus on the glamour more than grittiness of the story.

The script is alright, but the performances take the cake with a cherry on top. Sarkar is brilliant to say the least. Her character has enough depth to invest it with the mystique of her "many affairs" with different men, which she refers to in passing to Sumit but never actually articulates in so many words. If it is true, it presents a leading lady who has, at some time, been blamed for her promiscuity but based entirely on hearsay. Sumit does not believe in her repeated claims of being a "bad girl" from beginning to end.

Gaurav Chakraborty, usually relegated to bit parts, gets a meaty role at last in Sumit which he essays with perfection. The penultimate frame in Digha, when one learns of the letters' fate, is an absolute visual treat. Chakraborty's lack of fear is well brought out through low-key expressions and body language.

Soham Chakraborty as Barun has a multi-layered character and he handles it well with the right touches of anger, betrayal, will for revenge and retribution for his wife. Chatterjee and Alivya Sarkar are great in small parts of a slightly different kind, which are much more than mere cameos. Kaushik Ganguly as BBC has a role that is neither fleshed out, nor is a solid rationale given for his actions.

*Ei Aami Renu* is a good film and comes across as an assured directorial debut from Sur.

The writer is a senior film critic



For more updates

## BIG BOY'S APOLOGY

Manchester United co-chairman Joel Glazer (photo, left) has "apologised unreservedly" for his club's role in the failed plan to launch a breakaway European Super League. United were one of 12 top European clubs to sign up to the controversial competition on Sunday.

[www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS

**No politics:** Athlete protests and political messages remain banned at the Olympics, the International Olympic Committee said, after a survey had found most competitors favoured keeping the ban in place. A fist on the podium or taking a knee would risk punishment.

**Barcelona Open:** Rafael Nadal won 3-6, 6-2, 6-4 against Ilya Ivashka, ranked 111th, in his first match at the Barcelona Open, while Fabio Fognini was disqualified for alleged verbal abuse. He was defaulted while trailing 6-0, 4-4 against qualifier Bernabe Zapata Miralles.

**Bilbao dropped:** The Spanish city of Bilbao has been dropped by Uefa as a host for the European Championship. Bilbao, one of 12 cities across the continent to host games for the tournament, was unable to give UEFA guarantees fans would be let in.

**English league:** Manchester City beat Aston Villa 2-1 and Tottenham won by the same margin against Southampton in the English Premier League on Wednesday. The results left them in good spirits for their Wembley meeting for the League Cup final on Sunday.

**French Cup:** Mauro Icardi scored in the final seconds at Parc des Princes, this time completing a hat trick as title-holders Paris Saint-Germain routed Angers 5-0 to reach the French Cup semi-finals. Monaco joined PSG in the last four by winning 2-0 at Lyon.

**Spanish league:** Karim Benzema scored two goals and set up another to lead Real Madrid to a 3-0 win over Cdad the Spanish league in the team's first game since the implosion of the proposed Super League. Cdad wore T-shirts condemning the Super League.

**Inter held:** Inter Milan were held 1-1 at relegation-threatened Spezia but extended their lead at the top of the Serie A table. Ivan Perlic cancelled out Diego Farias' opener for Spezia as Inter moved 10 points above second-place AC Milan, who lost 1-2 to Sassuolo.

**Dortmund win:** Raphael Guerreiro scored late for Borussia Dortmund to seal a hard-fought 2-0 Bundesliga win over Union Berlin and maintain their Champions League qualification hopes. Marco Reus' first-half goal set Dortmund on their way to the win.

**Dhoni's parents:** Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming said the franchise would "monitor" the condition of skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni's parents, being treated in a private hospital at Ranchi after testing positive for Covid-19. The was "under control."

**Pak victory:** Mohammad Rizwan blazed an unbeaten half-century as Pakistan beat Zimbabwe by 11 runs in the first Twenty20 International at Harare on Wednesday. Rizwan played a lone hand for his team with 82 not out as they posted 149 for seven.

**SAI suspends coach:** The Sports Authority of India on Thursday suspended a Project Officer-turned coach employed by it with immediate effect and ordered an enquiry after he was arrested for allegedly sexual assault on a minor girl. The accused is currently lodged in Tihar Jail under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

## Bangladesh reach 474-4 on Day 2 after Mominul century

## AGENCIES

PALLEKELE, 22 APRIL

on day two.

The batsmen have done remarkably well considering they came into the test amid intense criticism after losing a home series to West Indies and losing six white ball games in New Zealand.

They are without their best player allrounder Shakib Al Hasan and best fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman both of whom are playing in the Indian Premier League.

I am really happy for the boys," Bangladeshi coach Russell Domingo said.

They have taken a lot of criticism over the last couple of weeks. They have come back and put in a big performance in foreign conditions. They were positive and hungry, and worked really hard. Some of them got good rewards.

Shanta showed why he



was rated so highly in Bangladesh with 163 in his seventh test. Batting for more than eight hours, Shanta faced 378 deliveries. He hit 17 boundaries and a six. Dropped on 28 by Niroshon Dickwella, Shanta

rarely rising above waist level.

temperament by not taking any undue risks.

Mominul was more free-flowing with some elegant strokes, including 11 boundaries. His 127 was his 11th test hundred, the most by a Bangladeshi batsman.

We didn't get as much support from the wicket as we thought, Sri Lanka seamer Vishwa Fernando said.

We felt it was dry underneath and it's now a battoning wicket. Today, the plan was to cut down the runs and fence them in.

Despite a nice grass cover, the Pallekele pitch was slow and the fast bowlers had their work cut out. Much was expected of Lahiru Kumara, who has the ability to clock 150 kph, but he got little help from the track with even his bouncers rarely rising above waist level.

The batsmen were quick to go on the back foot and pull him to midwicket but Kumara was also guilty of not bowling to a probing line and creating pressure.

Kumara did dismiss Shanta when he took a return catch but much more was expected of him when he was picked ahead of Asitha Fernando.

Allrounder Dhananjaya de Silva picked up the other wicket of Mominul, who edged to Lahiru Thirimanne in the slips.

Sri Lanka has the third new ball available in five overs, but dry areas are appearing on the pitch which should also help Bangladeshi's spinners. They have a first test win overseas in four years in sight.

**Brief scores:** Bangladesh 474/4 (Najmul Hossain Shanta 163, Mominul Haque 127; Vishwa Fernando 2/75)

## The Statesman Sport

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

## AMUL DOODH PEETA HAI INDIA

₹47\*/1 L  
**Amul Cow Milk**



500mL: ₹ 24\*

\*MRP (incl. of all taxes), transportation and cooling charges included. Conditions apply. For any clarification/ availability, please contact us: 011-28524336/37, Ghaziabad: 0120-2673024/ 2673102, Agra: 8750470011

## Morgan, penalised after defeat, is unruffled

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Eoin Morgan (in photo) has been fined Rs 12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during his team's ill-fated Indian Premier League match against Chennai Super Kings last night.

Faf du Plessis' magnificent 95 not out and Deepak Chahar's impressive four-wicket haul powered CSK to an 18-run win over KKR. CSK posted ed.

"Morgan has been fined after his team maintained a slow over rate. As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's code of conduct relating to minimum over rate offences, Morgan was fined Rs 12 lakh," the IPL stated.

The captain of an erring team is docked Rs 12 lakh in the first instance of such an offence.

The win lifted CSK to the top of the table with six points from four matches, while KKR slipped to No 6.

Morgan remains unfazed, though, and says it is a "matter of time" before he fires in the current tournament. The World Cup-winning captain's sequence of scores so far in this season is 2, 7, 29 and 7. "It's everything's about the process. The way I'm going about things at the moment

is extremely positive. I've been here a long time now and I've been practising well and it's a matter of time before something comes together," he said at the post-match Press conference.

"KKR have an expensive batting line-up, but it has faltered in three matches so far in the league, even though the team did better last night.

"We have a very deep batting line-up, and it's one of our strengths and we are very experienced in the middle and lower-middle order, and today we saw that," Morgan said.

A fine rally, led by Andre Russell, Pat Cummins and Dinesh Karthik, helped KKR go past 200 though the target was not reached eventually. Young CSK opener Ruturaj Gaikwad says Faf du Plessis' ability to play innovative shots and to take on bowlers makes "my job easier" at the other end. Gaikwad (64), du

Plessis (95) and paceman Deepak Chahar (4/29) were the architects of CSK's triumph.

"With Faf, it's pretty much easy. He has an innovation skill so he takes on the bowlers and it makes my job little bit easier," Gaikwad told teammate Lungi Ngidi in a video posted on the IPL website. The opening duo stitched a 115-run partnership to give CSK the best possible start."

Against KKR, it was a matter of taking a bit of time for me. We were playing on a small ground, we had to keep going. One over I used to take chances, and the next over, Faf. It was just about knowing each other very well," Gaikwad added.

The 24-year-old, who enjoyed a breakout IPL season last year, earlier struggled to fire in this edition, managing just 20 runs in three matches.

## Turnaround time for affronted Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHENNAI, 22 APRIL



Mumbai Indians would be aiming to iron out their batting problems to achieve consistency while Punjab Kings would be desperate to arrest an overall slide when the two sides clash in an Indian Premier League match here tomorrow.

Rohit Sharma's Mumbai crashed to defeat against Delhi Capitals following an inept batting performance and would look for redemption. The skipper is on the bat, but the others could not get going and the misfiring middle order would be a major concern.

MI bowlers, though, have often risen to the occasion, winning matches for the team. However, they could not do so against Delhi and would like the batsmen to put up bigger scores for them to do the rest of the job.

Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan, stars of the team's victorious 2020 campaign, have not been able to make match-winning contributions and that has hurt MI along with unremarkable performances from

The formidable batting unit has not delivered, though Rahul and Mayank Agarwal are exceptions, and the bowling has been pedestrian. Chris Gayle has not been able to boss the putatively lesser mortals and fellow-West Indian Nicholas Pooran, expected to come up with the big shots, has been a disappointment so far.

Punjab have flattered to deceive after a winning start. Being shot out for 120 by Sunrisers Hyderabad yesterday hinted at bigger problems for the KL Rahul-led team, who have more than one issue to resolve, especially their composition.

games so far but has lacked support. His captaincy has not inspired a lot of confidence and muddled team selection has compounded the team's woes.

Deepak Hooda showed what he was capable of, but greater consistency would be needed. Australian pacemen Jhye Richardson and Riley Meredith are looked up to but have proved expensive. Punjab may look to bring in the talented Ravi Bishnoi in place of Murugan Ashwin and fit in Chris Jordan.

**Match starts at 7.30 pm**

## RCB bowlers restrict Royals to 177/9

MUMBAI, 22 APRIL

"home", using the pace of deliveries, the profligate top-order of Royals once again flattered to deceive along with their skipper Sanju Samson, who has been "consistently inconsistent". It took Dube's impressive effort to lend some muscle to the Royals' rickety-looking scorecard.

For RCB, Mohammed Siraj's (3/27 in 4 overs) off-cutter first-up cleaned Jos Buttler (8) and Manan Vohra (7), with another atrocious shot selection off Kyle Jamieson (1/28 in 4 overs), might have ensured the rot and big-hits from Tewatia (40 off 23 balls) that helped them get past 175-run mark.

Dube smashed two sixes and five fours with Riyam Parag (25 off 15 balls) giving him good support, added 66 runs for the fifth wicket off only 6.2 overs to give his team some semblance of respectability.

While the giant all-rounder was comfortable playing at

chip shot at mid-wicket. Dube hardly used his feet as the two sixes in one over from Yuzvendra Chahal (0/18 in 2 overs) over long-on forced Kohli to take his leg-spinner out of attack. In case of fast bowlers, he used the ramp shot when anything short was bowled on off-stump channel. PTI

SCOREBOARD									
<b>RAJASTHAN ROYALS INNINGS</b>									
Jos Buttler	b Md Siraj	8							
M Vohra	c Richardson J Jamieson	7							
S Samson	c Maxwell b W Sundar	21							
D Miller	lbw b Md Siraj	0							
S Dube	c Maxwell b Richardson	46							
Riyam Parag	c Chahal b Patel	25							
R Tewatia	c Ahmed b Md Siraj	10							
Chris Morris	c Chahal b Patel	10							
K Shreyas Gopal	not out	7							
C Sakariya	c de Villiers b Patel	0							
Mustafizur Rahman	not out	0							
Extras:	(b 5, w 8)	13							
TOTAL:	(20 Ov, RR: 8.85)	177/9							
BOWLING:	Md Siraj 4.0, 27.3								
K Jamieson	4.0, 28.1								
3.0, 29.1	Y Chahal	2.0, 18.0							
Washington Sundar		3.0, 23.1							

An ICC team will be visiting India from April 26 to hold discussions and also inspect the arrangements with regards to all aspects of the global event.

Musker indicated that just like IPL has six venues (Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata) but is being held in only two cities at a given point in time (known as Cluster Caravan) before moving to next set, the template could also be green lighted for the T20 World Cup. The BCCI has shortlisted

nine cities for the T20 World Cup -- Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Lucknow, Dharamsala -- for the 16-team tournament.

"...The way the IPL is managed, they only have two venues engaged at one time. You haven't got eight venues at one time," Musker told ESPNcricinfo when asked if the number of venues could have been reduced.

"If the IPL works with this two-venue caravan model, then it is clearly a good starting point for us to understand how we may stage the men's T20 World Cup," Musker said, dropping broad hints as to how the global body plans to schedule the matches.

Musker admitted that organising a bio-secure environment for a bilateral series is much easier than for a multi-team tournament or a franchise.

"I'm fascinated to see how the IPL works in India over the coming weeks. We will be travelling to India on April 26 to see the arrangements there and are in touch with the BCCI on this. It is on top of our list of priorities."

"I don't think we'll be in position to really tie down what