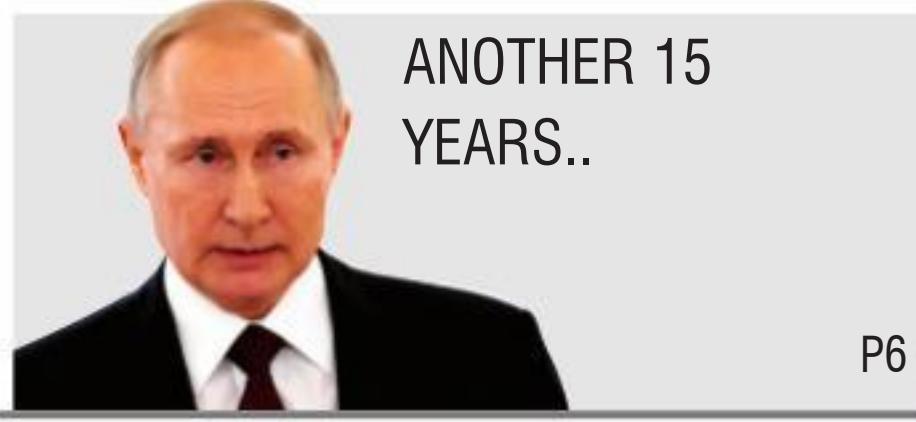
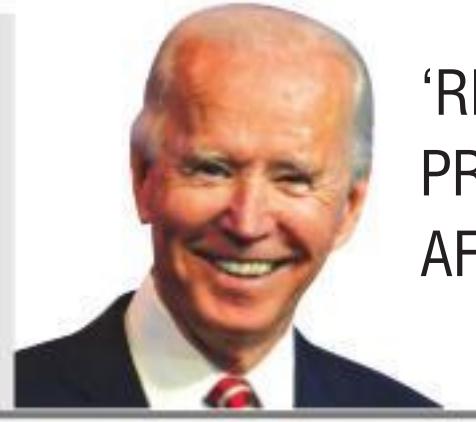


GEN NARAVANE ON  
5-DAY VISIT TO  
BANGLADESH

P5

ANOTHER 15  
YEARS..

P6

'READY TO EXTEND  
PRESENCE IN  
AFGHANISTAN'

P10

MBAPPE DOUBLE  
STRIKE GUMS IT  
UP FOR BAYERN

## WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 36 and 18 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 62%	Min: 17%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 35.2°C (+1)	Min: 19.4°C (0)
SUN RISES	SUN SETS
06:01 hrs	18:43 hrs
MOON RISES	MOON SETS
05:17 hrs	16:21 hrs

## THUMBNAILS



Tulips in full bloom at Asia's largest tulip garden along the banks of Dal Lake, in Srinagar. ■ AGENCIES

**SC rules on Rohingyas detained in Jammu:** The Supreme Court on Thursday said Rohingyas detained in Jammu shall not be deported to Myanmar without following the prescribed process. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde passed the order on a plea seeking immediate release of detained Rohingyas refugees in Jammu and a direction to restrain the Centre from deporting them to Myanmar. The Centre had earlier opposed the plea saying that the country cannot be the capital for illegal immigrants.

**India hopes for consensus on disengagement:** Ahead of the 11th round of talks between senior commanders of the two countries on the military stand-off in Eastern Ladakh, India on Thursday hoped the two countries would be able to arrive at a consensus on disengagement at other friction points at the LAC. "We would like to see disengagement in remaining areas in Eastern Ladakh," MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. Tomorrow's talks will focus on friction points in Gogra, Hot Springs and Dapsang plains in Ladakh. The talks will begin at 1000 hours at Chushul in E. Ladakh.

## Abducted CoBRA commando released by Maoists: CRPF

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

RAIPUR, 8 APRIL

CRPF commando Rakeshwar Singh Manhas, who was held captive by the Maoists in Chhattisgarh for over 100 hours after the 3 April gunbattle, was released on Friday evening, the CRPF said.

Manhas, a constable of the 210th CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action), an elite wing of the CRPF, was safely handed over to the state police and to Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

"Our CoBRA commando Rakeshwar Singh Manhas has reached our camp safely. He is being sent for medical examination," CRPF's IG, Operations, C.G. Arora

said. Manhas is physically fine, he added. The trooper had gone missing during the gun battle with over 300 PLGA ultras in Bijapur district on 3 April in which 22 personnel were killed and 31 injured.

Over 1,000 security personnel of the CRPF and Chhattisgarh's District Reserve Guard and Special Task Force took part in the operation. The gun battle took place on Saturday noon near Tekulgudem village under Tarrem police station.

The Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of the outlawed CPI-Maoist on Tuesday announced Manhas was 'safe' in their custody and sought an interlocutor appointed to his release.

## SC 'no' to MVA, Deshmukh pleads to stop CBI probe; says charges serious

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

**The nature of allegations is serious and the persons involved require investigations by independent agency. It is a matter of public confidence**

SUPREME COURT

public confidence."

Upholding the Bombay High Court order, the top court dismissed the petitions filed by Maharashtra government and Deshmukh.

"He (Deshmukh) did not resign when the state set up a Commission of Enquiry. He quit after High Court order. He was clinging to office," it observed. During the hearing, the bench also remarked that former Mumbai Police Com-

missioner, who made the allegations against him, was not Deshmukh's enemy but instead, "was almost his right hand man".

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal argued that court has to stay on guard while ordering investigation against a constitutional authority, and there has to be some material on which allegations are made but in this case, it is only hearsay.

He said due to these baseless allegations damage has been done to me (Deshmukh).

Advocate A M Singhvi said the state government was not heard by the High Court on the aspect of the CBI probe and alleged that it was in violation of federal structure.

## SC collegium headed by CJI Bobde holds scheduled meet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

The Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India S A Bobde is holding its scheduled meeting on Thursday to discuss possible candidates for appointment of judges in higher judiciary, sources said.

The CJI, who would superannuate on 23 April, has been holding the collegium meeting to discuss appointment of judges in the top court and high courts.

The 5-member collegium's pre-scheduled meeting assumes significance in the wake of the fact that President Ram Nath Kovind has formally appointed senior

most judge N V Ramana as the next CJI. As per the convention, since the President has issued warrants of appointment for the next CJI, the outgoing predecessor does not make any recommendations to the Centre for appointment of judges in high courts and the apex court.

The collegium meeting was scheduled before the issuance of the notification appointing Justice Ramana as the CJI. The last collegium meeting had taken place in the third week of March, the sources said. Besides the CJI, the four others members to the collegium are justices N V Ramana, R F Nariman, U U Lalit and A M Khanwilkar.

## Dassault rejects fresh charges of wrongdoing in Rafale deal

**The assertion comes days after French publication Mediapart, citing an investigation by the country's anti-corruption agency, reported that Dassault had paid about 1M Euros to an Indian middleman**

French aerospace major Dassault Aviation on Thursday rejected fresh allegations of corruption in the Rafale fighter jet deal with India, saying no violations were reported in the frame of the contract.

The assertion by the manufacturer of the Rafale jets came days after French publication Mediapart, citing an investigation by the country's anti-corruption agency, reported that Dassault Aviation had paid about one million euros to an Indian middleman.

Numerous controls are carried out by official organisations, including the French Anti Corruption Agency. No violations were reported, notably in the frame of the contract with India for the acquisition of 36 Rafales," a Dassault Aviation spokesperson said.

The official said Dassault Aviation reiterated that it acts in strict compliance with the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) Anti Bribery Convention and national laws.

Banerjee also accused Central police forces of harassing and intimidating voters in Bengal and urged voters to "gherao" them in case security men prevented them from voting.

## High-octane campaigning ends for fourth phase polling in Bengal

SNS & PTI  
KOLKATA, 8 APRIL

Campaigning for the high-decibel fourth phase of polling for 44 Assembly seats scheduled in five districts of West Bengal on 10 April, ended at 5 p.m. on Thursday.

A total 1,15,81,022 voters including 58,82,514 men, 56,98,218 women and 290 members of the third gender, will decide the fate of 373 candidates in Friday's polling in constituencies spread over Howrah (Part II), South 24 Parganas (Part III), Hooghly (Part II) in south Bengal and in north Bengal's Alipurduar and Coochbehar.

The polling will be held between 7 a.m. to 6.30 p.m. At 15,940 polling stations. At stake are nine Assembly constituencies in Howrah, eleven in South 24 Parganas, five in Alipurduar, nine in Coochbehar.



BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty during a roadshow in support of party candidate Babul Supriyo on Thursday. ■ AGENCIES

har and ten in Hooghly.

Among those whose fate will be decided at the hustings are former Bengal Ranji captain Manoj Tiwary, TMC's candidate from Shibpur, state education minister and sitting MLA from Behala Paschim Partha Chatterjee and Central minister Babul Supriyo of BJP who has locked horns with state sports minister Arup Biswas for the Tollygunge seat.

Former state forest minister, Rajib Banerjee, who moved to the BJP recently is contesting from Domjur while BJP MP and actress Locket Chatter-

Ratna Chatterjee, wife of former city mayor and fire minister Sovan Chatterjee, who left Mamata Banerjee's TMC to join the BJP for a short period, is facing BJP's actress-turned politician Payel Sarkar for the Behala Purbo seat.

Former state forest minister, Rajib Banerjee, who moved to the BJP recently is contesting from Domjur while BJP MP and actress Locket Chatter-

jee is contesting the polls from Chinsurah in Hooghly.

The Sanyujha Morcha comprising Left front, Congress and ISF has fielded mostly young faces for the fourth phase of polling. CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty is one of the few seniors fielded by the Left for this phase of the elections. BJP's star campaigners included PM Narendra Modi, Union Minister Amit Shah,

Modi and Shah promised voters early implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi as well as implementation of the seventh pay commission scales for state government employees if voted to power in West Bengal.

Banerjee, her nephew and party MP Abhishek were among star campaigners for the TMC who stepped up

EC can serve 10 showcase notices, says Mamata: Asserting that she would continue to raise her voice against any attempt to divide voters on communal lines, Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said the EC may serve 10 showcase notices on her but she won't change her stance.

The poll panel had issued a notice to Banerjee for violating model code of conduct, after she allegedly urged the Muslim community to vote en masse for the TMC.

Modi and Shah promised voters early implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme, PM Kisan Samman Nidhi as well as implementation of the seventh pay commission scales for state government employees if voted to power in West Bengal.

Banerjee, her nephew and party MP Abhishek were among star campaigners for the TMC who stepped up

their attack on the BJP-led Central government over recent hike in prices of gas, petrol, diesel, besides plans to disinvest in a large number of Central government run PSUs.

Banerjee also accused Central police forces of harassing and intimidating voters in Bengal and urged voters to "gherao" them in case security men prevented them from voting.

## AT STAKE

**Nine Assembly constituencies in Howrah (Part II), eleven ACs South 24 Parganas (Part III), ten ACs Hooghly (Part II) in south Bengal and in north Bengal's Alipurduar (five ACs) and Coochbehar (nine ACs)**

**TOTAL 373 CANDIDATES  
1,15,81,022 VOTERS**



SEE P4





This TMC is running its government with cut money

JP NADDAA, NATIONAL PRESIDENT, BJP

DURING ELECTION CAMPAIGNING IN ALIPURDUAR TOWN

# In huge Covid spike, Delhi sees 7,437 fresh cases, 24 deaths

Positivity rate jumps to 8.1 pc from 6.1; active cases tally soars to 23,181 from 19,455

SNS &amp; PTI

NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

**I**n a huge coronavirus spike, Delhi today recorded 7,437 fresh Covid cases, the highest single-day surge this year so far, while 24 more people died due to the contagious, deadly virus, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The positivity rate soared to 8.1 per cent from 6.1 per cent the previous day, as the massive spike in cases witnessed in the national capital over the past few weeks continued unabated.

This is also the first time that over 7,000 cases have been reported in a day in the city this year. The daily case

count for the past two days was above 5,000.

The highest single-day Covid spike in Delhi till date — 8,593 cases — was reported on 11 November, while on 19 November the city recorded 131 fatalities — the highest single-day Covid fatality count since the pandemic began.

On 27 November, Delhi had recorded 5,482 cases. It had logged 6,224 cases on 24 November and 7,486 cases on 18 November, as per official data.

Today's fresh cases were detected out of a total of 91,770 tests, including 52,696 RT-PCR tests and 39,074 rapid antigen tests, the health bulletin said.

The number of cumula-

tive Covid cases in the city rocketed to 6,98,005. Its Covid toll mounted to 11,157, the bulletin stated.

Over 6.63 lakh patients have recovered from the virus in Delhi so far, the bulletin said.

The number of active cases rose to 23,181 from 19,455 a day before.

The number of people under home isolation increased to 11,367 from yesterday's 10,048 while the number of containment zones increased to 4,226 from 3,708 the previous day, the bulletin added.

Delhi had yesterday re-

corded 5,506 fresh Covid cases and 20 deaths. The city had reported 5,100 Covid cases on Tuesday. Delhi

health minister Satyendar Jain had yesterday expressed his apprehension that if the positivity rate escalated and safety norms were not followed by people, the new cases could breach the last single-day spike record registered on 11 November last year.

Jain had however added that it will be too early to speculate on that as of now and that government efforts were continuing to contain the coronavirus infections as effectively as possible in Delhi.

In a bid to tackle the spiking Covid cases, the Delhi government had on Tuesday decided to impose night curfew in the city from 10 pm to 5 am till 30 April.

## Classified

### LEGAL NOTICES

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Prashant Kumar Additional District Judge-01(Central) (Commercial Court)-06 Central, Room No. 123, Tis Hazari Court Delhi

Case No. CS No.CS/780/2019 Vinod Kumar Punjani & Ors. —Plaintiff

Rajiv Arora —Defendant To,

Rajiv Arora, s/o Not Known, r/o DDA LIC Flat No. 127-A, Ground Floor, Moti Khan Residential Scheme, Moti Khan, Paharganj, New Delhi-110055

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on 13-07-2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 06-04-2021.

Additional District Judge-01(Central) (Commercial Court)-06 Central, Tis Hazari Court Delhi

Seal of the Court

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT (Order 5, Rule 20 of the Code of Civil Procedure)

In the Court of Sh. Sanjay Sharma-I District Judge (Commercial Court)-01 Room No. 12 Karkardooma, Delhi CS (Comm): 268/2019 Dena Bank (Now Bank of Baroda) —Plaintiff

Versus M/S. Krishan Export & Anr. To,

M/S. Krishan Export, through its Proprietor, RZ 372/22, First Floor, Tuglakabad Extension, New Delhi-110019.

Also at Mr. Guru Dutt Sharma, Proprietor of M/S. RZ 372/22, First Floor, Tuglakabad Extension, New Delhi-110019.

Whereas abovenamed Plaintiff has instituted a suit against you. You are hereby summoned to appear before this court in person or by pleader on 11-05-2021 at 10-00 a.m. to answer the same.

Take notice that, in default of your appearance on that day before mentioned, the suit will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 25th day of March, 2021.

District Judge (Commercial Court)-01 Karkardooma, Delhi Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF DR. SHRISH AGGARWAL Administrative Civil Judge-cum-Additional Rent Controller (Central), Court Room No. 323, 3rd Floor Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi N.D.O.H.: 05-2021 SC-32/2020

Mrs. Kusum Aged 49 years, w/o (L) Sh. Vinod Kumar, r/o H. No. 104, Villag Raoli Kalan, Muradnagar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201206.

—Petitioner Versus The State & Ors.

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 amount of Rs. xxx. As per record to be standing in the name of Late Sh. Vinod Kumar deceased.

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

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court this 06-04-2021.

Administrative Civil Judge-cum-Additional Rent Controller (Central), Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi Seal of the Court

COURT NOTICE (U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC) IN THE COURT OF MS. JYOTI GROVER Civil Judge-Junior Division-Cum-JMC 1st Class Panipat Case No. CS/50/2020 CRR No. HPPI/02-001052-2019 Next Date: 15-04-2021 Dev Dutt Jangre Versus

Sada Nand Application for Setting aside order Publication Issued to: Sada Nand Son- Radha Kishan 2. Harish Chander @ Harish Chander, s/o Radha Kishan, 3. Gopal Kishan, s/o Radha Kishan All R/ 4881 Sadar Bazaar 12 Tooti Delhi. 110004.

Rattan Chand, s/o Radha Kishan Present H. No. 216 Hans Stock Hillian NWU3 Delhi.

In above titled case the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 15-04-2021 at 10:00 a.m. For details logon to https://highcourtchd.gov.in/?rs=district\_notice&district=Panipat Civil Judge Junior Division-Cum-JMC 1st Class Panipat Seal of the Court

IN THE COURT OF SH. MADHUR BAJAJ Civil Judge (Junior Division), 04/04/2021 Notice to Defendant through Publication. (Publication Under Order 5, Rule 20 C.P.C.) Case No. CS/2301/2020 CRR No. HRGRC/02-002874-2020 Next Date: 10-05-2021 at 10:00 A.M. Mrs. Puja Kapoor — Plaintiff Versus General Public — Defendant Suit for Declaration. Notice to: General Public.

In above titled petition, the defendant could not be served. It is ordered that the defendant should appear in person or through counsel on 10-05-2021 at 10:00 a.m. For details logon to http://ecourts.gov.in Civil Judge (Junior Division), Gurgoan Seal of the Court

BEFORE the Lt. Addl. Dist. & Session Judge, 3rd Court at Paschim Bardhaman, Asansol

MAT Suit No. 66/2020. Kaushik Dev S/o. Madan Mohan Dey, R/o. Villt. Fokrudi Hospital Road, Durga Mandir, P.O.: Bonzemari, P.S.: Salanpur, Rupnarayanapur, Ansals, Paschim Bardhaman, Pin-713335;

...Petitioner

Diya Singh, W/o. Kaushik Dey, D/o. Yogendra Pal Seal of the Court

BEFORE the Lt. Addl. Dist. & Session Judge, 3rd Court at Paschim Bardhaman, Asansol

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...Petitioner

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### SITUATION VACANT

### KENDRIYA BHANDAR

### PUSHPA BHAWAN, E-WING

### MADANGIR ROAD, NEW DELHI-110062

### KENDRIYA BHANDAR INTENDS

### TO FILL UP FOLLOWING POST:-

### ASST. MANAGER (SALES) - (10 POST)

### SEAL OF THE COURT

### IN THE COURT OF SH. MADHUR BAJAJ Civil Judge (Junior Division), 04/04/2021 Notice to Defendant through Publication. (Publication Under Order 5, Rule 20 C.P.C.) Case No. CS/2301/2020 CRR No. HRGRC/02-002874-2020 Next Date: 10-05-2021 at 10:00 A.M. Mrs. Puja Kapoor — Plaintiff Versus General Public — Defendant Suit for Declaration. Notice to: General Public.

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### IN THE COURT OF SH. MADH



Through her (Mamata Banerjee) vitriolic speeches and the communal campaign, she has taken the political discourse to an all-time low...

URGING EC TO BAN MISS BANERJEE FROM CAMPAIGNING FOR THE ENTIRE ELECTION

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 09 APRIL 2021

03

# Covid: At 2.8, Punjab accounts for highest fatality rate in India

Capt blames 'casual and carefree attitude of Punjabis for resurgence in cases', health officials say  
CFR'd be much lower if patients report for treatment early; most infections due to UK strain of virus

RANJEET JAMWAL

CHANDIGARH, 8 APRIL



**E**ven as Punjab is battling severe second wave of Covid-19, the state's case fatality rate (CFR) — a ratio of deaths to the total number of cases recorded — has the alarm bells ringing.

At present, Punjab has a Covid death rate of 2.80 per cent which is highest in the country and more than double the national figure of 1.29 per cent. Besides Punjab, only Sikkim (2.15 per cent) has a higher death rate in this regard.

In a big cause of concern, about 85 per cent of Covid cases in Punjab have been found infected with the UK strain of the virus, which is more contagious and virulent. While the state's Covid positivity rate hit 7.7 per cent last week, Punjab has been reporting nearly 3000 Covid-19

cases on a daily basis now.

While Chief Minister Amarinder Singh blames "the casual and carefree attitude of Punjabis for the resurgence in cases", health authorities maintain the CFR would be much lower if infected persons were reporting for treatment early.

"Late reporting to the health care facilities is the main reason for high CFR in Punjab. As per our analysis, 78 per cent people (with symptoms of Covid-19) keep waiting on their own for the symptoms to subside rather than go for a treatment," Punjab's nodal officer for Covid-19 Dr Rajesh Bhaskar told The Statesman over phone.

"Patients are little careless (when it comes to reporting Covid-19 symptoms). They treat it like normal flu and hope it will blow away without treatment. This is despite the fact sufficient health care facilities are available to accommodate the present number of cases. Only about 20 per cent of beds (reserved for Covid-19 patients in hospitals) are occupied at present," he added.

From 4853 active cases in Punjab on 1 March this year, the figure for it has jumped

to 25,855 in the state on 7 April. The number of deaths has also increased from 5,850 to 7,778 during the same period.

The state has reported 414 deaths in the past seven days between 1 April and 7 April. As many as 20,449 new cases have also been reported during the same period (1 April to 7 April).

Expressing concern at the high CFR rate, CM Capt Amarinder on Wednesday said many of these deaths are avoidable with timely treatment. Besides ordering for a massive public awareness campaign to motivate people to approach hospitals at early stages, the CM directed the health department to target vaccinating two lakh people per day.

Besides night curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., there is a total ban on political gatherings in Punjab along with closure of educational institutions till 30 April.

# Himachal CM lauds police's role during Covid pandemic

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 8 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday said HP Police has done "exceptionally well" during the Covid pandemic by properly regulating the flow of tourists and people stranded in different parts of the country back to the state.

HP Police had also effectively maintained law and order, Thakur said while distributing Blood Pressure Monitors, provided by the State Bank of India as part of social responsibility to the police personnel of the state.

Thakur said this would go a long way in helping the police force in proper monitoring of their blood pressure.

"Since the police force have worked in varied environments and at times in unpleasant situations, thus it was vital that they ensure their proper physical and mental fitness," he added. He further stated that the SBI had provided 392 BP monitors which would be provided in all Police stations,



Police posts and Police battalions. Apart from this, SBI thanked the Chief Minister for being considerate towards the various issues of the police force and said all the equipment and machineries provided by the SBI and Arvind Mills would be disbursed to the respective police stations in the state.

## H'yana to pay 9% interest to 'Arthiyas' for delayed procurement payment

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 8 APRIL

the concerned arthiyas and after confirmation on the amount the payment will be transferred to the bank account.

The spokesperson said with this decision of the state government, an amount of about Rs 1.18 Crore will be paid as interest to the Arthiyas. He further said that among these, 6435 Arthiyas associated with the food and supplies department, will be paid about Rs 63.8 lakh, 3351 Arthiyas associated with Haryana Warehousing Corporation will be paid about Rs. 17.21 lakh and interest of Rs 37.30 lakh will be given to 42 cooperative societies of Hafed.

Meanwhile, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, while reiterating state government's commitment to ensuring hassle-free and time-bound procurements said that all those Arthiyas whose Commission and Labour wage amount is pending since last procurement season.

During the meeting, deputy commissioners apprised the Chief Minister that smooth procurement is being done in the Mandis.

## Plea in Delhi HC to relax age criteria for Covid vaccination, allow pvt labs to participate

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

A plea was moved in the Delhi High Court on Thursday seeking direction to the Centre and AAP government to relax the age criterion for COVID-19 vaccination drive and to allow more private sector participation in the process.

The petition, filed by a final year law student of Delhi University, also sought direction to the authorities to formulate a policy to provide the benefits of vaccination drive to senior citizens, differently-abled persons and poor sections of the society by initiating door-to-door vaccination services in the national capital.

The petitioner Mrigank Mishra, represented through advocate Kushal Kumar, said in the light of the alarming sit-



uation of rising coronavirus cases and the second wave which is more severe than the first one, it is pertinent to boost the vaccination drive for which widening of involvement of private sector entities is necessary as it will facilitate rapid and mass vaccination and allow door-to-door vaccination of the citizens.

The plea said the current system of vaccination drive involves visitation to centers

after securing an appointment on the Co-Win portal and the on-the-spot registrations are very limited in number and often lead to long queues.

Certain classes of citizens including bed-ridden senior citizens, differently-abled persons, poor sections of the society are at disadvantage owing to the present system of vaccination drive, it said.

It is also necessary to remove/ relax the age restric-

cation drive is the only solution to meet the ends.

The plea claimed there is an urgent need to take effective measures for the vaccination of a large number of citizens and the involvement of private players such as private labs and NGOs can boost the vaccination drive and facilitate mass vaccination.

Several experts have opined and suggested that the involvement of the private sector in COVID-19 vaccination drive can benefit the vaccination program and lead to rapid and mass vaccination.

Private players such as private diagnostics can play a key role in collaboration with the government in the administration and distribution of the vaccine owing to their vast network across the country, and trained workforce, it said.

## Cong beats BJP in high-stakes HP municipal corporations elections

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 8 APRIL

HP Congress president Kuldeep Singh Rathore



parties including Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur taking to door to door campaign to ensure victory in MC polls.

State Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore said the party secured a clear victory and had gained upper hand in the elections as the BJP government had failed in

carrying forward the development process in the state.

"Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur failed in delivering on the promises of development and welfare of common masses and it is the result of these failures that the people of the state have voted for Congress party," he added.

Thakur further stated that the government had constituted three new MCs and 6

Rathore said the ruling party manipulated the PRIs elections in its favour by misusing government machinery but the MC polls that were fought on party symbol, had made it clear as to who the people of state will favour in upcoming elections in the state.

Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur too claimed victory in MCs and PRIs elections and said the party had secured victory in biggest MC Dhamashala in Kangra which the party wrested from Congress.

"The MC elections are fought on local issues and BJP had secured wins in two MCs, besides securing win in over 70 per cent seats in panchayats, ULBs, Nagar Panchayats and Zila parishad.

The jubilation of Congress party is unfounded as the BJP has won 2019 Lok Sabha elections by record margin with party candidates securing victory in all the 68 assembly constituencies of the state," he added.

Thakur further stated that the government had constituted three new MCs and 6

Nagar Panchayats for regulated and planned growth of fast developing towns of the state in which the party had got whole hearted support of the people.

It is worthwhile to mention here that Congress had secured victory on 29 wards, BJP on 28 wards while independents won on 7 wards out of the total 64 wards in 4 MCs.

Solan and Dharamshala MCs had 17 wards each while Mandi and Palampur MCs had 15 wards each.

Congress had won 9 seats, BJP 7, independent 1 in Solan MC with the opposition party winning 11 seats in Palampur MC with BJP and independents winning 2 seats each.

In Mandi MC, BJP won on 11, Congress on 4 seats while the ruling won on 8 seats in Dharamshala MC falling short of majority by one seat, followed by Congress 5 seats and independents on 4 seats.

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had also fielded candidates too tried to test waters in HP ahead of assembly polls but failed to make any of the MC polls.

## Punjab CM urges Modi to clear ₹937 cr projects to mark Guru Tegh Bahadur's 400th Prakash Purab

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 8 APRIL



ing their infrastructure.

Besides the city of Amritsar, the town of Sri Anandpur Sahib and Baba Bakala are significant in this regard, he said. In addition, he said that there are 78 villages in the state graced by the Guru (charan chho prapt).

Amarinder said the proposal sent by the state government includes projects for development of infrastructure in and around Sri Anandpur Sahib, Amritsar and Baba Bakala; rejuvenation of village ponds and traditional water bodies for Water Conservation in 78 Punjab villages that were visited by the Guru; and setting up Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur School of Textile Technology and Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Institute of Handicrafts at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, and Sathiala, Baba Bakala, respectively.

Amarinder informed the Prime Minister that the details of the main programme on 1 May are being finalised, keeping in mind the Covid situation in the country and particularly in Punjab.

## Haryana mountaineer cop Anita to scale Mount Lhotse now

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 8 APRIL

Haryana Police sub-inspector Anita Kundu, who conquered Mount Everest from both Nepal and China side, intends to carry her next mountaineering expedition at Mount Lhotse, the fourth highest peak in the world with a height of 8516 metres.

Kundu, who called on the Director General of Police (DGP) Haryana, Manoj Yadava on Thursday, will embark on the new journey on 10 April. She will leave for Kathmandu from New Delhi and will lead a team consisting of 10 mountaineers from all over

the world. Their expedition will be about 50 to 60 days. There will be five camps from the base camp to the top.

The new mission of Kundu, who has hoisted the tricolor on the peaks of seven continents including Mount Everest, is to conquer the Lhotse peak.

Kundu, a recipient of Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award also thanked the DGP for boosting the morale of sportspersons of the police force. Kundu has scaled peaks in seven continents including Asia, Africa, Australia, Europe, Antarctica and South America. She has scaled Mount Everest from both Nepal and

China side. Apart from this, she has also undertaken a number of successful expeditions across the globe. Recently, she was also selected as expedition leader to twin peaks of 'Gangotri' and 'Rudragiri' in Uttarakhand. Congratulating the officer, the DGP said Kundu will once again bring laurels to the state and Haryana Police by hoisting the tricolor at the Lhotse peak of Nepal.

Encouraging the officer, he also conveyed best wishes for her upcoming expedition. The DGP also handed over the Haryana Police flag to Anita, which she will hoist at the peak.

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures.

# SHIRT TROUSER & JEANS SALE

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

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*There should be 'Kharche Pe Charcha' as filling fuel in car has become no less than giving examination due to Centre's tax collection*

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI

TAKING A DIG AT PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI'S 'PARIKSHA PE CHARCHA' PROGRAMME



# YSR sops for Tirupati voters

Addresses letters to families listing various welfare schemes, urges them to vote for his party

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 8 APRIL

**R**unning a unique campaign Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has addressed letters to each of the families residing within Tirupati Parliamentary seat, listing various welfare schemes extended to them while urging the family members to vote for his party in the upcoming bypolls.

Tirupati is witnessing a triangular fight with YSRCP, TDP and BJP supported by Jana Sena fielding candidates for the seat which fell vacant after



the death of the YSRCP MP from Covid-19. Although YSRCP has performed well in the recent local body polls it is wary of the Hindutva campaign run by TDP and BJP harping on temple attacks in the state as well as accusing the CM, a practising Christian, a free run to missionaries looking to convert people. The YSRCP is banking on its welfare schemes introduced by the chief minister in the past two years to sail through.

The chief minister signed the first of the letters today on the eve of the polls slated for 17 April. According to the CM's office the letter, more like

a four-page booklet, is addressed to an individual family and contains a detailed list of all government-run welfare schemes that the respective family benefited from, along with an appeal to vote for YSRCP candidate Gurumurthy.

According to the CMO it is a departure from existing political custom of criticising and bad-mouthing opponents and seek votes on the basis of the performance of the government and development work since assuming office 22 months ago.

However, undaunted by the approach, the state BJP unit which is pinning hopes on the

Tirupati seat to secure a foothold in the state, today sharpened its attack on the chief priest Ramana Dikshitaru who was removed by TDP and reinstated by Reddy prior to the polls, for describing the CM as incarnation of Vishnu.

BJP's national secretary and co-incharge of AP tweeted the chief priest has insulted the deity and the devotees by "calling an on-bail chief minister" an incarnation of Vishnu. He has tarnished the sanctity of the post of chief priest, thundered Deodhar who was joined by another BJP senior GVL Narasimha Rao in condemning the statement.

**17 April bypolls crucial for BSY, Shivakumar, Siddhu**

## NEWS ANALYSIS

TYAGARAJ SHARMA  
BENGALURU, 8 APRIL

The 17 April bypolls, including one in Belagavi for the Lok Sabha seat and one each in Maski and Basavakalyan, respectively, for Assembly, will prove crucial for four political heavyweights of the state.

These include chief minister B S Yeddyurappa, BJP, and two Congress leaders in former chief minister Siddaramiah and the state unit head of the party D K Shivakumar. Even H D Kumaraswamy of the JD-S, another former chief minister, has put everything at stake in the Basavakalyan Assembly seat from where his candidate is contesting.

That the matter is significant for the minister is evident from the fact that he also wrote about "the serious lapses" to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah. His grouse: The CM was violating rules.

The letter has had its impact going by the fact that another critic of Yeddyurappa, Basanagoud Yatnal, also a former Union minister, has raised the ante against the CM.

First, he joined the crucial Pan-chamshali Lingayats' rally last month against the Yeddyurappa government even as he kept up with his tirade against the chief minister. The sub set of the Lingayats was seeking better reservation facilities under the caste category, putting the BJP government in a fix.

This morning, Yatnal has once again unleashed another salvo against Yeddyurappa saying "the CM will be replaced any time after 2 May." The reference being to the results of Assembly elections in West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Assam and Puducherry and the bypolls in Karnataka, that will be announced that day.

Yatnal claimed the CM's time was up, especially because he is above 75, the age set by the party's leadership to quit

responsible positions for one so senior. The rebel MLA claimed the new CM could also be from north Karnataka. Importantly, he said the very ministers who had been supporting Yeddyurappa till now, would join the chorus to ensure his exit.

To that extent, the Belagavi election is equally crucial as the Congress sees to wrest the Lok Sabha seat from the BJP which has been holding it since 2004.

Accordingly, the three polls have given leaders of the Congress and JD-S another chance to prove their mettle and clout. For the JD-S though, its interest is limited to Basavakalyan Assembly seat only though not without facing allegations that the party has gone soft on Yeddyurappa government.

The BJP, under Yeddyurappa, is not taking any chances with the bypolls. This is largely because recent developments allegedly involving its former water resources minister, Ramesh Jarkiholi, have put the party in a bit of a problem. Ramesh hit the headlines a month ago, following the release of a sex tape involving a woman who claimed she had come to seek the help of the then minister in getting a job. The minister had to resign from his post even as the matter is being investigated. That embarrassed the Belagavi constituency.

Already, he seems to have ruffled several feathers, particularly of the aspirants, by nominating Mangala Angadi, wife of the late BJP MP from Belagavi, Suresh Angadi, for the Lok Sabha bypoll. Not surprisingly, it has put up Ramesh Jarkiholi's brother, Satish Jarkiholi, as its candidate for the Belagavi constituency.

Another problem for the BJP, on its part, would seek to reiterate that for the BJP, he alone can bring the much-needed votes for the party. In the event the party does well in the bypolls, he would have proved his point while putting his critics in place. Any failure, however, could well confirm what his detractors have been echoing.

## TENDER

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT "NOTICE INVITING TENDER"

The sealed item rate tender on form No. 6 & 8 are invited on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the following works from the approved and eligible contractor enlisted in HP-PWD. So as to reach in this office on or before 22.04.2021 at 11.00 A.M. and the tender will be opened on the same day at 11.30 A.M. in the presence of intending contractor or their authorized representatives. The tender from can be had from this office against cash payment (Non refundable) upto 3.00P.M. on 20.04.2021. The earnest money in the shape of National Saving certificate/ F.D.R./Time deposit account in any of the Post office in Himachal Pradesh duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Chenab Valley Division HP-PWD, Udaipur must accompany with each tender. Conditional tender and the tender received without earnest money will be summarily rejected. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days. The undersigned reserve the right to reject the tender without assigning any reasons.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Time limit	Cost of completion
1	Special repair to Town road Keylong Km. 0/0 to 2/060 (SH- C/o Hill side road drain with RCC Slab and grating at RD. 0/850 to 1/100).	496448/-	9930/-	Three Months	350/-
2	Special repair to Town road Keylong Km. 0/0 to 2/060,(SH- C/o Hill side road drain with RCC Slab and grating at RD. 1/100 to 1/350).	496448/-	9930/-	Three Months	350/-
3	R.O.F.D on Darcha Yoche- Battozing road Km. 0/0 to 10/600, (SH- C/o crated B/wall at RD. 9/1480 to 9/515).	457484/-	9150/-	Three Months	350/-
4	R.O.F.D on Darcha Yoche- Battozing road Km. 0/0 to 10/600, (SH- C/o crated B/wall at RD. 9/3750 to 9/475).	477495/-	9550/-	Three Months	350/-
5	Special repair to Town road Keylong Km. 0/0 to 2/060,(SH- C/o Hill side road drain with RCC Slab and grating at RD. 1/350 to 1/600).	496448/-	9930/-	Three Months	350/-
6	Repair and Maintenance of New Bus Stand road at Keylong. (SH- C/o R/Wall at RD. 0/300 to 0/314).	358350/-	7200/-	Three Months	350/-
7	C/o link road from Kukumesri to Chhatting. Pimal C/o link road to Distt. Hospital at Keylong. (SH- C/o B/wall at RD. 0/075 to 0/087).	225186/-	4510/-	Three Months	350/-
8	Special repair to Town road Keylong Km. 0/0 to 2/060,(SH- C/o Hill side road drain with RCC Slab and grating at RD. 1/600 to 1/850).	496448/-	9930/-	Three Months	350/-
9	Special repair to Town road Keylong Km. 0/0 to 2/060,(SH- C/o Hill side road drain with RCC Slab and grating at RD. 1/850 to 2/00).	297364/-	5950/-	Three Months	350/-
10	C/o link road from Saltgran to Dhar. (SH- C/o R/Wall, B/wall and C.C Drain in between Km.0/650 to 0/740).	429717/-	8600/-	Three Months	350/-
11	Repair and Maintenance of link road from Distt. Hospital to village Beeling. (SH- C/o B/wall at RD. 0/800 to 0/812).	225186/-	4510/-	Three Months	350/-
12	Repair and Maintenance of 21.00 mtr. Span bridge at Beeling Nullah (SH- Repair of wooden decking and steel railing).	260236/-	5210/-	Three Months	350/-
13	Repair and Maintenance of New Bus Stand road at Keylong. (SH- C/o U-shape drain with grating at RD. 0/00 to 0/100).	364016/-	7300/-	Three Months	350/-
14	R.O.F.D on Darcha Yoche- Battozing road Km. 0/0 to 10/600, (SH- C/o crated B/wall at RD. 8/810 to 8/910).	479033/-	9580/-	Three Months	350/-
15	R.O.F.D on Darcha Yoche- Battozing road Km. 0/0 to 10/600, (SH- C/o crated B/wall at RD. 9/30 to 9/348).	496935/-	9940/-	Three Months	350/-
16	C/o link road from Kukumesri to Chhatting. Pimal, Cheli (including 3 Nos. Bailey Bridge) Km. 0/0 to 3/00, (SH- C/o R/wall for approach road to dry span bridge at Chhatting over river Chenab at RD. 0/074 to 0/083) (Kukumesri side).	485715/-	9720/-	Three Months	350/-
17	Construction of link road from Kirtang to Yang-Kirting Thabak Padak Melvah & Gohar (Ausheh) Km. 0/0 to 5/500, (SH- Formation cutting at RD. 1/125 to 1/575).	498925/-	9980/-	Three Months	350/-
18	Construction of Chowkidar quarter at Jispa. (SH- Balance Works).	485600/-	9720/-	Three Months	350/-
19	Protection work on Miyar valley road Km. 0/0 to 2/000 (SH- c/o crated B/wall at RD. 1/800 to 1/890).	458745/-	9175/-	Three Months	350/-
20	The intending contractors shall produce their latest registration/ renewal/ Income Tax/PAN/GST/NOC from concerned E.T.O and earnest money alongwith their application.				
21	The intending firm/ contractor are required to see the site of work before submitting the tender..				
22	Work done certificate.				

Executive Engineer,  
Chenab Valley Division  
HPPWD, Udaipur

0098/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

## PRESS NOTE

### NOTICE INVITING BIDS FOR ROAD/ BRIDGE/ BUILDING WORKS

Executive Engineer, Bharwain Division, HP. PWD, Bharwain-177109 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh, invites on line e-tenders on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors registered in CPWD/ HPPWD for the following works:-

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Earnest money	Cost of the documents	Time allowed for completion (Months)	Time & date of opening of technical bids.	Class of contractor
1.	C/O & M/T on link road to village Kuthiari to Katohar Kalan via Bijapur to Bandukian Mohalla Hambla from km 0/0 to 7/455 (SH- Formation cutting including Retaining wall, cross drainage work, cement concrete pavement, GSB WMM Metalling /tarring and V-shape drain etc including five year maintenance) under NABARD-XXVI)	47650595	953000	5000	Twelve Months	11.30 AM on 04.05.2021	Class-A & B
2.	C/O link road Panchayat Ghar Mawa Sindhan to Abadi Harjan, Rajputan & Gurjan from km 0/0 to 1/500 (SH- Formation cutting including Retaining wall, cross drainage, work cement concrete pavement/ GSB, WMM metalling/ tarring & V-shape drain etc including five year maintenance) Under NABARD-XXVI	9666983	194000	2000	Twelve Months	11.30 AM on 04.05.2021	Class-A & B

1. Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://htptenders.gov.in> from 26.04.2021 (5.00 PM) to onward. The bids can be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://htptenders.gov.in> w.e.f 27.04.2021 to 05.05.2021 up to 5.00 PM & documents submission up to 10.30 AM. The bids received will be opened at 11.30 AM on 04.05.2021 in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.  
2. Bid document along with general terms and conditions of the work can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://htptenders.gov.in>.  
3. The bidders are advised to quote rates inclusive of GST as applicable. GST shall not be paid extra.

0091/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

## Will fight sectarian divide: CM on EC notice

SNS & PTI  
DOMJUR/BALAGARH, 8 APRIL

division of voters along religious lines," the TMC supreme said.

Asserting that she would continue to raise her voice against any attempt to divide voters on communal lines, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said that the Election Commission may serve 10 showcause notices on her but she won't change her stance.

The poll panel had on

Wednesday issued a notice to Banerjee for violating the model code of conduct, after she allegedly urged the Muslim community to vote en bloc for the TMC.

The TMC supremo, during her campaign in Domjur assembly seat, also sought to know why no complaint has been registered against BJP star campaigner and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging that he often makes references to Hindu and Muslim votebanks while delivering speeches.

"You (EC) can issue 10 showcause notices to me but my reply will be the same. I will always speak against any division in Hindu, Muslim votes. I will always stand against

allow this to continue," the TMC chief said.

Banerjee called upon the state police force "to keep vigil and not to bow their heads before Delhi."

"Your job is to ensure free and fair polls, please be stern with trouble makers and keep your integrity intact."

Asking villagers to lodge FIRs at local police station in case of any excess committed by central forces, the chief minister said, "If the police station refuses to accept the FIRs, inform us". Blaming BJP for "spreading lies about promulgation of section 144 in an entire constituency," the TMC supremo said, "They (BJP) spread lies to create panic. In reality, section 144 is in force within 200m of a booth. But they are doing this to prevent our voters from going to polling stations."

Miss Banerjee asked polling agents to be vocal and to protest any "misdeed by BJP and security forces".

Asking voters not to turn West Bengal into "another Gujarat" by voting for the saffron party, she said, "If you wish to protect the oldest Durga puja in



*Yogi is going to rallies even after coming in contact with Covid+ person. His office is giving incorrect figures of deaths from Covid*

CONGRESS LEADER PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA  
SLAMMING UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER'S 'IRRESPONSIBLE' BEHAVIOUR

## Debt Recovery Tribunal-I, Delhi

4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building,  
Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

O.A. No. 1057 / 2019

State Bank of India

Versus Applicant

Sh. Mateen Ahmed & Oths.

To,

1. Sh. Arun Kumar Tyagi, (Defendant No.

03) S/o Om Dutt Tyagi, R/o: L-457,

Sector-12, Pratap Vihar, Ghaziabad, U.P.-

201009. Also at: 2/1/1093, Nuhala, Tyagi

Nagar, Swarg Ashram Road, Hapur, U.P.-

245101. Also at: 26, Beegah Mandala

Village, Loni, Ghaziabad, U.P. Also at:

As Senior Client Consultant, Employee ID-

TPNT00453, at M/s. Tech Mech Internation

Pvt. Ltd. at P-14/45, 3rd Floor, Outer Circle,

Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 23,44,871/- (Rs Twenty Three Lacs Forty Four Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy One Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance before Hon'ble Registrar on 27-05-2021 at 10:30 A.M. (for further details kindly visit DRT website www.tribunal.gov.in) Phone No. 011-23748473)

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

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

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

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

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/ Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748473.

Given under my hand and seal of the Tribunal on this 10th March, 2021

by order of this Tribunal  
for Registrar

Respondent may contact under mention

phone number for further enquiry.

Amit K. Dar, Ld. Registrar, DRT-I, New Delhi, Phone: 011-23748473

E-mail: drt1delhi-dfs@nic.in

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY  
TRIBUNAL- III, DELHI  
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA  
BUILDING, PARLIAMENT  
STREET, NEW DELHI- 110001.

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

O.A. NO. 1108/2019

ICICI Bank LTD ...Applicant

Vs  
OMENDER KUMAR AND ORS.  
...Defendants

D-1 OMENDER KUMAR  
S/O SH DHARAM PAL  
R/O H. NO.33 BLOCK NO.1,  
VILL-PALI, THE  
FARIDABAD, HARYANA-  
121001

D-2 RAJESH  
S/O SH DHARAM PAL  
R/O H. NO.33 BLOCK NO.1,  
VILL-PALI, THE  
FARIDABAD, HARYANA-  
121001

D-3 SARJEET  
S/O SH CHANDI  
R/O H. NO.13, BLOCK  
NO.1, VILL-PALI, THE  
FARIDABAD, HARYANA-  
121001

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on 20.04.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

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

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

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

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

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/ Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748469.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 15TH day of March, 2021

By Order of the Tribunal  
For Registrar

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY  
TRIBUNAL- III, DELHI  
4TH FLOOR, JEEVAN TARA  
BUILDING, PARLIAMENT  
STREET, NEW DELHI- 110001.

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

O.A. NO. 291/2020

ICICI Bank LTD ...Applicant

Vs  
PRABJEET SINGH AND ANR.  
...Defendants

D-1 PRABJEET SINGH  
S/O SH TRILOK SINGH  
R/O A-4, GROUND  
FLOOR, GALI NO.22,  
MAHENDRA PARK, NEAR  
GURUDWARA, ADARSH  
NAGAR, DELHI-110053

D-2 AMAR JYOTI  
D/O SH JASHWANT SINGH  
R/O A-4, GROUND  
FLOOR, GALI NO.22,  
MAHENDRA PARK, NEAR  
GURUDWARA, ADARSH  
NAGAR, DELHI-110053

Whereas, the above named applicant has instituted a case against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in this Tribunal on 22.04.2021 at 10:30 A.M.

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

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

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

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

(iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/ Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 011-23748469.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this 15TH day of March, 2021

By Order of the Tribunal  
For Registrar

# Gen. Naravane's 5-day visit to B'desh will deepen defence ties



Gen Naravane will pay tributes to members of the Bangladeshi armed forces who sacrificed their lives during the liberation war in 1971 by laying a wreath at the altar of Shikha Anirban in the Dhaka Cantonment.

The Indian Army chief will share his experiences during the seminar on UN peace support operations. He will also witness the culmination exercise, hardware display and closing ceremony of the joint military exercise 'Shanti Ogroshena'.

Apart from the armies of India and Bangladesh, troops of Sri Lanka and Bhutan are also participating in it. The exercise is aimed at strengthening the procedures and improving interoperability among the neighbourhood countries. It will culminate on 12

April. The visit of the Indian Army chief will further strengthen the close and fraternal ties existing between the armed forces of the two countries," the Indian High Commission in Dhaka said in a press note.

He paid tributes to the fallen heroes of Bangladesh's 1971 Liberation War after arriving in the country on a five-day visit to further strengthen the close and fraternal ties existing between the Armed Forces of the two nations.

The visit will further strengthen the close and fraternal ties existing between the Armed Forces of the two countries, it said.

The Army chief will also interact with Bangladesh's Foreign Minister A K Abdul Momen on April 11.

**CPM: Modi govt proves 'grossly negligent' as India faces 'calamitous situation'**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

used in 35 countries, but awaited approval for manufacturing in India, the editorial said. "The supply of vaccine is already falling short with stocks rapidly depleting in States where the surge is most. This is at a time when people above 45 are being vaccinated from April 1. The failure to plan and execute a scaled-up vaccination programme is glaring," the CPI (M) editorial said.

The Centre should also immediately provide money for the Centrally-sponsored scheme - Atmanirbhar Swasthya Bharat Yojana - which is meant to develop capacities in primary, secondary and tertiary health system and other public health facilities. Though the scheme is to incur expenditure of Rs 64,180 crores over six years, no allocation was made for it in the budget, the party said.

**Fearing lockdown, migrants leaving Gujarat:** Fearing another lockdown in the wake of a sudden spike in Covid cases in Gujarat, migrant workers and their families have started leaving Surat and Ahmedabad, two of the state's most severely affected cities.

However, government officials on Thursday claimed the number of those leaving was very low and people cannot be stopped from moving from one place to another.

## -ve Covid report mandatory to enter T'gana: HC

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 8 APRIL

-ve certificate must to enter Mysuru: The Mysuru district administration issued an advisory stating that it was "appropriate" for all those travelling to Mysuru from Bengaluru to have negative reports, not older than 72 hours at the time of travel. An advisory to this effect was issued on Thursday. Noting the surge in cases in Bengaluru city, it said, many people commute between Mysuru and Bengaluru on a daily basis for job and business reasons, also it being a tourist spot many tourists travel to the district from the state capital.

PTI

which are witnessing high prevalence of the virus.

Telangana continued to witness a surge reporting 2055 new infections and 7 deaths. The court was also concerned that liquor shops were contributing to the spread of the virus along with pubs and cinema halls and wanted the state to step up vaccination by conducting camps in office complexes. Self-imposed curfew: The shopkeepers of Begum Bazar in old city area of Hyderabad have decided to go into self imposed curfew, downing the shutters at 5 pm in the evening instead of the customary 9 pm. The state Human Rights Commission too decided to suspend its hearings till 30 April in view of the pandemic situation.

## IIM Jammu: 19 tested +ve ahead of V-P's visit

JAMMU, 8 APRIL

At least 19 students and staff members at IIM Jammu have tested positive ahead of the visit of Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu to address the convocation at the prestigious institute on Friday.

Another team of doctors was rushed to the temporary campus of IIM on the Canal Road for mass testing. SNS

## LAC: India, China hope to reach mutual accord

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

Ahead of the 11th round of talks between senior commanders of the two countries on the military stand-off in Eastern Ladakh, India today hoped the two countries would be able to arrive at a consensus on disengagement at other friction points at the Line of Actual Control. "We would like to see disengagement in the remaining areas in Eastern Ladakh,"

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing. He recalled that during the

12 March meeting of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination (WMCC) in border areas, senior diplomats of the two countries had agreed to convene the 11th round of senior commanders' meeting.

Tomorrow's talks will focus on disengagement at friction points in Gogra, Hot Springs and Depsang plains in Ladakh, sources said. The talks will begin at 1000 hrs at Chushul in Eastern Ladakh. The two countries have successfully completed disengagement of troops at the Pangong Tso Lake area last month.

The way in which the government has formulated its vaccination policy is also contradictory and confusing," the party said. So far two vaccines have been approved for emergency use -- AstraZeneca's Covishield and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin.

The regulatory body had still not cleared the Russian vaccine Sputnik V which was

and Growth for All in the Region," Modi said.

Referring to the handing over of the patrol vessel, the Prime Minister said India was committed to strengthening the maritime security of Seychelles. He also noted that India was able to supply essential medicines and 50,000 doses of 'Made in India' vaccines to Seychelles during times of need. "Seychelles was the first African country to receive the 'Made in India' Covid-19 vaccines," he pointed out.

In his comments, Ramkalawan said his country wanted to deepen ties with India, adding today's event was a "defining moment in the annals of bilateral ties".

Modi and Ramkalawan also inaugurated a solar power plant, a court building and ten community development projects in the Indian Ocean island. The patrol vessel as well as the three other projects are part of India's development assistance to that country

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

India today formally gifted a fast patrol vessel worth Rs 100 crore to Seychelles at a virtual summit between Prime minister Narendra Modi and Seychelles President Wavel Ramkalawan.

Modi and Ramkalawan also inaugurated a solar power plant, a court building and ten community development projects in the Indian Ocean island. The patrol vessel as well as the three other projects are part of India's development assistance to that country.

will be used for multi-purpose operations, such as patrolling, anti-smuggling, anti-poaching, and search and rescue (SAR). India's High Commissioner Dalbir Singh Suhag handed over a ceremonial model of the fast patrol vessel to a Seychelles minister at the virtual summit.

The 48.9 m fast patrol vessel, built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineering,

is the fourth ship gifted by India to Seychelles and is named PS Zoroaster.

Speaking on the occasion, Modi said Seychelles is central to India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR). India and Seychelles share a strong and vital partnership in the Indian ocean neighbourhood. Seychelles is central to India's vision of "SAGAR" (Security

and Growth for All in the Region)," Modi said.

General public is hereby informed that one person (depicted in the photo), **NAME:** Suresh Pal Nayak, **Sl:** Sh. Atar Singh, **R/o:** H.No. B-1/98, Gali No. 8, Vishnu Garden, Khylia, Near Maddi Wali Gali, Delhi, **Aged:** 51 years, has been missing from Chandni Chowk, Delhi from the area of P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. In this regard a case vide DD No. 006A, Dated 19.11.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi. His physical description is as under:

**Complex**

## Another 15 years...

A major development in Russian history, one that was de facto till very recently, is now de jure. By signing Monday's critical law, the Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has arrogated to himself the authority to potentially hold on to power till 2036. Not that this proposed fruition of his seemingly boundless ambition was unexpected; he has, in point of fact, formalised the constitutional changes that were endorsed in a vote on the 1st of July last year. With this, Mr Putin has entrenched his authority as perhaps no other President has in the history of the Soviet Union or post-1991 Russia, the year when the geographical entity disintegrated with Mikhail Gorbachov at the helm. Mr Putin has been in power for far longer than any Kremlin leader since the era of the Soviet dictator, Josef Stalin. He now seems poised to surpass the heady tenure of even that iconic Soviet leader. The 68-year-old President, who has been in power for decades, has said that he will decide later whether to run again in 2024, when his current six-year terms ends. The argument proffered has been geared to ensure his benefit. In his reckoning, "resetting the term-count" had become imperative to keep his lieutenants riveted to their work instead of what he called "darting their eyes in search of possible successors". It bears recall that the July 1 constitutional vote had included a provision that reset Mr Putin's previous term limits, allowing him to run for President two more times. So if the next presidential election is held in 2024 as scheduled, again in 2030 and yet again in 2036, Mr Putin could be in the saddle for at least another 15 years from now. It is pretty obvious that he has taken recourse to constitutional amendments to achieve his ambition.

The amendments have emphasised the primacy of Russian law over international norms, outlawed same-sex marriages, and mentioned "belief in God" as a core value. Balloting continued for a week and concluded on July 1. Nearly 78 per cent of the voters approved the amendments. In the aftermath of the vote, Russian lawmakers have modified the national legislation, approving the relevant laws. The changes have caused a flutter in the political roost in a nation that was once known as the cradle of Communism. With the march of time, ideology has given way to chic consumerism. The Opposition has criticised the constitutional vote, arguing that it was marred by widespread pressure on voters and other irregularities such as the lack of transparency and contrived hurdles that impeded independent monitoring. In the little over nine months since the vote, Russia's most prominent Opposition leader, Alexei Navalny, has been imprisoned. Inherent in Vladimir Putin's personality is a streak of authoritarianism (the plight of Navalny), when not expansionist design (as manifest in Ukraine).

## Double-pronged crisis

Even after several elections in the span of a year, Israel remained in utter confusion on Monday when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption trial resumed in Jerusalem. In parallel, the beleaguered country's lawmakers were chewing over his political fate not the least because his Likud party hasn't won a distinct majority. Small wonder that the challenge that he faces has been described as "double-pronged" - the critical talks on his political future are being held in parallel to his appearance in a Jerusalem courtroom. In a word, the Prime Minister's political future is as uncertain as the legal fallout. The critical negotiations on his political future are being held in the aftermath of the inconclusive election in March. In the net, from the perspective of clarity, the uncertainty is fairly overwhelming in Israel today. The ferment in the Middle East might, therefore, persist for some time yet. The President, Reuven Rivlin, held key consultations at his residence with parliamentarians on how to form a government that could help save or end Netanyahu's career. At stake is both the legal and political fate of the country's longest-serving leader. Hence perhaps the analogy with the cinema, "There isn't a film-maker in the world who will agree to buy a screenplay with that kind of overt symbolism," is the perception of the columnist, Ben Caspit. "The fact that the two formative events are going to happen simultaneously on a split-screen is unbelievable. I do know that whoever planned this has a very good sense of humour and possesses a real flair for drama." Real life, we are inclined to add, can be wholly different not the least because of the chronic ferment in the Middle East. Netanyahu, the first serving Israeli leader to go on trial, has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing, alleging he is the victim of a politically motivated witch-hunt. He is alleged to have accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in luxury gifts from billionaire friends and traded favours with Israeli media and telecom moguls for favourable news coverage. The Prime Minister sat in court with his arms crossed as the lead prosecutor, Liat Ben-Ari, read out the charges against him, accusing him of being involved in "a serious case of government corruption". She added: "The relationship between Netanyahu and the other defendants became currency, something that could be traded. The currency could distort a public servant's judgment." In televised remarks at the end of the day, Netanyahu said the trial was an "abuse of power" by the state prosecutor's office. "This is what a coup attempt looks like." Unlike one of his predecessors, Ehud Olmert, who stepped down after it appeared he would be indicted, Netanyahu has refused to relinquish power. As Israeli law does not require Prime Ministers to resign while under indictment, Netanyahu will want to keep hold of his position throughout what could be a years-long trial. He faces more than a decade in prison if convicted. Israel's spring is fogbound.

# Subaltern Economics

The RBI-appointed KV Kamath Committee, which worked out the financial parameters for loan restructuring, has concluded that 72 per cent of banking sector debt worth Rs 37.72 lakh crore was under stress. Further, according to the Committee, the coronavirus pandemic is not solely responsible for the stressed loans; Rs 23.71 lakh crore, or 45 per cent of banking sector debt, was already under stress



Economics, for Indians, is a branch of study that seldom engages itself with the concerns of the poor. While the Government consistently focuses on building the biggest and the best in everything, the poor are supposed to remain satisfied with their subsidised rice and MNREGA payments. The slightly better off, the farmer, the small businessman and the casual worker are supposed to let the Government and big business think for them.

Therefore, the sharp public reaction to the cut in interest rates on small savings, with even the pink papers joining in the criticism, caught the Government unawares. Probably the public, which took demonetisation in its stride is now hesitant about its savings with the Government.

The Finance Minister rescinded the rate-cut order before the ink was barely dry, blaming 'oversight' for the faux pas. Anyone who is familiar with Government working would know that all important proposals travel from the desk of the Desk Officer to the room of the Secretary, with everyone in between vetting the proposal. So, to blame 'oversight' for the rate cut order is disingenuous; more probably, the Government had a brief spell of amnesia about the ongoing elections. Those who claim to be in the know predict that the rate cut order would now be passed by the Government at the end of the first quarter, when the elections are over.

The motivation for reducing the rate of interest could be the humongous fiscal deficit of financial year 2020-21, approximately Rs 18.5 lakh crore i.e., 9.5 per cent of the GDP - about double of the actual fiscal deficit of financial year 2019-20. Consequently, the interest payable by the Government on its borrowings worked out to more than Rs 6.32 lakh crore for financial year 2020-21. The current year would bring no relief; according to Budget Estimates, the fiscal deficit for financial year 2021-22 is pegged at Rs 15.06 lakh crore i.e., 6.8 per cent of GDP, and the interest payable on borrowings at Rs 8.10 lakh crore, which would amount to 23 per cent of total expenditure and 41 per cent of the expected revenue receipts. Ergo, the 'brilliant' plan of reducing interest rates was probably conceived to reduce the Government's interest liability.

According to another school of thought, the Government wanted to reduce the rate of interest on small savings to bring

down interest rates prevailing in the economy. The Government assumed that lower interest rates in the economy would lead to capital being available to businesses at a lower cost - a proposition which is not borne out by experience. The Repo Rate - the rate at which the central bank lends short-term funds to the commercial banks has declined consistently from 8 per cent in January 2014 to the present 4 per cent, but the interest that banks charge for business loans has not declined proportionately.

A rate cut in small savings for either of these two reasons reflects poorly on the Government. Typically, retired people and people with small means invest in small savings. Significantly, earlier, on 31 March 2020, the Government had reduced the interest rate by .7 percentage points to 1.4 per cent. Two such rate cuts, in quick succession would play havoc with the income of many elderly people, who rely on interest from savings to get by. As it is, with failing companies and stressed banks offering minimal returns, the average person does not know where to park his hard-earned money.

Probably, a rethink in Government policy is required. After the tryst with LPG (liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation) in 1991, successive Governments have increasingly relied on the trickle-down approach - a belief that more money in the hands of the rich through tax cuts and other measures would stimulate business investment in the short term and benefit society at large in the long term.

The volume of trickle down in the Indian economy has been meagre. According to the RBI Report of 2019, 22 per cent of our population lived below the poverty line but, at the same time, the richest Indian, Mr. Mukesh Ambani, had a daily income exceeding Rs.300 crore. According to an Oxfam study the top 10 per cent of the Indian population holds 77 per cent of our total national wealth. Disturbingly, the rich are getting richer; according to the same Oxford study, 73 per cent of the wealth generated in 2017 went to the richest 1 per cent. The Coronavirus pandemic that saw a 23.9 per cent decline

in the Indian economy in the first quarter, with a loss of 2.1 crore salaried jobs till August, also saw the wealth of most Indian billionaires rising dramatically.

The underlying idea of achieving rapid growth, financed by cheap credit to big businesses, so assiduously promoted by successive Governments, has failed. The RBI appointed KV Kamath Committee, which worked out the financial parameters for loan restructuring, has concluded that 72 per cent of banking sector debt worth Rs.37.72 lakh crore was under stress. Further, according to the Committee, the coronavirus pandemic is not solely responsible for the stressed loans; Rs.23.71 lakh crore, or 45 per cent of banking sector debt, was already under stress.

The availability of easy credit has prompted many promoters to overvalue their assets and then borrow to the extent of their actual investment, leaving them with no financial stakes in their enterprises. More dishonest promoters have borrowed against non-existent assets or have fraudulently disposed of their assets and hotfooted to foreign shores. The interest cost on borrowed funds ensures that only established and well-run businesses can thrive on borrowed funds; investors flock only to such enterprises, an example being the Reliance group that has attracted approximately Rs.2 lakh crore of foreign equity investment, in the last financial year.

Post-Budget 2019, the Finance Minister rolled back the higher taxes for the super-rich and announced a tax cut of Rs.1.45 lakh crore for corporates, in addition to relief packages totalling Rs.1 lakh crore, for specific sectors. Thereafter, the stimulus measures announced in 2020 leaned disproportionately towards big businesses. But, pampering big business has not created a robust and stable economy. If after availing so many incentives, our manufacturing sector cannot stand up to China, South Korea or even Vietnam, then something is decidedly wrong with our policies and their

implementation. Before offering further sops, the Government should ensure that the basic principle on which big businesses operate viz. "profits are personal while losses are public" is discarded for good.

On the other hand, despite being starved of resources, with spending falling short of allocated expenditure by Rs.29,000 crore, agriculture was the only sector that survived the Coronavirus-induced economic slowdown with aplomb, growing by 3.4 per cent while the economy contracted by 23.9 per cent, imparting a lesson to those advocating the entry of big business into agriculture.

A better way to contain the fiscal deficit could be to curb the wasteful expenditure of the Government. For example, according to Budget Estimates for the current year, an expenditure of Rs.14.32 lakh crore is earmarked for the more than 160 Schemes of the Central Government. The cryptic and incomplete, "Output Outcome Framework 2020-21 for Major Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes," is the only publicly available review of the Central Schemes. The bureaucratise of this document is unable to hide the fact that many flagship Government Schemes are floundering. For example, the review of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), shows that in addition to farmers' contribution, the Government paid Rs.15,695 crore to insure the crops of 5.64 crore farmers for Rs.2,35,277 crore but only 28 per cent farmers received the sum claimed under the Yojana. Probably, insurance companies profited more than farmers from PMFBY. As noted by the 15th Finance Commission also, axing and modifying money-guzzling Schemes is urgently required.

Making the tax system more efficient and productive, by levying taxes on wealth and inheritance is another option before the Government. Currently, the Government has adopted the easier method of raising revenue by an extortive levy on petroleum products that has resulted in misery for everyone and has set an inflationary cycle in motion.

The futility of the trickle-down approach has been summarised in the famous words of the economist John Kenneth Galbraith: "Trickle-down theory - the less than elegant metaphor that if one feeds the horse enough oats, some will pass through to the road for the sparrows."

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## Break the deadlock

When the then Nepal Communist Party leaders Pushpa Kumar Dahal and Madhav Kumar Nepal fed laddoos to each other after the lower house was reinstated by the Supreme Court, it was hoped that they would help bring the parliamentary process back on track. The restoration of the House, the leaders had said, was exactly what was needed to save democracy. They had given hope that they would fight tooth and nail to save the parliamentary process. But Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli came back with sweet revenge as the top court effectively bifurcated the Nepal Communist Party, sending the squabbling trio to their respective old parties. By the time the lower house had finally reopened, it was already clear that the parliamentary process was going to become a zero-sum game.

And that is exactly what has happened in the past month since the lower house came back to business. The parliamentary process has resumed in principle, but it has failed to yield any substantial result towards propelling the country out of the current stalemate. A plethora of vested interests, rather than a genuine will to enhance the democratic process, has, thus, brought the democratic process to a grinding halt. The House has seen several meetings after it resumed its

**THE KATHMANDU POST**  
business, but it has little work to show as of today as the government is not keen on providing it with any business whatsoever. They have missed the opportunity given by the Supreme Court to undo the wrongs committed by Prime Minister Oli, and give a new lease of life to the democratic process in Parliament. In fact, the government, having shed its primary responsibilities towards the people, is just keen on prolonging its life or going for an early election, and cannot think of letting others occupy centre stage. Prime Minister Oli is his boorbeating self, as usual, challenging the Maoist Centre to withdraw its support to the government, all too aware that his former comrades are not in a position to do so. The opposition is its disoriented self as always, scrambling to make a sense of where exactly it should claim its space. One day it says it is willing to go for elections, and on the next day, it says it is ready to begin the process to form a new government. Notwithstanding its grandiloquence on the democratic process, the grand old party is as befuddled as ever when it comes to untangling the gridlock in the House. In effect, the lower house has been rendered useless as the political parties have focused more on securing their petty political gains than bringing the parliamentary process back on track. The gridlock in the lower house has several severe consequences, ranging from a hamper in the passing of laws to the daily lives of the people. It is a different matter altogether that our governance system has always been so sluggish that a few glitches do not become apparent all the time. The government failed to present as many as eight bills in the lower house even as the Maoist Centre, the Nepali Congress, and the speaker of the House turned their eyes away from the parliamentary process.

The stalemate in the House of Representatives has already caused serious damage to the functioning of the very democratic process. The political parties have squandered the opportunity given by the Supreme Court by invalidating Prime Minister Oli's unconstitutional dissolution of the lower house. This deadlock must be broken and the political process provided with a definitive way out so that citizens get to feel the essence of democracy once again.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

### Myanmar crisis

THIS refers to the editorial, "Myanmar's Civil Strife" (4 April). The common people of Myanmar have been facing severe ordeal and passing harrowing days and nights. Amid this crisis, the Myanmar military has brought a serious charge against Aung San Suu Kyi that she transgressed the country's

secrecy law. She has also been charged with violating the country's natural disaster Law and with possessing illegal walkie-talkies. The comeuppance is no less critical than imprisonment for life. Myanmar's military seized power after overthrowing the government and declared a state of emer-

gency. The upsurge, most particularly in Yangon and Mandalay, has been countered with increasingly violent military crackdown. It was alleged that the landslide victory of Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) was fraudulent, though there was no evidence to substantiate the charge. However, more than 500 people including 40 children have been killed so far. There are increasing number of victims in Myanmar due to the violent acts of the military and political authorities. The military ought to have been explicit in disclosing the violation of the official secrets law. The world in general and the masses in Myanmar have been kept guessing. Suffice it to register that Myanmar bears witness to a political conflict between the people

### CHENNAI'S SHAME

SIR, The much awaited election for the Tamil Nadu assembly is over. But what has stood out, and rather disappointingly, is the low voter turnout in Chennai, where only 59.40 per cent of votes have been recorded. This straightaway compels us to ask ourselves whether the country's cultural capital is electorally the least sensitive. In fact, from the 1980s Chennai has always recorded low voter turnouts. In the 2016 assembly elections, while the State recorded 73.85 per cent polling, Chennai recorded only 60.5 per cent, and in the current election the pattern is similar.

While it could be due to systemic issues in some parts of the city, equally it is the lack of responsibility and moral obligation on the part of Chennaites, resulting in a poor polling percentage. And the excuse of the pandemic has only added to their lassitude. The preference of 'one vote will not change the results of an entire election', is cited by many who preferred not to vote. But if everyone believes that his/her vote will not have any impact, then the masses end up failing to make their voices heard.

It is a pity that while Chennaites will turn up in large numbers at a stadium to watch a cricket match for hours, they don't have the same kind of pride and passion when it comes to exercising their democratic rights.

Yours, etc., Ranganathan Sivakumar, Chennai, 7 April.



and the military, a civil strife if ever there was one.

The UN has stressed that the Myanmar military must relinquish power and demonstrate respect for the will of the people of the

country. In spite of cruel persecution and heinous criminal offences against the common people by the Myanmar military, how long will the world remain a silent spectator? The omnipotent military must not forget the action of UN forces against the military dictator of Iraq, Saddam Hussein after the invasion of Kuwait. Yours, etc., Achyut Kumar Mukherjee, Howrah, 6 April.

ADITYA GOWDARA  
SHIVAMURTHY

Prime Minister Modi's meeting with PM Sheikh Hasina, during his visit to Bangladesh on the 26-27 March has created a lot of excitement in policymaking and academic circles. Despite initial hesitation from Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League Party, India-Bangladesh relations have seen significant development under Mr. Modi's leadership. Sheikh Hasina has visited India twice, while Mr. Modi has reciprocated with the same number of visits to Bangladesh. Besides, they also held one virtual conference in 2020. This significant transformation in India-Bangladesh relations is now being promoted as the role model for the rest of the neighbourhood.

Although India and Bangladesh share common history and culture, it is their geographical locations that make their interactions absolutely essential. Bangladesh's proximity to West Bengal, North East India, the Bay of Bengal, Myanmar, and also the strategic Siliguri corridor/Chicken Neck – gives it with unduly strategic importance vis-à-vis India. On the other hand, surrounded by an economic and military power on all three sides, Bangladesh has no option but to maintain good ties with India. Consequently, Sheikh Hasina has put in significant efforts to woo India, after her predecessor, Khaleda Zia, had left a strain between the two countries.

Thus, starting from 2009, Bangladesh shut down several camps of North-East Indian insurgent organisations operating from their soil. It also started cracking down and deterring several ISI and Pakistan-sponsored terrorist organisations operating against India from Bangladeshi territories. This was adequately reciprocated and praised by India. In the following years, that under saw significant development, India and Bangladesh showed the determination to solve their differences. Consequently, India welcomed the 2014 ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration - despite losing its case to Bangladesh. This momentum furthered with the Land Border Agreement of 2015 - when India gave up 17,000 hectares of land in exchange for Bangladesh's 7,000 hectares.

In addition, India also accelerated its connectivity and infrastructure projects with Bangladesh as a strategy to check and limit Chinese influence in the region. China's increasing assistance and supply of military equipment to the Bangladeshi army, along with its increasing investments in Bangladesh, and Dhaka's decision to join the Belt Road initiative in 2016, raised severe concerns for India as the Chinese debt trap would now open threats to India from both Bangladesh and the Indian Ocean, and it would also allow China to re-empower the insurgent organisations of the North East.

## India must expand its Dhaka engagements



Thus, in recent years, India has perceived Bangladesh as a focal point to its "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies. Both states have been investing in infrastructure to enhance their economic integration and people-to-people interactions. They have pushed for integrating their rail, shipping, road and air networks, and are also developing bridges, airports, and land ports to enhance economic and people-to-people connectivity. For the past 10 years, India has offered over \$1 billion to promote development in Bangladesh and has also offered over 10 million Covid vaccines. India also imports certain Bangladeshi commodities without duty, while Bangladesh has allowed transshipment of Indian goods without transit fees at certain ports.

Both India and Bangladesh are seeing a major boost in their bilateral trade, and the same can be expected for the near future, as Bangladesh continues to grow economically, and India attempts to limit China's influence in the region. Besides, sub-regional institutions such as BBIN and BIMSTEC will ensure bilateral and multilateral cooperation between the states, regardless of SAARC's functioning. Finally, both countries have also shown their willingness to solve all major issues, with some hiccups over Teesta water sharing and illegal migration issues. The future of these issues will also hinge on the outcome

of the Bengal and Assam elections.

But there is a major challenge for this cordial relationship. Much of these can be related to the protests in Bangladesh that erupted with PM Modi's arrival. Bangladesh is a torn nation - a nation whose major parties' ideologies and views starkly contrast with each other. The ruling Awami League-led by Sheikh Hasina has been true to its cause of establishing a secular and democratic nation in Bangladesh. In this context, this party idealizes the Indian democratic and secular framework and intends to foster improved ties.

But, on the other hand, there are organizations and parties promoting Islamic nationalism over secularism in Bangladesh. These include parties such as Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), the erstwhile Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party that fight their elections by emphasising that "Islam is in danger". Linked to the military ruling days of Bangladesh, these parties have falsely pictured India as a Hindu state, which intends to dominate non-Hindus and Bangladesh. Consequently, their policies are oriented to further ties with Pakistan and China, and they care less for India and its security concerns.

Although a lot has been achieved by India and Bangladesh under the Awami League, a lot can be expected to change if Hasina and her Awami League party fail to win future elec-

tions. Hasina's policies have ushered in economic growth for Bangladesh, but her track record and legitimacy has been taking a significant hit in recent years. There is a growing discontent with Hasina's iron-fist governance within various political parties, organizations and individuals.

Thus, in an era, where social media has facilitated easy radicalisation and religious fundamentalism, there is a probability of this discontent being channelised and promoted towards Islamist Bangladeshi nationalism.

Further, the ban on JI and the disempowering of the democratic-Islamist BNP - by arresting Khaleda Zia - will only give rise to more extreme voices, such as Hefajat-e-Islam (HI). Borrowing ideas similar to JI, and receiving support from the BNP, HI has been demanding further Islamisation of society. Consequently, it has developed a very pessimistic view of India, and also organized the recent anti-Modi protests which had claimed 17 lives as of 30 March. And rising sympathy and support for these protesters indicates how several sections of the society are unhappy with Hasina's governance and policies.

Thus, there is a clear need for India to build good ties across the political spectrum of Bangladesh. Mr. Modi's meeting with Khaleda Zia in 2015, and the late Sushma Swaraj's meeting with her in 2017, were aimed

at this. Yet, New Delhi has got a long way to go to ensure that Bangladesh maintains a non-partisan policy towards India. Firstly, it has to accelerate its prevalent socio-economic development projects to ensure people-to-people connectivity and help the Bangladeshi government in providing basic needs to its people, through projects related to electricity generation, education, health, irrigation etc.

Secondly, scholars such as Anand Kumar have asserted that the Bangladesh parliament has seen an increase in the number of parliamentarian businessman/ industrialists. In this scenario, accelerating trade, removing non-tariff barriers, and facilitating easy FDIs from Bangladesh will strongly benefit these legislators, making it difficult for them to move or drift away from India in the near future.

Finally, India can continue innovating and promoting new methods of countering violent extremism, both bilaterally and within international institutions. This can also help reduce the incidence of radicalization and violent extremism in Bangladesh and elsewhere, thereby letting New Delhi maintain its influence across the region.

The writer, an MSc in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, comments on foreign policy issues.

"The accumulated afflictions of the soul overflowed. / When my eyes welled up I had no choice. / But to heed the inner voice. / And I bathed my dust-encrusted eyes in blood. / Yes, I rinsed my impure eyes in the liquefied essence of life. / And now each earthly vision and visage. / Every conceivable aspect of creation. / Is in perfect harmony with the hue of my perception. / The golden orb glows blood-red in the ruddy sky. / Likewise its mighty surrogate, the silvery moon. / The blood-curdling mirth of the mornings. / Echoes the blood-drenched mourning by night. / Every tree's a tower of sacrifice, each bloom a funereal flower. / Gore greets each gaze, every vista is a scarlet haze. / As long as it freely flows, the crimson tide. / Reflects shades of martyrdom, torment and remorse. / But when the blood coagulates, it smoulders. / Likes the embers of hate, of dusk and death. / The cremation rites of every tint and taint. / Let it not be thus, o giver of hope. / Conjure up from the depths of this divine despair a flood of tears. / A cleansing tide. / That miraculously might purge. / The blood from my dust-encrusted eyes."

Perhaps Faiz's Bengali friends would have been less unforgiving had they been familiar with this anguished lament.

Dawn/ANN.

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The details given in our mail telegram of the treaty concluded between the Bolsheviks and the Afghans furnish a piquant commentary upon the statement of M. Briand in the French Chamber of Deputies on Wednesday, which makes it abundantly clear that the British-Bolshevik treaty was concluded, not merely in defiance of public opinion in England, but against the opinion, and doubtless also against the advice of France. The French Government, said M. Briand, had not considered it prudent to follow the British lead in signing a treaty with the Bolsheviks. In the light of subsequent events it is easy to see the reasons for the urgency with which this amazing treaty was forced to an issue. There may or may not have been a genuine belief that revival of trade with Russia would do something to relieve the unemployed situation, so soon to be aggravated by the intransigence of the miners, but an opportunist Government had made up its mind to take the risk, and, incidentally, to dispose of a considerable quantity of coal to Russia. Two days after England's signature of the Russian treaty it was stultified, or rather annulled, by the announcement of the Russo-Afghan treaty; and within a fortnight the miners' declaration of war upon the community proved that it had been equally nugatory as a means of solving the politico-economic problems of unemployment and decontrol of the mines.

### NEWS ITEMS

### LABOUR BUREAU FOR BOMBAY

The frequency of labour disputes in Bombay has led at the instigation of the Governor of Bombay to the establishment of a Labour Bureau. Mr. Findlay Sherras, who has been transferred to Bombay by the Government of India, will be at the head of the Bureau and the services have also been secured of Mr. F.H. McLeod, a Board of Trade expert. Mr. McLeod explained the scheme to a press representative today. In the forefront of the working programme of the new Bureau, Mr. McLeod said, will be the economic and social condition of the workers. One of the first considerations will be to arrive at and publish a fair index figure showing the fluctuations that have taken place and are taking place in the cost of living.

### WOMEN'S COLLEGES IN OXFORD

Following the recent visit of the Queen and Princess Mary to Oxford, Viscountess Rhondda, honorary treasurer of the Oxford Women's Colleges Fund, the object of which is to put the women's colleges on a sound financial basis, has received the following letter from Sir Edward Wallington, Treasurer to the Queen. I am commanded by the Queen to transmit to you a cheque for £500 towards the appeal which is being made on behalf of the Women's Colleges in Oxford. The Queen is pleased to make this contribution as a mark of her deep interest in the object of the appeal, and Her Majesty earnestly trusts that the Colleges may continue to receive the generous support of which they stand so much in need.

### PARIS STREET DANGERS TACKLED

The Parisian public has protested so violently against the very real danger of high-speed motor traffic in the city that the police have at last taken action, and the boulevards are becoming disfigured with great bands of brick-red paint, which stretch from side to side. All wheeled transport has to respect these isthmuses of safety under heavy pains and penalties, but though the paint is now dry I have not noticed any members of the public making use of the fatherly assistance of the Prefect of Police. Anyone who has studied Paris traffic knows that while the speed of cars produces avoidable accidents, the skill of the Paris driver reduces this risk to a minimum. The Paris Press today expresses its satisfaction at the chastisement.

### STORM HAVOC AT POONA RACECOURSE

Poona, April 8  
A very heavy hailstorm last night caused great damage in the Western India Turf Club enclosures at the racecourse. The trainers' stand has been completely wrecked and the grandstand had its roof blown clean off and deposited in the centre of the paddock. Though the damage done is not on quite such an extensive scale as in last June, it is sufficiently widespread to need some months to put right. The totalisators in the second enclosure have been stripped bare, just as they were last time, but the damage to the rubbing down sheds is only slight. No damage to trees or buildings occurred elsewhere in the cantonment or the city.

## A poet's anguished lament

MAHIR ALI



Pablo Neruda was already something of a renowned poet when he was posted as the Chilean consul to Barcelona in 1934, and shortly afterwards transferred to Madrid, a vantage point from where he witnessed the unfolding Spanish civil war. It proved to be a thoroughly politicising experience.

He did not need to be pressured to pick sides in that conflict. Like the towering American singer Paul Robeson, he had no choice. The Franco fascists claimed the life of his close friend Federico Garcia Lorca. Other comrades fought at the front. Neruda published a volume of verse titled Spain in My Heart, and subsequently, as a diplomat in France, facilitated the passage of dozens of Spanish Republican exiles to Chile.

Reflecting on Bangladesh's independence struggle, I was recently reminded of a poem about Madrid that appeared in Neruda's Residence on Earth. As translated by Mark Eisner, he concludes it thus: "You will ask why his poetry doesn't speak to us of dreams, of the leaves, of the great volcanoes of his native land? // Come and see the blood in the streets/ come and see/ the blood in the streets/ come

and see the blood/ in the streets!"

One can only wonder whether one of Neruda's later comrades, the foremost Urdu poet of his age, had such verses in his mind as he navigated his way through 1971.

That wasn't a good year for any Pakistani, as the much anticipated advent of democracy degenerated into a bloodbath that sealed the nation's fate. There was only a handful of intellectuals, mainly on the left, who publicly spoke out against the violence being perpetrated in what was then still considered the country's eastern wing. Faiz Ahmed Faiz wasn't among them.

The silence, it's fair to presume, weighed down the poet's heart. One could argue endlessly, and probably inconclusively, about the extent to which it was or wasn't voluntary. What's indubitable is that in those days (and, sadly, through most of the decades that have followed) there was a price to be paid for demonstrably deviating from the official narrative.

Faiz had been down that road before. Denigrating, and often punishing, opponents of the government policies or actions is by no means exclusively a Pakistani trait. It has, in fact, gathered steam in recent years in many parts of the world — not least

in India. And it can be evidenced in Bangladesh, too.

If memory serves — and it's inevitably an imperfect, occasionally deceptive, archive — the only significant public statement from Faiz that year was critique of the Indian and Soviet role in the freedom struggle of East Bengal. I cannot testify to the pressures he faced, nor would it be fair to be too judgemental. He ought not to have been too surprised to discover, on visiting post-independence Dhaka for the first time in 1974, as part of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's delegation, that some of his surviving comrades in Bangladesh refused to renew their acquaintance.

That experience yielded one of Faiz's best-known poems, in which he wonders how many monsoons it would take to wash away the bloodstains. Three years earlier, though, the angst he felt he could not express in public had been poured into appropriately blank verse.

Nuskha Hai Wafa, the nearly complete collection of his verse, suggests the following poem was composed or concluded 50 years ago today, on 8 April 1971. I would strongly recommend the original to those who are conversant with Urdu. For the rest, here's an admittedly inadequate, non-literal translation, although I hope it conveys the essence of the poet's torment:

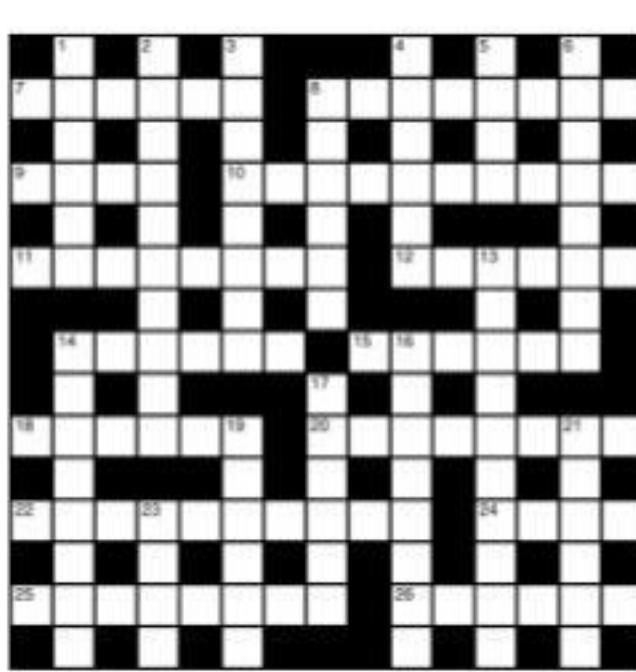
"The accumulated afflictions of the soul overflowed. / When my eyes welled up I had no choice. / But to heed the inner voice. / And I bathed my dust-encrusted eyes in blood. / Yes, I rinsed my impure eyes in the liquefied essence of life. / And now each earthly vision and visage. / Every conceivable aspect of creation. / Is in perfect harmony with the hue of my perception. / The golden orb glows blood-red in the ruddy sky. / Likewise its mighty surrogate, the silvery moon. / The blood-curdling mirth of the mornings. / Echoes the blood-drenched mourning by night. / Every tree's a tower of sacrifice, each bloom a funereal flower. / Gore greets each gaze, every vista is a scarlet haze. / As long as it freely flows, the crimson tide. / Reflects shades of martyrdom, torment and remorse. / But when the blood coagulates, it smoulders. / Likes the embers of hate, of dusk and death. / The cremation rites of every tint and taint. / Let it not be thus, o giver of hope. / Conjure up from the depths of this divine despair a flood of tears. / A cleansing tide. / That miraculously might purge. / The blood from my dust-encrusted eyes."

Perhaps Faiz's Bengali friends would have been less unforgiving had they been familiar with this anguished lament.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28878

### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

#### ACROSS

- 7 A chap apparently back in the country (6)
- 8 Repeatedly stove's beginning to ruin jelly (4-4)
- 9 Rating bowler's target (4)
- 10 TV science programme leading discussion mostly on the level (10)
- 11 Colouring agent is something recalled in bamboo? (8)
- 12 Minor performers no longer rubbish? Not entirely (6)
- 13 Flower, one found in US state meadow (6)
- 14 Nuisance besetting European with a dated

#### DOWN

- 18 currency (6)
- 19 Restraint removing front feather from cockerel (6)
- 20 Ultimate issue: gold brought back in clutches of the Spanish (8)
- 22 On a mystic bent, adopting new expression of holiness (10)
- 24 Country air damaged court card (4)
- 25 Prince recalled a cheering cry in a fix (8)
- 26 Cheers, after bringing about a change: ditching unknown gaming figure (6)
- 1 Openings in Commonwealth area involving a Commonwealth state (6)
- 2 Sequential description of discussions in defence? (4-2-4)
- 3 Fabric Queen twice displayed in legal action (8)
- 4 Put on a show for father instead of turning up for crossword? (6)
- 5 Amusing to be around a pastoral deity (4)
- 6 A South American once enthralled by Egyptian god in religious epic (8)
- 8 Getting on, having provided

billet for soldiers? Certainly (6)

- 13 Exaggerated consequence of chewing that eclair (10)
- 14 A research centre: graduate brought on board by an American resident (8)
- 16 Elevated title capturing most suitable figure in morality (8)
- 17 Supplied golden colour on a hat (6)
- 19 Oratorio, I judge, with sound rising around (6)
- 21 A river? Skill needed to secure a landing-point (6)
- 23 Grasp lead item in constitutional legislation (4)

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



There is now a faster global growth driven primarily by the US, China and India.

DAVID MALPASS  
PRESIDENT, WORLD BANK

## THUMBNAILS

**Oil import from Iran:** India will look to resume buying crude oil from Iran the moment US sanctions are eased, helping it diversify its import basket, a senior government official said. India stopped importing oil from Iran in mid-2019 following sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation by the Trump administration. The US and other world powers are meeting in Vienna to revive the Iran nuclear deal. "Once the sanctions are lifted, we can look to resume oil imports from Iran," the official said. PTI

**NxtGen cloud platform:** Leading cloud technologies and datacenter provider, NxtGen has launched its public cloud computing platform SpeedCloud available for global markets. Backed by best-in-class technology components and powered by Intel, Canonical and Hewlett Packard Enterprise, SpeedCloud is NxtGen's endeavour to simplify and strengthen the adoption of open-source technologies in the country, said a Press release from the company. SNS

**BMW launch:** German luxury car maker BMW on Thursday announced that it has launched an updated version of BMW 6 Series. Locally produced at BMW Group plant Chennai, the car is available in one petrol (BMW 630i M Sport) and two diesel variants (BMW 630d M Sport and BMW 620d Luxury Line). The petrol version has been priced at Rs 67.9 lakh, while the diesel variants have been priced at Rs 77.9 lakh and Rs 68.9 lakh, respectively, the company said. SNS

**HDFC Bank:** HDFC Bank on Thursday announced the winners of its fourth edition of SmartUp Grants 2021. Twenty one startups working in the social sector were selected through a rigorous screening process from 300 applications received across the country, the lender said. These grants are aimed to nurture startups offering unique solutions to harbingers sustainable change in the society and environment, it added. SNS

**Poco smartphone:** Online smartphone brand Poco on Thursday announced the launch of its latest smartphone, Poco X3 Pro. Tailor-made for young tech and gaming enthusiasts, the newly launched smartphone redefines the smartphone experience by making it unbelievably fluid and powerful, the company said in a Press release.

**Edelweiss MD:** Edelweiss Wealth Management on Thursday said it has appointed Pankaj Razdan as its vice-chairman and managing director. Razdan will lead strategic initiatives for Edelweiss Wealth Management and work closely with CEO Nitin Jain, who will continue to drive business operations, the company said. PTI

# Corporates may post 15-17% revenue growth in Q4 FY'21

The estimates of revenue growth are based on an analysis of 300 companies by Crisil Ratings

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 8 APRIL

After eight quarters of either decline or single-digit growth, corporate revenue grew in high double-digits of 15-17 per cent in the March quarter of FY'21 to Rs 6.9 lakh crore, partly because of the low base and better realisation due to higher commodity prices, pushing up their operating profits by a much higher 28-30 per cent, says a report.

With a visible recovery in the second half of fiscal 2021, the overall revenue may be a just 50 bps lower than that of fiscal 2020, according to a pre-earnings forecast by Crisil Ratings today.

The estimates of 15-17 per cent revenue growth to Rs 6.9 lakh crore in Q4 of FY'21 are based on an analysis of 300 companies, which account for 55-60 per cent of the market capitalisation (excluding financial services and oil companies) of the NSE, the agency said, adding operating profit jumped by 28-30 per cent in the quarter.

## EARNINGS FORECAST

► The growth is led by construction-linked sectors like steel and cement which are estimated to have posted 45-50 per cent and 17-18 per cent year-on-year revenue rise, respectively, buoyed by higher realisations and volume.

► But the picture is not rosy across verticals. A cloud of uncertainty continues to loom over consumer discretionary services such as airlines which likely to have declined by 30 per cent amid social distancing and cut in travel budgets.

► Similarly, revenue for players in media and entertainment is also expected to have dropped by 10 per cent due to lower ad spends and subscriptions.

The robust revenue growth rides on a low base of the year-ago quarter, besides higher government capex and higher realisations amid a commodity upcycle, among others. A closer look at the revenue breakup indicates 50 per cent of the recovery is contributed by



as airlines which likely to have declined by 30 per cent amid social distancing and cut in travel budgets.

automobiles, IT services and construction, according to Hetal Gandhi, a director at the agency who lead the team of analysts.

She also pointed out that this double-digit growth comes after eight quarters of either decline or single-digit growth.

Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation

(Ebitda) is estimated to have jumped by 28-30 per cent in the quarter, significantly better than revenue growth.

The growth is led by construction-linked sectors like steel and cement which are estimated to have posted 45-50 per cent and 17-18 per cent year-on-year revenue rise, respectively, buoyed by higher realisations and volume.

Domestic prices of flat steel and cement are estimated to have risen by 32 per cent and 2 per cent year-on-year, respectively.

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Similarly, revenue for players in media and entertainment is also expected to have dropped by 10 per cent due to lower ad spends and subscriptions.

Despite this, fiscal 2021 will close with Ebitda profile rising 12-13 per cent year-on-year over flat revenue.

Amazon has moved the Supreme Court challenging the Delhi High Court's division Bench order that had vacated a stay on Kishore Biyani-led Future Group proceeding with its Rs 24,713-crore asset sale to Reliance Industries.

Amazon, in the petition, sought a stay on the 22 March order of the division Bench, terming it "illegal", "random", "inequitable and unfair".

On 22 March, a division Bench of Delhi High Court had granted Future a reprieve from a 18 March single-Judge order that restrained it from taking any steps to sell assets to Reliance.

Amazon has now moved the Supreme Court and challenged the 22 March order, requesting a stay till a final outcome of its earlier plea related to the deal.

Pass an ex-parte interim order/interim order and stay the impugned Interim Common Order dated 22.03.2021 passed by the Hon'ble High Court of Delhi till the issues

raised herein are finally decided by this Hon'ble Court, Amazon said in its petition filed before the Supreme Court.

It has also requested the apex court to pass any further order, which it may deem fit and proper in the facts and circumstances of the present case, Amazon's petition said.

Amazon and Future Retail Ltd (FRL) did not respond to e-mailed queries.

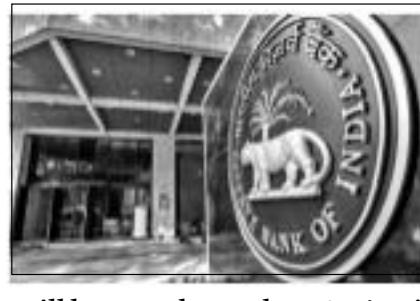
According to the plea filed by Amazon, the division Bench has committed a grave error in passing an order in a non-maintainable appeal, permitting Future Group to commit further breaches of the EA (Emergency Arbitration) order.

Amazon submitted that the single Judge had passed a well-reasoned order spanning over 130 pages and the division Bench passed the interim order in a mechanical manner staying its operation on the same reasons.

Therefore, the petitioner (Amazon) approached this Court by filing SLP (special leave petition), the petition added.

## RBI to purchase G-secs worth ₹25,000 crore on 15 April

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 8 APRIL



will be conducted on 15 April 2021," the central bank said in a statement.

On 15 April, the RBI will purchase five government securities of different maturities amounting to Rs 25,000 crore. There will be no security-wise notified amount.

On Wednesday, the RBI had said it will put in place a secondary market government securities acquisition programme or G-SAP 1.0 in the first quarter of this financial year.

"The first purchase of government securities for an aggregate amount of Rs 25,000 crore under G-SAP 1.0

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Under the programme, which will be for 2021-22, the RBI will commit "upfront to a specific amount of open market purchases of government securities with a view to enabling a stable and orderly evolution of the yield curve amidst comfortable liquidity conditions," Das had said.

The benchmark 10-year bond, which traded at 5.93 percent (on an average) during April 2020-January 2021, spiked to 6.25 percent on 10 March 2021 before coming down again. In sync with G-Sec yields, corporate bond yields also hardened across issuers and rating categories in the recent period.

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## Open for stronger trade relations with EU: Thakur

NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

Union minister Anurag Singh Thakur today said India is open for stronger trade and investment with the European Union (EU).

Portugal's minister of state for internationalisation Eurico Brilhante Dias called on Thakur ahead of the 5th Joint Economic Commission India-Portugal meeting in Delhi.

The meeting would discuss the ongoing negotiation process of trade and investment agreements between India and the EU, the finance ministry said in a series of tweets. "Indian and Portuguese Prime Ministers share a special bond and both nations have strong ties. India welcomes and is open for trade and investment with the EU," Thakur, the minister of state for finance, said. PTI

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## Coal India records all-time high capex of ₹13,115 crore in FY'21

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 8 APRIL



diture, breaching the ramped-up capex target of Rs 13,000 crore, achieving 101 per cent of the revised target, it said.

CIL's original sanctioned capex budget was Rs 10,000 crore for FY'21. "The entire capital expenditure was funded through internal resources. Capex growth during all the four quarters of FY'21 was significantly higher compared to previous year," said a senior official of the company.

This also marks the state-owned Maharatna coal miner's all-time high capital expen-

review, followed by land at Rs 2,470 crore. Capex in joint ventures accounted for Rs 2,194 crore during the fiscal, CIL said.

The company's coal evacuation initiatives, which include setting up coal handling plants, silos and constructing sidings, accounted for Rs 1,398 crore while Rs 1,166 crore was spent on construction of rail corridors and railway lines.

CIL and five of its subsidiaries CCL, NCL, WCL, MCL and CMPDIL coasted through their respective revised capex targets for 2020-21. SECL, though did not surpass its revised budgeted target, was the highest capex spender among all CIL's subsidiaries at Rs 3,260 crore, creating a record for itself, the statement said.

## NBCC, Suraksha submit revised bids to acquire Jaypee Infratech

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

have submitted their resolution plans to interim resolution professional (IRP) Anuj Jain.

Jain said that NBCC and Suraksha Group have submitted their revised bids to acquire debt-laden Jaypee Infratech through an insolvency process, as per the direction of the Supreme Court.

This is the fourth round of bidding process.

Both NBCC and Suraksha have made some changes in their plans in view of the apex court direction to return Rs 750 crore with accrued interest to Jaiprakash Associates Ltd (JAL), the promoter group of Jaypee Infratech, after reconciliation of accounts between JAL and JIL, sources said.

In March last year, NBCC got approval from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) to acquire Jaypee

Infratech and complete around 20,000 pending flats over the next three and half years.

The order was, however, challenged in the appellate tribunal NCLAT and later in the Supreme Court.

Jaypee Infratech went into an insolvency process in August 2017, after the NCLT admitted an application by an IDBI Bank-led consortium.

In December 2019, the CoC comprising 13 banks and around 21,000 home buyers, approved the resolution plan of NBCC with 97.36 per cent vote in favour in the third round of bidding process.

In the 2019 bid, NBCC had proposed to complete over 20,000 pending flats in housing projects launched by Jaypee Infratech in Noida and Greater Noida (Uttar Pradesh).

Home buyers' claim

amounting to Rs 13,364 crore and lenders' claim worth Rs 9,783 crore were admitted.

NBCC offered 1.526 acres of land to lenders under a land debt swap deal.

On Yamuna Expressway, NBCC had proposed to transfer the road asset to lenders but before that it would take a loan of around Rs 2,500 crore against toll revenue to fund construction spend.

Anuj Jain was appointed as an IRP to conduct the insolvency process and also manage the affairs of the company. In the first round of insolvency proceedings, the Rs 7,350-crore bid of Lakshadweep, part of Suraksha Group, was rejected by lenders.

The CoC rejected the bids of Suraksha Realty and NBCC in the second round held in May-June 2019.

Home buyers' claim

## Ambani to appeal against Sebi penalty

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani will appeal against the fine imposed by market regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India over alleged irregularities in a two-decade-old share issue in the company, the firm said today.

Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) had issued debentures with convertible warrants in 1994 and allotted equity shares against the warrants in 2000.

This was when Dhirubhai Ambani was heading the undivided company.

"Sebi had issued a show-cause notice in February 2011 (more than 11 years after the acquisition of shares) to the promoter and promoter group (as in the

case of RIL) and they remain confident of vindicating their position," the filing said.

year 2000) alleging violation" of takeover regulations, the company said in a stock exchange filing on Thursday.

The show-cause notice has now been adjudicated (21 years after the acquisition of shares) and a penalty of Rs 25 crore levied on then promoter and promoter group ~ brothers Mukesh and Anil (who had split the company after the death of their father in 2002) and other individuals.

"The promoter and promoter group have informed RIL that there has been no violation of Regulation 11(1) of the Sebi Takeover Regulations and they have complied with applicable laws, and an appeal will be preferred to the Securities Appellate Tribunal and they remain confident of vindicating their position," the filing said.



*Speaker's visit to Kabul postponed as airport was closed due to security threat. The plane was about to descent when the control tower informed of the closure of airport.*

SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF PAKISTAN FOR AFGHANISTAN MOHAMMAD SADIQ  
AFTER PAKISTAN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEAKER'S AFGHANISTAN VISIT WAS DELAYED.

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 09 APRIL 2021

09

# Myanmar junta limits internet, satellite TVs

As the junta increased use of deadly force, it also imposed ban on mobile data

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANGON, 8 APRIL

A nformation blackout under Myanmar's military junta worsened on Thursday as fiber broadband service, the last legal way for ordinary people to access the internet, became intermittently inaccessible on several networks.

Authorities in some areas have also begun confiscating satellite dishes used to access international news broadcasts.

Protests against the Feb. 1 coup that ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi continued Thursday despite the killing of 11 people by security forces a day earlier.

It was unclear if the internet interruptions for at least two service providers, MBT and



Anti-coup protesters walk through a market with images of ousted Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi at Kamayut township in Yangon, on Thursday. [FILE PICTURE]

Infinite Networks, were temporary. MBT said its service was halted by a break in the line between Yangon and Mandalay, the country's two biggest cities, but internet users had been complaining for the past week of major slowdowns in the services.

The junta has gradually throttled internet service since the coup. It initially imposed a largely ineffective block of

social media such as Facebook and then cut mobile data service, the most common way of connecting to the internet, but only at night.

As the junta increased its use of deadly force against protesters it also imposed a total ban on mobile data use.

At least 598 protesters and bystanders have been killed by security forces since the takeover, according to the

Assistance Association for Political Prisoners, which monitors casualties and arrests.

The use of satellite television as a source of information also appeared to be under threat. In Laputta and other towns in the Irrawaddy Delta southwest of Yangon, local government vehicles announced over loudspeakers that it was no longer legal to use satellite dishes and they must be turned in at police stations.

Police also raided shops selling the dishes and confiscated them.

Online news services Khit Thit Media and Mizzima said similar measures were taken in Mon state in the country's southeast. Satellite TV offers access to international sources of news about Myanmar.

Since the coup, all non-state-owned daily newspapers have stopped publishing and online news sites have

# China blames America for tensions over Taiwan

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
BEIJING, 8 APRIL

Beijing blamed the United States on Thursday for tensions over Taiwan after a US warship sailed close to the Chinese-claimed island, asking rhetorically whether China would sail in the Gulf of Mexico as a "show of strength".

The democratically-run island has complained of repeated military activities by Beijing in recent months, with China's air force making almost daily forays into Taiwan's air defense identification zone.

On Monday, China said an aircraft carrier group was exercising close to the island, and on Wednesday a US warship sailed through the sensitive Taiwan Strait that separates the island from its giant neighbor.

Speaking at a daily news briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said US ships engaging in "provocations" "send a



seriously wrong signal to the forces of Taiwan independence, threatening peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait".

"Would a Chinese warship go to the Gulf of Mexico to make a show of strength?" he added.

In 2015, five Chinese Navy ships sailed in international waters in the Bering Sea off Alaska, in an apparent first for China's military that came as then-US President Barack Obama toured the US state.

The US Navy has been regularly conducting what it calls "routine" transits of the Taiwan Strait.

Washington has expressed its concern about a pattern of Chinese intimidation efforts in the region, including

towards Taiwan, reiterating that the US commitment to Taiwan is "rock solid".

China believes the United States is colluding with Taiwan to challenge Beijing and giving support to those who want the island to declare formal independence.

Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen says they are already an independent country called the Republic of China, the island's official name. The widely-read Chinese state-backed Global Times, published by the ruling Communist Party's official People's Daily, said on Thursday China's carrier group had been drilling near Taiwan "amid US provocations".

# Indonesia flood death toll surges

JAKARTA, 8 APRIL

The death toll from the floods and landslides triggered by tropical cyclone Seroja in Indonesia's East Nusa Tenggara province has increased to 138, the National Disaster Management Agency said.

The agency's head Doni Monardo said that the deaths were reported in the districts of East Flores (67), Alor (25), Lembata (32), Kupang (five), Malaka (four), Sabu Raijua (two), and one each in Ende, Kupang city, and Ngada.

"The evacuation process is the most difficult measure in Lembata and Alor. We are struggling to mobilise heavy equipment units such as excavators and trucks to move very large boulders," Monardo said.

The Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency said such extreme weather as heavy rains, strong winds, and high sea waves of up to 6 metres occurred after the tropical cyclone Seroja swirled in the Savu Sea, south of East Nusa Tenggara province with a peak on 5 April.

Although Seroja has moved away from the Indonesian territory, but the impact would still be felt in a number of provinces in the southern part of the country for the next a few days.

"Residents in the provinces of Bali, West Nusa Tenggara, East Java, Yogyakarta, and Central Java must watch out," the agency's head Dwikorita Karnawati said.

Seroja is the 10th tropical cyclone hitting Indonesia since 2008 but had the worst impact as it made landfall.

The government provided tens of thousands of anti-coronavirus masks and said authorities would set up health posts at refugee camps to test people for the virus. IANS

## Turkey denies it snubbed EU chief during Ankara visit

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

ANKARA, 8 APRIL

Cavusoglu told a joint press conference with his Kuwaiti counterpart Ahmad Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah in Ankara.

Cavusoglu's remarks came after the European Commission expressed disappointment that its President was relegated to a sofa on the side, while European Council President Charles Michel was offered the only chair next to Erdogan during their visit at the Turkish presidential palace.

The unequal seating arrangements prompted social media allegations of sexism or a purposeful affront against the commission.

"The seating arrangement was made in line with suggestions from the EU side,"

## Africa CDC opposes issuance of Covid vaccine passports for now

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KAMPALA, 8 APRIL

The head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Thursday described Covid-19 vaccine passports as inappropriate" while poor countries lag behind others in acquiring the shots.

Our position is very simple. That any imposition of a vaccination passport will create huge inequities and will further exacerbate them, Dr. John Nkengasong told a briefing.

We are already in a situation where we don't have



cines."

Vaccine passports are documents that show that travellers have been vaccinated against virus or recently tested negative for the virus.

Technology companies and travel-related trade groups in some wealthy countries are developing and testing out passports to encourage travel. The matter of vaccine passports has been a hotly debated topic around the world, including in the United States and Israel. One question relates to whether governments of large gatherings have a right to know about a person's virus status.

vaccines, and it will be extremely unfortunate that countries impose a travel requirement of immunisation certificates whereas the rest of the world has not had the chance to have access to vac-

## Pakistan NA Speaker's Afghanistan visit delayed

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

ISLAMABAD, 8 APRIL

The visit of the Speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly Asad Qaiser to Afghanistan has been postponed due to security threat, a top official said here on Thursday.

"Speaker's visit to Kabul postponed as airport was closed due to security threat. The plane was about to descend when the control tower informed of the closure of the airport.

New dates for the visit will be decided after mutual consultations," Special Representative of Pakistan for

Afghanistan Mohammad Sadiq, who is a part of Qaisar's delegation, said in a tweet.

An official from the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul also confirmed to Xinhua news agency that the visit was postponed.

According to the secretariat of the National Assembly, the lower house of Pakistan's Parliament, Qaiser was originally scheduled to pay a three-day official visit to Afghanistan on Thursday for talks on bilateral relations, focusing on ways to enhance ties between the parliaments of both countries.

## Afghans work to stem polio rise amid violence, pandemic

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KABUL, 8 APRIL

Afghanistan is trying to inoculate millions of children against polio after pandemic lockdowns stalled the effort to eradicate the crippling disease. But the recent killing of three vaccinators points to the dangers facing the campaign as turmoil grows in the country.

The three women were gunned down in two separate attacks on March 30 as they carried out door-to-door vaccinations in the eastern city of Jalalabad.

It was the first time that vaccination workers have been killed in a decade of door-to-



door inoculations against the children's disease in Afghanistan. Such attacks have been more common in neighbouring Pakistan, where at least 70 vaccinators and security personnel connected to vaccination campaigns

have been killed since 2011. Afghanistan and Pakistan are the only two countries in the world where polio is still endemic, and both have seen a disturbing increase in cases in recent years. In Afghanistan, 56 new cases were reported

I went, but with a lot of worry, she told The Associated Press. I was thinking what if someone was waiting for us and suddenly started shooting at us. But at the end of the day, I love my job I serve my people, especially children, she said. Such attacks can't stop us from what we are doing.

In Pakistan, officials have struggled to overcome deep

public suspicion over vaccines particularly since the US used a fake vaccination campaign to unearth the hideout of al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. Hard-line clerics and militants have stoked the fears by depicting polio vaccinations as a Western plot to sterilize Muslim children.

In Afghanistan, some have also been suspicious of vaccinations, but that rarely if ever translated into violence. The new killings appear to reflect the disturbing rise in chaos in the past year, when the country has seen increasing targeted killings, sometimes of professionals or civil society figures, sometimes just seemingly at random.

## Israel remembers Holocaust victims

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

TEL AVIV, 8 APRIL

Israel paused on Thursday to mourn the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis during the Second World War on Holocaust Remembrance Day.

At about 10 a.m., sirens went off nationwide for two minutes while pedestrians paused and drivers pulled their cars over on streets and highways, reports dpa news agency.

The sirens marked the beginning of a series of memorial activities on the Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day, an official day to honour the Jews who died at the hands of Nazi Germany

and its collaborators.

According to official figures, 174,500 Holocaust survivors are still alive in Israel.

Eighty-three per cent of them are older than 80, and 18 per cent are older than 90.

More than 900 Holocaust survivors in Israel are older than 100. President Reuven Rivlin said at a ceremony at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial that some 900 survivors in Israel died "as a

direct result" of the coronavirus pandemic.

He said many of them spent their final days "disastrous and isolated, behind masks and protective gloves, longing for contact but separated from their loved ones".

"Our hearts are with them and their families," Rivlin said. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other officials also attended the ceremony.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**CROSS**  
1 Tavern (3) 1 Loose (4)  
3 Ghost (7) 2 Starry (5)  
7 Jumping game (8) 3 Napkin (9)  
8 Overwhelming defeat (4) 4 Ovum (3)  
9 One-sided (10) 5 Laconic (5)  
12 Loathe (6) 6 Schooled (8)  
13 Infants (6) 10 Large seagird (9)  
15 School brochure (10) 11 Treasured family object  
18 Emblem of peace (4) 12 Lustre (5)  
19 New York theatre district (8) 14 Moreover (7)  
20 Vehicle (7) 17 Misty (4)  
21 Firmament (3) 19 Haircut (3)

**DOWN**  
1 Family, 13 Orientation,  
16 Stand-up, 14 Abstain,  
18 Mascara, 15 Rating,  
20 Agile, 16 Slant,  
21 Tsunami, 17 Deed,  
22 Tan, 18 Essay,  
23 Thug, 19 Reach.

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

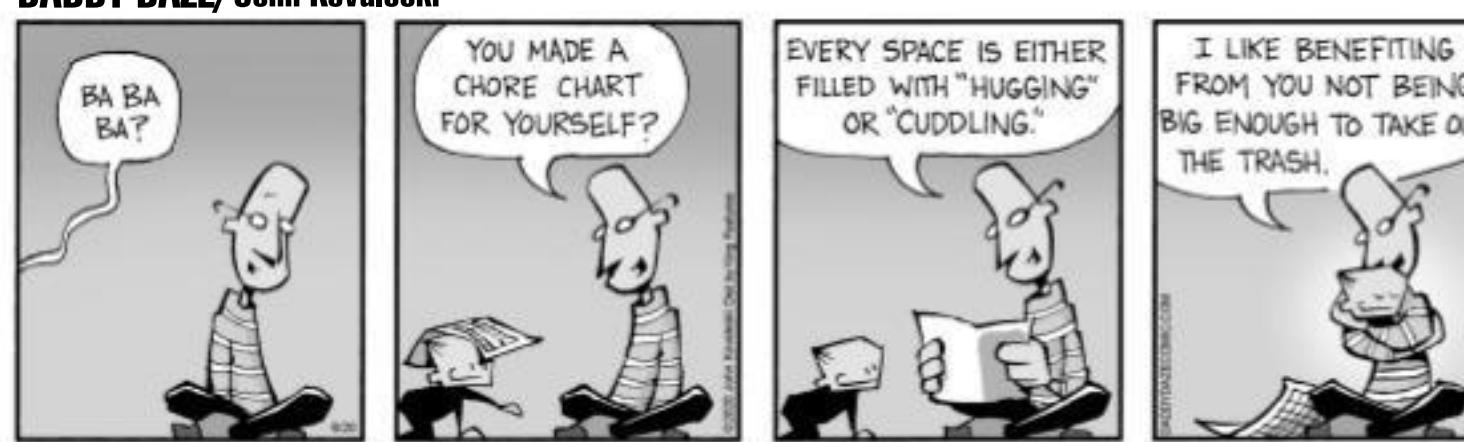
### BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



### RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



### DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



### NEED TO KNOW

#### HOSPITALS

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How can we hope to keep our military strong if we don't give our families, survivors and caregivers what they need to thrive?

JILL BIDEN

HIGHLIGHTS ON MILITARY FAMILY PROGRAMME

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	34	25 R
HONG KONG	24	19 CL
TOKYO	17	10 CL
LONDON	12	04 CL
DUBAI	28	21 S
SAN FRANCISCO	17	9 CL
NEW YORK	19	8 R
MOSCOW	5	-1 CL

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

## THUMBNAILS



Spanish police use batons to keep protesters away from supporters of the far-right Vox party during a rally in Madrid's Vallecas neighborhood, a traditional left-wing bastion, Spain. ■ AGENCECS

Ireland leaders call for peace: Rioters set a hijacked bus on fire and hurled gasoline bombs at police in Belfast in the fourth night of violence in a week in Northern Ireland, where Brexit has unsettled an uneasy political balance. Youths threw projectiles and petrol bombs at police on Wednesday night in the Protestant Shankill Road area. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson condemned the unrest. ■ AP

Pak national charged with smuggling: A 40-year-old Pakistani national has been indicted by an American federal grand jury for allegedly using fraudulent documents and international travel routes to facilitate the entry of unauthorised individuals into the United States from Pakistan and Afghanistan. Abid Ali Khan, allegedly organised, and worked with others in his Pakistan-based smuggling network to facilitate the travel. ■ PTI

# 'Ready to extend presence in Afghanistan'

US President knew of the looming deadline and had time to meet it if he had chosen to do so

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 8 APRIL



Without coming right out and saying it, President Joe Biden seems ready to let lapse a 1 May deadline for completing a withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan.

Orderly withdrawals take time, and Biden is running out of it.

Biden has inched so close to the deadline that his indecision amounts almost to a decision to put off, at least for a number of months, a pull-out of the remaining 2,500 troops and continue supporting the Afghan military at the risk of a Taliban backlash.

Removing all of the troops and their equipment in the next three weeks along with coalition partners who can't get out on their own would be difficult logistically, as Biden himself suggested in late March.

It's going to be hard to meet the 1 May deadline, he said. Just in terms of tactical reasons, it's hard to get those troops out. Tellingly, he added, And if we leave, we're going to do so in a safe and orderly way. James Stavridis, a retired Navy admiral who served as NATO's top commander from 2009 to 2013, says it would be unwise at this point to get out quickly.

Sometimes not making a decision becomes a decision, which seems the case with the May 1 deadline, Stavridis said

in an email exchange Wednesday. The most prudent course of action feels like a six-month extension and an attempt to get the Taliban truly meeting their promises essentially permitting a legitimate conditions based withdrawal in the fall. There are crosscurrents of pressure on Biden. On the one hand, he has argued for years, including during his time as vice president, when President Barack Obama ordered a huge buildup of US forces, that Afghanistan is better handled as a smaller-

scale counterterrorism mission. Countering Russia and China has since emerged as a higher priority.

On the other hand, current and former military officers have argued that leaving now, with the Taliban in a position of relative strength and the Afghan government in a fragile state, would risk losing what has been gained in 20 years of fighting.

A withdrawal would not only leave America more vulnerable to terrorist threats; it would also have catastrophic effects in Afghanistan and the region that would not be in the interest of any of the key actors, including the Taliban, a bipartisan experts group known as the Afghan Study Group concluded in a February report.

The group, whose co-chair, retired Gen Joseph Dunford, is a former commander of US forces in Afghanistan and former chairman of the Joint Chiefs, recommended Biden

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A withdrawal would not

## TREAT BREAK



A man offers a dog a treat next to a line of empty oxygen cylinders stretched across a dirt road, as people wait for a shop to open in order to refill their tanks. ■ AGENCECS

# US takes aggressive steps to protect Americans from Chinese trade policies

PRESS TRUST OF TRUST  
WASHINGTON, 8 APRIL

Describing China's trade practices as "uncompetitive, coercive and underhanded," US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo has said the Biden administration plans to use all the tools in its possession, as aggressively as possible, to protect American workers and businesses from Beijing's "unfair" actions.

Addressing her maiden news conference at the White House, she said that to compete in the long run with China, efforts must be made to rebuild America.

We have to work with our allies and find common ground where we can. With respect to tariffs, there is a place for tariffs. You know the 232 tariffs on steel and aluminium have, in fact, helped save American

jobs in the steel and aluminium industries, she said, referring to the previous Trump administration's tariffs on imported aluminium.

Three years ago, former president Donald Trump levied 25 per cent tariffs on imported steel and 10% on imported aluminium from most countries, saying it was a matter of national security to ensure domestic production

of the metals could survive. "The fact is China's actions are uncompetitive, coercive, underhanded. They've proven they'll do whatever it takes. So I plan to use all the tools in my toolbox, as aggressively as possible, to protect American workers and businesses from unfair Chinese practices," Raimondo said. So what do we do with tariffs? We have to level the playing field. No one can

outcompete the American worker if the playing field is levelled", the commerce secretary said.

During his tenure, Trump, a Republican, pushed aggressively on all aspects of US-China ties, including with his relentless trade war, challenging China's military hold on the disputed South China Sea, its constant threats to Taiwan, the mass detention of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang and the Tibet issue.

Trump's four years in power are regarded as the worst phase in China-United States relations.

Under president Trump, the US placed tariffs on around \$370 billion of Chinese goods, and President Joe Biden said during the presidential election campaign that he would not make any immediate moves to lift the tariffs.

China pledged to buy \$200 billion in additional US goods and services over two years as part of the phase one trade deal signed in January 2020.

But according to statistics released by the Commerce Department on Wednesday, the US goods deficit with China grew 11.4 per cent from January to USD 30.3 billion in February.

Raimondo said the American Jobs Plan is about making sure every American has the opportunity to get a decent job. A decent, well-paying job, with dignity and has an opportunity.

It's a historic investment in America, intended to create tens of millions of jobs, rebuild our country's infrastructure, and position the United States to outcompete China. Many have commented that it's large, it's bold.

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# Provides ample food for thought

**Based on the theme of humans versus machines, the philosophical and political *Namoh Jantro Namoh Dharma* makes for fascinating viewing**

SHOMA A CHATTERJI

**S**wapanmoy Chakraborty is one of the most gifted creative voices in Bengali literature now. He is among the best when it comes to experimenting with both form and content and is never known to write on the same theme twice. His play *Namoh Jantro Namoh Dharma* has been adapted from his original short story, *Praye Jyanto Manush bonam Praye Jyanto Machine* (*Almost Alive Human versus Almost Alive Machine*). It is an incisive work on life and its struggles, and the performance is drawn from the "marriage" between the two.

Director Niladri Sekhar Banerjee says that he has not changed a thing from Chakraborty's original. It is a philosophical, political satire aimed as a jibe at people who exploit marginal and poor performers. On the other hand, when the latter exploit a machine to replace themselves in a performance, questions are raised about humans turning into mechanised puppets that can sing and dance.

The play has an electric opening scene with severed bodies in the form of huge puppets suspended from the ceiling while a small group of people slowly come to life from frozen postures on the stage. The two main characters, among others, are Khokon (Biswajit Sarkar) and Khunti (Madhumati Kabyo) who manage to eke out a living through *shong* performances.

There is a difference between a *bahurupi* and *shong*. Both are street performers, made up in different garbs to entertain people with songs, oratory, jokes and the like. *Bahurupis* are a group of folk performers who portray hundreds of characters -- from gods to lepers, animals to demons, and everything in between. A *bahurupi* is a polymorph, shapeshifter, and wearer of masks who hides the real person underneath them for the sake of performance and livelihood. Derived from the Sanskrit *svanga*, meaning "someone with a graceful action," *shong* is a term that signifies a comic routine.

In this play, Khokon, who is a middle-aged, impoverished and desperate man, forever dressed in a tattered red tee shirt, becomes a joke unto himself but is persuaded by Khunti, his co-performer in the *shong* performances, to

get married. Khunti wants to settle down to a happy family life, away from dressing up and performing, but Khokon wishes to change their fortunes.

A sudden brainwave, triggered by someone in the group, pushes Khokon to have a skilled mechanic create a mechanised doll to take his place. The machine-man is a miracle and with a little push on a button, it seamlessly impersonates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, Rabindranath Tagore, Lord Rama, Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Mahatma Gandhi by only twitching its mechanised arms. Do postures and hand movements alone define those great personalities? Don't they reduce such multi-faceted figures to mere objects for entertainment?

The machine-man changes the fortunes of Khokon so much for the better that he decides to sell it. With the proceeds, he opens a restaurant and rakes in the moolah. The sudden affluence changes Khokon and he keeps throwing religion on the face of the Muslim man who buys the doll from him. "Does the doll have any faith to speak of?", the young man asks, leaving Khokon speechless. He finds it easy to dispense with the object that brought him affluence, much like how Khunti and he would be forgotten once their performance was over. The climax makes for riveting viewing.

There are many other actors, who like repertory theatre, essay several roles simply with a change in costume, body language, behaviour and stage props. Pooja Roy, the actress who changes to a journalist asking Khokon to narrate the story of his life, is an excellent performer and outstanding singer. The actors are not only brilliant and committed but are also good at music, dance and even acrobatics.

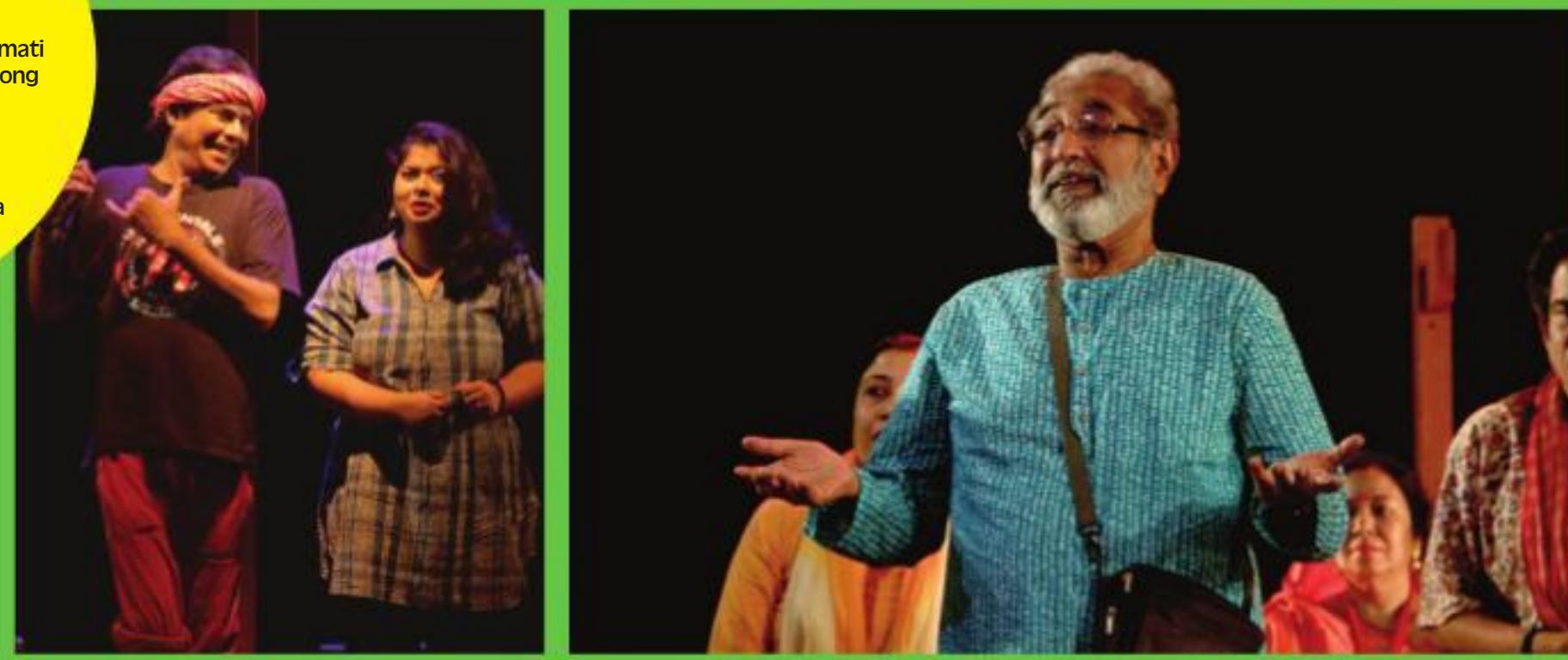
There are several characters who perform well but the scenario gets a bit too crowded in this powerful politi-

cal play. Cutting a few would have helped to zero in on the man versus machine aspect more intensely. Sarkar is brilliant as Khokon while Kabyo often disappears from the stage and has a shorter role compared to the others. Prosenjit Bardhan, who plays the mechanised doll, is brilliant to say the least because sustaining the frozen mannequin-like movements is no mean feat.

The late Jagannath Guha, mentor to this group, had conceived the per-

formance and his guidance gave the play its present form. The choreography of the lighting by Dinesh Poddar has been brought to life by Sasanka Mandal. Abloo's musical score is exceptional while Madan Halder's set design is minimalist but effective. Anindo Nandi's sound design adds the right touch of magic to the performance and Mohammed Israfil's make-up is fitting.

The writer is a senior film and theatre critic



## SNIPPETS

### Toxic Joss



Joss Whedon allegedly threatened to harm Gal Gadot's career on the set of *Justice League*.

*The Hollywood Reporter* shared the allegation recently, as part of a broader report on issues actor Ray Fisher says he experienced and witnessed on the set of the 2017 superhero film *Justice League*.

Whedon's comments allegedly occurred after he took over from Zack Snyder in post-production, when Snyder had to leave the project due to personal reasons.

According to *The Hollywood Reporter*, citing Fisher and other unnamed sources, Whedon was "dismissive" of some actors – Fisher, Gadot and Jason Momoa – when they questioned some of the lines in the film.

The "biggest clash", the outlet writes, "came when Whedon pushed Gadot to record lines she didn't like, threatened to harm Gadot's career and disparaged Wonder Woman director Patty Jenkins".

Gadot told *The Hollywood Reporter* in a statement, "I had my issues with Whedon and Warner Bros handled it in a timely manner." Whedon declined to comment for *The Hollywood Reporter's* piece.

This isn't the first time Fisher has spoken out against Whedon. In July 2020, he alleged in a tweet that Whedon's "on-set treatment of the cast and crew of *Justice League* was gross, abusive, unprofessional, and completely unacceptable". Momoa said in September of that year that "serious stuff went down" on the *Justice League* set.

Gadot said in December that she had been interviewed as part of a "very thorough investigation" by WarnerMedia into what allegedly happened during filming. WarnerMedia said at the time that "remedial action has been taken" but did not disclose details.

In February this year, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* star Charisma Carpenter also came forward, alleging that Whedon had created "hostile and toxic work environments."

—THE INDEPENDENT

## SEPARATED BY GEOGRAPHY, UNITED BY MELODY

**Suromurchhhana recently concluded its celebration of the birth centenary of legendary Indian classical vocalist Arkut Kannabhiran with an online music festival**

*Mishra Kafi.*

Among others, there were sitarist Ustad Rafique Khan from the Dharawad gharana and guitarist Suman Laha of Rampur Senia gharana. The roster reads like a "who's who" of Indian classical Music today and featured musicians who have performed at the most prestigious festivals and conferences worldwide. The festival also presented young maestros like Yadnesh Raikar on violin; Namami Karmakar, vocalist and senior-most disciple of Banerjee, and Sumoulika Sarkar, also a student of Banerjee. The young ones ably presented the depth, beauty and complexity of the art form. Through his renditions of *khayals*, Banerjee too paid homage to his gurus with great reverence.

All the concerts were enhanced by their accompanying musicians' superb support from Abhijit Banerjee, Subrata Bhattacharya, Nitin Ware, Indranil Bhaduri, Kiran Godkhindi, Ishaan Ghosh, Trilochan Kampli, Prashant Pandav, Rupak Mitra, Rahul Pophali on tabla and Pratap Awad on pakhawaj. Harmonium support was provided by Suyog Kundalkar, Anirban Chakrabarty, Dnyaneshwar Sonawane and Pratik Singh.

The digital music festival was one of the biggest online Indian classical concerts, as it was organised in the US

but broadcast in different time zones. Even though audiences were spread across the world and separated by geography, they watched and participated with rapt attention and great admiration for the melodious music that unfolded. The performances enthralled everyone, displaying the rich tradition and vast range of Indian classical music. It was a musical treat for both connoisseurs and amateurs.

As part of the festival, the academy also arranged a series of interviews with several master musicians and featured them on its YouTube channel. The *Behind the Music* series was a means for viewers and listeners to connect with the artists and listen to their stories, journeys and, in many cases, personal connection with Kannabhiran, the patron guru of the academy.

Suromurchhanna continues its mission with the upcoming Nava Kalakar events featuring promising students and artists from India and the US, and concerts with master musicians, and hopes to bring its live concerts to audiences soon. Its academic activities include students from all corners of the globe. The academy is honoured and feels privileged to follow in the footsteps of its revered gurus, Kannabhiran and Kanan.

The writer is a senior music critic

## A hard job

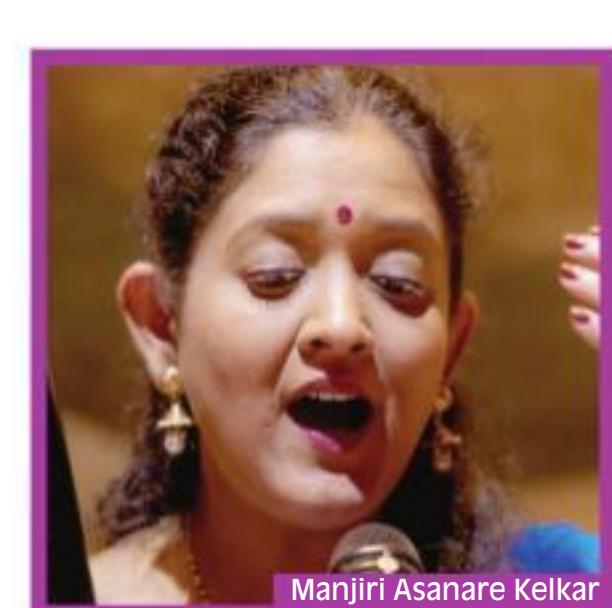


Rani Mukerji, who has worked in the Hindi film industry for 25 years now, says it is challenging to be a part of showbiz. She says her advice to newcomers would be to understand that there are a lot of expectations in the industry.

"My only advice would be that being an actress in the film industry is not easy. It's a very difficult profession to be in, as there are a lot of expectations that viewers have from you once you become an established star. Also, to be able to work in different conditions is not easy," she says.

"Of course, on-screen it all looks glamorous, easy and nice. It looks serene and beautiful, especially the locations where we shoot at times, but actually working in the industry is very hard," she says.

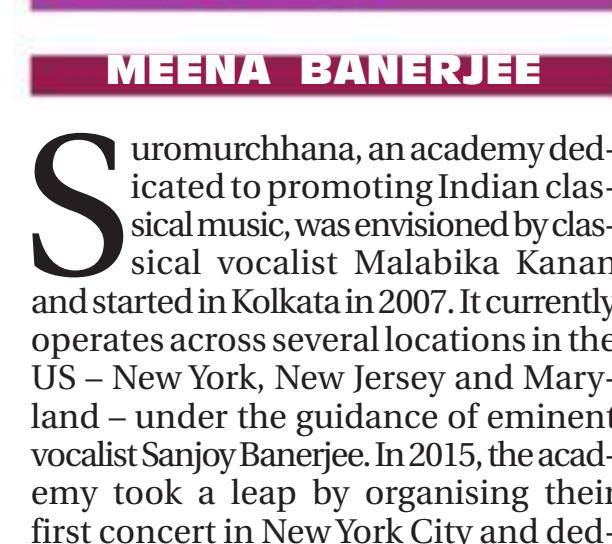
She urges people to only join the profession only if they are passionate about their craft. The actress will soon be seen in the upcoming films *Bunty Aur Babli 2* and *Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*.



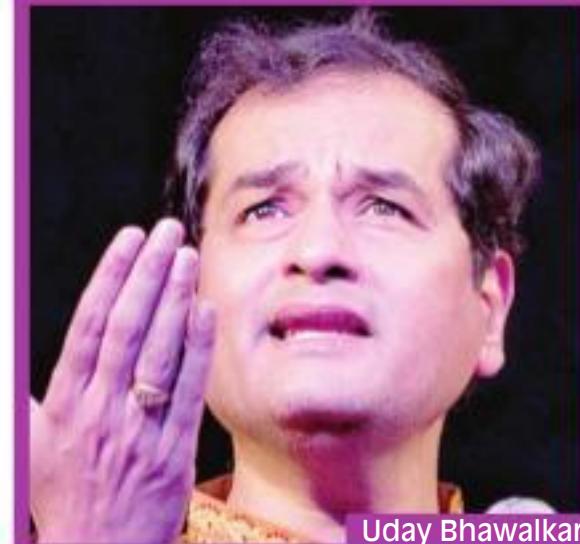
Manjiri Asanare Kelkar



Manjusha Patil



Sanjoy Banerjee



Uday Bhawalkar



MEENA BANERJEE

**S**uromurchhanna, an academy dedicated to promoting Indian classical music, was envisioned by classical vocalist Malabika Kanan and started in Kolkata in 2007. It currently operates across several locations in the US – New York, New Jersey and Maryland – under the guidance of eminent vocalist Sanjoy Banerjee. In 2015, the academy took a leap by organising their first concert in New York City and dedicated it to the memory of Banerjee's gurus, Pandit Arkut Kannabhiran and Kanan. The debut in New York was the first memorial concert in their names and was highly appreciated by audiences.

Encouraged by the response, the academy celebrated the birth centenary of Kannabhiran in a big way. The

celebration commenced in Kolkata's Uttam Mancha on 16 February 2020 and the year-long commemoration concluded with the Annual Music Festival 2021, which was conducted online across six weeks.

The 2021 online Annual Music Festival consisted of 12 full featured concerts presenting upcoming and star musicians, from different gharanas – both in vocal and instruments. There were musicians like tabla maestro Nayan Ghosh and his worthy son Ishaa Ghosh, who played a scintillating duet in *teental*. Dhrupad maestro Uday Bhawalkar offered ragas *Nayaki Kanada* and *Tilang* in his inimitable style. Manjiri Asanare-Kelkar – a torch-bearer of the Jaipur-Atrauli gharana – regaled listeners with *raga Nand* and followed that up with *raga Nayaki*

*Kanada: Mero piya rasiya, a paramparik composition in Rupak tala and the Drut khayal, Ratiyamaijagi re in teental*. She concluded with a *bhajan* in *raga Bhairavi*. Manjusha Patil of the Gwalior gharana enthralled all with her rendition of ragas *Bageshri* and *Sohni* and closed with *Bhairavi thumri*.

Eminent flautist Pravin Godkhindi and his son Shadaj Godkhindi played a *jugalbandi* in *raga Maru Biyah*. He presented it in Kirana gharana's *gayakiang* – *Vilambit in ektaal* and *Drut teental*. Their next was *raga Jog*, presented in *tantrikariang* followed by a *teental tarana* composed by Ustad Amir Khan. Sitarist Anupama Bhagwat of the Imdadkhani gharana played ragas *Jhinjhoti* and *Shankara (alap, jod, composition in Jhaptal)* and concluded with a *Hori dhun* in

*Mishra Kafi*. The digital music festival was one of the biggest online Indian classical concerts, as it was organised in the US

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Suromurchhanna continues its mission with the upcoming Nava Kalakar events featuring promising students and artists from India and the US, and concerts with master musicians, and hopes to bring its live concerts to audiences soon. Its academic activities include students from all corners of the globe. The academy is honoured and feels privileged to follow in the footsteps of its revered gurus, Kannabhiran and Kanan.

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**THUS SPAKE RUMMENIGGE**  
Bayern Munich chief Karl-Heinz Rummenigge (photo, left) opposes a boycott of the 2022 football World Cup in Qatar. "The players have the right to raise their concerns. We believe change does not happen through rejection, it only happens through dialogue. And change doesn't happen overnight," Rummenigge said.

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

**THUMBNAILS**

**Afrixi surprised:** Shahid Afridi said it was surprising to see Cricket South Africa allowing players to leave for the Indian Premier League in the middle of an international series. Quinton de Kock, Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje were those allowed to go to India.

**Maxwell's target:** Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell says he is not excessively worried about his performances in this year's India Premier League and wants to focus on having a positive influence on his new franchise, Royal Challengers Bangalore, in any way.

**Test tour:** Bangladesh will start a two-Test tour of Sri Lanka this month despite renewed coronavirus restrictions at home, Sri Lankan cricket chief Arjuna de Silva said on Wednesday. Dhaka ordered a one-week lockdown on Monday amid a record surge.

**Pak triumph:** Pakistan beat South Africa by 28 runs in the third and final one-dayer at Centurion on Wednesday to win the series 2-1. South Africa won the toss to bowl. Fakhar Zaman scored his second successive century as the visitors made 320/7.

**Deception alleged:** Former South African captain Shaun Pollock on Wednesday said he believed South African wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock had been guilty of deception in the run-out of Pak batsman Fakhar Zaman during the Johannesburg One-Day International.

**Police raid:** Maradona's ex-lawyer has hit back at his daughters after his offices were raided by anti-fraud police, accusing them of abandoning their father. Matias Morla and two of Maradona's daughters, Dalma and Giannina, are embroiled in an inheritance dispute.

**Suarez injured:** Atletico Madrid forward Luis Suarez, the club's leading scorer this season, hurt his left leg in training on Wednesday, potentially dealing a critical blow to their La Liga title hopes. Suarez left Wednesday morning's training session after feeling discomfort.

**Crash report:** Tiger Woods was driving at nearly double the 45mph speed limit when he crashed California in February, the Los Angeles County's sheriff said on Wednesday. Woods' SUV was travelling at up to 87mph before flying off the road and flipping.

**Awesome One for feature**

**GAUTAM BANERJEE**  
KOLKATA, 8 APRIL

The Dandified Cup is the feature in a card of eight races framed on the final day of the season. The 1,600m terms race open for four years and older horses, has attracted seven runners. Awesome One is best favoured by the terms of the race and is expected to keep others at bay. Akshay Kumar rides the aashay Doctor trained runner.

**Selections:**  
1.45 p.m.: BEMUSE 1, Marazzo 2, Indian Tiger 3.  
2.15 p.m.: NOVA 1, Isle Of Sky 2, Rare Bird 3.  
2.45 p.m.: YAHALLA 1, Harbour Sunrise 2, Sitar 3.  
3.15 p.m.: PORTOFSPAIN 1, After Shock 2, Treasure Hunt 3.  
3.45 p.m.: APPRECIATE 1, Shopify 2, Oasis 3.  
4.15 p.m.: BARACK 1, Malwa 2, Kimaya 3.  
4.45 p.m.: AWESOME ONE 1, Rainbow Trout 2, Tudor Hall 3.  
5.15 p.m.: BERLUTI 1, Stagger 2, Lakmos 3.  
Day's best: Awesome One.

## IPL-14: Formidable MI aim for hat-trick, Kohli aims to break RCB deadlock

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHENNAI, 8 APRIL

Rohit Sharma has a legacy to defend, Virat Kohli would be looking to create one while a "been-there-done-that" Mahendra Singh Dhoni seems ready to pull off a fresh trick when the Indian Premier League starts here on Friday, cooped up in a bio-bubble as a raging pandemic wreaks fresh havoc.

If one looks at the bigger picture, the 14th edition of IPL assumes greater significance as it is being held in a T20 World Cup year and that too in the sub-continent.

If Kohli will keep a 'Hawk Eye' on the performances of his probable list of players, it won't be any different for an Eoin Morgan or a Kieron Pollard, who would also be preparing for the mega-event while giving it all for their respective franchises.

For Rohit, the most successful captain in the 'IPL Universe' with an unprece-



dented five titles, he could well walk away with a sixth trophy and the first title hat-trick of this league.

Mumbai Indians, perhaps in the near two decade existence of Twenty20 format, is a side that will be remembered for its aura.

If Rohit fails, then Quinton de Kock will certainly succeed. If both fail, Ishan Kishan and Surya Kumar Yadav could

Trent Boult, with his swing, and Rahul Chahar, with his googlies, will also test the batsmen in Australia early this year.

Amid all this, Dhoni will be quietly smiling and may be planning differently as it will be a placid Wankhede where CSK will be playing Delhi Capitals instead of sluggish Chepauk on Saturday.

The return of seasoned Suresh Raina, which opens up an option to play Imran Tahir in most games, and the presence of Moeen Ali and Sam Curran as floating all-rounders gives CSKA better look than last time.

Glenn Maxwell has again been picked for a bomb and New Zealand's Kyle Jamieson has been made an overnight multi-millionaire by the franchise despite him being untested on Indian dust-bowls.

Devdutt Padikkal will be in his second season with teams analysing his way more and Yuzvendra Chahal seems to have lost his mojo.

Mohammed Siraj and Navdeep Saini do not inspire the highest confidence in white ball cricket at least despite their gutsy perfor-

along with the experience of Steve Smith and Ajintha Rahaane, Capitals would like to finish one better than last time.

Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje's contribution will be as important as Ravichandran Ashwin, Amit Mishra and Axar Patel's bowling.

Sunrisers Hyderabad is one of the most low profile teams which has been known for on-field exploits. A superb assortment of foreign players comprising the prolific David Warner in batting and world's best T20 bowler Rashid Khan along with Kane Williamson, Jason Holder, Jonny Bairstow and Jason Roy makes them a contender.

Kolkata Knight Riders would expect that Andre Russell gets his six-hitting prowess back while Varun Chakravarthy is more than a one-season wonder. Eoin Morgan, the best white ball international skipper on view, would look for a settled batting order while praying that Sunil Narine isn't again called for a suspect action.

### Indian board unruffled by coronavirus surge before IPL start

**MUMBAI/CHENNAI/NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL**

The Indian Premier League is not only one of the world's most lucrative annual sporting properties but also among the most durable, with not even the lengthening shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic appar-

ently able to stop the Twenty20 juggernaut.

Royal Challengers Bangalore all-rounder Daniel Sams has tested positive for Covid-19 ahead of the cash-rich tournament, which begins on Friday. The 28-year-old Australian is the third player to test positive inside the IPL's bio-secure bubbles after

Last year's delayed tournament was shifted to the United Arab Emirates but the 14th edition returns to India, where the coronavirus situation has worsened significantly in recent weeks. The surge in new cases could yet scupper plans to host the tournament in bio-secure bubbles at six venues across the

country, starting on Friday in Chennai. The Board of Control for Cricket in India, however, is bullish about the chances of pulling it off.

"We did it successfully in Dubai last year. We are confident we are going to do it again this time," BCCI chief Sourav Ganguly said. AGENCIES

### India held in eight-goal hockey thriller

**NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL**

Three goals in the first quarter by India were not enough to dampen Argentina's spirits as the reigning Olympic champions came back with a vengeance to draw the second practice match 4-4 in Buenos Aires yesterday.

Varun Kumar (7th minute), Rajkumar Pal (13th) and Rupinder Pal Singh (14th) struck in the first quarter to rattle the hosts, but Argentina, after their 3-4 defeat in the opening match on Tuesday, came back strongly to score through Leandro Tolini (10th), Lucas Toscani (23rd), Ignacio Ortiz (42nd) and Lucas (57th) to snatch a draw.

In an action-filled match, Argentina negated India's three-goal lead in the dying minutes of the third quarter with Ignacio Ortiz scoring in the 42nd minute (3-3). But within two minutes of Ortiz's goal, Varun Kumar had again snatched the lead for India. However, Lucas' 57th-minute goal put paid to the visitors' hopes of going 2-0 up.

Earlier, India made a fine start with a well-structured attack. The first goal was made possible by forward Mandeep Singh who helped India earn a penalty corner in the seventh minute, which was effortlessly converted by drag-flicker Varun Kumar. The early goal

put the home team on the back-foot but they bounced back in the 10th minute with Leandro Tolini converting a penalty corner.

Two strikes within a span of one minute by Rajkumar and Rupinder again tilted the balance in India's favour.

In the second quarter Argentina's Lucas Toscani scored a field goal in the 23rd minute to narrow the lead to 3-2.

Argentina eventually succeeded in scoring the equaliser with their attacking midfielder Ignacio Ortiz giving little opportunity to the rival goalkeeper to stop the firmly-hit penalty corner. IANS

Once maligned, Dembele and Vincius shine before 'clasico'

**AGENCIES**  
MADRID, 8 APRIL

Barcelona will rest its hopes in the "clasico" on a young player who until recently was unreliable in the clutch. So will Real Madrid.

The teams meet on Saturday in Madrid for a match that will have a big impact on the Spanish league title race.

Barcelona is only one point adrift of struggling leader Atletico Madrid, which visits Real Betis on Sunday. Madrid is right in the mix in third place, two points behind Barcelona.

Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele appeared to be hopelessly prone to injury before this season, while Madrid winger Vincius Junior (in photo) had developed the maddening habit of failing to finish off his scoring chances.

That was before stellar performances by both earlier this week.

Before this season, the 23-year-old Dembele had been written off as a bust. Reeling from the unwanted exit of Neymar to Paris Saint-Germain in 2017, Barcelona acquired Dembele after paying Borussia Dortmund a then-club record 147 million euros (then \$173 million), including add-ons.

Accused of having overpaid for the untested player, club officials lauded Dembele's ability to pass and shoot equally well with both feet and his one-on-one dribbling ability. But a series of injuries cost the Frenchman a total of 80 games in his first three campaigns at Camp Nou. That has changed since Ronald Koeman took over as coach last year and Dembele altered his fitness training.

"Physically, when I got to the club I was very fragile," Dembele said last month. "Here I have progressed a lot with the trainers and fitness coaches. My way of preparing myself for games everything has changed."

At first criticized for not fitting into Barcelona's passing style, Dembele is now credited with diversifying Barcelona's attack with his solo efforts and unbridled confidence to shoot from long range.

Beyond his six goals this season, Vincius causes havoc in opposing defenses with his runs and creates room for striker Karim Benzema, who leads Madrid with 24 goals.



Lionel Messi (29) and Antoine Griezmann (14). None was bigger than Dembele's 90th-minute volley to snatch a 1-0 win over Valladolid on Monday that tightened the title race.

"(Dembele)'s progress this season has been very good,

Koeman said after the win over Valladolid. He has improved a lot. The key has been his ability to stay on the field."

Dembele will very likely start alongside Messi at Alfonso di Stefano Stadium, where he will face a Madrid team with out-injured centerback Sergio Ramos.

On the other side of the ball, a young Brazilian dressed in white will be trying to pick apart Barcelona's backbone with his blistering speed.

It is a departure from years of huge star signings, Madrid took a chance on the budding Vincius in 2018 when it paid Flamengo 45 million euros (then \$50 million) when he was only 17 years old. After a brief spell with Madrid's reserve team, he was thrust into the limelight at 18.

His hunger to impress won praise at first, but he soon became known for his poor finishing. Again and again, he would blow by defenders only to scuff shots wide or push the ball into the hands of the goalkeeper. Then came his performance on Tuesday, when Vincius outplayed Liverpool defender Trent Alexander-Arnold by scoring twice in a 3-1 victory in the first leg of the Champions League quarter-finals.

"I personally hope that it is the start of a new era in Indian sailing. Sailors and the community behind them are amazing. It is time for them to become recognised and start shining locally and internationally," Januszewski added.

On Thursday, Saravanan was the first to qualify for the Tokyo Games in Laser Standard Class after finishing second in the overall standings.

Later, the duo of Chengappa and Thakkar finished on top of the points table in the 49er Class. The two had won a bronze medal in the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

**Unprecedented: 4 Indian sailors to compete in Tokyo Olympics**

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, 8 APRIL

In a historic first for India, four sailors from the country will compete at this year's Olympics after Vishnu Saravanan (in photo) and the pair of Ganapathy Chengappa and Varun Thakkar made the cut for Tokyo at the Asian Qualifiers in Oman on Thursday.

This was after Nethra Kumanan on Wednesday became the first Indian woman sailor to qualify for the Olympics in the laser radial event in the Mussanah Open Championship, which is an Asian Olympic qualifying event.

It is also the first time that India will compete in three sailing events in the Olympics.

So far, India had competed in only one event in all the earlier Olympics though two sailors represented the country on four occasions.

"Yes, history has been scripted. Four Indian sailors have qualified for Olympics to compete in three events. It's the maximum number of sailors qualified and also in number of events," Yachting Association of India joint secretary general Capt Jitendra Dixit told PTI.

Dembele will start alongside Messi at Alfonso di Stefano Stadium, where he will face a Madrid team with out-injured centerback Sergio Ramos.

"Sincere congratulations to our champions for creating this historic day and taking Indian sailing to a whole new level," he told PTI from Oman.

He also thanked the Sports Ministry, the Sports Authority of India and the Yachting Association of India for constant support.

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"I congratulate Indian athletes when he has space," Madrid coach Zinedine Zidane said. "I am happy for him. He is particularly proud of the quota of Nethra, who is India's first-ever female sailor to qualify for the Olympics!" tweeted sports minister Kiren Rijiju.

Two sailors make a team in the 49er Class while laser class is a single sailor event. Also, two sailors qualify



beat Neuer in the 28th minute. Marquinhos went off injured immediately after scoring and the defender's absence dealt a blow to Mauricio Pochettino's backline before replacement Ander Herrera could settle in. Bayern quickly took control of the game and came close through Mueller and Choupo-Moting, who was replacing the injured Robert Lewandowski.

Choupo-Moting had headed onto the crossbar in the second minute but did better with another header and Mueller brought the hosts level, nodding in a Joshua Kimmich free-kick.

**Advantage Chelsea**

Superb individual goals from English pair Mason Mount and Ben Chilwell gave Chelsea a 2-0 win away to Porto in their Champions League quarter-final first leg on Wednesday in Seville's Sanchez Pizjuan stadium due to coronavirus restrictions on travel between Portugal and England.