



KERALA MINISTER
KT JALEEL RESIGNS



TRIANGULAR CONTEST
IN BENGAL: HARIPRASAD



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

HONG KONG ELECTIONS
TO TAKE PLACE IN
DECEMBER



'BIG BOY WON'T
BE MISSED IN
TEST SERIES'

P9

WEATHER

Partly cloudy sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 40 and 20 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 59% Min: 20%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 40.2°C (+4) Min: 19.4°C (-1)
SUN RISES SUN SETS
05:56 hrs 18:46 hrs
MOON RISES MOON SETS
07:50 hrs 20:48 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta, mayor North Delhi Municipal Corporation Jai Prakash and others inaugurate Ambedkar's statue on the eve of birth anniversary of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar at North DMC HQ, in the Capital Tuesday. SUBRATA DUTTA

Remdesivir not for home use, says govt: The Centre on Tuesday said doctors should ensure "rational and judicious" use of anti-viral drug Remdesivir, underlining it is to be given only to Covid-19 patients admitted in hospitals and is not to be used in home settings. At a weekly press conference, NITI Aayog member (Health) Dr V K Paul said, "Remdesivir is to be used only in those who require hospitalisation and are on oxygen support. That is the precondition."

Air India disinvestment: The government has initiated the process for inviting financial bids for the sale of national carrier Air India and the deal is likely to conclude by September, sources said. Tata Group was among the "multiple" entities that had put in preliminary bids for buying loss-making Air India in December last year. The transaction has now moved to the financial bids stage, the sources said, adding that the deal is expected to conclude by September. P8

Delhi: 13,468 cases in 24 hrs, Kejriwal urges Centre to cancel board exams

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Delhi today recorded 13,468 coronavirus cases—it's highest spike so far—and 81 Covid deaths. In view of such a grim situation, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to the Centre to cancel the CBSE exams.

Warning that conducting the exams may contribute to the large-scale spread of the virus, he said the centres could emerge as major hotspots.

"Six lakh children in Delhi are going to write CBSE exams. Nearly one lakh teachers will be a part of it. These (the centres) can become major hotspots leading to large-scale spreading of corona. Children's lives and health are very important to us. I request the Centre to cancel the CBSE exams," he said at a press conference today afternoon.

The Central Board of Secondary Education can explore other methods, including online exams and promoting students on the basis of internal assessments, he said.

"Several countries have done it, some states in India are doing it too. Some alternative methods could be thought of. Children can be promoted this time on the basis of either an online method or internal assessment. But the exams should be cancelled," he added.

The CBSE Class 10 and 12 exams are scheduled to begin on 4 May. With the exponential increase in cases, the chorus for cancellation or postponing the board exams is growing. SNS & PTI (SEE P2)

The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

twitter.com/TheStatesmanLtd
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P4

P5

P9

Foreign-made vaccines put on fast-track: Centre

First 100 beneficiaries of foreign vaccines will be assessed for a week for safety outcomes



SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

With an aim to expand the basket of Covid-19 vaccines and enhance the pace of inoculation in India, the central government on Tuesday said it has fast-tracked emergency approval for foreign-produced jabs that have been granted similar clearances in other countries.

The move is significant as it may make available several vaccines, including those made by Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson, in India with certain conditions.

The first 100 beneficiaries of such foreign vaccines shall be assessed for seven days for safety outcomes before it is rolled out for further immunisation programme within the country, the Union health ministry said.

The decision came following the recommendations of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19 (NEGVC).

Currently, two vaccines—Covaxin by Bharat Biotech and Covishield



by Serum Institute of India (SII)—are being used for inoculation in India.

India's drug regulator has also granted permission for the restricted emergency use of the Russian Covid-19 vaccine Sputnik V with certain conditions on Monday.

The matter of augmenting the basket of vaccines available for fighting the pandemic as well as to accelerate the pace and coverage of domestic vaccination programme were discussed in the 23rd meeting of NEVAC chaired by Niti Aayog Member (Health) V K Paul on 11 April.

India is following a comprehensive approach to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic in a proactive and pre-emptive manner. In this context, as early as May 2020, India constituted a Task Force headed by the Principal Scientific Advisor to encourage research and development for vaccine manufacture and constituted in August 2020 an Expert Group headed by Member, NITI Aayog to assist in roll-out of the Covid vaccination programme.

It was because of these strategies that India became the first country

to have two "Made in India" vaccines for domestic vaccination drive, the ministry said.

India records 1,61,736 infections, 879 deaths

A total of 1,61,736 new Covid cases have been reported on a day pushing India's tally of cases to 1,36,89,453, while the national recovery rate dropped further to 89.51 per cent, according to data updated by the Union health ministry on Monday.

The death toll increased to 1,71,058 with 879 new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed.

Registering a steady increase for the 34th day in a row, the number of active cases rose to 12,64,698.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 1,22,53,697, while the case fatality rate has dropped further to 1.25 per cent, the data stated.

The 879 new fatalities include 258 from Maharashtra and 132 from Chhattisgarh. A total of 1,71,058 deaths have been reported in the country so far, including 58,245 from Maharashtra, 12,941 from Karnataka and 12,927 from Tamil Nadu.

Bengal cases: West Bengal logged the highest-ever daily spike of 4,817 fresh cases and 20 deaths today. The total Covid caseload is 6,24,224 and toll is 10,434 in the state with 29,050 active cases.

Kolkata recorded 1,271 cases and 11 deaths.

looking at the condition, that in the coming days we will need Oxygen," he said.

"We are requesting the PM that instead of bringing oxygen by road, if we can take the military's help and get it via air," Thackeray said that while the state had postponed board exams, "we can't postpone the exam we are giving currently and we have to pass this with flying colours."

Speculation of a lockdown led to panic buying by people. Vegetable vendors and general stores selling fast-moving consumer goods saw higher buying from around 5.30 pm when the CM's office informed of Uddhav's virtual address on Tuesday. "There is no certainty about the length of a lockdown or how strictly will it be implemented. It is better to buy essentials," said a harried shopper in the suburb of Thane.

Resort to Sec. 144: A Division Bench of Calcutta High Court Chief Justice TBN Radhakrishnan and Justice Arif Banerjee today directed the West Bengal administration may, so far as possible, resort to the provisions of Section 144 of CrPC.

The Chief Electoral Officer, West Bengal may issue such further guidelines as he may deem necessary to check the spread of Covid-19 due to gathering and rallies. The matter was listed for next hearing on 19 April when the CEO will file an affidavit.

PM to virtually address AIU annual meet

NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually address the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) 95th Annual

Meeting and National Seminar of vice-chancellors through video conferencing on 14-15 April. The main theme of the National Seminar of VCs will be 'Implementing National Educational Policy-2020 to Transform Higher Education in India'.

The seminar will seek to work out implementation strategies for the 'National Education Policy-2020' with a clear-cut action plan on effectively implementing the policy in the interest of its primary stakeholders, the students,' a PMO press note stated. SNS

NOVEL PROTEST



BJP leaders face EC's wrath

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The Election Commission on Tuesday barred BJP leader Rahul Sinha from campaigning for 48 hours; Bengal chief Dilip Ghosh gets an EC notice and Suvenu Adhikari "warned" for certain statements. EC found the remarks of the BJP leaders violating model code, various provisions of Representation of People Act and the Indian Penal Code.

The ban on Sinha begins at 12 noon on Tuesday and will remain in force till 12 noon of 15 April, the order said.

On Monday, the poll panel barred West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee from campaigning for 24 hours for her remarks against central forces and a statement that allegedly had religious over-

tones.

The EC, in another order, has let off BJP candidate from Nandigram Suvenu Adhikari with a light rap for his remarks that "if people vote for Begum there will be mini Pakistan".

"Now, therefore, the Commission hereby warns Shri Suvenu Adhikari and advises him to desist from using such statement during the period when Model Code of Conduct is in force," the order issued on Monday night said.

The EC took suo motu cognisance of Sinha's remarks and said it decided to issue the order without giving any notice to him due to the urgency of the matter.

After the Trinamool Congress approached the Commission against Ghosh over his reported remarks that

there would be "Sitalkuchi in several places", the EC asked him to respond to its notice making his stand clear on the issue by 10am on Wednesday.

The notice said the Commission is of the considered view that Ghosh has in violation of various clauses of the Model Code of Conduct and provisions of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the Indian Penal Code "made statements that are provocative and can seriously incite the emotions".

This could "lead to a breakdown of law and order thereby adversely affecting the election process", the notice said.

The EC notice against Ghosh cited his alleged "naughty boys" remarks.



Modi calls for united global efforts to defeat Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today said the Covid-19 pandemic has presented the global community an opportunity to reshape the world order and create systems which address the problems of today and challenges of tomorrow.

"We must think of the entire humanity and not merely of those who are on our side of the borders. Humanity as a whole must be at the centre of our thinking and action," he said, inaugurating the "Raisina Dialogue", the annual signature event of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on geopolitics and geo-economics.

Acknowledging that the world today was under-pre-

pared to handle Covid-19,

Modi said, "We understand fully that the mankind will not defeat the pandemic unless all of us, everywhere, regardless of the colour of our passports, come out of it."

Modi noted that for over a year now, the best minds of every society have been engaged in battling the pandemic. All the governments

of the world at all levels were trying to contain and control it. "Why did it come to this? Is it perhaps because in the race of economic development the concern for welfare of humanity has been left behind?" he wondered.

India, he noted, has tried to "walk the talk" in its own humble way in the larger interest of humanity during the pandemic. "We have tried to protect our own 1.3 billion citizens from the pandemic. At the same time, we have also tried to support the pandemic response efforts of others," he added.

Modi said, "In our neighbourhood, we have encouraged our coordinated regional response to the crisis. Last year, we shared medicines and protective equipment with over 150 countries. This

year, despite many constraints, we have supplied vaccines to over 80 countries. We know that the supplies have been modest. We know that the demands are huge. We know that it will be a long time before the entire humanity can be vaccinated. At the same time, we also know that hope matters. It matters as much to the citizens of the richest countries as it does to the less fortunate."

He said India would continue to share its experiences, its expertise and also its resources with the entire humanity in the fight against the pandemic.

He called upon the participants at the "Raisina Dialogue" to emerge as a powerful voice for a human centric approach to grapple with the pandemic.

Sushil Chandra takes over as 24th CEC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Sushil Chandra assumed charge as the 24th Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday.

Chandra was appointed as an election commissioner on 15 February 2019, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections and was also an ex-officio member of the Delimitation Commission since 18 February 2020 looking after the process in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

He would demit office on 14 May 2022.

Under him, the EC will hold Assembly polls in Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. He has served several posts in the

Income-Tax Department for nearly 39 years and was also Chairman of the CBDT from 1 November 2016 to February 2019 where he had played an active role in unearthing illegal money often used during Assembly elections. With his continuous monitoring of the seizures of cash, liquor, freebies, narcotics have increased substantially in recent elections.

Chandra has constantly emphasised the concept of "indemnity-free" elections.



I had to cancel three of my meetings because of the situation

ASOK BHATTACHARYA, CPI(M) LEADER, SILIGURI POLL CANDIDATE

ON HOW HE WAS HELD UP DUE TO THE ROAD SHOW OF AMIT SHAH IN SILIGURI

SDMC offers rebate to properties owners for getting Covid shots

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) Standing Committee Chairman Rajdutt Gahlot on Tuesday said that the civic agency has decided to allow special incentives in the form of additional rebate to the owners/taxpayers of residential properties if they get Covid-19 vaccines dose.

"Property owners/taxpayers, who take Covid-19 vaccine after fulfilling the criterion, will get an additional rebate of 5 per cent in payment of property tax. An office order in this regard has been issued by the concerned department of the SDMC and all eligible persons can avail the facility," said Gahlot.

He said that the SDMC is also making all efforts to encourage more and more people for vaccination and the move to

provide an additional rebate of 5 per cent in property tax after getting the vaccine will attract more people for this cause.

"Through such ways we can get success in ensuring 100 per cent vaccinations of all who have attained the age of 45 years which will further help in containing spread of Coronavirus," Gahlot expressed hope.

Describing the scheme, Gahlot said that the 5 per cent rebate will be an additional benefit and the benefit of 15 per cent rebate for depositing property tax before June 30 will be continued for all. The 5 per cent rebate will be granted if owners/taxpayers deposit property tax through online and in one installment before June 30. This rebate will include a 2 per cent rebate provided for online payment. If payment is being made through offline modes then a rebate of 3 per cent will be given.

Capital logs 13,468 new Covid cases, highest single-day spike

81 more die in Delhi due to deadly virus; Kejriwal, Sisodia appeal to Centre to cancel CBSE exams

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Amid the unprecedented surge in coronavirus cases in Delhi, the city today recorded a staggering 13,468 Covid cases—the biggest single-day spike since the pandemic began early last year—while 81 more people succumbed to the contagious, deadly pathogen, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The national capital had reported 11,491 coronavirus cases and 72 Covid deaths

yesterday. It had recorded 10,772 cases and 48 deaths on Sunday, 7,897 infections and 39 deaths on Saturday, and 8,521 cases and 39 deaths on Friday. It has logged about 78,000 infections in the last 10 days, according to official data.

Today's 81 deaths figure is the highest since December 3 when 82 deaths were recorded. Delhi had recorded 131 Covid deaths on November 19—the highest single-day fatality count till date.

The city's Covid caseload today soared to 75,016, and its toll jumped to 11,436, the health bulletin said.

The positivity rate mounted to 13.14 per cent from 12.44 per cent a day ago, the bulletin said.

The fresh cases were detected out of 1,02,460 tests. The positivity rate was above 15 per cent in mid-November last year, when the pandemic was at its peak. It seems to be heading towards that grim mark again.

The number of active cases rose to 43,510 today. Of these, 21,954 patients were under home isolation. Over the last 24 hours 7,972 patients recovered in the city, the bulletin said.

Of the total 12,667 hospital beds in Delhi for Covid patients, 7,731 were occupied.

The number of containment zones increased to 6,852 from yesterday's 6,175, the bulletin added.

With single-day coronavirus infections number rocketing to nearly 13,500 in Delhi in 24 hours, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to the Centre to cancel the CBSE Class 10 and 12 exams and explore alternative methods such as online exams.

Warning that conducting the board exams may contribute to further large-scale spread of the virus, the CM said the exam centres could emerge as major infection hotspots.

"Six lakh children in Delhi are going to write CBSE exams. Nearly 10 lakh teachers will be a part of it. These (the centres) can become major hotspots leading to large-scale spreading of corona. Children's lives and health are very important to us. I request the Centre to cancel the CBSE exams," Kejriwal said at a press conference this afternoon.



A medic collecting swab samples for Covid tests, in the Capital on Tuesday.

SNS

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) can explore other methods, including online exams and promoting students on the basis of internal assessments, he said.

"Several countries have done it, some states in India are doing it too. Some alternative methods could be thought of. Children can be promoted this time on the basis of either an online method or internal assessment. But the exams should be cancelled," the CM added.

Kejriwal also appealed to people who recovered after getting infected by coronavirus to come forward to donate plasma, which was not available as much as was its demand. The plasma demand has increased substantially during the fourth wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in the national capital. This is how many lives can be saved, the CM pointed out.

The CBSE Class 10 and 12 exams are scheduled to begin on May 4. With the exponential increase in coronavirus cases, the chorus for cancellation or postponing the board exams is growing, with a number of top Opposition leaders including the Congress party's Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi urging the Narendra Modi government to call off the CBSE

exams for the sake of young students' safety amid the massive Covid surge across the country.

Delhi Deputy CM and Education Minister Manish Sisodia also appealed for the board exams to be cancelled.

"It is time that board exams be cancelled in view of increasing cases of coronavirus across the country. When whole year teaching learning did not happen the old way, then why are we adamant on conducting the exams the old way?" Sisodia said, adding that if exams will not be cancelled then examination centres will turn into super spreaders."

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE COURT OF RAJ KUMAR TRIPATHI Judge Family Courts, West District, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi SUMMONS/NOTICE FOR SERVICE FOR ADVERTISEMENT IN A NEWSPAPER (O.V.R. 20 GP 10/2021 NDOH : 01-06-2021 Sanjeev Chathrath Versus State

To, State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi) Whereas (Petitioner) Sajeev Chathrath, mentioned in the above said suit for appointment of the petitioner as guardian of Ms. Neeru Bala, who is suffering from mental retardness and insanity to the extent of 90% and permission to sell her property under Section 10 of The Guardians and Wards Act 1890 read with Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908. You are hereby summoned to appear in Court on a day in person or by a pleader on the 01-06-2021, to answer the same failing which the suit will be disposed off ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court.

Judge Family Courts, West District; Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts New Delhi Petition No. SC-78/2020 Manju Anand & Another, Versus State & Ors.

(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned,

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Mr. Govind Chandra Pandit, s/o Late Mr. P. D. Pandit, died on 24-05-2011 at Rajiv Gandhi Insti, Sec-5, Rohini, New Delhi. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court to be standing in the name of deceased.

Whereas the 04-05-2021 at 10 (Ten) O'Clock in the forenoon has been fixed for hearing and the application notice is hereby given to all concerned.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court this 01-04-2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts New Delhi Petition No. SC-72/2019 Ashok Krishnay and Ors. Versus State

(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned,

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IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts New Delhi Petition No. SC-28/2019 Deepak Manoharan Versus State (Govt. of N.C.T. of Delhi)

(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned,

Where in the abovenoted petition, the applicant/petitioner has applied for Succession Certificate to the Hon'ble Court Under Section 372 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 in respect of the debt and securities any person having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the deceased Dham Prakash Anand, s/o Mukund Lal Anand, died on DL 08-11-2017 at Holy Angels Hospital. Are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Court to be standing in the name of deceased.

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

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court this 01-04-2021.

L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Patiala House Courts New Delhi Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF MS. PREETI PAREWA L.D. ACJ/CCJ/ARC Room No. 03, Patiala House Courts New Delhi Petition No. SC-25/2021 Tanuja Pandey

(Petitioner) FOR SUCCESSION CERTIFICATE UNDER INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925 To, All concerned,

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दिल्ली सरकार
आप की सरकार

Delhi CELEBRATES FREEDOM@75

A stylized portrait of Mahatma Gandhi, depicted from the chest up. He has a shaved head, wears dark-rimmed glasses, and has a prominent nose. He is dressed in a white kurta and a blue shawl (aghora). The background is a warm, textured yellow and orange, with faint, illegible text visible through it.

सार्वीय अवधि के लिए जो एक और परिसंघीय समूह का बनाने के लिए आवश्यक है।

四

प्रत्येक ता
दर्पण होता है। वह
एवं आकांक्षाओं पर जाधारित होता है।

संविधान को एक जड़ दस्तावेज़ भासू मान रोना चाहिए। यह आगे क्योंकि संविधान केवल वही नहीं है, जो संविधान के मूलषाठ में लिखित है। संविधान सक्रिय संस्थानों का एक अधिकारी भी है। यह निरंतर पनपता रहता है, पल्लवित होता, रहता है। हर संविधान इसी

Heartfelt Tribute to Bharat Ratna

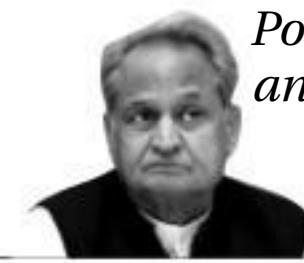
Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary



"We pay our tribute to the father of the Indian Constitution, Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar, who fought a long battle for justice and equality. Come, let us follow in his footsteps and create the India of his dreams."

- Arvind Kejriwal,
Chief Minister, Delhi





*Politics is being done today in the name of religion and caste
and people are succeeding and becoming happy*

RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER ASHOK GEHLOT

SAYING YOUTH TODAY SHOULD BE MADE AWARE ABOUT THE DANGERS OF CASTEISM AND COMMUNALISM



THUMBNAILS



A sadhu performs ritual during morning prayers at Kumbh Mela, amid surge in Covid-19 cases across the country, in Haridwar, on Tuesday.

AGENCY

India, France to deepen strategic partnership: India and France on Tuesday agreed to deepen strategic partnership and further boost trade ties at a meeting between the foreign ministers of the two nations. French Foreign minister Jean-Yves Le Drian explored with external affairs minister S Jaishankar ways to strengthen cooperation in Indo-Pacific, including India-France-Australia trilateral framework. SNS

Ship collides with boat: At least three fishermen are feared dead and nine others are missing after their fishing boat collided with a foreign vessel off the coast of Mangaluru early on Tuesday, sources said. PTI

Stalin supports Mamata: Supporting West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, DMK president M K Stalin on Tuesday said the Election Commission must ensure a level playing field for all parties and maintain impartiality. PTI

Mamata stages dharna against EC's 24-hr ban on campaign

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

Irrked by the decision of the Election Commission to ban her from campaigning for 24 hours, Trinamul chief and outgoing chief minister, Mamata Banerjee, today staged a sit-in protest near the Gandhi Statue at Mayo Road for 3.5 hours.

Banerjee had earlier tweeted that the ban is "undemocratic and unconstitutional". Before she arrived at the spot, TMC workers began sloganning. The on-duty Kolkata police urged the TMC supporters to refrain from sloganning.

Mamata arrived at 11:30am, post which the Trinamul supremo literally took to the drawing board where she produced one after another paintings as she sat on her wheelchair. Many women supporters were present at the spot. Rita Adhikari, a resident from Behala said that she was there to support "Didi" since she believes the EC ban is "unjustified". However, Banerjee's 'dharna' had put the

'Mamata eyes only throne, not progress'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

Defence minister and senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh on Tuesday hit out at West Bengal chief minister and TMC chief Mamata Banerjee by saying that she is doing politics only to recapture power and not to develop the state.

Addressing a rally at Swarupnagar in North 24-Parganas, Singh said that providing good governance is a tough job for the TMC supremo, who ruled Bengal for 10 years and ruined the state with syndicate raj, extortion racket and cut money culture. Over her continuous attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for criticising the law and order situation in the state, Singh said that Mamata keeps blaming Modi for everything.

"You talk nonsense about our PM. Why do you blame him for everything? I have also been a CM and I know how a CM should behave. The Election Commission has banned her for 24 hours citing the Model Code of Conduct violation. She's now against the Election Commission. Didi, can't you spare anyone?" Singh said. He claimed that he saw on TV about a bomb factory in the area. "I saw on TV that there's a bomb factory here. I thought it was a government factory, but here bombs are made to attack opponents. How is it



Kerala minister KT Jaleel resigns

Lokayukta finds him guilty of nepotism, abuse of power

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 13 APRIL

In a setback to the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government in Kerala, higher education minister K T Jaleel resigned on Tuesday, days after the Lokayukta indicted him for nepotism, abuse of power and breach of oath of office.

Jaleel sent his resignation to the chief minister which was forwarded to Governor Arif Mohammad Khan, CMO sources said. The Governor accepted his resignation, Raj Bhavan said.

In a Facebook post, Jaleel himself confirmed that he had put in his papers. "I am happy to say that those who had been baying for my blood can be relieved for now. I have submitted my resignation to the chief minister. Since the past two years, I have been facing a media onslaught," Jaleel, second minister in the LDF ministry to resign on nepotism charges, said in the post.

The resignation came four days after the Lokayukta's adverse remarks dealt an unexpected blow to Jaleel, and on a day his plea seeking a stay on the verdict was being heard by the Kerala High Court, which has reserved orders on his petition.

The development comes at a time when the LDF government has hardly a couple of days left for its term to get over. The state Assembly polls were held on 6 April and the results are awaited on 2 May.

Industries minister E P



Jayarajan had resigned in October 2016, five months after the Left ministry assumed office following a row over the appointment of his nephew and son of former Kannur MP P K Sreemathy as managing director of Kerala Industries Enterprises Ltd.

Two years later, Jayarajan was taken back in the ministry. While CPI(M) secretary-in-charge Avijayaraghavan welcomed the decision, saying it was apt and taken on moral grounds, the Congress said he should have stepped down earlier. The CPI(M) leadership is understood to have asked the minister to resign.

Law minister A K Balan

had earlier stated that the Lokayukta had given the chief minister three months time to act on the report and that there was no such precedent in the state. "Has anyone ever resigned just because a lower court said something?" Balan had asked as demands for Jaleel's resignation grew from various quarters after adverse remarks by the Lokayukta.

Describing the resignation as "delayed wisdom" of Jaleel, Union minister V Muraleedharan wanted to know why the CM had also not quit. "The CM is keeping mum on the matter," the Lokayukta said in its verdict.

Industries minister E P

in Delhi. Lashing out at Jaleel, leader of the Opposition in the state Assembly Ramesh Chennithala said the minister had no other go, but to resign.

The high moral ground that the party was claiming which prompted him to resign, was not right, the senior Congress leaders said. "Why did not resign immediately after the Lokayukta verdict three days ago? Why did he move the High Court?" Chennithala asked reporters.

A division bench of the Lokayukta, comprising Justice Cyriac Joseph and Justice Harun-Ul-Rashid, had on Friday submitted the report against Jaleel to the chief minister and had held that the allegation of abuse of power, favouritism and nepotism against the minister was proved.

The Muslim Youth League had on 2 November, 2018 alleged that Adeeb KT, a cousin of Jaleel, was appointed general manager in Kerala State Minorities Development Finance Corporation, flouting rules. Adeeb was serving as manager of a private bank when the appointment was made.

The Lokayukta had found the minister had changed the qualifications for the post of general manager in the Corporation to add "B.Tech with PGDBA" also as a qualification for the post to enable his second cousin, eligible for the post.

"It amounted to favouritism and nepotism and lack of integrity in his capacity as a minister," the Lokayukta said in its verdict.

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Kumbh & Covid

Visuals of the choc-a-bloc crowd of faithfuls, who have assembled at Hardwar's Harkipauri on the occasion of Kumbh mela, are direly unnerving. Religion and the holy dip in the Ganga appear to have been accorded precedence over public health and the elementary precaution to prevent infection during the resurgence of coronavirus and the crippling shortage of vaccines that has rendered the protection/prevention drive out of joint almost throughout the country. Ignored in the process or deliberately violated are the basic certitudes of precautionary gear, notably thermal screening and wearing of masks. On Monday, more than 28 lakh devotees reportedly turned up for the ritualistic second *shahi snan* (royal bath) in the supposedly sacred river, albeit rendered thoroughly polluted over time and for a variety of reasons. The violation of certitudes is as shocking as it is incredible. In the ten kilometre distance between Hardwar railway station in Uttarakhand to Harkipauri and the ghats, it beggars belief that there is no arrangement whatsoever for thermal screening. Though there is an AI-enabled CCTV system in place to track down violators ~ whose number is legion ~ no action has been taken against those without masks, an elementary requirement. There is no thermal screening before or after the bath in the Ganga; no one asks for a test report in the mela complex. No less critical must be the fact that devotees without test reports are being let through the barriers that dot the route to the river... and with no questions asked. Indeed, irregularities and the almost deliberate flouting of norms have been institutionalised in the season of the dreadful ailment that has killed hundreds of thousands and quarantined many more. As the ghats are said to be reserved for *akharas*, there is no arrangement for thermal screening, not to mention social distancing.

Every rule in the book has been violated, and it is difficult to imagine that the administration in Dehra Doon can afford to be so blissfully impervious. Even challans for not wearing masks and thermal screening were avoided on Monday to prevent crowding at specific locations. This is a feeble excuse for a potentially daunting catastrophe. Surely, alternate arrangements were imperative not the least because of the surge of the virus and the pilgrims, a lethal cocktail in the sphere of public health. Even the appeal of the police, amplified through the tannoy, to follow social distancing guidelines "went for a toss" to quote the designated Kumbh Mela IG. Overall, there appears to be an aversion to guidelines on protection ~ "We have distributed 2.5 lakh masks and also conducted awareness camps. But people are not sticking to the Covid protocol," is the lament of the nodal health officer. Small wonder more than 100 pilgrims tested positive at the mela ground on Monday. Arguably, there are hundreds more who avoided the test, hoping that "Ganga Maa will take away my Covid". As in 18th century India, superstition and ignorance are the two nooses hung around the neck of civilization.

Race and Colour

If a black can be shot dead by a white policeman ~ the usual syndrome ~ at a routine traffic stop near the Brooklyn Center in Minnesota, there is life yet in the debate whether there has been a resurgence of racist violence in President Joe Biden's United States of America. Monday's tragedy follows the final phase of the trial of a white policeman for the ghastly killing of George Floyd and more recently, the mayhem against Asians in America. Truth to tell, people are being killed irrespective of their origin in Asia and/or the colour of the skin. The profiling is as racial as it is territorial, and the grim reality has only deepened the serial tragedies. Monday night was the second night of protests after 20-year-old Daunte Wright was killed by a police officer, identified by authorities as Kim Potter, at a traffic intersection. The authorities were suitably prompt in enforcing curfew in Brooklyn Center and police arrested those in violation who ignored dispersal orders. But the arrests don't minimise the enormity of the tragedies. On the contrary, police fired tear gas and stun grenades on Monday night when a crowd gathered to protest the killing of a black man by a police officer in a Minneapolis suburb. The first black mayor in Brooklyn Center said Daunte Wright's shooting is 'unfathomable'. The Minnesota National Guard had originally been planning to increase the number of its members on duty as closing arguments approach in the Floyd trial. More than 500 members of the Guard have been activated, and there are plans to increase the number of members on duty "in response to the events overnight in Brooklyn Center." As anger over Wright's death escalated, aerial footage showed several police cars around the Brooklyn Center crash site swarmed by crowds. Arguably to deflect attention, there is speculation in Minnesota over whether the shooting was accidental or deliberate; the latter seems more likely in the context of the hideous black-and-white narrative in America, one that is almost historical. A spokesperson for the US Department of Justice said the shooting was a local matter and that the department is not involved in the investigation. The district attorney for Hennepin County said it had sent the case to a different county to avoid an "appearance of a conflict of interest." An attorney for Wright's family, Ben Crump, called the shooting "entirely preventable" and "inhumane." "As Minneapolis and the rest of the country continue to deal with the tragic killing of George Floyd, now we must also mourn the loss of this young man and father," he said. President Biden has called for "peace and calm", as authorities in Minneapolis and St. Paul declared emergencies and curfews ahead of expected unrest. The county of Hennepin, which includes Brooklyn Center, was under curfew, which many protesters ignored.

Elections Unlimited

Reform of the electoral process is an obvious necessity, which is constrained by the interest of political parties in continuing with the present, imperfect set-up. The Supreme Court has often tried to exclude criminal candidates, but Parliament has shown no eagerness to amend the Representation of the People Act



Elections in India have often been described as a 'dance of democracy' or a 'festival of democracy' but one would seriously question these descriptions if one follows the progress of the recent elections that seem to have brought out the basest instincts in workers and leaders of all political parties. Political discourse has touched its nadir; additionally, all participants in the election have demeaned themselves and the electorate by promoting violence. Probably, complete mayhem has been avoided only by a large police presence.

Elections go on interminably, spread over seven to eight phases in four to five weeks' time, and are always taking place in some place or the other. Citizens suffer as imposition of the Model Code of Conduct stymies most Governmental functions and National and State leaders perambulate through the election-bound places, abandoning their official responsibilities. Sadly, elections appear to have become an end in themselves rather than a means to good governance.

The cost of holding elections has also increased exponentially: General Elections 1952 cost the nation only Rs 10.5 crore while General Elections 2019 cost nearly Rs 10,000 crore. Moreover, the time when people voted for good and honest candidates without any inducements is long past. All candidates have to bribe voters; freebies do not guarantee votes, but electors do not vote for candidates who do not distribute goodies. A CMS Study found that candidates and their parties had spent Rs.60,000 crore in the 2019 General Election - a colossal figure, as the expenditure limit for a candidate was only Rs 70 lakh. The Study estimated that while Rs.20,000 to Rs 25,000 crore was spent on publicity, Rs 12,000 crore to Rs 15,000 crore was given directly to voters. The seizure report released by the Election Commission after the General Election is revealing: total seizure was Rs 3,500 crores, comprising drugs worth nearly Rs 1,300 crore, cash of Rs 839 crore, liquor worth Rs 294 crore, gold/silver valued around Rs 986 crore and other valuable items worth Rs 58 crore.

These statistics are important because the level of corruption post-election, is directly proportional to the real election expenditure of the winning candidates. In this background, major parties prefer candidates with deep pockets; during the 2019 General Elections, the BJP fielded

363 crorepatis, followed closely by the Congress, with 349 crorepatis candidates. All candidates fielded by the TDP, SAD and AIADMK were crorepatis. The richest of the rich representing the poorest of the poor underlines the incongruity of elections in India.

Along with moolah, muscle power is also required to win elections; according to a report by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), 88 per cent MPs had assets exceeding Rs one crore and nearly half of the MPs had criminal cases against them ~ a rise of 26 per cent compared to the last Lok Sabha. One MP had terror charges against her and another had a record of 204 cases against his name. Further, the Report says that 128 (24 per cent) MPs were non-graduates with one MP declaring himself as illiterate and another as barely literate.

A flurry of defections precedes and succeeds every election, particularly in those States where the same people cling on to power by representing different parties at different times. The hunger for power and pelf gets multiplied after getting elected; large-scale floor crossings and change of government in a number of States, in the last few years, points to political corruption of the highest order. Legislators have their own compulsions; with the need to arrange resources for the next election they cannot afford to remain out of power.

The current elections are an exception only to the extent of the viciousness on display. Personal attacks, threats and polarisation, freely employed by political parties, are driving a wedge between communities. Respected leaders are calling each other kraits and Judas; such acrimony guarantees that democracy and the public would lose out regardless of who wins at the hustings.

Elections are seldom fought on real issues but on sops and catchwords; in the current elections, none of the major parties has good governance on its agenda, rather manifestos of all parties promise targeted sops. Tactics of competitive populism, hyper-nationalism, hyper-religiosity and a vote-gathering appeal to Bengali pride appear to be the mainstay of the election campaign.

Reform of the electoral process is an obvious necessity, which

is constrained by the interest of political parties in continuing with the present, imperfect set-up. The Supreme Court has often tried to exclude criminal candidates, but Parliament has shown no eagerness to amend the Representation of the People Act. In the celebrated Lily Thomas case, the Supreme Court ruled that a legislator convicted of an offence would be automatically disqualified, reversing the earlier position that legislators could be disqualified only after disposal of appeals at all levels. Shamefully, the then Government tried its best to overturn this decision.

Later on, in 2014, the Supreme Court directed that trials involving elected representatives should be completed within one year. In 2017, the Supreme Court oversaw the formation of Special Courts with exclusive jurisdiction over legislators, and in 2018, the Supreme Court directed political parties to publicise the criminal antecedents of their candidates. Sadly, Special Courts have not achieved their purpose; in September 2020, the amicus curiae assisting the Supreme Court

reported that a total 4,442 cases were still pending against MPs/MLAs in different courts. The amicus curiae further reported that the number of legislators involved was more than the total number of cases, since there were more than one accused in some cases.

The progress in most cases was minimal, the oldest case in the Special Courts dated back to 1983, and three cases registered in 1991, 1993 and 1994 had not even reached the trial stage. Almost no one had been convicted by the Special Courts, for example, of the 245 cases in Telangana, 73 had been disposed of with no conviction and the rest were still pending. The UP Government has done even better, by withdrawing serious cases against political personalities. The Model Code of Conduct is honoured more in breach than in observance because most election related FIRs are withdrawn as soon as the elections conclude.

Similarly, transparency in electoral funding is a desirable goal but resisted by all political parties that, according to an ADR study, had received two-thirds of

their declared income in 2018-19, from undisclosed sources. The financial accounts of political parties are never audited by independent auditors. In a telling instance, after the Delhi High Court found that both the BJP and the Congress had illegally accepted foreign donations, both parties co-operated in retrospectively amending the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, to nullify the High Court judgement.

Electoral Bonds have made

electoral funding even more opaque. Again, by legal amendments,

the percentage cap on a company's political donations

has been scrapped and details of

political donations are no longer required to be revealed in a company's balance sheet. Significantly,

the Reserve Bank of India and the Election Commission had

apprehended that Electoral

Bonds could promote money

laundering and attract dubious

foreign funding through shell

companies.

The internal working of all

parties is fully opaque as all

parties refuse to honour the Central

Information Commission decision

that political parties are

"public entities" subject to the

Right to Information Act. The

matter has been referred to the

Supreme Court, where it has lan-

guished for the last eight years.

Politicians defend the use of

money and muscle power by

pointing to the need to contact a

large number of voters spread over

a vast geographical area in a

limited time. Voters say that they

sell their votes because candi-

dates would countenance them

only during the elections. Elec-

toral reforms should reverse this

trend; constituencies need to be

smaller so that there is a personal

connect between the electors and

the elected. To reduce the impor-

tance of money power, the

amount spent by a political party

should be added to the candi-

date's expenditure. Concomitantly,

electoral spending limits

should be reduced, to the level

that only door-to-door canvass-

ing is possible during elections.

Legislators changing parties

should immediately lose their

membership, and CAG should

audit the accounts of all political

parties.

Finally, imperfect as it is, the electoral process, gives a voice to the public who are also responsible for the outcome. As Abraham Lincoln had said: "Elections belong to the people. It is their decision. If they decide to turn their back on the fire and burn their behinds, then they will just have to sit on their blisters."

A MEMBER OF THE

ANN
ASIAN NEWS NETWORK

Fukushima N-Plant water

The decision, made at a meeting of relevant ministers, came as the government of Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga aims to accelerate work to decommission the Tokyo Electric Power Company Holdings Inc. plant in Fukushima Prefecture, north-eastern Japan, despite strong opposition from the fisheries industry, which is concerned about reputational damage to marine products from the water release into the ocean. The government hopes to start the ocean release of the water after about two years of necessary preparations. It plans to take all possible measures to deal with potential unfounded rumors about the safety of local marine products, such as helping expand seafood sales channels.

But the ocean release of the water could spoil Fukushima fishers' efforts to resume full-scale operations after suffering damage from the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami, which caused an unprecedented triple meltdown at the nuclear plant.

In addition, the reconstruction of areas hit by the disaster could be affected if the regional communities' efforts to expand shipments of locally produced agricultural, forestry and fisheries goods are foiled by the water release operations. The government plans to instruct TEPCO to pay compensation to businesses and others in any regions and industries affected by unfounded rumors that could occur following the water release into the ocean.

Moreover, the water disposal method is expected to draw anger

The Japan News
from nearby countries, such as China and South Korea. Suga said: "We will aim to ensure safety that is higher than standards. The government will make all-out efforts to deal with unfounded rumors." At the nuclear power plant, operations to cool damaged reactors are continuing and groundwater is flowing into the buildings for the reactors, resulting in the creation of radiation-tainted water every day.

How to dispose of the tainted water has been a serious issue. The water is treated repeatedly using special equipment to remove radioactive substances. But current technology cannot remove tritium, a radioactive material, from the water. More than 1,000 tanks built at the plant's premises to hold the treated water are expected to reach full capacity in autumn 2022, according to TEPCO. Concerned that the nuclear plant decommissioning could be hampered if work to dispose of the water stalls, the government plans to gradually release the treated water into the ocean after diluting the levels of tritium in it to about one-40th of the state-set standard of less than 60,000 becquerels per liter using seawater, based on a report from an expert panel, which termed the ocean release as a realistic way of disposing of the water.

The government has been stressing the safety of the water release operations, saying that the levels of tritium after the dilution are even lower than those set under the World Health Organization's drinking water guidelines.

The government aimed to formalize the ocean release plan in October last year. But it postponed the decision in the face of opposition from fishers and a flurry of public comments voicing safety concerns.

To break the stalemate, Suga met with Hiroshi Kishi, head of the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations, on Wednesday last week.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

Good men need to act

SIR, Surendra Singh Rawal's article 'Climate change and national security' (*The Statesman*, 10 April, 2021) prompted me to quote Al Gore, Nobel Peace Laureate and former US Vice-President, to explain the enormity of the challenge ahead of humanity: "The struggle to save the global environment

is in one way much more difficult than the struggle to vanquish Hitler, for this time the war is with ourselves. We are the enemy, just as we have only ourselves as allies."

It is unanimously accepted that keeping global temperature rise below 2 degree C, measured from prein-

dustrial levels (1850), is the threshold that will lease climate change from being 'dangerous' becoming 'catastrophic'. To put this number into context, consider current average global temperature increase is 0.8 degree C; add on the fact another 0.8 degree C is inevitable, because of the amount of greenhouse gases (GHGs), predominantly Co2, already pumped into the atmos-

phere. Once Co2 is added to the atmosphere, it hangs around, for a long time, between 300 to 1000 years. So, we are already close to the threshold.

Moreover, climate change is massively inequitable. The lion's share of Co2 emissions are being generated either in rich countries or to produce what people consume in rich countries. More appropriately, we get the 50-

10 rule: 10 per cent of the world's population (the higher polluters) contribute roughly 50 per cent of Co2 emissions, while the 50 per cent who pollute the least contribute just over 10 per cent. Under such a crucial situation, protracted climate change negotiations are going nowhere with nations entangled in a "Prisoner's Dilemma". One country sus-

pects the motives of the other; they agree to take measures only if others do so. However, a worldwide consensus is urgently required to soften the impact of GHGs. We should also keep in mind what Edmund Burke once said: "The only thing necessary for evil to prevail

The forever pandemic

SUNIL SHARAN

India's daily Covid cases surged by 100,000 recently, a record that prompted nationwide panic. Last autumn, India reported over 8 million Covid cases nationwide, but a new study led by professors from the University of Chicago and Duke University suggests that the state of Karnataka alone had approximately 32 million cases by the end of August last year.

Other scientific studies have put underreporting of Covid cases worldwide between 35 and 50 per cent of those reported. A credible Worldometer website shows the number of worldwide deaths to be nearly 3 million. Factoring for underreporting, these could easily be 4 million. Of course this is nothing compared to the approximately 50 million deaths caused by the Spanish flu, which raged between 1918-20.

Brazil is reeling today. So are India and the US. So is Europe. Daily worldwide new cases are crossing 700,000 globally now. Factoring for underreporting, these could be easily crossing a million globally. On 8 January 2021, the spike was 8,50,000 (not accounting for underreporting).

Daily deaths too seem to be tracking the trend of daily cases. Vaccines went into effect in January, but it seems that they do not seem to have had much effect in reducing the number of daily Covid cases or daily Covid deaths. In many US states that are vaccinating rapidly, the number of Covid cases seems to be surging as well. Perhaps newer and newer variants of the virus are being discovered, with which the vaccines can't cope as yet.

In India, the spike in cases is blamed on festivals like Holi and Easter, when people gather closely. In the US it is blamed on Spring Break, when students let their hair down and party. But all over the world a festival is right around the corner where people will



mingle irrespective of the hazards involved.

It would be foolhardy to blame the vaccines, to say that they are not having an effect. During Donald Trump's reign, the US was careless about the virus. But Florida, a state with a population of 22 million has reported 34,000 total deaths so far. California, a state with a population of 40 million has reported 60,000 total deaths so far. On a per capita basis, the number of deaths is similar.

But Florida has kept the state relatively open and humming for business. California has had frequent lockdowns. In addition, Florida has a large population of seniors who are most susceptible to the virus. Florida

recommends but does not require a face mask whereas California has a strict masking policy.

The debate in the US, especially on the right, is raging. What is the efficacy of social distancing? What is the efficacy of masks? What is the efficacy of lockdowns? Donald Trump spurned all and his followers cite Florida's example and claim that he was right after all.

In Brazil, President Bolsonaro has displayed the same shocking attitude towards the virus as Donald Trump did. Today Brazil, like India, is touching 1,00,000 new cases a day. Factoring for underreporting, total Covid deaths in Brazil have easily crossed half a million. In the US, the country

with the largest number of Covid deaths, the number of Covid cases is close to 900,000 factoring for under-reporting.

Both the US and Brazil had/have cavalier leaders in Trump and Bolsonaro respectively. India in Narendra Modi does not. What gives in India then? In India, half the number of the recently discovered one lakh plus daily cases originate in the state of Maharashtra alone. Maharashtra is the richest state in the country, with some of the best medical infrastructure. Yet, the chief minister of the state, Uddhav Thackeray, has been blaming migrants as well as that Maharashtra is a major financial and transportation hub for the Covid crisis

in his state ever since its inception.

Modi has finally dispatched a team to Maharashtra to figure out what is going wrong there. A security scare near the house of Mukesh Ambani, India's richest man, seems to have spooked Maharashtra's government. One thing has led to another with the uncovering of a major possible scam in Thackeray's government. Apparently, the police were being coerced to collect hafta (protection money) from shopkeepers and bars to the tune of crores.

When there are frequent lockdowns in the state, how are business establishments able to pony up such hefty payments? That is just the irony of India. People are dying from Covid en masse, and the government of the day is apparently busy running a racket. All deaths are ascribed to their karma. How can a government manage a massive pandemic while at the same time being distracted by corruption and by coping with the ire of the country's richest man and one of its most powerful?

If Maharashtra seems singularly capable of managing the pandemic soon enough, Modi must certainly consider dispatching Thackeray's government in short order and imposing federal rule.

Masks work, they don't work. Social distancing works, it doesn't work. Lockdowns work, they don't work? Who knows what's going on? President Bolsonaro has asked Brazilians to stop whining about their dead. One thought that one mourned for one's dead, not whined for them. But Brazilians are so busy burying their dead, whose corpses arrive faster than they can dig their unmarked graves, that they have neither the time nor the energy to either whine or mourn.

The writer is an expert on energy and contributes regularly to publications in India and overseas.

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

Dr. H.S. Gour has written a general review of the work so far accomplished by the Legislative Assembly at Delhi, in which he himself has taken an active part. Impression formed behind the scenes of the Assembly are of considerable interest, and Dr. Gour's impressions point to a success as great as could have been anticipated by the most sanguine. Men who have put their own shoulders to the wheel, as a rule, have neither the time nor the disposition to enact the part of grumbling critics. There is a business-like tone in Dr. Gour's account which is refreshing. The story he has to tell is one of vigorous and progressive work, which may or may not involve differences of opinion but which leaves no doubt as to the vitality of the Assembly. There is always a risk lest ardour for retrenchment should lead to false economy, but this risk is minimised by the reasonable spirit of which the Assembly has given proof. Dr. Gour speaks of "crushing defeats" inflicted by the Opposition upon the Ministerialists. These, at any rate, disprove the accusation which extremist politicians are fond of making that the moderates have merged themselves in the bureaucracy. It has been claimed, says Dr. Gour, that the Assembly has accomplished in three months much of what the Congress has been crying for in thirty years.

NEWS ITEMS

NOAKHALI FERRY BOAT FATALITY

A ferry boat running between the Island of Hatia and the mainland of Noakhali was capsized by a violent gale while on its way to Noakhali. 125 passengers were drowned. The vessel, which is said to have been carrying about 120 passengers and about 150 maunds of rice and paddy, was overtaken by a strong gale near Char Jabbar and ultimately ran against a submerged char where it remained fast. There was a strong current running and the vessel was badly buffeted by the waves and eventually capsized and broke in two. About sixty passengers were picked up by the Char Jabbar ferry boatmen and were taken to the town in an exhausted condition. There is no trace of the other passengers and it is feared that the death toll is heavy.

BRITISH MISSION IN KABUL

PESHAWAR, APR 13
Private advices from Kabul show that since the return of Sir Henry Dobbs from Delhi he has busily resumed his negotiations with the Afghan Government. The general impression in Kabul is that there is little likelihood of a final decision for some time to come. Several factors contribute to make the negotiations difficult and complicated, notably the fact that the Afghan Government are endeavouring to enter into treaty engagements with several Powers at once and the same time. Enough has been revealed regarding these in Sir Robert Horne's note to Krassin in connection with the Russo-British Trade Agreement to make it clear that the Afghan Government will have no easy task in readjusting their engagements with Russia so as to make them compatible with a treaty with Great Britain.

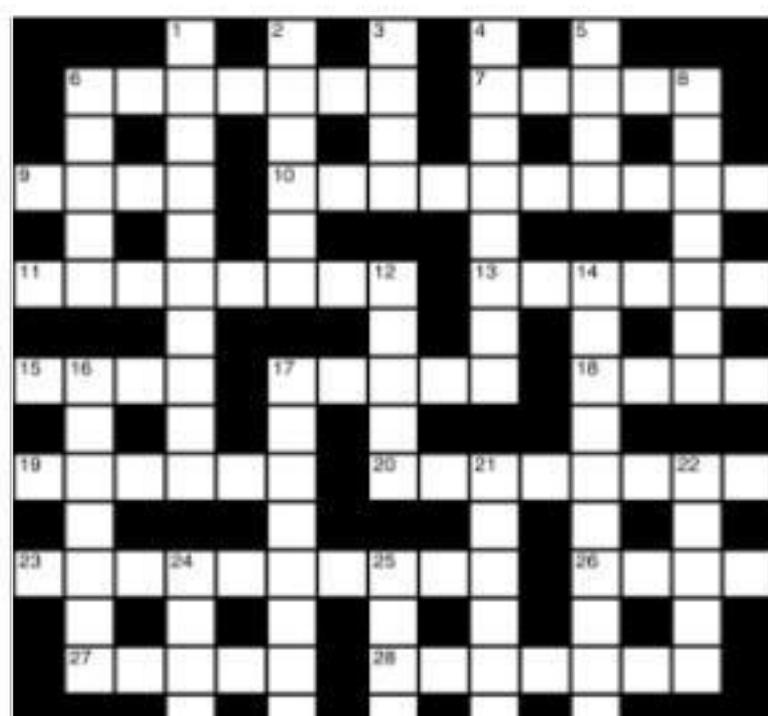
GERMANY'S SETTLING DAY

ALLAHABAD, APR 13
The miners' strike has distracted attention from the important fact that unless some hitherto un-indicated change takes place in the situation, the Allies must shortly consider the bringing of some further pressure to bear on Germany to compel her to pay what she has agreed to pay. The sum of £1,000,000,000 sterling has to be paid by May. Germany has claimed that it has been paid; that it is part of, and not additional to, the Paris Conference demands and that under the treaty she is entitled to convert any unpaid balance into bonds. The present situation he adds, should be regarded as extremely grave. M. Briand's speech in the Senate was no political manoeuvre.

SUGGESTED SUSPENSION OF NON-COOPERATION

DELHI, APR 13
Interviewed by a representative of the Associated Press, Mr. Asaf Ali emphatically re-affirmed his faith in the effectiveness of the non-violent non-cooperation movement. He further asserted that the method adopted by the Government to combat the movement, being proof of open war, could hardly be expected to restore the confidence of the people in the Government. Questioned regarding Mr. Raza Ali's letter to Mr. Gandhi for a suspension of the movement for two months, he suggested the Hon. Member might have been gratifying a desire to stand in the limelight. There was not the least intention on the part of the non-cooperators, so far as he knew, to relax the campaign.

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 6 One turning in abandoned terrier (7)
- 7 Electric current inside one cooking main (5)
- 9 Leaders to allow lascivious Brits into French commune (4)
- 10 World-famous rock group from the South West? (10)
- 11 Take a break, with opportunity to get cottage in US (8)
- 13 One spotted punching peaceful group and small boxers? (6)
- 15 Drinking last of ale, Hoskins had a thought! (4)
- 17 I flog hot items from a wooden enclosure, perhaps? (5)
- 18 Load of work? That's no good! (4)
- 19 Egotistical Republican leaders must be pushed into river by a Brownie? (6)
- 20 You might see them atop a house with hand in knickers (8)
- 23 Actor and medic slammed by The People (10)
- 26 Drugs that man from Bow smuggled inside flipping kid (4)
- 27 Mug? One can be seen in ultimately crass PM's address! (5)
- 28 One that smokes bit of tobacco on red jumper? (7)

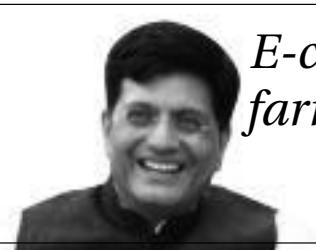
DOWN

- 1 An increasingly bare display a priest set out (10)
- 2 Get up, taking E with half-cut Toff and one of her pals? (6)
- 3 Right around lunchtime, love to have a threesome (4)
- 4 She'd clue 'pants' as something a secretary might have a hand in! (8)
- 5 Perfectly acceptable penalty (4)
- 6 Sort to be grabbed by heartless referee or linesman (5)
- 8 Piece of foliage covering up twig and berries? (3,4)
- 12 Grow a pair of primarily nice-scented Umbellularia in plot (3,2)
- 14 Do over grand lot in northern industrial town (10)
- 16 Thirteen artists with lead in their pencils? (7)
- 17 Sweet-smelling fish brought up during loud storm (8)
- 21 Steal train to make a bit of cash abroad (6)
- 22 Some sex actually is spot on (5)
- 24 Too much port gets daughter going! (4)
- 25 Conservative leader's rubbish without diplomatic skill (4)

NO 2883

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





E-commerce platform eSaNTA for marine products will empower farmers as they will be able to sell their produce at the click of a button.

PIYUSH GOYAL
UNION COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER

THUMBNAILS

NSE Data Room: NSE on Monday said it has launched a cloud-based research facility ~ NSE Data Room (NDR) ~ to encourage research based on Indian capital markets, towards facilitating researchers to access and analyse historical orders and trades data. Such a facility will not only allow usage of data available within NSE but in turn will also provide an enabling platform that paves the way for a wider gamut of research opportunities, the exchange said in a statement. The NDR is a cloud-based data repository system with basic analytical tools and a software environment that can be accessed from any part of the country. PTI

APACMed committee: The Asia Pacific Medical Technology Association (APACMed) has appointed a new executive committee (ExCo) in India. The committee comprises of Pavan Mocherla, MD, Becton Dickinson India, South Asia, as the chairperson; Meenakshi Nevatia, MD, Stryker India as vice-chairperson; Narendra Varde, MD, Roche India & Neighbouring Markets as vice-chairperson, according to a Press release issued by the association. SNS

Ford cars: Ford's cars & SUVs are the most affordable to maintain in their respective segments, according to Autocar India's Vehicle Maintenance report. The report that covers all vehicle segments and manufacturers, said Ford products were among the most economical ~ ranging from Rs 20,682 or 34 paisa per kilometre for Ford Figo to Rs 42,548 or 71 paisa per kilometre for Ford Endeavour ~ to maintain against segment leaders over a 60,000-kilometre or five-year ownership cycle. SNS

Samsung offer: Samsung on Tuesday launched "Back to School" campaign that offers exciting discounts on Galaxy tablets to school and college going students. The offers are applicable on Galaxy Tab S6 Lite, Galaxy Tab A7, Galaxy Tab S7 and Galaxy Tab S7+, the company said in a Press statement. SNS

Bangle Utsav: Jewellery retail chain Senco Gold & Diamonds on Tuesday announced the commencement of the "Bangle Utsav 2021". Commenting on the occasion, Suvankar Sen, CEO, Senco Gold & Diamonds, said: "Bangle Utsav for us is a celebration of womanhood. It's a tribute to the Indian women of today who take on multiple responsibilities and play a crucial role in shaping our society." SNS

Smartphone: Smartphone brand iQOO on Tuesday announced that its powerful iQOO 7 series will be available in India on Amazon.in. The iQOO 7 series will have two devices in the line-up ~ iQOO 7 Legend and iQOO 7, the company said. SNS

2nd Covid wave poses risk to economic recovery: Moody's

Reimposition of measures to curb the spread of the virus will hit economic activity, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

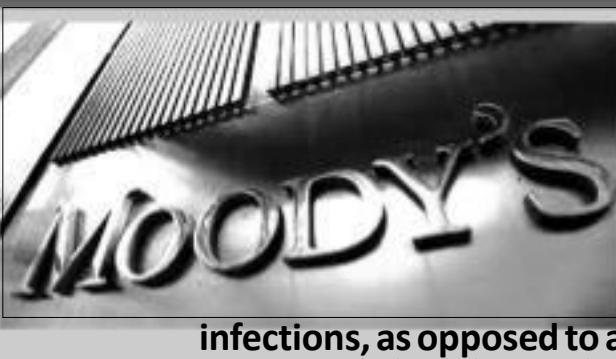
The second wave of Covid-19 infections presents a risk to India's growth forecast as the reimposition of measures to curb the spread of the virus will hit economic activity, but a double-digit GDP growth is likely in 2021, given the low level of activity last year, Moody's said today.

Moody's expects that given the focus on "micro-containment zones" to deal with the current wave of infections, as opposed to a nationwide lockdown, the impact on economic activity would be less severe than that seen in 2020.

"India's very low coronavirus death count (only about 1,70,175 deaths) have been recorded as of 12 April and relatively very young population also help mitigate risks. GDP is still likely to grow in double digits in 2021, given the low level of activity in 2020," Moody's Investors Service said.

In its commentary on India, Moody's said the counter-

DOUBLE-DIGIT GROWTH LIKELY



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measures to combat the second wave ~ some of which are due to remain in place at least until the end of April ~ risk weakening the economic recovery. However, the targeted nature of containment measures and rapid progress on vaccinating the population will mitigate the credit-negative impact.

In February, Moody's had bettered India's growth projection for the current fiscal year, which began on 1 April to 13.7 per cent as economic activity gathered pace. For the calendar year 2021,

Moody's has projected economic growth rate at 12 per cent.

As per official estimates, the Indian economy contracted by 8 per cent in 2020-21 fiscal year, which ended on 31 March 2021.

"The second wave of infections presents a risk to our growth forecast as the reimposition of virus management measures will curb economic activity and could dampen market and consumer sentiment," Moody's said.

Retail and recreational activity across India had

dropped by 25 per cent as of 7 April compared with 24 February, according to Google mobility data. This was mirrored in the Reserve Bank of India's March consumer confidence survey which showed a deterioration in perceptions of the economic situation and expectations of decreased spending on non-essential items, it noted.

Moody's said vaccination will be a key element in controlling the second wave of Covid-19 as the authorities balance virus management against maintaining economic activity.

India began its vaccination drive against Covid-19 in mid-January and has administered 100 million doses of the vaccine as of 10 April, becoming the fastest country to reach that threshold so far.

However, a shortage of vaccines and India's nearly 1.4 billion population, which includes many people living in rural, more remote locations, could slow the progress of the vaccine rollout, it added.

As of early April, around 7 per cent of the population

has been inoculated. The vaccination drive was expanded to all citizens aged 45 years and above, which is about 25 per cent of the population, from 1 April.

Workplace vaccination centres were also launched on 11 April, through which the government expects to facilitate inoculation among workers, while minimising risk.

"India has prioritised domestic vaccine distribution, delaying exports, amid the resurgence in coronavirus infections," Moody's said.

The government also placed a temporary prohibition on the export of Remdesivir, which is used in the treatment of coronavirus patients.

India has been experiencing a second wave of coronavirus infections since March 2021.

"Daily new reported cases for the month totalled 1.1 million, jumping from the 0.4 million cases reported in February, which was the lowest since the country's 2.6 million peak in September 2020 during the first wave," Moody's said.

S&P index to remove Adani Ports for links with Myanmar military

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

Gautam Adani's port-to-energy conglomerate had said that it won the Yangon International Terminal project in Myanmar last year through a global competitive bid, as it sought to clarify on allegations of having paid \$30 million to Myanmar military-controlled firm for the deal.

The land acquisition for developing a port in the main city of Yangon was facilitated by the agency under Aung San Suu Kyi's government, Adani Group had said.

Clarifying on ABC News report on \$30 million paid to the Myanmar Economic Corporation in "land lease fees", the group had said APSEZ won the Yangon international terminal project through a global competitive bid. "The project, fully owned and developed by APSEZ, is an independent container terminal with no joint venture partners."

ABC News reported that APSEZ chief executive Karan Adani had in July 2019 met Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, the army chief who led the coup against the elected government.

Indirect tax collection up 12.3% at ₹10.71 lakh cr

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 13 APRIL

The net indirect tax collections (GST and non-GST) for financial year 2020-21 stood at Rs 10.71 lakh crore, registering a growth of 12.3 per cent over the previous fiscal, say data released by the government today. The last financial year's (2019-20) collection was Rs 9.54 lakh crore.

"Net indirect tax collection for the financial year 2020-21 shows that 108.2 per cent of the revised estimates (RE) of indirect taxes for financial year 2020-21 has been achieved," reads the Press release from the finance ministry.

As regards customs, net tax collections stood at Rs 1.32 lakh crore during financial year 2020-21 as compared to Rs 1.09 lakh crore during the previous financial year, thereby registering a growth of around 21 per cent.

Thus, the actual net GST collection is 106 per cent of total targeted collection, though these are 8 per cent lower than the last FY's collection," reads the Press statement.

The GST collections, the government informed, were severely affected in the first half of the financial year on account of Covid. However, in the second half, the GST collections registered a good growth and collections exceeded Rs 1 lakh crore in each of the last six months. It also mentioned that March saw an all-time high of GST collection at Rs 1.24 lakh crore after very good figures in the month of January and February. Several measures taken by the Central government helped in improving compliance in goods and services tax.

Net tax collections on account of GST of Centre (CGST+IGST+ Compensation Cess) during financial year 2020-21 is Rs 5.48 lakh crore as compared to Rs 5.99 lakh crore in the previous financial year, thereby registering a growth of more than 59 per cent.

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The first action will be to put the economy in order, promote investment and generate employment.

GUILLERMO LASSO
PRESIDENT-ELECT OF ECUADOR

NEW DELHI, WEDNESDAY 14 APRIL 2021

09

China objection against Fukushima nuclear plant

Releasing water in the ocean the most realistic method by a govt panel: Tokyo

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 13 APRIL

China on Tuesday objected to Japan's move to release treated radioactive water from the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant into the sea, warning Tokyo that "it reserves the right to make further reactions".

Japan decided on Tuesday to release treated radioactive water from crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant into the sea, having assessed there will be no negative impact on human health or the environment despite concerns from local fishermen and neighbouring countries, Japan Times reported.

Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga met with members of his Cabinet to for-



Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, left, attends a cabinet meeting at his official residence ■ AGENCIES

malise the decision, which comes a decade after a massive earthquake and tsunami triggered a triple meltdown in March 2011.

While the US-backed Japan's move, it drew sharp reactions from neighbouring China and South Korea.

"As a close neighbour and

stakeholder, the Chinese side expresses grave concern over this," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

"The Fukushima nuclear accident is one of the most serious in world history. The leak of large amounts of radioactive materials has had far-reaching implications on

the marine environment, food safety and human health," it said. It said a review report by the International Atomic Energy Agency expert team points out that "if the wastewater containing tritium from the Fukushima nuclear plant is discharged into the sea, it will affect the marine environment and people's health of neighbouring countries and that the treated wastewater needs to be further purified to remove other radionuclides.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry also quoted a report by the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation which believes that the impact of the wastewater on the marine ecological environment requires continued monitoring.

The Japanese government

"should re-evaluate the issue and refrain from wantonly discharging the wastewater before reaching consensus with all stakeholders and the IAEA through full consultations, the statement said.

Koo Yoon-cheol, head of South Korea's Office for Government Policy Coordination, said that the government will take every necessary measure in line with the principle of keeping its people safe from the contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant. South Korea on Tuesday summoned Japanese Ambassador Koichi Aiboshi over Tokyo's decision to release contaminated water from the Fukushima nuclear plant.

However, the US has defended the Japanese government's decision, saying the release of treated water is an "acceptable approach".

Thailand sees steady rise in covid cases

BANGKOK, 13 APRIL

Thailand recorded a third day in a row with more than 900 coronavirus cases on Tuesday as thousands of people swarmed to beaches on the first day of a long national holiday despite warnings from health officials.

Dr Opas Karnkavipong, director-general of Disease Control Department, warned that possible lockdowns will be implemented next week when people return to the cities after the traditional New Year festival, known as Songkran. He said the government will implement a work-from-home order for all public services after the holiday. The government reported 965 new cases Tuesday to bring the totals since the pandemic began to 34,575 infections and 97 deaths. More than 6,000 of those cases have been recorded since April 1, when the new surge erupted in nightclubs in Bangkok. AP

Hong Kong elections to take place in December



ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 13 APRIL

eral political system as a former British colony. China imposed a national security law on Hong Kong last year and is following up this year with a revamp of the electoral process.

The crackdown comes in the wake of months of pro-democracy protests in 2019 that brought hundreds of thousands to the streets and turned violent as the government resisted the movement's demands. In the current 70-member legislature, voters elect half the members and the other half are chosen by constituencies representing various professions and interest groups. Many of the constituencies lean pro-Beijing, ensuring that wing a majority in the legislature.

The new body will have 20 elected members, 30 chosen by the constituencies and 40 by an Election Committee which also chooses the city's leader. The committee, which will be expanded from 1,200 to 1,500 members, is dominated by supporters of the central government in Beijing.

A new, separate body will also be set up to review the qualifications of candidates for office in Hong Kong to ensure that the city is governed by patriots, in the language of the central government.

Elections for the Election Committee, which will choose the city's leader and 40 lawmakers, will be held on 19 Sept. Elections for the chief executive will take place on 27 March, 2022, Lam said Tuesday.

Three killed as Pakistan indulges in clashes between police and Islamists

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LAHORE, 13 APRIL

Two demonstrators and a policeman were killed Tuesday in violent clashes between Islamists and police in Pakistan, hours after authorities arrested the head of an Islamist party in the eastern city of Lahore, a senior official and local media reported.

The policeman was killed in overnight clashes with the supporters of Saad Rizvi, the head of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan who was arrested on Monday, a senior police officer Ghulam Mohammad

Dogar said. Ten policemen were also wounded in these clashes in the town of Shahdara near Lahore.

Two Islamists were reportedly killed in the eastern Punjab province. The violence began Monday after police arrested Rizvi for threatening protests if the government did not expel France's ambassador over depictions of Islam's Prophet Muhammad.

According to Dogar, the arrest was aimed at maintaining law and order. But Rizvi's detention quickly sparked violent protests by Islamists in cities around the

country. The protesters blocked highways and roads in several cities.

The deadly clashes come two days after Rizvi in a statement asked the government of Prime Minister Imran Khan to honor what he said was a commitment it made in February to his party to expel the French envoy before April 20 over the publication in France of depictions of Islam's Prophet. However, the government has said it only committed to discussing the matter in Parliament. The reaction from Rizvi's supporters against his arrest was swift.

After summoning Ambassador Huang Xilian on Monday, Philippine Foreign Undersecretary Elizabeth Buenaventura expressed to him Manila's displeasure over the illegal lingering presence of Chinese vessels around Julian Felipe Reef, the foreign affairs department said in a statement, using the Philippine name for Whitsun Reef in the most hotly disputed Spratlys region of the busy waterway.

The Philippine govern-

IN OLYMPIC MOOD



Olympic fan Kyoko Ishikawa shows her elation at her home. ■ AGENCIES

Philippines calls Chinese ambassador over reef dispute

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MANILA, 13 APRIL

The Philippine government summoned the Chinese ambassador to press its demand for Chinese vessels to immediately leave a reef claimed by Manila in the South China Sea and said their presence was stoking tensions, officials said Tuesday.

The escalating feud between Manila and Beijing started after more than 200 Chinese vessels suspected by Philippine authorities to be operated by militias were spotted early last month at Whitsun Reef.

The Philippine govern-

ment demanded the vessels leave then deployed coast guard and patrol vessels to the area but China said it owns the reef and the Chinese vessels were sheltering from rough seas.

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waterway.

Muslims began marking Ramzan with communal prayers Tuesday in a socially distanced contrast to the empty mosques of a year ago when Islam's holiest month coincided with the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

COVID-19 cases are spiking in Indonesia, the world's most populous Muslim nation, but vaccines are being administered and the government is loosening restrictions.

Mosques were allowed to open for Ramzan prayers with strict health protocols in place,

and with malls and cafes open, passers-by could again see curtains shielding the sight of food from people



Muslims pray in Indonesia as they practise social distancing to curb the spread of the new coronavirus during an evening prayer called "tarawih". ■ AGENCIES

spaces and risk spreading the virus.

Muslims this year are expecting a virus resurgence but all mosques will be con-

tinuing to adhere to social distancing and other precautions, which will significantly reduce crowds, said Nasaruddin Umar, imam of Jakarta's Istiqlal grand mosque.

I miss everything of Ramzan already, Umar said. The heart of faithful Muslims is tied to the mosque... the longing for Ramzan lovers has finally been relieved today although the pandemic has not yet ended.

In the capital, Jakarta, authorities disinfected 317 mosques on Sunday in preparation for Ramzan, said Jakarta Gov. Anies Baswedan. Social distancing markers have been installed and soap and hand sanitizers have been prepared.

The government also will allow people to hold iftar gatherings during Ramzan in restaurants, malls and cafes, which can serve customers up to 50 per cent of their capac-

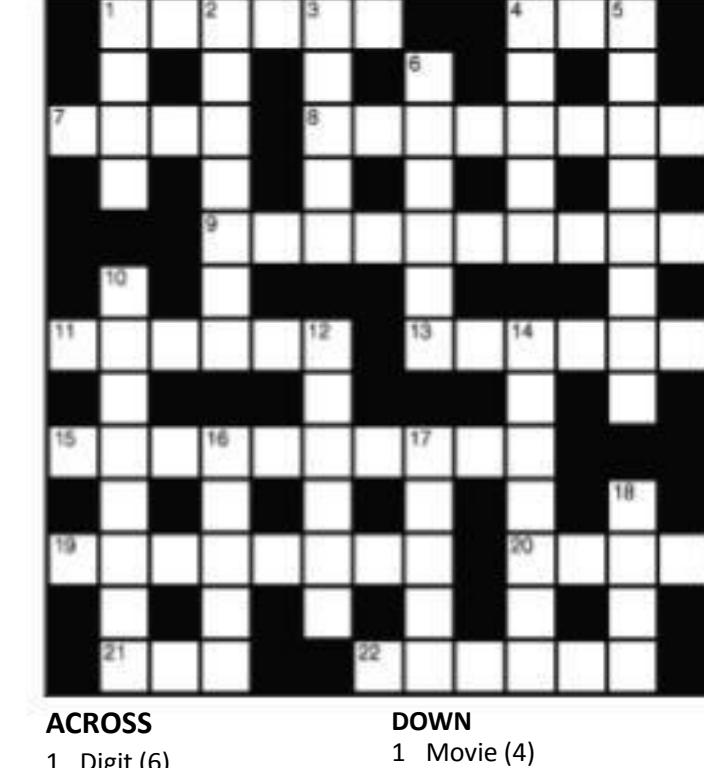
ity and follow strict health guidelines. Iftar occurs at sunset, the time Muslims break their fast and usually the prime time for people to have dinner together with friends and family members before the night prayer.

Easing restrictions is like a breath of fresh air for us who are tired by this Covid-19 outbreak, said Anna Mardyaustuti, a resident in Jakarta. Yes, they should act to stop the virus, but not block the door to worship or to change our tradition of Ramzan entirely, she said.

In Malaysia, Wan Noradrina Balqis, 21, welcomed the return of community prayers in mosques but said she will avoid Ramzan bazaars that are often packed with people.

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS

- Digit (6)
- Be in debt (3)
- Walk heavily (4)
- Purgative (5,5)
- Creamy dessert (6)
- Abandon (6)
- Ordinary local language (10)
- Ancient Indian language (8)
- Melody (4)
- Plaything (3)
- Flight of fancy (6)
- Digit (6)
- Female deity (7)
- Contests of speed (5)
- Musical drama (5)
- So forth (2,6)
- Injured (6)
- Prediction (8)
- Again! (6)
- Laver (7)
- Unpleasant (5)
- Fastening (5)
- Covetousness (4)

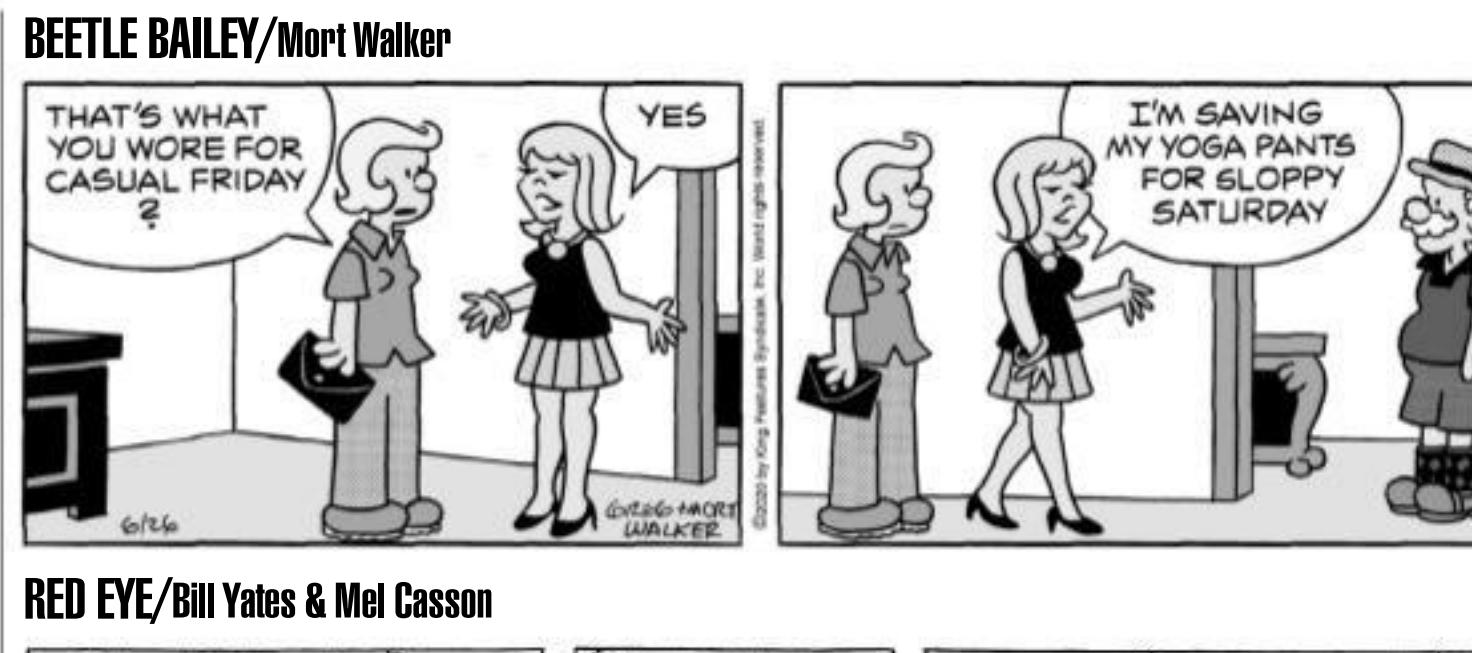
DOWN

- Movie (4)
- Anæmia, 13 Mundi, 14 Grievous, 15 Bantor, 16 Sheer, 17 Upon, 18 Fores, 19 Hot, 20 Shiftless, 21 Tee.
- Elf
- Pop-ups
- Author
- Entourage
- Hot
- Sheer
- Tee
- Shiftless

By arrangement with The Independent

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

- AIMS 26588500, 26588900
- Moolchand Medcity (formerly Hospital) 42000000 & 24-hour Chemist Shop 42000447
- Vidyasagar Institute for Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences 26924300, 26924304
- Batra Hospital & Medical Research Centre 29051280, 29958747
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay 25496320, 25494403
- Guru Tegh Bahadur 23717473, 23253230

RAILWAY INQUIRY

- General Inquiry 139
- Toll Free Nos. 1800125151
- SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

- ISBT (General Inquiry): 23868836, 23865181
- INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

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

• Rajasthan Roadways 23864470

• U.P. Roadways 23868709

• AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

• INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, 18001803838, Reservation 43513186; Indigo Airlines Air

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

• RAJASTHAN Roadways 23864470

• U.P. Roadways 23868709

• AIR CANADA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407

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

• KUWAIT AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23354373

SCRABBLE® BRAND

YOUNGER

RONCSILI

NYLEGPAI

OACLSVIA

PAR SCORE 150-160

by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL

TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

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PAR 1 = 10

PAR 2 = 20

PAR 3 = 80

PAR 4 = 60

JUDD'S TOTAL = 170

SCRABBLE®



Muslim Americans continue to be targeted by bullying, bigotry, and hate crimes. This is wrong. No one in America should ever live in fear of expressing his or her faith.

US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN

THUMBNAILS



Hundreds of persons over 60-years-old, line up to be vaccinated with the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine at the University Olympic Stadium in Mexico City on Tuesday. AP

Austria health minister resigns: Austria's health minister announced his resignation on Tuesday, saying that he couldn't continue in the grueling job of leading the country's coronavirus response because of persistent personal health problems caused by overwork. Rudolf Anschober, 60, had been health minister since January 2020. AP

US Bishop Hoeppner resigns: A Minnesota bishop who was investigated by the Vatican for allegedly interfering with past investigations into clergy sexual abuse has resigned. The Vatican said on Tuesday that Pope Francis accepted the resignation of Bishop Michael Hoeppner (71) and named a temporary replacement to run the Crookston diocese. AP

Green Card backlog: Urging American lawmakers to pass a legislation that ends the archaic per country quota for legal permanent residency in the US, a group of frontline Indian-American healthcare professionals, stuck in the 150-plus-year Green Card backlog, held a peaceful demonstration in front of the Capitol. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence of being granted the privilege of residing permanently in the country. AP

Defence set to take turn in ex-cop's trial in Floyd death

ASSOCIATED PRESS

MINNEAPOLIS, 13 APRIL

The defence for a former Minneapolis police officer charged in George Floyd's death was set to start presenting its case on Tuesday, following 11 days of a prosecution narrative that combined wrenching video with clinical analysis by medical and use-of-force experts to condemn Derek Chauvin's actions.

Prosecutors called their final witnesses Monday, leaving only some administrative matters before they were expected to rest Tuesday. Once the defense takes over, Chauvin attorney Eric Nelson is expected to have his own experts testify that it was Floyd's drug use and bad heart, not Chauvin's actions, that killed him. The defense hasn't said whether Chauvin will take the stand.

Prosecutors effectively wrapped up their case with George Floyd's younger brother, who recalled Floyd, followed by another look at the harrowing video and testimony from a use-of-force expert who said Chauvin's actions were clearly unreasonable.

Seth Stoughton, a professor at the University of South Carolina School of Law, judged

US recommends 'pause' for J&J vaccine over clot reports

Report says the clots were observed along with reduced platelet counts in vaccinated people

AP & PTI

WASHINGTON/LONDON, 13 APRIL



The US is recommending a pause in administration of the single-dose Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine to investigate reports of potentially dangerous blood clots.

In a joint statement on Tuesday, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration said they were investigating clots in six women that occurred in the days after vaccination.

The clots were observed along with reduced platelet counts making the usual treatment for blood clots, the blood thinner heparin, potentially dangerous.

More than 6.8 million doses of the J&J vaccine have been administered in the US, the vast majority with no or mild side effects.

US federal distribution channels, including mass vaccination sites, will pause the use of the J&J shot, and states and other providers are expected to follow. The other two authorised vaccines, from Moderna and Pfizer, are not affected by the pause.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices will meet Wednesday to discuss the cases and the FDA has also launched an investigation into the cause of the clots and low platelet counts.

Until that process is complete, we are recommending a pause in the use of this vaccine out of an abundance of caution, Dr. Anne Schuchat, Principal Deputy Director of the CDC and Dr. Peter Marks, director of the FDA's Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research said in a joint statement.

They are recommending that people who were given the J&J vaccine who are experiencing severe headache, abdominal pain, leg pain, or shortness of breath within three weeks after receiving the shot contact their health care provider.

Officials say they also want to educate vaccine providers and health professionals about the unique treatment required for this type of clot.

The J&J vaccine received emergency use authorisation from the FDA in late February with great fanfare, with hopes that its single-dose and relatively simple storage requirements would speed vaccinations across the country. Yet the shot only makes up a small fraction of the doses administered in the US as J&J has been plagued by production delays and manufacturing errors at the Baltimore plant of a contractor.

Last week the drugmaker took over the facility to scale up production in hopes of meeting its commitment to the US government of providing about 100 million doses by the end of May.

Until now concern about the unusual blood clots has centered on the vaccine from AstraZeneca, which has not yet received authorisation in the US. Last week, European regulators said they found a possible link between the shots and a very rare type of blood clot that occurs together with low blood platelets, one that seems to occur more in younger people.

The European Medicines Agency stressed that the benefits of receiving the vaccine outweigh the risks for most people. But several countries have imposed limits on who can receive the vaccine; Britain recommended that people under 30 be offered alternatives. But the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines are

made with the same technology. Leading Covid-19 vaccines train the body to recognise the spike protein that coats the outer surface of the coronavirus. But the J&J and AstraZeneca vaccines use a cold virus, called an adenovirus, to carry the spike gene into the body. J&J uses a human adenovirus to create its vaccine while AstraZeneca uses a chimpanzee version.

The announcement hit US stock markets immediately, with Dow futures falling almost 200 points just over two hours before the opening bell. Shares of Johnson & Johnson dropped almost three per cent.

UK to vaccinate all over 45 years of age

The National Health Service (NHS) in England on Tuesday expanded the Covid-19 vaccination programme to the next cohort on its age-based priority list to all above 45 years of age, after it announced that the target to cover over 50s had been met ahead of the 15 April deadline.

The government had set a target to offer a Covid-19 jab to all above 50 years, the clinically vulnerable and health and social care workers about 32 million people by this Thursday. The NHS confirmed that nearly 40 million vaccine doses had now been administered across the UK.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson welcomed "another hugely significant milestone", adding that the focus would now be on completing essential second doses as well as to meet the target of offering all adults a vaccine by July end.

Under the new regulatory guidance, when vaccines are expanded to the under-30s age group, they would be offered either the Pfizer or Moderna jabs after concerns about a possible link to very rare blood clots with the AstraZeneca vaccine.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has insisted that the benefits of the vaccine continue to outweigh

WHO urges curb in market sale of captured animals

ASSOCIATED PRESS

GENEVA, 13 APRIL

The United Nations' health agency on Tuesday urged countries to suspend the sale of live animals captured from the wild in food markets as an emergency measure, saying wild animals are a leading source of emerging infectious diseases like the coronavirus.

The World Health Organisation, backed by key partners, issued new guidance saying that animals particularly wild animals are the source of more than 70 percent of all emerging infectious diseases in humans, many of which are caused by novel viruses.

The coronavirus' origins more than a year ago have been the source of intense speculation, much of it centred around the likelihood that it was carried by bats

any risks, but said those aged 18-29 in the UK will be offered an alternative vaccine instead.

African Covid variant found, UK surge testing

The UK's National Health Service (NHS) has said it is using a surge testing system in two areas of south London this week after it was found to have a "significant" cluster of the faster-spreading South African variant of Covid-19.

The NHS Test and Trace said it is providing additional testing and genomic sequencing across parts of Wandsworth and Lambeth, where 44 confirmed and 30 probable cases of the variant first identified in South Africa have been found.

All identified cases are isolating or have completed their isolation, and their contacts have been traced and asked to isolate. The first case

and passed to humans through an intermediary species sold as food or medicine in traditional Chinese wet markets. The pandemic first appeared in the city of Wuhan, China.

WHO highlighted the risk of direct transmission of emerging infectious diseases to humans who come in contact with bodily fluids of an infected animal, and cited the additional risk of picking it up in places where such animals are housed or locations that could have been contaminated with such viruses.

Globally, traditional markets can play a central role in providing food and livelihoods for large populations, WHO said in a statement. However, Banning the sale of the animals can protect people's health both those working there and those shopping there.

of the variant in the area was identified in early March.

"The cluster of cases of the variant first identified in South Africa found in parts of South London, predominantly the Lambeth and Wandsworth areas is significant. It's really important people in the local area play their part in stopping any further spread within the local community," Dr Susan Hopkins, Chief Medical Adviser for NHS Test and Trace, said on Monday.

Under the surge testing system, everybody aged 11 years and over who resides in, works in, or travels through the affected boroughs of south London is strongly encouraged to take a Covid-19 PCR test, whether they are showing symptoms or not.

The NHS described it as the largest surge testing operation to date.

Iran warns sabotage could hurt Vienna talks over nuke deal



ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, 13 APRIL

Despite evidence that shows the role of the U.S. as main instigator of nuclear sabotage against Iran, unfortunately some statesmen, by purging the US of responsibility, (aid) Washington's crimes against the people of Iran, the paper said in Tuesday's editions. While Kayhan is a small-circulation newspaper, its editor-in-chief, Hossein Sharatiadari, was appointed by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and has been described as an adviser to him in the past.

Those talks are aimed at finding a way for the United States to re-enter the agreement, the goal of which is to limit Iran's enrichment of uranium in exchange relief on sanctions.

The US has insisted it had nothing to do with Sunday's sabotage at the Natanz nuclear facility. Instead, Israel is widely believed to have carried out the assault that damaged centrifuges, though it has not claimed it. But Mohammad Javad Zarif still issued a warning to Washington.

Americans should know that neither sanctions nor sabotage actions would provide them with an instrument for talks," Zarif said in Tehran alongside visiting Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. They should know that these actions would only make the situation difficult for them.

Zarif separately renewed his earlier warning to Israel over the sabotage, saying that if Iran determines its arch-enemy was behind it, "then Israel will get its response and will see what a stupid thing it has done."

Kayhan, the hard-line Tehran newspaper, urged Iran to "walk out of the Vienna talks, suspend all nuclear commitments, retaliate against Israel and identify and dismantle the domestic infiltration network behind the sabotage."

Iran insists its nuclear program is peaceful, though the West and the International Atomic Energy Agency say Tehran had an organised military nuclear program up until the end of 2003. However, the deal prevents it from having enough of a uranium stockpile to be able to pursue a nuclear weapon.

NATO vows to support Ukraine, warns Russia on troop build-up

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BRUSSELS, 13 APRIL



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg expressed the Western military alliance's unwavering support for Ukraine and warned Moscow on Tuesday not to push its troop buildup along Russia's border with the neighbouring country.

NATO stands with Ukraine, Stoltenberg said during a news conference with Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba, calling the Russian movements unjustified, unexplained and deeply concerning.

The comments came amid a rise in cease-fire violations in eastern Ukraine, where Russia-backed separatists and Ukrainian forces have been locked in a conflict since Moscow's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula. More than 14,000 people have died in fighting in eastern Ukraine since 2014, and efforts to negotiate a political settlement have stalled.

Stoltenberg called Moscow's recent troop deployment the biggest military buildup since the conflict in eastern Ukraine began.

Russia has moved thousands of combat troops to

sia was ready to act swiftly and pursue its military goals.

Ukraine has said Russia has accumulated 41,000 troops at its border with eastern Ukraine and 42,000 more in Crimea. The numbers are likely to grow as the troops keep arriving.

The Kremlin has maintained that Russia is free to deploy its troops wherever it wants on its territory and has repeatedly accused the Ukrainian military of provocative actions along the line of control and of planning to retake control of the rebel regions by force. Kremlin officials charged that Kyiv's actions have threatened Russia's security, warning that Russia may intervene to protect Russian speakers in the east.

Underlying Tuesday's meeting is also Ukraine's wish to become a member of NATO over the vehement objections of Moscow.

Minnesota police shooting: Protest after chief says officer meant to use Taser, not gun

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BROOKLYN CENTER, 13 APRIL

Police clashed with protesters for a second night in the Minneapolis suburb where an officer who authorities say apparently intended to fire a Taser, not a handgun, fatally shot a Black man during a traffic stop.

Brooklyn Center Police Chief Tim Gannon described Sunday's shooting death of 20-year-old Daunte Wright as "an accidental discharge." The shooting sparked protests and unrest in an area already on edge because of the trial of the first four police officers charged in George Floyd's death.

Hundreds of protesters faced off against police in Brooklyn Center after nightfall Monday, and hours after a dusk-to-dawn curfew was announced by the governor.

When the protesters wouldn't disperse, police began firing gas canisters and flash-bang grenades, sending clouds wafting over the crowd and chasing some protesters away. A longline of police in riot gear, rhythmically pushing their clubs in front of them, began slowly forcing back the remaining crowds.

"Move back!" the police chanted. "Hands up! Don't shoot!" the crowd chanted back.

By late Monday, only a few dozen protesters remained. There were 40 people arrested Monday night at the Brooklyn Center protest, Minnesota State Patrol Col. Matt Langer said at a news conference early Tuesday. In Minneapolis, 13 arrests were made, including for burglaries and curfew violations, police said.

Law enforcement agencies had stepped up their presence across the Minneapolis area after Sunday night violence. The number of Minnesota National Guard troops was expected to more than double to over 1,000 by Monday night.

Authorities earlier Monday released body camera footage that showed the officer shouting at Wright as police tried to arrest him. "I'll Tase you! I'll Tase you! Taser! Taser! Taser!" she can be heard saying. She draws her weapon after the man breaks free from police outside his car

and gets back behind the wheel. After firing a single shot from her handgun, the car speeds away and the officer is heard saying, "Holy (expletive)! I shot him!"

Brooklyn Center Mayor Mike Elliott called the shooting "deeply tragic" and said the

officer should be fired. "We're going to do everything we can to ensure that justice is done and our communities are made whole," he said.

Elliott later announced that the city council had voted to give his office "command authority" over the police department. This will streamline things and establish a chain of command and leadership," he wrote on Twitter.

He also said the city manager had been fired, and that the deputy city manager would take over his duties. The reason behind the firing was not immediately clear, but the city manager controls the police department, according to

Ellison, the state's first Black attorney general, in addressing a group of protesters not far from the police department ~ telling the demonstrators to use their voices but remain safe.

"We are going to get to the bottom of this, we are going to make sure that there's justice, that there's officers held accountable," Elliott can be heard telling protesters on video posted by a reporter for Minneapolis television station KARE. Ellison reminded the crowd he currently is leading the prosecution of the first officer charged in Floyd's death, and promised Wright's death will not be "swept under the rug."

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Holograms in daily life

A resource-hungry technology could be trimmed and brought within reach

S ANANTHANARAYANAN

Instantly representing distant things in true-life, in three dimensions, has been an elusive dream. The technology itself has been there, but the resources needed for implementation are prohibitive.

Takashi Nishitsui, Takashi Kakue, David Blinder, Tomoyoshi Shimobaba and Tomoyoshi Ito, from Tokyo Metropolitan and Chiba Universities, Japan, and Vrije Universiteit in Brussels, write in the journal, *Scientific Reports*, of developments in the building and transmission of holographic images, which could enable shapes and images to be created and conveyed over distances in a practical way.

Images that are captured in drawing, or in photography, are essentially two dimensional. What they record are the shape and colours of an object, as projected on a plane surface -- a canvas, camera screen, or the retina of the eye. There is an impression of depth as distant parts of a familiar object are shown smaller than nearer parts.

Meaningful appreciation of depth, however, needs two such images, from points that are separated by a distance, like the images on the retinas of a pair of eyes. Images recorded from different points and projected, one to each eye could thus create a life-like image. We may recollect the 3D images in the *Viewmaster* device. But the images are static, and one cannot move one's head and "see around" the objects being shown.

The hologram, however, makes this possible. The hologram is not the recording of the image of an object, as received at a sensor or set of sensors, but is created by capturing the wave-front, or the pattern of light waves that emerge from the object. If the same wave-front is created again, it appears to sensors like a pair of eyes, and what they see is the real object. In normal imaging, however, it is not the wave-front that is captured; it is an image of the object focused on a screen. The hologram, in contrast, does not focus the image, it arises from two sets of light waves, those that come directly from the source

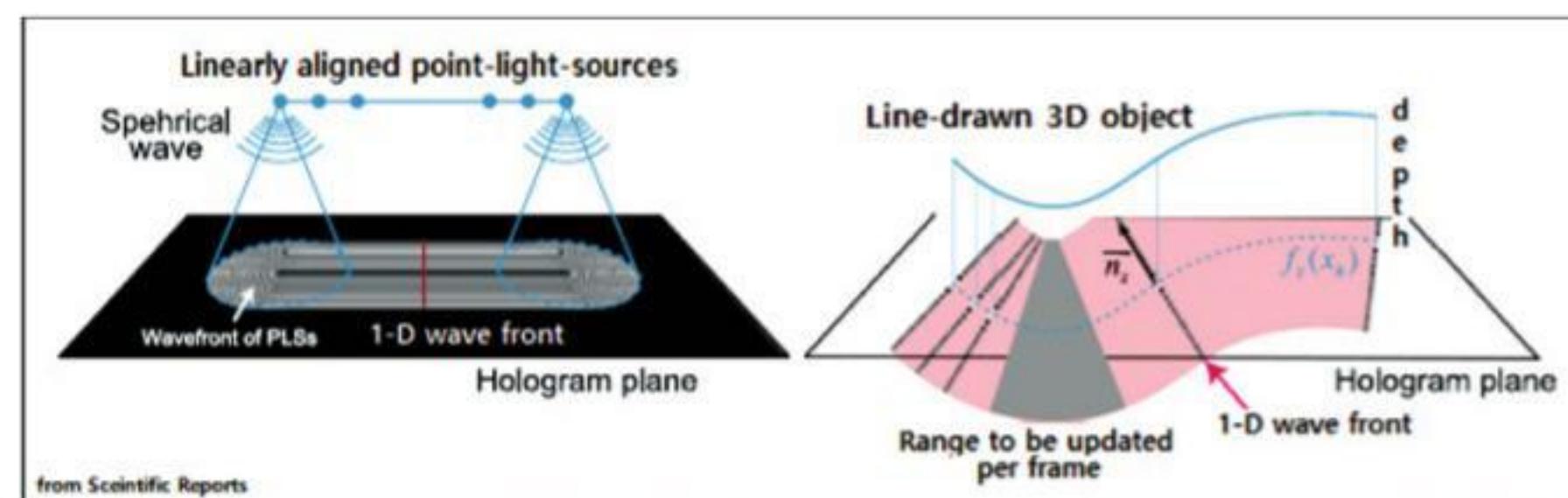
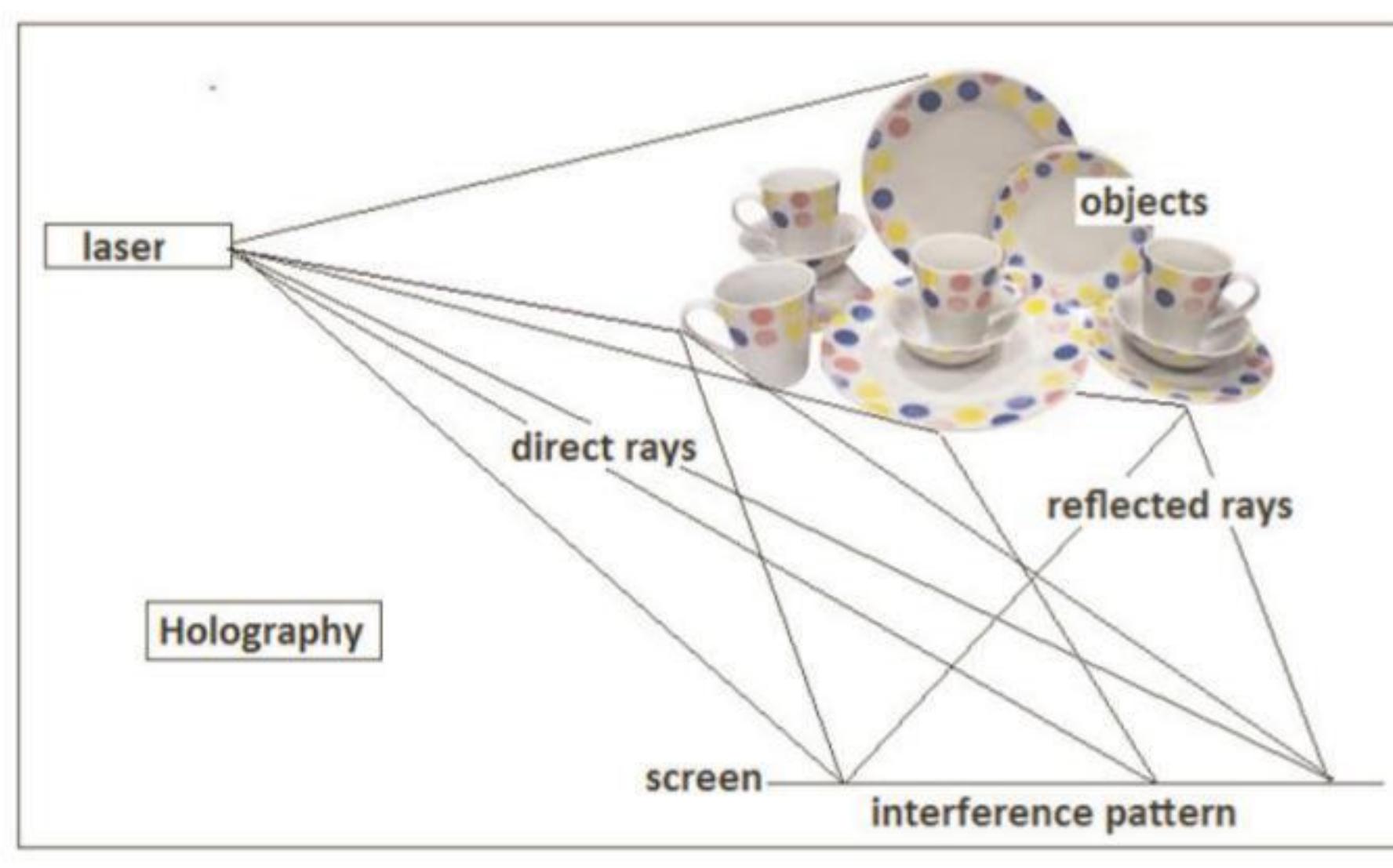
laser and the waves reflected from the objects, and capture the interaction.

Waves from the two sources fall on every point on the hologram plate. And at each point, the waves either add, to get stronger, or cancel, to get weaker. The screen is hence covered with a pattern of dark and bright portions, like a bar-code, and this distribution captures the relationship of the illuminating light and the light that has been reflected by the objects illuminated.

Now, if this screen, with the pattern of dark and bright parts, is again illuminated by a beam from the same laser, the wave-front that emerges would have the same intensity distribution as the wave-front which originally played upon the screen. A person who looks at the screen would thus see the same, original wave-front, and perceive the same objects as before. As the pattern on the screen, and hence the wave-front, does not depend on where the viewer is located, views from different parts of the screen would show different images, as if the original objects were physically there.

Nor is it necessary that holograms be made from actual objects and laser light. The interference can be simulated and the pattern on the hologram can be generated by software. Computer generated holograms -- also called electro-holography -- has become "a very promising technology," the *Scientific Reports* paper says. As the pattern recorded, or generated, arises from interference of light waves, we can imagine that the pattern on the hologram would be fine, with dimensions comparable to the wavelength of light. The quantity of data in the CGH is hence very large and the computers to generate a hologram need extensive resources.

And with all this, what is created is a static pattern. To show motion, we need to create a hologram every sixteenth of a second, so that the eyes see continuous motion. Even if this were made feasible, there is a problem when the data needs to be transmitted. This would be needed in practical applications of the hologram, like transmitting a surgical operation, for review in real time. Or a display of



navigation data as 3D pictures, to a motorist.

Despite all that, however, sophisticated computing facilities are required to achieve practical computing speeds, the paper says.

In the work so far, the distributed PSLs that simulate the object generate two-dimensional wave-fronts, or surfaces, which the computational utilities superimpose, to arrive at the CGH. In the current work, what is considered are the PSLs which are along a line, at the same depth. The result of this method, which the authors call the "Computer Graphics - line method", is a one-dimensional wave-front. Superimposition of one-dimensional wave-fronts is computationally far simpler than doing it with 2D wave-fronts.

The three-dimensional image to be projected is hence built up of multiple 2D images, which consist of out-

lines. Although not with details, the basic depth relationships are maintained. The dimension of depth can hence be added to figures like symbols and letters, which would make it suitable for "car navigation systems and remote work support systems," the paper says.

The method has limitations, one being that "full" 3D is not possible, as continuous lines in the direction of depth are not possible. But it is a method that permits interactive 3D projection, and has the great merit that it can run on an ordinary, consumer computer.

The writer can be contacted at response@simplescience.in

PLUS POINTS

Hallucinating painters



Prehistoric cave painters in Europe were hallucinating deep underground due to a lack of oxygen while making their art, researchers have claimed.

The evocative paintings created in the pitch-black baffled academics as they were often far away from the cave's entrance and in difficult to access parts of the tunnel.

But a ground-breaking new study by Israeli researchers has shown that the intrepid Palaeolithic artists sought out the most remote parts of the dark because it induced oxygen deprivation in their brains, a process known as hypoxia.

To be able to see in the darkness they had to light torches, which would lessen the amount of oxygen in the depths of the cave, possibly causing them to hallucinate or have euphoric out-of-body experiences while creating paintings that are dotted around remote spaces in Europe.

The paper was published by Yafit Kedar and Ran Barkai of Tel Aviv University in *Time and Mind: The Journal of Archaeology, Consciousness and Culture*, and further suggests that the cave spaces may have been viewed by the artists with reverence and seen as sacred.

The authors write, "We discuss the significance of caves in indigenous world views and contend that entering these deep, dark environments was a conscious choice, motivated by an understanding of the transformative nature of an underground, oxygen-depleted space."

The researchers believe heading into the depths was a conscious choice and an "ontological arena" that allowed the early humans to "maintain their connectedness with the cosmos."

Kedar told *Haaretz* that the cavemen artists may have thought that they were communicating with another being. She said, "The idea is they went in (to the bowels of caves) because they believed something was there, that there were entities beyond the wall."

Kedar had the idea for the paper after visiting rock-sites in Europe and wondering why cavemen ventured more than a kilometre inside the tunnel and into cramped spaces to create art.

The independent

New Covid-19 test



A new Covid-19 rapid test that can detect variants of the virus has been developed in Singapore. It produces results within 30 minutes and can be used directly on patient samples. It is also about 10 times more accurate than rapid antigen tests currently in use in the country.

The variant nucleotide guard test is the first rapid test in Singapore to make use of a gene-editing tool known as CRISPR or clustered regularly interspaced short palindromic repeats.

Developed by scientists from Nanyang Technological University, the VanGuard test uses a reaction mix containing a specific enzyme that acts like a pair of molecular scissors'.

The enzyme targets specific segments of the genetic material of Sars-CoV-2 -- the virus responsible for Covid-19 -- and snips them off the rest of its viral genome. Successfully snipping off the segments is how the enzyme identifies the presence of the virus.

To ensure that variants are not missed, two short genetic sequences -- known as guide RNAs -- are used to recognise sequences that are extremely similar between the variants but also unique to the virus. Associate professor Tan Meng How, who led the study, said, "Should these binding regions mutate, a new test can be redesigned in under a week."

CRISPR technology is traditionally used in scientific research to alter DNA sequences, giving it the potential to cure -- and not just treat -- any disease caused by DNA differences. Currently, rapid antigen tests that detect proteins called antigens on the surface of the virus are used in Singapore. Should a mutation affect the viral antigen, some tests may be ineffective.

Redesigning a rapid antigen test takes longer because it relies on antibodies and the redesigning of an antibody requires more time, Tan said.

The Straits Times/Ann

Preventing pesticide poisoning

Upon penetrating into an organism, pesticides spread rapidly, becoming selectively accumulated in separate parts or organs of a body

TAPAN KUMAR MAITRA



The pesticides used for protecting plants are biologically active substances and act not only on their targets but are also a potential hazard for Nature and the health of humans.

Pesticides are characterised by a different toxicity to humans and warm-blooded animals. Their action manifests not only directly during the period of application but may also be chronic. Some of them, accumulating on objects of the environment, gradually concentrate in the food and fodder, become a real hazard to beneficial animals and humans, and may lead to serious alterations in ecosystems, biocoenoses and landscapes.

That is why the chemicals used in agriculture must be studied from a general sanitary standpoint, with a view to their behaviour in the environment and to all the sources from which they may enter a human organism. The main task in ensuring safety in pesticide application is the finding of effective measures and means for the sanitary protection of the environment, especially atmospheric air, food products of a vegetable and animal origin, sources of water supply, and the soil from contamination with chemicals in amounts dangerous for the health of people.

Humans and animals may be poisoned either by the pesticides themselves or by the products of their metabolism. Poisoning by pesticides may be occupational or encountered in everyday life. Occupational poi-

soning occurs among workers busy in preparing the working formulations of pesticides, treating orchards or fields, or occupied in the treatment of seeds. Poisoning sometimes occurs upon the accidental spraying of pesticides when the apparatus was being prepared. Cases are known of poisoning when drinking water, eating, or smoking during work with toxicants.

Cases have been noted of intoxication when caring for plants (weeding, trimming, etc) soon after the application of pesticides. In most cases, the cause of occupational poisoning was performing the work without the appropriate individual means of protection.

The poisoning by pesticides of persons having no direct relation to work with them is referred to as non-occupational poisoning. A major cause of such poisoning is the careless storage of pesticides. A great hazard to health is the use of containers freed of toxicants to store food products. Poisoning often occurs upon the unskilled use of pesticides to control synanthropic insects.

It is important not only to preserve beneficial animals, but also eliminate a possible source of supplying pesticides into human organisms with products of an animal origin. The poisoning of animals and accumulation of residual amounts of toxicants in their organisms occur because of the improper use of chem-

ical means of protecting cattle from insects, when the animals feed on plants containing pesticide residues or on treated grain, when water from contaminated sources is used, when fodder is given to them in containers emptied of toxic chemicals, or upon the accidental contact of animals with such chemicals.

A danger of poisoning birds and fish appears when persistent pesticides are used and the rules for the application, storage and transportation of toxicants are violated, when contact of the birds and fish with a poison scattered or washed into water basins is possible. The systematic use of pesticides having cumulative properties leads to their concentration in the organisms serving as food for birds and fish.

Upon penetrating into an organism, pesticides rapidly spread, becoming selectively accumulated in separate parts or organs of a body. Some of them are bound by proteins or other components of the cells, while others are metabolised and excreted from the organism. Organophosphorus compounds, carbamic acid derivatives (carbaryl), and aromatic nitrocompounds (DNOG) are detected in various tissues of an organism already in a few minutes after ingestion.

The maximum concentrations of those pesticides in the internal tissues is noted in one-and-a-half to six hours after entry. When ingested one time in a dose of LD₅₀, they are completely excreted from the organism in 24 to 96 hours. Organochlorine compounds accumulate more slowly, and their maximum concentration is observed in 25 days or more after entry. In large amounts, pesticides accumulate in the liver, kidneys and heart. Most of them in small amounts penetrate the brain.

The deposition of pesticides in some tissues is possible. For example, organochlorine compounds accumulate in fatty tissue. Some pesticides may accumulate in the skin and then enter the blood. At the places of their accumulation, pesticides undergo metabolism with subsequent deactivation or activation. Processes of metabolism occur most actively in the liver, kidneys, and in the intestinal tissues.

Metabolism is often the basic process lowering the concentration of a pesticide in organs. For instance, the concentration of heptachlor in the liver and fatty tissue mainly diminishes owing to its decomposition to epoxide and other metabolites. Poisons are excreted from an organism via the kidneys, gastrointestinal tract, lungs, skin, or mammary glands.

The mechanism of the toxic action of pesticides is determined by the absorption, transportation, metabolism, and influence thereof on the general metabolism in an organ-

ism. The initial causes of the toxic action of pesticides vary. Some pesticides cause a change in the cellular structures (for example, of the mitochondria), violating the conjugation of vitally important processes such as oxidation and phosphorylation of a substance.

Pesticides characterised by structural similarity to natural compounds of the organism join the conventional metabolism, as a result of which the functions of the metabolites synthesised with their participation are disrupted. For instance, the structural similarity of triazine derivatives to pyrimidine bases allows them to participate in metabolism as antimetabolites of pyrimidine bases, which leads to the synthesis of improperly built proteins. For this reason, the harmful action of triazine manifests itself when the new proteins begin to function.

The ability of pesticides to react with active groups of enzymes leads to inactivation of the latter and causes violation of the exchange reactions in which they participate. The result is the accumulation of intermediate products of metabolism causing poisoning of the organism. Most organophosphorus pesticides are inhibitors of the cholinesterase activity of enzymes.

Just as diverse as the nature of pesticide action on the organisms of warm-blooded animals is the manifestation of this action. Pesticides cause acute, subacute, or chronic poisoning, affecting important organs and systems of an organism, disrupting exchange processes, and aggravating the course of previous diseases.

Pesticides may have a local action, destroying a tissue directly in the zone of contact of an organism with the poison. It may be irritative, anaesthetising, or necrotising. The mucous membranes and lung tissue are especially sensitive to pesticides. Upon entering the blood, they are carried to different organs and tissues and affect the indices of an organism's vital activity. Under the influence of many pesticides, the gene responsible for the synthesis of haemoglobin is activated, changes occur in the morphological composition of the blood and the functional properties of the leucocytes, and shifts are noted in the content of the blood's erythrocytes.

CRISPR technology is traditionally used in scientific research to alter DNA sequences, giving it the potential to cure -- and not just treat -- any disease caused by DNA differences. Currently, rapid antigen tests that detect proteins called antigens on the surface of the virus are used in Singapore. Should a mutation affect the viral antigen, some tests may be ineffective.

Redesigning a rapid antigen test takes longer because it relies on antibodies and the redesigning of an antibody requires more time, Tan said.

The writer is associate professor and head, department of botany, Ananda Mohan College, Kolkata



A RECORD-HOLDER

Shigeko Kagawa, a 109-year-old woman, has become the oldest Olympic torch-bearer after participating in the Tokyo Olympic torch relay in Nara Prefecture. Kagawa, born in 1911, took the record from Aida Mendes of Brazil, who had walked with the Rio Olympic torch in Macapa, Brazil, when she was 107 years old in June 2016.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Unopposed Olympics: More than 70 per cent Japanese want the Tokyo Olympics cancelled or delayed as the coronavirus pandemic rolls on. Just over 100 days are left for the planned start of the Games. The survey showed 39.2 per cent wanted the Games scrapped.

Covid-19 tests: One particular company is conducting Covid-19 tests for all Indian Premier League teams. All players, management teams, broadcast crew, state and central cricket committee members, groundsmen, hotel staff, and event managers are being tested.

Virus strikes: Five members of the South Africa Women's Emerging team tested positive for coronavirus in Sylhet on Monday. The visitors were scheduled to leave Bangladesh hours later, having shortened their tour and dropped the fifth One-Day International.

Goals galore: Sevilla twice came from behind to claim a 4-3 win at Celta Vigo in a La Liga game on Monday to keep their slim hopes of a title push alive. Defender Jules Kounde gave the visitors an early lead only for an Iago Aspas double to put the hosts in charge.

Neymar deal: Although rumours suggested a return to Barcelona, Neymar's future was in Paris, says France Football. The Brazilian and his entourage said the player hoped to continue in the French capital. A deal until 2026 was said to have been struck.

Gayle's feat: When Punjab Kings batsman Chris Gayle hoisted Rajasthan Royals' Ben Stokes for a six in his first over, he became the first batsman in Indian Premier League history to hit 350 sixes. No other player has got even 250, with AB de Villiers totalling 237.

NZ Cricket Awards: New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson won his fourth Sir Richard Hadlee medal for excelling across formats and was also adjudged the 'Test Player of the Year' in the country's annual cricket awards on Tuesday.

ICC Player of the month: Experienced India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Tuesday won the ICC Player of the Month award for his superlative show in the limited overs series against England in March. Bhuvneshwar took six wickets at an economy rate of 4.65 in the three ODIs, while capturing four wickets at a fantastic economy rate of 6.38 in the five T20Is.

NADA DC: IAS officer Siddhanta Singh Longjam will take over as the National Anti-Doping Agency's Director General, succeeding Navin Agarwal who listed the creation of Athletes Biological Passport (ABP) for around 60 elite Indian sportspersons as one of the highlights of his tenure. Longjam is currently serving as joint secretary in the sports ministry.

Goswami tests positive: Olympic-bound athlete Priyanka Goswami was isolated on Tuesday at the Sports Authority of India training centre in Bengaluru after she tested positive for Covid-19. She is the country's first high profile track and field athlete to have tested positive for Covid-19.

Balbir Singh Jr died: Balbir Singh Junior, who was a member of the silver medal-winning 1958 Asian Games Indian hockey team, died here at the age of 88, his daughter Mandeer Samra said on Tuesday. He is survived by his wife, daughter and son. His son is settled in Canada and could not attend the last rites of his father because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Born on May 2, 1932, at Sansarpur in Jalandhar, Balbir Singh Junior had played alongside legends like Balbir Singh Senior, Leslie Cladius, Prithipal Singh, Balkishan and Charles Stephen among others.

RCB confront SunRisers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL

Seeking to consolidate their position after a winning start, Virat Kohli's (in photo) Royal Challengers Bangalore will have their task cut out as they take on a determined Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League here on Wednesday.

While RCB began their campaign with a morale-boosting win over five-time defending champions Mumbai Indians at the same venue, the David Warner-led SRH lost to Kolkata Knight Riders in their tournament opener. Having put up a decent performance in the first game, RCB will be strengthened further when the immensely-talented Devdutt Padikkal makes the team after his recovery from COVID-19.

Padikkal has said he is now completely ready to play his part in the IPL and confident of replicating his stupendous domestic form in the ongoing league. He contracted the deadly virus on March 22 and was in isolation, but has since completely recovered and resumed practice with his RCB teammates. In the event Padikkal is unable to return for Wednesday's game, RCB will stick to the opening pair of Kohli and Washington Sundar.

RCB might try out the likes of Mohammed Azharuddin and Australian leg-spinner Adam Zampa in the coming matches. Kohli and the incom-



parable AB de Villiers will be the key men again for RCB in batting, with Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell hoping to make invaluable contributions with the willow.

He looked good in the first game in RCB's jersey, and has the backing of the team management, including skipper Kohli.

Barring the trio of Kohli, de Villiers and Maxwell, RCB look thin on batting and that's why Padikkal's presence at the top is important for them. The 20-year-old Karnataka left-hander was RCB's highest run-getter

in IPL 2020 with 473 runs from 15 matches, including five half-centuries in what was his debut season.

Padikkal continued rich form in the last Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy (218 runs at an average of 43.60 in six matches) and Vijay Hazare Trophy (737 runs in seven matches). After their failure in the opener, Rajat Patidar and Washington will aim to add to that impressive tally. In opening, SRH have the option of reuniting Warner with Jonny Bairstow, who made a fifty while batting in the middle-order against KKR along-

um pacer Harshal Patel returning excellent figures of 5/27. They will certainly look for an encore.

As far as SRH are concerned,

both their openers Wriddhiman Saha and Warner failed to get going against KKR in the first game and will look to make up for that against RCB. The swash-buckling Warner has close to 600 runs against RCB and he will aim to add to that impressive tally. In opening, SRH have the option of reuniting Warner with Jonny Bairstow, who made a fifty while batting in the middle-order against KKR along-

side Manish Pandey, who made a 44-ball 61. Kane Williamson is unlikely to return on Wednesday as coach Trevor Bayliss had said the Kiwi would require some more time to regain full match fitness. Bhuvneshwar Kumar went for runs against KKR but the experienced seamer is expected to get his rhythm back sooner than later. The likes of Rashid Khan and Mohammed Nabi can also ask probing questions with their crafty bowling.

Teams (from): Royal Challengers Bangalore: Virat Kohli (c), Devdutt Padikkal, Finn Allen (wk), AB de Villiers (wk), Pavan Deshpande, Washington Sundar, Daniel Sams, Yuzvendra Chahal, Adam Zampa, Shahbaz Ahmed, Mohammed Siraj, Navdeep Saini, Kama Richardson, Harshal Patel, Glenn Maxwell, Sachin Baby, Rajat Patidar, Mohammed Azharuddin, Kyle Jamieson, Daniel Christian, Suyash Prabhudessai, K.S. Bharat.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: David Warner (c), Kane Williamson, Jonny Bairstow (wk), Manish Pandey, Sreevatsa Goswami (wk), Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Priyam Garg, Vijay Shankar, Abhishek Sharma, Abdul Samad, Virat Singh, Mitchell Marsh, Jason Holder, Mohammad Nabi, Rashid Khan, Shahbaz Nadeem, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, T.Natarajan, Sandeep Sharma, Khaleel Ahmed, Siddarth Kaul, Basil Thampi, Jagadeesha Suchith, Kedar Jadhav, Mujeer-Ur-Rahman.

Match starts at 7.30 PM.

Fearlessness in modern cricketers comes with great exposure: Ganguly

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOLKATA, 13 APRIL

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly (in photo) feels that the exposure to various facets of life makes this current generation of cricketers like Rishabh Pant and Hardik Pandya, extremely fearless.

The BCCI presidents said that even before some of them have stepped out on international arena, they look so "ready" to take on the world which comes with exposure.

"I think for the modern day generation exposure has been enormous. It helps them to become fearless, because they realise that things are available at their doorsteps. And if they make an effort and are desperate to succeed, they will be successful. So they're fearless," India captain said during a conversation with Hero Vired Founder and CEO Akshay Munjal in a YouTube live show titled 'You The Future'.

Ganguly then specifically gave example of Pant and Pandya.

"You look at this current Indian cricket team. The likes of Rishabh Pant, Hardik Pandya and some of the young fast bowlers who have come at this level, you just see that when they walk out into the International arena, they're ready."

"They're not just ready skill wise, but they're ready mentally also which is very very



important," Ganguly said.

One of the most successful Indian captains, Ganguly, who retired from international cricket in 2008, further said he missed the "7 o'clock nervousness" moments while getting up for a Test match.

"I miss that nervousness in the morning at 7 o'clock. When I used to wake up and get ready, wearing my track bottoms, shoes to play a Test match... I was under pressure to perform. I knew I cannot afford to fail as if I performed well, by evening 4.30, I'll be a hero to all the people in the country," he said recalling his playing days.

"So I miss that challenge, miss that pressure, the expectation every morning. I think that is something which every individual should learn to embrace," Ganguly said, adding that the bit of nervousness actually brings out the best in oneself. For Ganguly, it's okay to be nervous sometimes as it can only help one become a better cricketer.

Russell restricts Mumbai Indians to 152

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

CHENNAI, 13 APRIL



Andre Russell's (in photo) five-wicket haul in just two overs (5/15) helped Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) restrict Mumbai Indians (MI) power-packed batting to 152 (all out) in their 20 overs during an Indian Premier League 2021 match at the MA Chidambaram Stadium here on Tuesday night.

Things looked promising for the Mumbai franchise early on despite the loss of an early wicket and a less productive power-play stage.

Suryakumar Yadav (56 off 36 balls) decided to take on the KKR attack and began playing his shots after the KKR spinners, who bowled five of the six power-play overs, had curtailed MI. Yadav, who hit three fours in Harbhajan Singh's second over, hit two sixes and seven fours as he looked to take MI to a strong total.

However, his dismissal off the bowling of Shakib Al Hasan in the 11th over when MI were coasting at 86/1 triggered a collapse. MI soon lost Ishan Kishan who was dismissed by Pat Cummins in the 12th over and a few overs later, the defending champions saw the back of skipper Rohit Sharma who struggled to get going against spinners.

Rohit, who shared a 76-run second-wicket partnership with Yadav, made 43 off 32 balls. The famed MI middle-and-lower order batting, which has plenty of hard-hitters, failed to get going. Soon after Rohit's dismissal, MI lost the wickets of Kieron Pollard and Kieron Pollard in the space of one over. South African Marco Jansen's dismissal left MI at 126/7 after 18 overs. Medium-pace bowler

Russell, who offers variations in his deliveries, hadn't bowled till the 17th over. But in his first over, innings' 18th, he got rid of Kieron Pollard (5) and Marco Jansen (0) and in his second over, innings' last, he picked three wickets - Krunal Pandya (15), Jasprit Bumrah (0) and Rahul Chahar (8).

Trent Boult not out 0 Extras: (1B-4, w-3) 7 Total: (All out in 20 Overs) 152 Fall of Wickets: 1-10, 2-86, 3-88, 4-115, 5-123, 6-125, 7-126, 8-150, 9-150 Bowling: Harbhajan Singh 2-17-0, Varun Chakravarthy 4-27-1, Shakib Al Hasan 4-0-23-1, Pat Cummins 4-0-24-2, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-42-1, Andre Russell 2-0-15-5.

Scoreboard

Rahul's tip: Bat like Hooda, fearlessly

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

MUMBAI, 13 APRIL



A relieved Punjab Kings skipper KL Rahul called on his batsmen to bat fearlessly just like Deepak Hooda (in photo) after his team had managed to see off a resilient Rajasthan Royals led by Sanju Samson. Rahul, who himself made 91 off 50 deliveries, breathed a sigh of relief after Samson's 119 had failed to get RR past the finish line.

Hooda's innings was amazing. That's the kind of batting we want to see as a team. We want to bat fearlessly and take down bowlers. We have a lot of power in our line-up but we have been slightly tentative. It is important for us to bat fearlessly. It is great to see boys trying to understand what we expect," said Rahul after the match. Hooda made 64 off 28 balls, his knock helping the team put up a big 221-run total. While he praised his batsmen, he did add that the bowlers had been a bit inconsistent with their length and needed to pull up their socks.

"The heartrate was high but I didn't stop believing. We knew a couple of wickets would bring us back. Till the first 10-11 overs, we bowled well. It was close because we, me included, dropped a few sitters. We bat really well and bowled well in patches. We weren't consistent with the length but the bowlers will learn," he added.

"When you're bowling against Sanju, it's difficult," he added. Samson wanted to keep the coin from the toss as a souvenir since last evening's

match against Punjab Kings marked his captaincy debut. However, the match referee did not allow him to do so. All that the new Rajasthan Royals skipper will be able to carry are the memories of his seven big sixes and 12 boundaries that helped him get to a century in his Indian Premier League captaincy debut. "The coin looked great so I pocketed it and asked

match against Punjab Kings.

Samson, who replaced Steve Smith (now with Delhi Capitals) at the helm of the franchise, played a calculated innings as he overcame the early loss of a couple of wickets and built his innings well.

"The second part of my innings was my best IPL performance. I took my time and respected the bowlers, whereas in the first part I was not timing it very well. I took the singles and got into a rhythm and then I started to play my shots in the second half. I enjoy my shots, but I return to the present after playing them," said Samson, who was given the Man-of-the-Match award as his knock had eclipsed Rahul's innings.

Rajasthan Royals team director Kumar Sangakkara has backed Sanju Samson's decision to retain strike for the last ball during a stiff run-chase against Punjab Kings, saying it was encouraging to see him take responsibility.

"Sanju backed himself to get the job done, and he nearly did, he was five or six yards short of hitting that last ball for a six and sometimes when you are hitting the ball well and you are in form, you believe you can do it," Sangakkara said in a virtual press conference.

Why De Bruyne matters so much to City

AGENCIES

MANCHESTER, 13 APRIL



"Win everything," said Kevin De Bruyne (in photo) when asked of his ambitions for Manchester City after signing a new four-year contract reportedly to become the Premier League's highest paid player last week. With less than two months of the season to play, City are still on course for a historic quadruple of Champions League, Premier League, FA Cup and League Cup. Just breaking through the barrier of the Champions League quarter-finals would be a landmark for Pep Guardiola as he tries to reach the last four for the first time in five years in Manchester on Wednesday.

City travel to Borussia Dortmund holding a slender 2-1 lead and bearing plenty of scars from quarter-final ties over the past three years.

"Different year, same stuff," was how a disappointed De

fashion in 2018 and 2019. Despite the explosive talent of Erling Braut Haaland, a Dortmund side sitting fifth in the Bundesliga should not pose a problem for the runaway Premier League leaders. But De Bruyne has lived

through too many City horror shows in Europe's premier club competition to take anything for granted. The Champions League is the one trophy to have so far eluded the Belgian since he arrived in England in 2015. A determination to end City's wait to conquer Europe was key to both the player and club's motivations for agreeing a new contract worth a reported £20 million (\$27 million) a year. De Bruyne showed he was no ordinary player off the pitch as well as on it during the negotiations. The 29-year-old did not use an agent and instead worked with analytics companies to show the data that backed up his claim to be the key figure in City's success.

Chief executive officer of Analytics FC, Jeremy Steele, told The Athletic: "After discussing the scope of the work, De Bruyne commissioned us to create a report studying almost every aspect of his contribution to the club."

"All the players and officials coming from South Africa, Brazil, Middle East and European countries including UK will be serving a 7-day quarantine period and have to report in the capital city on May 11 to 16, albeit behind closed doors due to the raging COVID-19 pandemic.

The USD 400,000 tournament, one of the last few qualification events for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, has attracted 228 (114 men and 114 women) entries from 33 different national associations, including China. However, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) said, "due to the rapidly rising COVID-19 cases in the country, the tournament will be contested in a bio-secure bubble without spectators and media while implementing strict COVID-19 safety protocols."

On the court, three-time world champion Marin will lead the women's singles category along with other Top-10 shuttlers such as Akane Yamaguchi, 2019 world champion PV Sindhu, Korea's Ai Se-Young and Thailand's Pormpawee Chochwong. India boasts of the largest contingent with 48 players (27 women and 21 men), while Malaysia has fielded the second biggest squad with 26 shuttlers, which includes 10 women and 16 men.

We understand spectators have been an integral part of our growth story but this year despite the Olympic qualifiers