



LADAKH STANDOFF:  
RAJNATH HAILS IAF



ALARUMS &  
EXCURSIONS



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

BLINKEN IN KABUL TO  
SELL BIDEN TROOP  
WITHDRAWAL

GUARDIOLA IS  
AMONG THE  
BEST, AGAIN



P9

P12

WEATHER

Generally cloudy sky. Very light rain / thundershowers accompanied with gusty winds towards evening/ night. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 22 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 61% Min: 21%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 40.5°C (+3) Min: 21.5°C (+1)

SUN RISES SUN SETS

05:54 hrs 18:47 hrs

MOON RISES MOON SETS

09:09 hrs 22:37 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Women participate in a rally on the occasion of Bengali New Year in Kolkata on Thursday. ■ IANS

**Coast Guard apprehends Pak boat with heroin:** A Pakistani boat 'NUH' with 30 Kgs of heroin worth about Rs 300 crore in the international market has been apprehended by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in a joint intelligence-based operation with ATS Gujarat off Jakhau, Gujarat. Eight Pakistani nationals have also been arrested from the boat, Defence Ministry said. The Ministry said that an input was received on 13 April regarding suspected narcotics trafficking by the Pak boat.

**India-France sign deal for Gaganyaan mission:** Space agencies of India and France on Thursday signed an agreement for cooperation for the country's first human space mission Gaganyaan, the French space agency CNES said. The agreement was announced during French Foreign Affairs minister Jean-Yves Le Drian visit to the ISRO headquarters.

**US expels 10 Russian diplomats:** The US on Thursday announced the expulsion 10 Russian diplomats and slapped sanctions on over 30 individuals and key financial institutions as it held Moscow accountable for interference in 2020 US presidential election and the hacking of US federal agencies. The sanctions are also meant to impose penalty over Russia's continued occupation of Crimea.

# The Statesman



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## India worst-hit by second Covid wave

Country adds over 2 lakh new cases in 24 hours; daily deaths also on rise; exponential rise forces states to impose fresh curbs

SNS & AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

**FACT FILE**  
**TOTAL CASES**  
**1,40,74,564**  
**ACTIVE CASES**  
**14,71,877**  
**NEW CASES**  
**2,00,739**  
**NEW RECOVERIES**  
**93,528**  
**TOTAL DEATHS**  
**1,73,123**  
UNION HEALTH MINISTRY FIGURES AS OF 8.00 A.M.  
THURSDAY 15 APRIL 2021

**I**ndia has emerged as the worst-hit nation in the latest wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, with as many as 2,00,739 new infections in a 24-hour period being reported on Thursday. The country's highest peak in the first wave of the pandemic was 97,894 cases, recorded on 17 September last year.

Covid-19 cases have been on the rise at an alarming rate for the past fortnight, with India recording over one lakh daily cases for the first time on 4 April. Within 10 days, India became the second nation to record over 2 lakh daily cases, as per data provided by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare at 8 a.m. on Thursday. India has been recording more than 1.5 lakh cases a day for five days in a row now and added 13,88,515 cases in nine days.

As per Union Health Ministry figures, India reported 2,00,739 new

Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours, the biggest single-day spike so far, taking its overall tally to 1,40,74,564 cases. India's daily deaths due to Covid are also rising with 1,038 new deaths getting reported on Thursday, the second consecutive day the country reported over a thousand deaths. This took the overall death

toll in the country to 1,73,123 till date.

By comparison, the USA and Brazil, the other badly-hit countries, added 75,267 and 73,513 new cases, respectively, on Wednesday.

The exponential surge

in cases has forced states to impose new curbs to control the virus spread.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal during the day announced a weekend curfew after the national capital on Wednesday

recorded a new high daily Covid tally, making it the worst-hit city in the country, outstripping Mumbai.

Uttar Pradesh, which saw its highest single-day spike on Thursday, at 22,439 fresh cases, shut all schools

on Thursday. ■ SNS

single-day surge in the national capital since the onset of the pandemic, while over 100 fatalities were reported.

On Thursday, the

national capital recorded 16,699 new Covid-19 cases along with 112 fatalities.

Mr Kejriwal said after

meeting, "We have taken

this harsh step because

people generally go out for

work on weekdays and

spend their weekends on

entertainment. So, we are

imposing a weekend curfew to break the chain. All

essential services will

remain exempted." He

also announced ban on all

social, religious and politi-

cal gatherings. (SEE P2)



### Weekend curfew imposed in Delhi



Covid testing at Defence Colony, in the Capital on Thursday. ■ SNS

till 15 May and postponed board examinations and imposed night curfew in 10 districts. Odisha imposed night curfew in all urban areas and weekend shutdown in 10 districts.

On Wednesday, Maharashtra remained the worst hit as the state reported 58,952 fresh coronavirus cases, taking the tally to 35,78,160, while 278 new fatalities pushed its death count to 58,804. In terms of fresh caseload, Maharashtra is followed by Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh.

UP, Delhi, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, West Bengal and Bihar are the nine states which recorded their highest ever tally in the last 24 hours.

**Another Delhi spike:** 16,699 cases, 112 deaths: Reeling under a raging coronavirus surge crisis, Delhi today recorded 16,699 fresh Covid cases and 112 fatalities, even as the positivity rate soared to 20.22 percent - its highest till date - according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. (SEE P2)

**Ramzan curbs**

The Delhi High Court on Thursday allowed 50 people to offer namaz five times a day at Nizamuddin Markaz during Ramzan, saying there is no direction from Delhi Disaster Management Authority to close down places of worship.

**Night curfew in Odisha**

The Odisha government imposed night curfew in all urban areas of the state and weekend shutdown in 10 districts bordering Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand. It also announced suspension of 10th and 12th state board examinations and closed all schools.

**ASI monuments closed till 15 May**

All Centrally-protected monuments, museums and sites under the Archaeological Survey of India have been closed till 15 May.

### 1,700 test Covid +ve in Kumbh over 5 days

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DEHRADUN/RISHIKESH,  
15 APRIL



Over 1,700 people have tested positive for Covid-19 in the Haridwar Kumbh Mela area from 10 to 14 April confirming fears that one of the world's largest religious gatherings may contribute further to the rapid rise in coronavirus cases.

Medical workers conducted 2,36,751 tests over the five-day period in the mela site. Out of these, 1,701 came out positive for coronavirus.

The numbers include both RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Test reports of

the EC said. The Kumbh Mela area is spread over 670 hectares covering parts of Haridwar, Tehri and Dehradun districts, including Rishikesh.

A majority of the 48.51 lakh people who took part in the last two 'royal baths' ('shahi snan') held on Somavati Amavasya on 12 April and Mesh Sankranti on 14 April were seen openly violating Covid norms.

### NEET-PG postponed

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

In view of a spike in the number of Covid-19 cases, the National Eligibility-Cum-Entrance Test (post-graduate), which was scheduled to be held on 18 April, has been postponed. Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Thursday.

The decision was taken keeping the well-being of the young medical students in mind, he added.

Next date to be decided later. Decision has been taken keeping well-being of our young medical students in mind,"

Vardhan said in a tweet. PTI

The drug regulator will

make a decision on applications seeking approval for restricted emergency use of foreign produced Covid-19 vaccines within three working days from the date of submission, the government said on Thursday.

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She never loved North Bengal

SUVENTU ADHIKARI, LEADER, BJP

ON HOW HE CLAIMED MAMATA BANERJEE DID NOT SERVE PEOPLE OF NORTH BENGAL

# Weekend curfew to be imposed in Delhi to break coronavirus chain: CM

The weekend curfew will be effective from 10pm today to 5am Monday, even as malls, gyms, spas, auditoriums, entertainment parks & assembly halls will remain shut in the city till 30 April

SNS &amp; PTI

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

**A**mid an unrelenting, staggering surge in coronavirus cases in Delhi for the past several days, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today announced imposition of a curfew in the upcoming weekend and the closure of malls, gyms, auditoriums and auditoriums till April 30 as part of sweeping restrictions to break the chain of Covid infections in the city.

According to an official order, the weekend curfew will be effective from 10 pm on April 16 (Friday) to 5 am on April 19 (Monday), even as gyms, auditoriums, malls, spas, entertainment parks and assembly halls will remain closed in the national capital till April 30. Cinema halls will function with only 30 per cent capacity.

The officials, however, said a decision to extend the week-



end curfew will be taken after reviewing the Covid situation next week.

There will be no in-house dining in restaurants, the CM said at an online press conference a day after the city recorded 17,282 Covid cases — its highest-ever single-day infections since the onset of

the Covid pandemic early last year.

However, the restaurants will be allowed to operate home-delivery and take-away services, Kejriwal said, adding that bars will remain closed till April 30.

The announcement came after Kejriwal had a meeting

with Delhi Lt Governor Anil Baijal and top officials that took stock of the grim situation arising out of the alarming rise in coronavirus cases in the city on a daily basis.

"There was a meeting with the LG today. We have decided to impose a weekend curfew in Delhi. We have taken this harsh step because people generally go out for work on

weekdays and spend their weekends on entertainment. So, we are imposing a weekend curfew to break the chain. All essential services, however, will remain exempted," the CM said.

The national capital has already been under a night curfew (from 10 pm to 5 am) till 30 April, which was imposed on 6 April.

Kejriwal told the virtual press conference that the essential services and weddings will not be affected by the weekend curfew and that cur-

few passes will be provided to those attending weddings.

In its order, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said during the weekend curfew, the movement of people for wedding-related (up to 50 people) and funeral-related (up to 20 people) gatherings will be allowed.

People going to airports, railway stations and ISBTs will be allowed to proceed on the production of valid tickets.

However, those going for vaccination will be required to apply for a curfew pass. Media persons have been exempted from the weekend curfew.

People dealing in food, groceries, fruits, vegetables and dairy products will also have to seek a curfew pass for their movement.

Kejriwal said the reason behind the weekend curfew was that on these days, people often indulged in recreation

and other such activities that could be "curtailed" and "curbed" without much inconvenience to them.

"Therefore, the weekend curfew is being imposed to break the chain (of Covid) and prevent contact among people.

"But we will not allow any inconvenience to those involved in essential services like going to hospitals, railway stations or airports and also weddings. We will issue passes for their movement quickly and without harassment," he said.

Media persons have been exempted from the weekend curfew.

People dealing in food, groceries, fruits, vegetables and dairy products will also have to seek a curfew pass for their movement.

Kejriwal also asserted that there was no shortage of hospital beds in Delhi and that over 5,000 beds were still avail-

able for Covid patients. Efforts to increase the number of beds on a large scale will be made, he said and appealed to people not to "insist" on beds in particular hospitals. Only one weekly market in a zone will be allowed to open per day and steps will be taken to control the crowds there, he said. The CM said the number of Covid cases is rising rapidly every day in Delhi and that the restrictions were needed to check the spread of the virus.

The government will also ensure a strict enforcement of Covid-appropriate behaviour such as wearing masks, he said, noting that many people are still not following it.

Kejriwal said he expected the support of people in implementing the restrictions, adding that the government will overcome the fourth Covid wave with the help of citizens as it did earlier.

Delhi chief secretary Vijay

## Classified

### PUBLIC NOTIFICATIONS

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
Manufacturing Unit of M/s Pioneer Refractories Company Ltd, 12/2 DM, Road, East Faridabad, Haryana (Constructed on a Plot of Land Admeasuring Approximately 11129 Sq Mtr Equivalent to 21 Kanal 18 Maria Bearing Khasra Number 6/16 (8-00); 7/20/2 (5-3) 6/17 (6-13) and 7/11/2 (2-2) Situated in Revenue Estate of Village Sarai Khawaja, Tehsil and District Ballabhgarh Haryana with Entire Structure Standing thereon).

BE IT KNOWN TO ALL THAT the above-stated property is an asset of Partnership Firm M/s Pioneer Refractories Company having its registered office at 2854, Bani Bazar, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006 and is in its exclusive possession, as in terms of the last duly constituted partnership deed of the firm dated 19.12.2003 executed amongst its partners. That after the demise of one of the partners of the firm, Shri Indra Singh Anand on 27.05.2005 the dissolution of the assets of the above firm has not taken place till date. As per terms of the last partnership deed dated 19.12.2003 the partners of the firm have no individual right to assign and transfer their share in the assets of the firm without the consent of the other partners or till the firm is finally dissolved and its assets and liabilities distributed amongst its partners as per the partnership deed.

That it has come to the knowledge of our clients being namely Sri Kanwal Singh Anand and Shri Khuswant Pal Singh who are residents of B-94, Greater Kailash-I, New Delhi-11046 and amongst themselves are 60% partners of the firm (hereinafter called the Majority Partners of the firm) that the three minority partners of the firm namely Smt. Darshan Kaur W/o Late Shri Raghbir Singh holding 10% share, Sardar Gurp Singh Son of Late Shri Kuldeep Singh holding 10% share and Smt. Kamlesh Kumar W/o Late Shri Kuldeep Singh holding 10% share (hereinafter called the minority partners) all residents of 8, Tolstoy Marg, New Delhi-110011 are trying to illegally transfer their share in the above said asset of the firm without the consent of the other majority partners and without the dissolution of the firm and have even excused some illegal and void documents including an illegal General Power of Attorney in favor of one Shri Harish Bajaj S/o Late Shri Amar Nath Bajaj R/o 197, Ground Floor, Tagore Park, Model Town, Delhi with the Sub-Registrar Ghaziabad in furtherance of their illegal and fraudulent intentions to illegally deal with the above asset of the firm. Kindly note that any Person dealing with the aforesaid 3 minority partners of the firm or any of their purported agents, transferees etc. as regards the above asset of the firm shall do so at its own risks and costs and without in any manner affecting the said assets of the firm. Any person having agreements/authories from the above stated minority partner as regards the above asset is called upon to lodge his claim/documents with us within 7 days of the issue of the present Public Notice so that appropriate action can be taken by the firm to have the same cancelled and annulled.

Place: Delhi  
Dated: 10.04.2021  
For Gowari & Associates  
Advocates for Pioneer  
Refractories Company  
F-56, LGF, Kalkaji, New Delhi-19  
Email: lawvalue@msn.com

Executive Member of Balak Sangha (9830044912 / 9903954380) with cheque fav., "Balak Sangha" to update their membership by 30.04.2021.

By Order  
Assistant Secretary

**RE: PREMISES Nos. 25A and 26, Mohini Chandra Das Sarani (previously known as the premises Nos. 25A and 26, Robert Street), P.S.- Bowbazar, Kolkata-700012.**

My clients have entered into an agreement to purchase the abovementioned property from its present owners. Any person having any claim / objection in the said property may contact the undersigned. If no such objection is received within 15 days, it will be presumed that there is no claim or objection or encumbrance and my clients shall proceed to complete the purchase.

Sk. Reazul Islam  
Advocate  
High Court, Calcutta  
10, Kiran Sankar Roy Road  
Kolkata-700011  
Mobile: 9830137595  
E-mail:  
sk.reazulislam@outlook.co

m  
Enrolment No.  
WB/1973

**LEGAL NOTICES**

**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.

In the matter of :  
O.A. No. 93/2019  
ICICI Bank Ltd.

— Applicant

Versus  
Saakaar Educational Trust — Defendants

To,  
D-1, Virtual Global Education Ltd. Through its Director, 104, Palco House No. 2162-T/10, Main Patel Road, Delhi-110008.

D-2, Ashok Kumar Dubey, S/o Jay Shankar Dubey, 101-A, 2nd Floor, Street No. 4, East Luxmi Market, Delhi-110092.

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 abovementioned 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 up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose:

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

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

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

Given under my hand and Seal of the Tribunal on this 15th day of March, 2021.

By Order of the Tribunal  
Assistant Registrar,  
DRT-III, New Delhi

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-III, DELHI

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

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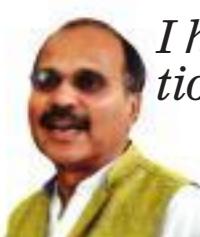
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By Order of the Tribunal  
Assistant Registrar,  
DRT-III, New Delhi

&lt;p



I have written to the (election) commission, stating how Covid regulations are being violated. We need to raise the awareness level.

WEST BENGAL CONGRESS CHIEF ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY  
AFTER THE DEATH OF A CONGRESS CANDIDATE OF COVID-19

The Statesman  
NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 16 APRIL 2021

03

# Capt orders enforcement of anti-superspread protocols

Punjab chief minister also orders an increase in Covid-19 vaccination to two lakh doses per day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 15 APRIL

**P**unjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Thursday said the Covid cases numbers in the state appeared to have plateaued.

Chairing a virtual meeting to review the Covid and vaccine situation in the state, the CM, however, ordered strict enforcement of Covid appropriate protocols to prevent any superspread events, along with increase in daily vaccination doses to two lakh, and a special control room to be set up for effective in-person monitoring of home isolation cases.

Citing figures on mortality and positivity, Capt Amarinder said the restrictions currently in place are showing results and the same needed to be implemented strictly, especially in Mohali and other big cities showing high rates of transmission and pos-



(March 2021).

He pointed out that the state's positivity rate stood at 8.1 per cent, even though positivity in the age group of less than 40 years had come down from 54 per cent (September 2020) to 50 per cent

and should be strictly adhered to, the CM added.

However, Capt Amarinder repeated his demand that the Centre should allow vaccination for under 45 in areas with more cases, since the UK variant was infecting younger people more.

Punjab currently has three lakh Covishield and one lakh Covaxin in stock. Of the 75 lakh population in the age group of 75+, so far only 15.56 per cent have been vaccinated, the CM noted, stressing the need to create public awareness to end "vaccine hesitancy".

Noting that even though there had been a decline in case fatality rate (CFR) — a ratio of deaths to the total number of cases recorded — almost 30 per cent deaths were taking place within two days of hospitalisation, the CM said, adding that around 84 per cent patients presented themselves at the hospital for the first time with severe symptoms, indicating delayed reporting. He

also said that 90 per cent of the total deaths have been of persons with co-morbid conditions.

Pointing to the low contact tracing, Capt Amarinder asked the health department to aim for tracing 30 contacts per positive patient.

Earlier, in a presentation, health secretary Hussan Lal said that as against the 8.1 per cent overall positivity in Punjab, the district of Mohali was reporting 18 per cent. Along with Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala, the district is reported to have high transmission.

Dr KK Talwar, head of the state's Covid task force, said while the curve seems to be flattening, caution was imperative, and anyone coming from a large gathering should quarantine at home for four days as a precautionary measure. The next few weeks were expected to show the same numbers, post which they should start declining, he added.

## HP hoteliers resent govt advisory seeking tourists' negative RTPCR

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 15 APRIL

due to complete closure of tourism units for seven to eight months last year.

The industry was slowly heading towards revival due to free flow of tourists in the last few months but the outbreak of the second wave of Coronavirus has broken the backbone of the tourism industry in Himachal," he added.

Seth said the tourism of Himachal was seasonal and the major revenue generation up to 65 per cent of the total revenue of the year comes in the summer season starting from 15 March to 25 July.

The tourists from Maharashtra and Gujarat contributed to the maximum occupancy in hotels in the month of March and April which had now slipped after the decision.

He further stated that the hoteliers were finding it hard to keep their units running due

to shortage of funds and cancellation of bookings due to the state government's decision.

He urged the state government to withdraw the advisory on TRPCR report and said the government should only charge subsidised tariff for two years for water, property tax, garbage fee.

"The hoteliers are demanding complete abolition of demand charges and other fees charged from the hotel units and 75 per cent rebate on bar fees to save the tourism industry which is already on a ventilator due to shortage of funds for daily expenses," he added.

He added that if financial help was not provided to the ailing tourism industry, it will collapse completely and the decision will badly affect the state's economy as the sector's contribution in Himachal's GDP was around 8 per cent.

## Pb students of Classes V, VIII, X to be promoted without exams

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 15 APRIL

Amid the continuing Covid surge, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Thursday announced that all Class V, VIII and X students will be promoted to the next class, without taking any examination, with a decision on Class XII. Punjab State Education Board (PSEB) exams, which have already been postponed, to be taken later, based on the emerging situation.

The CM took these decisions during a virtual Covid review meeting with top officials and medical experts.

The CM said while the state had closed all educational institutions till 30 April bringing down the positivity in the age group between 11 and 20, relief was needed to be provided to school children going for

exams.

For the Class V students, since exams for four out of five subjects have already been conducted, results may be declared by the PSEB on the basis of the marks obtained by the students in respect of four subjects, ignoring the fifth subject.

Results for Class VIII and X may be declared on the basis of pre-Board examinations or the internal assessment of the respective schools, the CM directed the education department.

The CM, who had earlier this week written to the Union education minister in this regard, also expressed satisfaction at the Centre's decision to postpone Class XII and cancellation of Class X exams to be conducted by the Central Board of Secondary Education exams in view of the pandemic.

## HPCM offers incentives to Corona warriors, tourism industry



CM Jai Ram Thakur during a Himachal Day function at Padhar in Mandi district on Thursday. SNS

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 15 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur on Thursday announced additional salary to Corona warriors such as staff nurses, ward boys, Class IV employees, Asha workers etc, who are involved directly in the service of Covid patients, for the months of April and May.

He also announced sops for ailing tourism and transport sector which were badly affected in Covid pandemic while addressing state level Himachal Day function at Padhar in

Mandi district.

"An ex-gratia/honorarium of Rs 1,500 will be given to all the Class-3, 4 employees such as staff nurses, ward boys, Class IV employees, Asha workers etc involved directly in the service of Covid patients."

An interest subvention scheme for 3 months till June 2021 for the tourism industry has been started and all hotels, tourist lodges, tourism units will be exempted from paying demand charges for 2 months without any late charges. They could pay the same in easy installments and in addition,

demand charges would not be levied from private schools, as they have also adversely affected due to pandemic," he added.

He announced an interest subvention scheme for the transport sector so that they could also avail financial facilities.

Under the scheme, 50 per cent concession on SRT on stage carriage for 3 months from April and 50 percent concession on passenger tax for 3 months on taxis and contract carriage will be given, he said.

Thakur further stated that the whole world has been suffering from Covid-19 and our

## Himachal Day celebrated with fervour

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 15 APRIL

The 73rd Himachal Day was on Thursday celebrated with fervour across the state with functions being organised till the block level to mark the occasion.

The state level function was at Padhar in Mandi district which was presided by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur and he unfurled the Tri-colour after which he took salute from the contingents

state was also no exception.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, with support of people, the government tried to revive the economy of the state by regulating the basic facilities smoothly.

The state government had collected health information of 70 lakh people at their doorsteps under the Active Case Finding campaign.

He urged the people of the state to come forward to help the government in checking the spread of this virus.

of Police and Home Guards.

The Chief Minister flagged-off 136 dedicated two-wheeler for women help desks at each police station of the state on the occasion of Swarnim Himachal Day function at Padhar.

Thakur honoured the parade leaders who presented the march past on this occasion and later administered the oath to the people for fight against the Covid-19 and working for the progress of the state.

He also urged the people to strictly follow the guidelines and SOPs of the state government from time to time while calling them to join the vaccination campaign along with following the mantra of "Dawai Bhi Kadai Bhi".

The Chief Minister's announcements had, however, left government employees and pensioners disappointed as they were expecting release of arrears which were frozen after Covid pandemic and also announcements of 6th pay commission.

"ASSOCHAM feels that lockdown may only lead to another economic slowdown which the country cannot afford at this point of time," the ASSOCHAM said in a statement. The number of Covid cases are on the rise in Haryana from last few days, after which the state government has announced night curfew.

"The decision of imposing night curfew rather than moving towards lockdown is a well thought out statement, in which the deputy CM has taken care of the healthcare of the people of Haryana as well as the economic activities of the state. However, strict self-disci-

pline of sanitisation, mask and social distancing is the need of the hour by the public at large" said chairman, ASSOCHAM Haryana State Development Council and director, Jindal Stainless, Vijay Sharma.

"Government is doing its job, now it is our duty to follow the Covid appropriate behaviour, which is the only way to avoid lockdown in the state," he added.

"The industrial sector of the state has suffered a lot during the last lockdown, the statement of Mr. Chautala has

relieved the Trade and Industries of Haryana, which are still trying to come out of the losses faced in last lockdown," Jyoti Prakash Gadodia, co-chairman, ASSOCHAM Haryana State Development Council and managing director, Resurgent India Limited.

"We appreciate the statement of the deputy CM that no industrial activity will be stopped," he added.

Chautala on Wednesday has stated that 'Haryana not moving towards a lockdown' and no industrial activity will be stopped in the state.

## Prepare plan to ensure there is no shortage of Remdesivir injections: Delhi CM to officials

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday asked officials to prepare a plan to ensure that there is no shortage of Remdesivir injections in Delhi and directed hospitals to provide real-time data related to COVID-19 beds on its digital dashboard.

Remdesivir helps shorten recovery time for patients hospitalised with the coronavirus disease and is being used in combination with other drugs in the treatment of COVID-19 symptoms.

Kejriwal also said there is no dearth of hospital beds in



Delhi as around 5,000 beds are unoccupied.

During a review meeting on the coronavirus situation, the chief minister acknowledged that there has been a shortage of Remdesivir injections in the city.

He directed officials to prepare an action plan to ensure availability of Remdesivir injections and prevent its stocking, according to a statement.

The government expects that 18,000 injections will be available in Delhi by April 18.

Amid reports of shortage of Remdesivir in some states, the Union government has ramped up production and supply, and has decided to reduce the cost of the drug.

Kejriwal said the Delhi government has been focusing on increasing bed capacity and that government and private hospitals should take over more facilities.

The bed capacity will increase by 900 if two MCD hospitals - Hindu Rao and Swami Dayanand Hospital are declared fully COVID, he said.

"There should be full cooperation and no politics on the matter. The Delhi government will provide every possible help to these MCD (municipal corporation of Delhi) hospitals, including funds," Kejriwal said.

The chief minister said the helpline numbers of hospitals, also mentioned on the Delhi government's app, should remain fully functional.

Hospitals must make people available 24x7 for providing assistance through helpline numbers, he said.

Also, all hospitals should ensure flow of information on the real-time availability of beds. This data should be updated every day, Kejriwal said.

The Delhi government has also requested the Centre to increase the number of COVID-19 beds in central government-run hospitals to 2,700.

It will further increase the COVID bed capacity in Delhi to around 20,000, the statement said.

Health officials also apprised the chief minister that vaccine stock is available for the next six to seven days.

## Khattar appeals to protesting farmers to withdraw stir in view of Covid surge



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 15 APRIL

In the second wave of the infection, the spread of Covid-19 has started from educational institutions, so there is a need to be more vigilant, especially there'

"We also need to reduce crowding in public gatherings etc. Therefore, it has been decided that from now on, not more than 200 people can gather in open spaces during public functions and not more than 50 in indoor functions. Similarly, no more than 20 people will be able to attend funerals," the CM said.

He directed all the deputy commissioners to issue advisory in their respective districts to ensure that night-time ceremonies should be shifted to the day time and the Navratra programmes should also be held during the day.

Haryana home and health minister, Anil Vij said there are two ways to prevent Covid-19 from spreading. The first method is lockdown and the second is strictness, he added. We want the situation to be dealt with strictly instead of imposing lockdown in the state.

He said that we can withstand resentment of people by acting strictly but cannot see people dying. "This time Covid-19 is more aggressive. Last year the number of cases increased gradually, but this time it is a matter of serious concern that about five and a half thousand cases are reported in a single day," Vij added.

## ASSOCHAM hails Chautala's 'no lockdown in Haryana' statement

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 15 APRIL

The Associated Chamber of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) on Thursday hailed the statement of Haryana deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala that the state is not moving towards lockdown.

"ASSOCHAM feels that lockdown may only lead to another economic slowdown which the country cannot afford at this point of time," the ASSOCHAM said in a statement. The number of Covid cases are on the rise in Haryana from last few days, after which the state government has announced night curfew.

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pline of sanitisation, mask and social distancing is the need of the hour by the public at large" said chairman, ASSOCHAM Haryana State Development Council and director, Jindal Stainless, Vijay Sharma.

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"The industrial sector of the state has suffered a lot during the last lockdown, the statement of Mr. Chautala has

We are taking all necessary COVID 19 Precautionary Measures.

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"When the poll was announced, even at that time the Covid cases were spreading rapidly and yet EC decided to hold the Bengal polls in eight phases. Why?"

MD SALIM

CPI(M) POLITBURO MEMBER

## THUMBNAILS



Heavy traffic on Western Express Highway, after restrictions imposed by the Maharashtra government at Malad, on Thursday. ■ IANS

**Donation cheques bounce:** About 15,000 bank cheques with a face value of Rs 22 crore, collected by the Vishva Hindu Parishad for the construction of the Ram temple, have bounced. Around Rs 5,000 crore was collected during the drive though the final figures are yet to be declared by the trust. ■ PTI

**Prisoners recaptured:** Two prisoners were recaptured from Jodhpur and Jaisamler districts on Thursday, almost 10 days after they escaped from the Phalodi jail in Jodhpur with 14 other inmates, police said. They were identified as Rajkumar Bishnoi, an accused under the NDPS Act, and Shaukat Ali, who is a murderer. ■ PTI

**POJK resident repatriated:** The Indian Army on Thursday repatriated a Pakistani-occupied Jammu & Kashmir resident Ghulam Qadir, who on 11 April crossed over to India through LoC. The repatriation was done at the Poonch-Rawakot crossing point. ■ SNS

**ICG seizes Pak boat with heroin worth ₹300 crore**

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

A Pakistani boat 'NUH' with 30 Kgs of heroin worth about Rs 300 crore in the international market has been apprehended by the Indian Coast Guard (ICG) in a joint intelligence-based operation with ATS Gujarat off Jakhau, Gujarat. Eight Pakistani nationals have also been arrested from the boat, the Defence Ministry said today.

Giving details, the ministry said that an input was received on 13 April regarding suspected narcotics trafficking by the Pak boat off the Indo-Pak national international maritime boundary line (IMBL). Upon receiving the input, a coordinated operation was jointly launched by the ICG and the ATS Gujarat.

The fast interceptor boat of ICG with ATS officials was deployed to intercept the suspected Pak boat. On the midnight of 14-15 April, the suspected Pak boat was sighted inside Indian waters and intercepted by ICG.

On boarding and rummaging, about 30 packets of heroin weighing about one kg each were recovered from the boat. Preliminary investigations revealed that the consignment being smuggled was destined for landing on Gujarat shore. The boat along with the Pakistani crew was being escorted to Jakhau for further search and joint investigation. ■ SNS

# Ban mass congregations, Left tells Centre

Says Centre should provide relief to people by immediate direct cash transfer of ₹7,500 per month & free distribution of food grains to needy

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI/GUJARAT, 15 APRIL

**T**he CPI (M) today asked the Government to immediately ban mass congregations of all hues in view of the current surge in Covid-19 cases, and run special trains for free passage of all migrant workers to their homes.

The party said the Central Government cannot abstain from its responsibility by blaming the people for not following the protocols, or shifting the blame on to State governments.

Immediate steps are required in order to contain the growing number of deaths and to overcome shortages in health facilities, the party said.

The Central government must strictly regulate implementation of protocols in election meetings; release extra resources and all funds collected in the PM Cares to augment health facilities; and intensify mass vaccination on an urgent basis, the party said.

The CPI (M) politburo asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi to implement these steps on a war footing. The situation was compounding people's livelihood conditions imposing greater miseries. The government should provide relief to people by immediate direct cash transfers of Rs 7500 per month and free distribution of food grains to all needy. The MGNREGA programme should be expanded and an urban employment guarantee programme should be started at the earliest, the CPI (M) said.

**PIL filed over Covid drug deal by Guj BJP chief:** The controversy surrounding shortage, illegal procurement and sending the crucial Covid-19 injection Remdesivir outside Gujarat has refused to die down.

As the daily Covid-19 cases have crossed 7,400-mark, a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed in the High Court today seeking action against Gujarat BJP president C R Paatil for illegally procuring, storing and distributing 5,000 vials of Remdesivir to party supporters in Surat.

Leader of the Opposition in the State Assembly, Paresh Dhanani filed the PIL in the High Court today after a Con-

**NY bash triggers surge in Andhra Pradesh; YSR seeks more vaccine**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 15 APRIL

Even as Andhra Pradesh witnessed a steep spike in Covid cases and chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy asked for more vaccines from the Centre, large religious congregations as a part of the Telugu New Year celebrations continue leaving people shocked, particularly since Kurnool the venue of these gatherings, saw the second highest surge among the 13 districts.

According to the latest health bulletin, the state reported 5,086 fresh infections with 14 deaths. Among the worst hit district was Chittoor with 835 cases.

A bypoll is slated to be held on 17 April at Tirupati. Kurnool too saw 626 cases just a day it witnessed huge religious gatherings as a part of Ugadi, the Telugu new year celebrations.

In another similar gathering of people of Kalluru took out a procession of donkeys during the New Year cel-

lenges. The government should provide relief to people by immediate direct cash transfers of Rs 7500 per month and free distribution of food grains to all needy. The MGNREGA programme should be expanded and an urban employment guarantee programme should be started at the earliest, the CPI (M) said.

**IAMA seeks PM intervention in 'VIP culture' treatment:** In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has urged the PM to intervene and stop the VIP culture which the doctors are facing presently. Raising concerns over what it said a trend of 'VIP culture' and 'preferential treatment' to politicians and officials when it comes to Covid testing and treatment, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) wrote Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention.

The letter also said "765 of our doctors" died in the fight against Covid and "they are yet to be recognised as warriors and honoured by the government". In the letter signed by IMA national president Dr Jayalal and honorary secretary-general Dr Jayesh M Lele, the IMA has urged the PM to "direct officials and streamline this at the earliest and prevent burn out of front line workers".

Regarding the procurement of 5,000 doses of Remdesivir by state BJP chief C R Paatil too, the Chief Minister had clarified that the supply was not from any Government stock. The PIL in the High Court filed today has also included as respondents the Gujarat Government and BJP MLA Harsh Sanghani who assisted C R Paatil in procuring, storing and distributing of Remdesivir to

cessations at the Chowdeshwari temple.

Both religious festivals saw huge congregations and the majority of the people in the crowd were without masks.

During a review meeting on Covid vaccination drive held today chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy directed health officials to write to the Centre and ask for more vaccines in view of the shortage in the state. He said if required he would write to the Centre for more vaccines.

He said administering six lakh vaccines daily should continue to be the target for a few more days to meet the stipulation of vaccinating all health workers, frontline ones and the population above 45 years of age.

**T'gana cancels SSC exams:** Telangana has cancelled its SSC board exams for class X students which were slated to begin from 17 May but has postponed Intermediate exams for the time being.

BJP workers and supporters in Surat.

**IAMA seeks PM intervention in 'VIP culture' treatment:** In a letter addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has urged the PM to intervene and stop the VIP culture which the doctors are facing presently. Raising concerns over what it said a trend of 'VIP culture' and 'preferential treatment' to politicians and officials when it comes to Covid testing and treatment, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) wrote Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention.

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Covid victims' bodies being cremated at the Nigambodh Ghat in New Delhi on Thursday. ■ IANS



People stand in a queue to cast their vote at a polling booth for UP Gram Panchayat election, in Gorakhpur on Thursday. ■ IANS

50 people can offer namaz 5 times a day at Nizamuddin:HC

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

The Delhi High Court Thursday allowed 50 people to offer namaz five times a day at Nizamuddin Markaz during Ramzan, saying there is no direction in the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) notification to close down places of worship.

The court also noted that there was "no clear stand" of the central government as to whether religious congregations or gatherings were permitted in other places of worship.

Justice Mukta Gupta directed that namaz is to be offered on "first floor above the basement" of the mosque, making clear that it has to be "strictly in accordance" with the DDMA's April 10 notification and other standard operating protocols.

"Considering the fact that religious places/places of worship are not closed by the DDMA notification, this court finds that the petitioner (Delhi Waqf Board) has made out a prima facie case for permitting devotees to offer namaz at Masjid Bangley Wali," the court said.

"Please wake up to the grim situation in Delhi," the court said as the national capital recorded the biggest single-day jump of 17,282 Covid cases. ■ PTI

## Covid norms go for a toss in Hooghly

HEMANT JACOB  
HOOGHLY, 15 APRIL

The new strain of Covid is rapidly spreading in the district as every effort of the local and police administration in spreading awareness among common people, are proving to be futile.

Strangely enough, in public places people are seen without masks; even the students of the senior classes on the way to their educational institutions or while going for private coaching centers, are seen without mask.

Dr Pradeep Kumar Das, IMA President, Serampore, said, within a few days almost 25 Covid positive patients have visited him for treatment.

District magistrate, Dr Deepa Priya said, "We conducted review meeting with the health department. The BDO and SDO teams are on the move carrying the message of awareness towards following the Covid-19 norms in public places. Market association and committees have been given strict directives to take active participation in implementing Covid-19 protocols."

The Champdani, Arambagh, Rishra, Chinsurah, Serampore, Uttarpara local administrative bodies are carrying on awareness move towards Covid-19. The Serampore police

Cong candidate dies of Covid, five others test positive

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 15 APRIL

A Congress candidate, who had tested Covid positive two days ago, died today as five other candidates tested positive.

Rezaul Haq, 46, Samserganj Congress candidate of Murshidabad district, died of Covid today at a premier private hospital along EM Bypass, stoking anxiety over curbing the virus when political parties are rigorously holding roadshows and rallies.

Haq had tested Covid positive on Wednesday and was rushed to a city hospital after his condition deteriorated with severe respiratory trouble. Bengal Congress chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury condoled his death and said the Election Commission should take note of the various instances of violation of safety protocols at poll rallies.

The Election Commission has countermanded the election in Samserganj Assembly following the death of Haq. Many candidates who had participated in election rallies and roadshows have also tested Covid positive. Pradip Nandi, Jangipur RSP candidate in Murshidabad and TMC Jalpaiguri candidate Pradip Barma are undergoing treatment in two separate hospitals after contracting the virus.

## Political slugfest over Assam UPA candidates

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, 15 APRIL

one of Congress's sharpest political hand Ashok Gehlot roosts.

The political-leisure trip however, has not gone down well in certain quarters with the BJP questioning the move at a time when the corona explosion has taken the state's caseload to the dubious second-highest position in the country. Former chief minister Raman Singh derided Congress for creating such a high-octane political drama.

BJP is coming to power comfortably in Assam, there will be no need for any other outside support for the party to form the government, he claimed.

The 10 UPA candidates along with a host of senior Congress leaders have been placed in the Government Rest House in Chitrakote on the banks of the Brahmaputra river in Assam. A squad of police and other government officials take care of the visitors round the clock.

**Pokhriyal addresses IGNOU's 34th convocation**

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

Union minister of education Ramesh Pokhrayan addressed the 34th convocation of Indira Gandhi National Open University through virtual mode.

The university awarded 2,37,844 degrees, diplomas and certificates of different programmes to the successful students at 34th convocation today. The Convocation function was held virtually from the IGNOU Headquarter in light of the surge in Covid cases.

The minister in his speech stressed on the need to provide education that could make one self-reliant.

In order to achieve the goal of 50 percent Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2035, the university will have to be a crucial contributor, he added. ■ SNS

## ANCHORED



Anchored boats at Kasimedu harbour in Chennai on Thursday. Authorities have imposed a 61-day ban on trawling on coast to protect fish stocks during the breeding season. ■ IANS

India hosts BRICS seminar on misuse of Internet by terrorists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

The immense challenges posed by the misuse of the Internet

## TENDER

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## Rajnath hails IAF for befitting response during LAC stand-off

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

Defence minister Rajnath Singh today hailed the IAF for ensuring a "timely and befitting" response during the military stand-off with China in Eastern Ladakh and asked the force to draw up long-term plans for capability enhancement to counter future threats.

He was inaugurating the two-day biannual IAF commanders' conference which is attended by Chief of the Defence Staff, Gen Bipin Rawat, IAF chief, Air Chief Marshal R K Bhadauria and senior IAF officials.

The delegates at the seminar appreciated the fact that in the current milieu of break-neck technological innovations and ever-evolving digital landscape, the challenges pertaining to prevention, control and prosecution of the terrorist misuse of Internet are immense," a statement said.

Referring to changing international geopolitics, Singh said that the force has become more obvious in the recent past. "Changing dimensions of war would now include advanced technologies, asymmetric capabilities and info-dominance, and it is very important that the IAF's preparations for the future must include these aspects," he

observed that the perceptible shift of focus from Trans-Atlantic to Trans-Pacific has become more obvious in the recent past. "Changing dimensions of war would now include advanced technologies, asymmetric capabilities and info-dominance, and it is very important that the IAF's preparations for the future must include these aspects," he



THUMBNAILS

## BJP will win Belagavi by over 4 lakh votes: BSY

Campaign ends for bypolls to 2 Assembly segments, 1 LS seat in Karnataka

**SNS & PTI**  
BENGALURU, 15 APRIL



Chief minister BSY Yeddyurappa and the Opposition parties are heaving a sigh of relief now as campaigning for the three bypolls in Karnataka has come to an end.

The bye-elections which are being held this Saturday for two Assembly seats in Maski and Basavakalyan and one for the Belagavi Lok Sabha constituency, assume importance for the BJP leader, in particular.

In fact, even though the party is striving hard to win all the three seats, it is the campaign for Belagavi which seems to stand out more, as it has retained the constituency since 2004.

The political campaign saw the ruling BJP and Congress battling out in all three constituencies, while JD(S) limited itself to Basavakalyan, as the regional party has not fielded any candidate in Maski and Belgaum.

The importance of the seat apart, the Belagavi bypoll assumes importance as the Congress has pitted its heavyweight, Satish Jarkiholi, against BJP's Mangala Angadi, widow of Union minister of state for railways, Suresh Angadi.

Satish is the brother of Ramesh Jarkiholi, former water resources minister in Yeddyu-

rappa's government, who was forced to resign this February following the release of a sex tape, allegedly involving him.

More importantly, the BJP even got Balachandra Jarkiholi, another brother of Satish, to campaign for the party.

Both the brothers, however, are quick to admit they are working for their respective parties and have their own vote bank.

Till the time of writing though, Ramesh Jarkiholi was not seen in the campaign; perhaps he is keeping a low profile for now. Interestingly, the Jarkiholis have sought to keep out the sextape issue from this bypoll so far.

The BJP, meanwhile, has tried to work on the sympathy factor in Belagavi while capitalising on the goodwill of Union minister of state for railways, Suresh Angadi.

Satish is the brother of Ramesh Jarkiholi, former water resources minister in Yeddyu-

therefore, to see Yeddy repeatedly asserting that the BJP would win by over four lakh votes, giving the much-needed boost to its candidate.

That the seat remains extremely important for Yeddy is also evident from the road shows that he held in the constituency in the last two-three days, despite the demand on his time in tackling the virus surge in the state.

For him the Belagavi bypoll also comes as a challenge: first to brush off his critics in the party, including bete noire B Yatnal, and state minister K Eshwarappa.

Equally relevant for the CM is the need to put one over his critics in the party's central leadership, with many gunning for him. More so, as at 78, he is beyond the 75 year age cap the party has imposed for its chief ministers.

Accordingly, while the As-

embly seats of Maski and Basavakalyan have their own relevance, it is crucial for Yeddyurappa to retain the Belagavi seat, if only to keep the critics off his back.

The BJP that sought votes in the name of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and work done by governments both at the Centre and the state is looking forward to keeping the winning momentum on, as it has won most of the bypolls after coming to power in the state.

JD(S) leader and former chief minister H D Kumaraswamy who has been camping in Basavakalyana for party candidate, cancelled the roadshow and mega rally today citing increasing Covid cases as the reason.

Bypolls to Belgaum Lok Sabha and Basavakalyan Assembly seats are necessitated following the death of Union minister Suresh Angadi and MLA B Narayan Rao, respectively due to Covid-19 in September last year.

Maski seat fell vacant after the disqualification of MLA Prathapagouda Patil, who had won in 2018 from Congress and is now with the BJP.

For the smooth conduct of polls that will be held by following Covid guidelines, a total of 6 CoYs of CRPF have been deployed for security, 4 CoYs for Belgaum and one each for Basavakalyan and Maski segments, poll officials said.

"I'll get justice only when action is taken based on the findings in the investigation. I had sought a CBI investigation earlier. There is no point

## BEST FOOT FORWARD



Security personnel during the 73rd Himachal Day Parade at the Ridge, Shimla, on Thursday.

■ AGENCY

## Ex-ISRO scientist Narayanan hails CBI probe in spy case

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
15 APRIL

Former ISRO space scientist Nambi Narayanan on Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's direction for a CBI probe once again into the 1994 ISRO spy case, in which he was falsely implicated.

Welcoming the apex court order, Narayanan said the CBI must expose the conspirators, including the IB officials behind the case.

"I'll get justice only when

action is taken based on the findings in the investigation. I had sought a CBI investigation earlier. There is no point

if the conspirators in the case are not exposed. Many people are involved in the case and the role of IB officials should also be investigated," he said.

The apex court had in 2018 appointed a three-member committee headed by retired SC judge DK Jain to probe if there was a conspiracy among then police officials to falsely implicate Narayanan.

The SC on Thursday ordered a CBI probe into the involvement of police officers, while considering the Justice D K Jain report.

"The espionage case and the conspiracy delayed the cryogenic project of the ISRO. The project which would have

been launched in 1999 was delayed and launched around 15 years later. This should have been avoided," Nambi Narayanan said. Narayanan maintained Kerala police fabricated the case and said the technology he was accused to have stolen and sold did not even exist at that time.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

It is to inform you that person named Ved Prakash Sawhney (M. No. 72) has resigned from the membership of the society. He has been paid his dues and share money through cheque. Objection are invited from the general public within 10 days from the date of publishing.

**Sd/-**  
**Surinder Manik**  
(Secretary)  
The Kalkaji Best Friends Co-operative Group Housing Society Ltd.  
H. No. 1180, 1st Floor,  
Gali No. 13, Gobind Puri, N. D.-19  
Mob.: 9811254232

## SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one female namely **Shabana**, W/o Shakeel Ahmad, R/o H.No. 29A, Rashid Market Extension, Delhi, Age: 37 years, Height: 5'3", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Strong, wearing Pink Kurti, Grey pajama and

Bare feet, has been missing along with her daughter **Tabasum**, Age: 5 years, Height: 3'6", Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Normal, wearing Pink colour Shirt, White pajama and Bare feet, has been missing from her house since 26.03.2021. In this regard a DD No. 57A, dated 30.03.2021 has been registered at P.S. Jagatpuri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the female & her daughter but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about them please inform undersigned.

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

**SHO**  
**P.S. Jagatpuri, Delhi**  
Ph.: 011-22420363, 22420362

**Debt Recovery Tribunal-I, Delhi**  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001  
O.A. No. 1175/2018

**STATE BANK OF INDIA**  
Versus **Applicant**  
M/s Jagtar Singh And Sons  
Hydraulics Pvt. Ltd. & Ors.  
To,

1 Sh. Jagtar Singh (Defendant No. 03)  
Director (personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Bhagat Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

2 Sh. Joginder Singh (Defendant No. 04) (Personal Guarantor) S/o Janta Jagtar Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

3 Sh. Sukhwant Singh (Defendant No. 05) (Personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Jagtar Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

4 Sh. Kawajjeet Singh (Defendant No. 06) (Personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Amrik Singh R/o E-27, Sardarshah Park New Delhi-110015

5 Sh. Jatinde Singh (Defendant No. 07) (personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Amrik Singh, R/o C-15, 1st Floor Kirti Nagar, New Delhi-110015

6 Sh. Upkar Kaur (Defendant No. 08) (Personal Guarantor) W/o Shri Handeep Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

7 Sh. Ranjit Kaur (Defendant No. 09) (Personal Guarantor) W/o Shri Jodhinder Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

8 Sh. Surjeet Singh (Defendant No. 10) (Personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Kartar Singh R/o F-38, SC-1, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

9 Sh. Parvinder Singh (Defendant No. 11) (personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Hardeep Singh R/o C-1/B, Mansarovar Garden New Delhi-110015

10 M/s Alankar Texim Pvt. Ltd. (Defendant No. 12) (Corporate Guarantor) Off. 23 Strand Road, Kolkata, West Bengal-700001

Whereas the above named applicant has instituted a case for recovery of Rs. 12,72,17,276 (Rupees Twelve Crore Twenty Seven Thousand Two Lacs Seventeen Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Six and Paisa Twenty Seven Only) against you and whereas it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not possible to serve you in ordinary way. Therefore, this notice is given by advertisement directing you to make appearance in the Tribunal on 26.04.2021 at 10.30 A.M.

Please note that in default of your appearance on the day before the mentioned, the case will be heard and determined in your absence.

**Order of this Tribunal** For Registrar DRT-I, Delhi

**Form No. 3**  
[See Regulation-15(1)(a)/16(3)]  
**DEBT RECOVERY TRIBUNAL DELHI (DRT 3)**  
4th Floor, Jeevan Tara Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi - 110 001  
Case No. OA/406/2020

Summons under sub-section (4) of section 19 of the Act, read with sub-rule (2A) of rule 5 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993.  
Exh. No. 2252  
HDFC BANK LTD. vs.

To, M/s Om Shiv House Keeping Services And Ann. D/W/S/O - Through Its Prop. 993 DDA Janta Flats, GTB Enclave, Nand Nagri East, Delhi - 110093  
Mr. Om Shiv House Keeping Services And Ann. D/W/S/O - Through Its Prop. 993 DDA Janta Flats, GTB Enclave, Nand Nagri East, Delhi - 110093

4 Sh. Kawajjeet Singh (Defendant No. 06) (Personal Guarantor) S/o Shri Amrik Singh R/o E-27, Sardarshah Park New Delhi-110015

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

Due to ongoing Pandemic situation, all the matters will be taken up through Video Conferencing and for that purpose :- (i) All the Advocates/Litigants shall download the Cisco Webex application/Software. (ii) Meeting ID and Password for the next date of hearing qua cases to be taken by Registrars/Recovery Officer-II shall be available one day prior to the next date at DRT Official Portal i.e. [drt.gov.in](http://drt.gov.in) under the Public Notice Head. (iii) In any exigency qua that, the Advocates/Litigants can contact the concerned official at Ph. No. 23748469. Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this date : 15/04/2021.

Drets Recovery Tribunal-III, Delhi

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to change the days of run of the following Train as per the details given below:-

06593/06594 Yesvantpur Jn.-Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Yesvantpur Jn. Duronto Special Express (Weekly)

Train No.	From - To	Announced Days W.E.F.	Revised Days W.E.F.
06593	Yesvantpur Jn.-Delhi Sarai Rohilla	17.04.2021 to 19.06.2021	24.04.2021 to 19.06.2021
06594	Delhi Sarai Rohilla-Yesvantpur Jn.	19.04.2021 to 21.06.2021	26.04.2021 to 21.06.2021

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

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

RailMadad Helpline No.: 139  
Visit RailMadad website: [www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in)

Please join us on Download RailMadad app.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
Your Convenience - Our Concern  
Visit us at : [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
"SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE"

66/21

## BJP, Cong accuse Kerala CM of violating Covid-19 protocol

**SNS**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 15 APRIL

A day after chief minister Pinarayi Vij

## Arctic ambitions

Oppose the People's Republic of China and all it stands for or admire it, one has to hand it to the Chinese when it comes to a long-term vision of national interest. Strategic thought is almost hardwired into the DNA of the policy establishment in Beijing. At any rate, not content with incorporating most of Asia into its supply chain, becoming the largest holder of US foreign debt, taking on all-comers in the South China Sea, ensuring its energy security and mineral-supply by making virtual client-states of countries on the South American and African continents respectively, aligning with erstwhile enemy Russia, propping up failed states including Pakistan and North Korea as instruments of state policy, cutting regional rivals such as India down to size, close to realising its ambition of being the second pole of global power with only the USA to rival it et.al., now add to that list Beijing's Arctic ambitions. The Arctic region, while very much in the 'sphere of influence' of the eight Arctic states - Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the USA - which have control over its strategically valuable geography, has another contender for influence in China, which is making no secret of its desire to become a 'polar great power' by 2030. As is par for the course for Beijing when it comes to the projection of its strategic aims, there is a clear dichotomy in its domestic and international discourse. The external narrative aimed at a foreign audience stresses on cooperation for the common good while the more cynical domestic story underlines the competition between various countries and China's desire to win it. What is abundantly clear regardless of which narrative is emphasised, however, is that China's political, military, scientific, and economic activities in the Arctic leave no doubt about the seriousness with which it is approaching the issue. As a recent report points out, China has sent high-level figures to the region 33 times in the past two decades, engaged or joined most major Arctic institutions, sought half-a-dozen scientific facilities in Arctic states, pursued a range of plausibly dual-use economic projects, expanded its icebreaker fleet, and even sent its naval vessels into the region. China has, in official documents, described the Arctic as one of the world's "new strategic frontiers," where rivalry and the potential for extraction are both great. In that sense, the Arctic, the Antarctic, the world's seabed, and space are considered as ungoverned or under-governed spaces by Beijing and its policies have been formulated keeping this characterisation in mind.

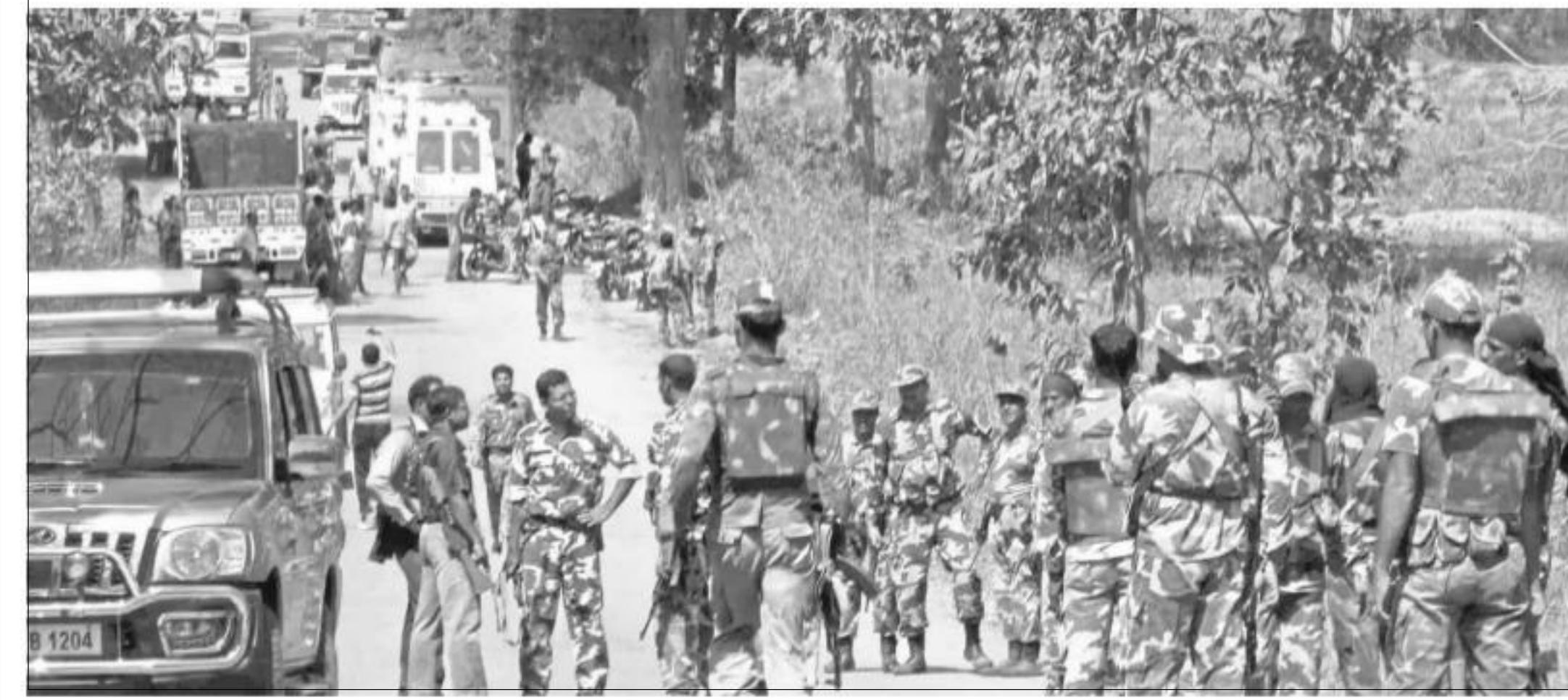
So, as China's position gets clearer - it treats the Arctic a zone of future military competition, its investments in Arctic science are intended to buttress influence in the region, it supports existing Arctic governance mechanisms publicly but complains about them privately - what will the world do? The findings of a Brookings study iterate that accommodating China's Arctic ambitions rarely produces enduring goodwill. Norway was the first country to allow China to build an Arctic science station and Sweden the first worldwide to allow a completely China-owned satellite facility. Both these efforts, which were richly praised by China at the time, did not protect either country from later economic coercion and harsh condemnation.

## Alarums & Excursions

Democracy has effectively been muffled even before the first vote is cast. There is little doubt that Hong Kong's election schedule, as announced by chief executive Carrie Lam on Tuesday, is yet another attempt by the island territory's government to kowtow to its protector, the People's Republic of China. Not the least because the election overhaul plan threatens to sideline Hong Kong's Opposition that has spearheaded the movement for democracy for the past several years, notably through the Umbrella movement. The proposal, initiated by the government in Beijing with PLA boots occasionally on the ground, is intended to make it difficult for advocates of democracy to hold office and would criminalize organized protest votes. The electoral changes are the latest effort by the Chinese government to stamp out political opposition in Hong Kong, after months of fierce anti-government demonstrations in 2019. Last month, the National People's Congress Standing Committee, an arm of China's Communist Party-run legislature, unanimously approved a plan that would give national security entities the authority to select candidates for political office. That proposal, which followed the enactment last year of a harsh national security law, dictated that less than a quarter of Hong Kong's legislature would be directly elected, compared to half before. It also put in place a candidate vetting committee with the power to unilaterally bar anyone deemed insufficiently loyal to the government. And it reshuffled the membership of another election committee that selects Hong Kong's top leader, stacking it with more Beijing loyalists. But some details of the new system, including exactly who would sit on the reconstituted election committee, remained unclear until Tuesday, when the Hong Kong government published a bill of more than 500 pages. The bill was explicit on the point that the election committee - already tilted in favour of Beijing - would be filled with even more pro-establishment business and interest group leaders, as well as members of pro-Beijing political bodies. Also included was a proposal that would criminalize encouraging voters to cast blank or modified ballots, or to forgo voting altogether. Even a boycott will be deemed as an offence, however. The bill is expected to be passed by the Legislative Council, Hong Kong's local law-making body which is composed entirely of pro-establishment figures after the mass resignation of the Opposition last year. The alarms are China's. The excursions are in Hong Kong.

# No lessons learnt

If the suggested 'search and destroy' operation was borne out of the reported 'weeks' of planning by senior 'advisors' - it says something about the quality of leadership, planning, operational efficacy, accompanying intelligence and the understanding of the societal landscape



The latest Naxal attack in Chhattisgarh has triggered familiar noises, defections and worst of all, familiar reactions. While the exact details are still subject to conjecture, it was a joint operation entailing over 2,000 security personnel (including specialist forces like COBRA) against an estimated 300 insurgents, acting ostensibly on 'intelligence input', who then got caught in an ambush despite telltale signs of a looming trap. Many soldiers were left behind to fend for themselves, when others retreated to the camps.

Disturbingly, the insurgents had adequate time to strip the fallen security personnel of their weaponry and wares, as their bodies lay unrecovered for hours, six kilometers from a security camp. With 23 security forces dead and just one insurgent body recovered - it is claimed that 'many more were killed' but were taken away by insurgents in tractors - paints an even worse picture of reality. That the concentrated presence of 300 odd insurgents in a specific area went unnoticed by both the intelligence community and the villagers says something about the competence of the former and the inclination of the latter. If the suggested 'search and destroy' operation was borne out of the reported 'weeks' of planning by senior 'advisors' - it says something about the quality of leadership, planning, operational efficacy, accompanying intelligence and the understanding of the societal landscape.

While in any counter-insurgency environment, such like attacks are to be expected, it is the post-attack reaction that determines the future course. There are always invaluable lessons in terms of preparedness, tactics and leadership imperatives that hold the key to probabilities of repeat incidents and impact. Importantly, this incident on the borders of Bijapur and

Sukma districts, was preceded by an equally deadly attack last year in Sukma district's Elmuguda forest that had led to 17 security personnel fatalities. Even then, it entailed joint operation with multiple police forces of states, CRPF, Special Task Force and District Reserve Guards, and like now, 16 weapons were taken away by the insurgents.

Earlier still in 2018, nine CRPF soldiers were killed in an IED blast, and in 2017, 26 security personnel were killed in yet another ambush, in Sukma district. As the Naxal movement and attacks have surged in the district, the popular opinion amongst locals has yet to tide against the insurgents and this suggests something very instructive about how the overall management of the counter-insurgency operations has been handled, as no successful insurgency can sustain for so long without popular support.

However, the optics and 'voices' post the latest attack still sound eerily familiar, with rote banalities and nothing to suggest any fundamental efforts towards course correction. Despite the huge fatalities in this incident the CRPF DG insisted that there was, 'no operational and intelligence failure', the Chief Minister said that 'people of the region were disenchanted with Naxals', whereas the Home Minister chipped in with 'we will win it in the end'. There was nothing to suggest much-needed reflection, and expectedly, no heads rolled for any responsibility and accountability reasons.

The parallel 'echo chamber' of ostensible 'nationalists' roared with brave talk of deploying the military, alluding to so-called

'urban naxals' and sabre-rattling at China for supporting the Maoists. In the din of the absurd, important questions of addressing societal grievances, questioning operational efficacy and political honesty in keeping certain issues beyond electoral posturing, was lost. That no counter insurgency anywhere in the world has ever been won through only security exertions was immaterial. That we should never think of deploying our Armed Forces against our own citizens (howsoever misguided) and instead rely on policing forces to do the needful, was also relegated to the background. The dominant instinct of 'muscular posturing' was immediately deployed, and to counter any uncomfortable questions pertaining to the operation itself, the morale of our jawans was invoked as a political bulwark. Last but not the least,

the Centre-State dissonance also played up, with each side resorting of platitudes and grandstanding of 'taking this fight to a decisive turn'. The ostrich mentality of the political classes, security personnel and administrative machinery seemingly saw no issues with the prevailing local sentiment or the operational conduct - this after repeated attacks, year after year. Instead the incident was afforded sentimentalism and emotions that snub hard questioning, beyond partisan politics.

Success in counter-insurgency is predicated on 'winning back' the popular disaffection, as that is the only oxygen that sustains a movement. While in the past, sporadic elements of the LTTE and North-Eastern insurgent groups had aided the Naxals in procuring weaponry and

training - today the bulk of weaponry is not of sophisticated Chinese or Pakistani markings (as popularly believed), but of the homegrown facilities that make guns, landmines, IEDs or of snatched/ 'sourced' weapons from security personnel. That the Naxals exploit the governmental indifference (even discrimination) and carry out their own share of atrocities is given a justifying context by the locals.

The lack of coordination between various police forces, administration and the absence of a holistic national plan to acknowledge and address the root causes of the conflict, has resulted in a 'score card' mentality of tracking killed/apprehended as the sole determinant of 'situation coming under control'. Insurgencies in Punjab and North East were ended when the locals were given a patient hearing and redressal of their genuine grievances, along with the parallel steel of the security apparatus.

Today, alluding to ideological patrons in some universities, intelligentsia or even China/Pakistan is where the passionate conversations end, and the more important task of 'winning back' our own citizenry is sacrificed by muscular talk that reaps electoral harvest in other places.

India has experience in successfully ending insurrections. It also has heaps of reports on transformational policing reforms, if allowed to be implemented. But it lacks the political sincerity, vision and the will to accept the wrongs committed on the 'unseen' populace and outgrow its fixation with partisan one-upmanship which disallows introspective debate and change.

Unfortunately, this may not be the last of such Naxal attacks, and a lot of the blame for the same must be apportioned on the hubris, petty politics, lack of accountability and intransigence of those in the corridors of power - besides the Naxals, themselves.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIAN VOICES

## No permanent solution

As the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic engulfs Nepal, we seem to be going back to square one. We are still keeping up our lackadaisical attitude vis-à-vis prevention and management of coronavirus transmissions, and it may just be a matter of time before public life comes to a complete halt. And it is the educational institutions that are going to feel the heat in the first round, as they have arguably become dreaded coronavirus hotspots of late. On Saturday, the Ministry of Health and Population recommended that the Covid-19 Crisis Management Centre enforce a shutdown of educational institutions for at least three weeks. That has not gone down too well with students, teachers, parents and educational institution administrators, but their voices may not be heard amidst the cacophony of yet another lockdown-style offensive against the virus.

Students and teachers have only just returned to their schools, colleges or universities after a long and tiresome gap. The last thing they would want right now is the shutting down of their classes. They have lessons to finish, exams to take, and an academic session to complete. Losing a significant part of the already truncated academic year is not an option anymore. Nine months is how long it took for schools to reopen last time. That is too long a duration for students who need to wrap up their courses and upgrade to the next level. It is especially punishing for tertiary level students who have to catch up with their peers

**THE KATHMANDU POST**  
across the world - after all, we are a small and yet significant part of the global educational system that incentivises competition and excellence.

To make up for the months-long closure of educational institutions, the government had, last September, reduced a third of the prescribed contact hours and curriculum at the school level and also extended the academic year by two months. School authorities say they still have a third of the coursework to finish. But the prospect of yet another closure is already looming large, leaving teachers, students and parents in a quandary: To continue with the physical mode of teaching or not, especially because the students, many of whom are below the eligible age for vaccination, are nowhere close to being immunised.

This concern would not have been so consequential had we been a little more imaginative and enterprising early on. We have been there and done that, and yet we are here, today, wondering how we will be able to conduct classes online in the event of a shutdown. Once the initial pandemic storm was over, we considered the calm that followed as a permanent solution.

The first wave of the pandemic taught us enough about the impermanence of the traditional teaching-learning infrastructure. It taught us that we would have to adopt new technologies to make good in a post-pandemic world, and that we would have to bridge the digital divide to provide equal opportunities to every learner out there.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

editor@thestatesman.com

## Tolstoy's spiritual awakening

SIR, Abhik Roy in his brilliant article "Tormented Life" (11 April) has described how Tolstoy's spiritual awakening had changed his mission of life. Gandhiji was also influenced by Tolstoy's mission of life when he adopted non-possession as his ideal and reduced himself to the level of the poorest of the poor. Like Tolstoy he had immense faith in the powers of love and non-violence. Gandhiji had his own opinion that violence breeds further violence and considered it as the law of the brute. He advocated the law of love which was based on the law of truth. Without truth there can be no love.

Love transcends all animality.

With "ahimsa" comes his theory of self-suffering, a process through which one can eradicate all evils from society and can uplift one's soul. He believed that all men are sons of god and are bound by spiritual ties. Gandhiji writes, "I was simply overjoyed and found my own opinion confirmed which I least expected. The *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression, and Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is within you' gave it a permanent form."

Yours, etc., Dilip Kumar Dutta,  
Midnapore, 14 April.

### THE BURNING CERTIFICATE

SIR, The ruling party of West Bengal is against the NRC/NPR/CAA

and they are giving various rulings on the subject, but in practice it is different altogether. An NRC type of practice is being followed in West Bengal particularly in North 24 Parganas.

In this district, when a death occurs, the burning ghat provides the burning certificate (not death certificate) as done in Kolkata. Now in North 24 Parganas to obtain the death certificate the family of the deceased has to surrender the ration card and voter card to the authorities or else the death certificate is not issued. That is one has to be registered with the National Voter Portal and State Ration Portal. It is one kind of

### WISE DECISION

SIR, This refers to the front page report, "CBSE puts off Class XII, cancels Class X exams" (15 April). The coronavirus is spreading faster in India than in any other country in the world, reporting an average of nearly 150,000 new cases daily over the past week.

The CBSE's decision to cancel board exams for Class 10 and postpone the exams for Class 12 at the end of a disrupted academic year brings much-needed relief to anxious students caught on the crest of the second Covid-19 wave.

Unlike last year's first phase of the pandemic, the ongoing spread covers young people as well. Those infected now include even 15-year-olds. It is a wise move on the Centre's part to keep this risk group out of harm's way, reducing the possibility of school-based clusters and onward spread to older age groups who have shielded themselves so far. The onus is now on State governments to similarly recognise the growing crisis and display flexibility in reconsidering dates.

While ideally, Board Exams provide a fairly accurate assessment of a student's intellect and learning, these are unprecedented times and the health and safety of students cannot be compromised with. This move will bring home the seriousness of the fast-unfolding situation to the people so that they will be induced to observe Covid protocols and act responsibly.

CBSE should not lose any time and plan and prepare for an alternative mode of assessment in the event the rise in cases continues. No further postponement should be made.

Yours, etc., S S Paul, Nadia, 15 April.

NRC/NPR in another form.

If the death certificate is not available to the family, then the latter will not be able to get such benefits as family pension, which is deposited in the bank.

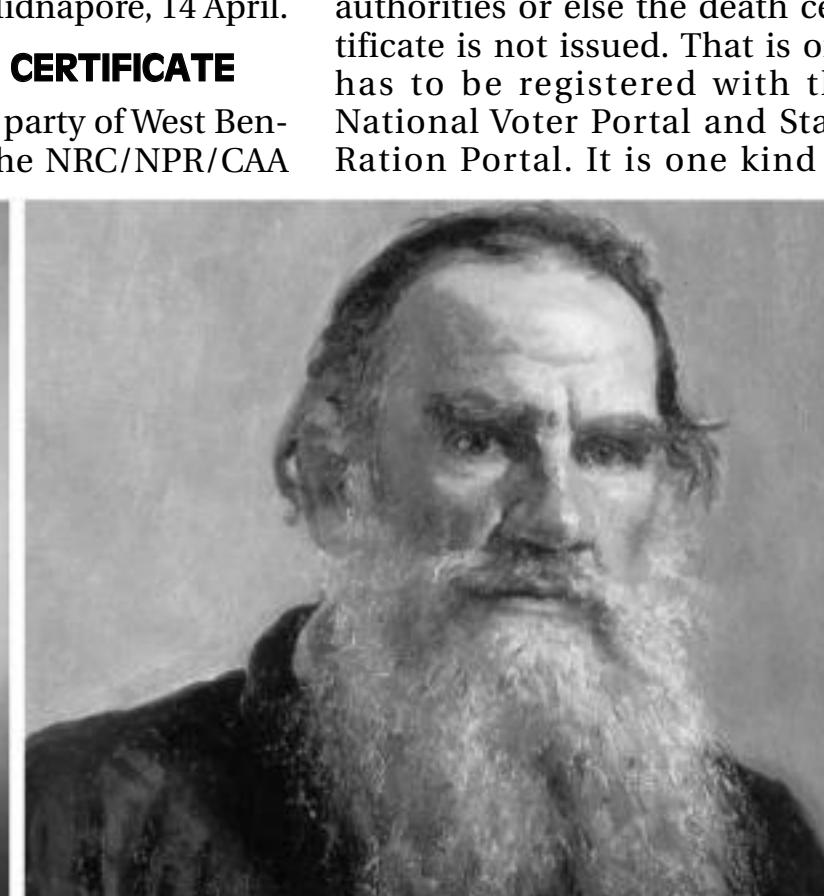
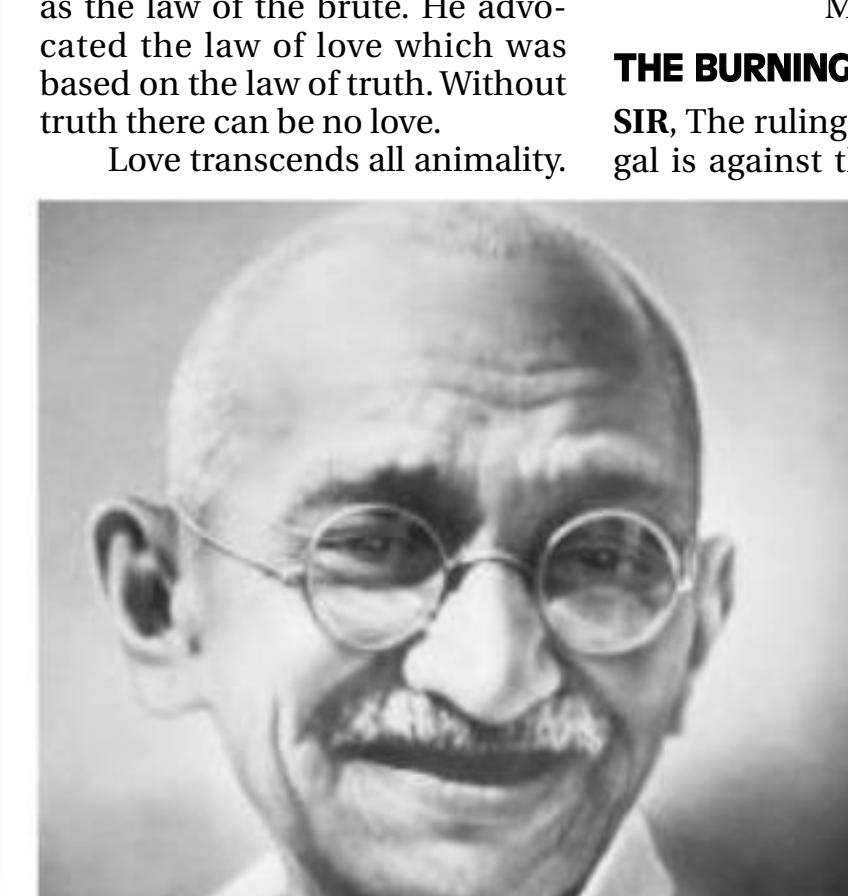
Thus we can say that in the absence of registration in any form the family will be deprived of the facilities.

Hence the present ruling party

is deceiving the people. There are many without the voters' card or their names have been deliberately deleted by the prevailing party or have not been provided with ration card.

So it is my humble request that let the people know the ground reality in West Bengal.

Yours, etc., A resident of North 24 Parganas, 15 April.



LOKENDRA MALIK AND ASHIT KUMAR SRIVASTAVA

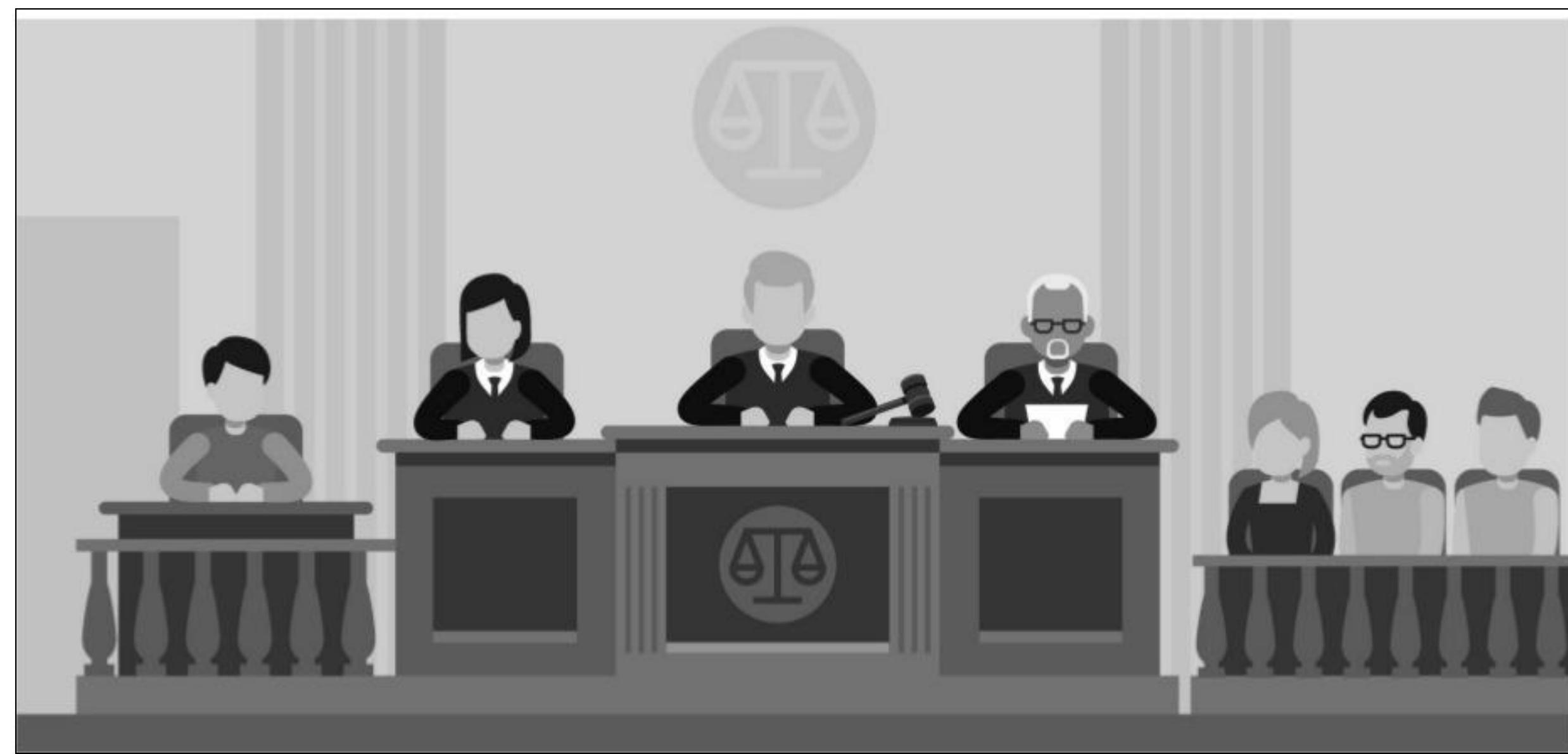
The recent controversy about the appointment of senior advocate Saurabh Kirpal as a judge of the Delhi High Court is gaining traction, mostly because the issue has brought to the forefront a stereotypical generalization of justice. In a recent interview given to *the Print*, Mr. Kirpal had admitted that he had given consent for consideration of his name as a judge in the Delhi High Court back in 2017 itself. However, the Supreme Court of India deferred his name thrice. Mr. Kirpal also said that the main reason for the deferment of his name might be his sexual orientation and the fact that his partner is a foreign citizen.

The appointment of High Court judges in India is governed by a very sound convention backed by the memorandum of procedure under which for elevating an individual to the High Court, the Chief Justice of the High Court in consultation with two of his senior-most colleagues in the Court needs to recommend names for appointment to the Chief Justice of India, the Union Law Minister, the Chief Minister, and the Governor of the respective State.

The Governor or the Chief Minister could add comments on the names recommended, however, in absence of any comments received within six weeks, the Union Law Minister can presume there are no comments to be added by the Governor or the Chief Minister and can proceed. The fact that Mr. Kirpal's name had reached the Supreme Court Collegium thrice raises questions over the report submitted by the Intelligence Bureau (IB), which collects information regarding the individual suggested for the appointment and this information is sent by the Union Law Minister to the Supreme Court collegium for its consideration. The final decision rests with the Collegium of the Supreme Court.

The fact that the name of Mr. Kirpal has been deferred thrice suggests that a flag was raised by the IB report. Chief Justice S A Bobde who was part of the Ranjan Gogoi-led collegium in 2019, the last time Kirpal's name was deferred, must be acquainted with the reason behind it. Meanwhile, CJI Bobde in March wrote to the Union Law Minister asking for clarification as to why Mr. Kirpal's name was not

## An unelevated discourse



being cleared. A constant narrative maintained by the Centre has been that Mr. Kirpal's partner is a foreign national, which might lead to a conflict of interest; however, there is lack of a definitive response from the Central government.

Underlying this ambiguity is a hue of homophobic concern of the Central government. The fact that Mr. Kirpal admitted that his sexual orientation might be the reason for his non-elevation raises some serious concerns regarding the objective decision-making of the Central government, especially because it has not been very vocal about the rights of the LGBTQIA community. Whether it be the definition of marriage or the new surrogacy provisions, the Centre seems to have maintained a gender-exclusive stance when it comes to the rights of non-binary gender. Thus, this issue raises questions about the intersectionality of gender identity and representation.

What lies within Mr. Kirpal's elevation as a judge is the potential of

adequate representation of a marginalized community within the legal ecosystem of India. On the contrary, the Supreme Court of India has represented its predilection towards gender-inclusiveness and non-binary gender rights, whether it be the landmark case of *Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India* (2018) wherein the Court had decriminalized homosexuality because it is a direct violation of expression and right to life or whether be it the *NALSA v. Union of India* (2014), wherein the Court had recognized third-gender rights.

Notably, recognition of the rights of the marginalized community and their participation in the legal system will have serious repercussions on their citizenship rights. Adequate representation continues to be the backbone of a *sovereign democracy*, the absence of which has the capacity of deteriorating the basic structure of the Constitution. The potential of a diverse gender sitting on the bench lies in its capacity of recognizing rights that so far have stayed defunct.

It is an opportunity to operationalise the silent portions of the Constitution and thus bring equity in its true sense.

Further, the Supreme Court recently had laid its elaborate opinion on indirect discrimination through Justice D.Y. Chandrachud in *Lt. Nitisha v. Union of India* (2021). Justice Chandrachud had said categorically that uncritical application of law might lead to exclusion, which is a clear violation of substantive equality. Keeping this as a normative basis of equality, it becomes important for us to analyze the application of substantive equality, which calls for a more conscious and accommodative application of the law. The fact is that there is a clear convention set for the elevation of judges backed by the memorandum of procedure. It becomes a condition for the central government as well as the Collegium to apply the normative condition of substantive equality while considering the name of an individual for the elevation. Further, the Supreme

Court has time and again elaborated on Article 15 of the Constitution and has categorically held that the wording of Article 15, clause 1 is large enough to include ancillary cases of discrimination, the term 'only' used under Article 15 (1) of the Constitution does not mean that discrimination could only happen on the grounds mentioned in the clause, rather, it is inclusive of any ancillary ground of discrimination as well: sexual orientation is a part of 'sex' as given under article 15 (1).

Further, Article 21 of the Constitution which deals with the elevation of an individual as a judge of the High Court, in all its captivating characteristics does not exclude the LGBTQIA community from being considered for the position. So, the onus shifts to the Centre and the Collegium to show a justifiable reason why an individual from a particular community cannot be given representation in the higher judiciary.

The writers are, respectively, an Advocate of the Supreme Court of India and an Assistant Professor, National Law University, Jharkhand.

## Biden and his climate initiatives

SALEEMUL HUQ

US President Biden's first act upon being sworn in on 20 January was to officially notify the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that he was withdrawing his predecessor's withdrawal from the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and that the United States was rejoining the Paris Agreement.

He has since followed this up by appointing John Kerry, who was President Obama's Secretary of State and had been key in achieving the Paris Agreement in 2015, as his Climate Envoy. He has also declared that he wants the US to not only rejoin the Paris Agreement, but to become a leader in tackling climate change with the degree of seriousness that the issue deserved.

In that vein, he also plans to hold a leaders' climate summit on April 22, where he will be inviting 40 of the world's leaders to join virtually and support the US in taking stronger actions regarding the climate crisis, and prepare to make really meaningful progress at COP26 (to be held in November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, hosted by the United Kingdom).

President Biden has sent Mr. Kerry around the world to hand-deliver his invitation to the leaders' climate summit. Kerry just visited India and Bangladesh, where he delivered the invitation to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, who has formally accepted the invitation.

So, what can our expectations be from President Biden's Climate Summit?

The first point to iterate is that while the world has indeed welcomed President Biden rejoining the Paris Agreement and also his declaration that he wanted the US to become a



world leader in tackling the climate crisis, he will need to earn that position of leadership. This means that his actions will speak louder than his words.

Therefore, the biggest challenge that every country has to deliver on is to make meaningful plans for getting to net zero emissions and not just pledges to reach that goal by 2050, although the pledges are important as well. The US has yet to share its pledge and plans, and we look forward to some really ambitious plans which will enable the global temperature to be kept below a 1.5 degrees Centigrade warming, which is what all countries agreed to in the Paris Agreement in 2015.

Delivering these emissions reductions at the national level is by far the most important action that Biden and his government have to deliver, and will be judged by. To his credit, President Biden has indeed appointed some very climate change-savvy cabinet members and is taking an all-of-government approach to tackling climate change in the US. His recent \$2 trillion infrastructure bill

has detailed a lot of actions to tackle climate change. These are indeed welcome developments.

The second pledge that Mr. Biden will have to deliver on is one made by the developed countries in Paris in 2015 to collectively provide \$100 billion a year to developing countries so they may tackle climate change, starting from 2020. The share of the US to this pledge was \$3 billion, and President Obama provided \$1 billion of that just before he handed power over to Trump, who then stopped payments.

Partly for this reason, 2020 has come and gone without the \$100 billion having been provided to developing countries, as promised in Paris in 2015. This has left a major dent in the credibility of the developed countries.

To Mr. Biden's credit, he has promised to pay the \$2 billion due from the US and has said that he will also raise more during 2021.

The challenge for the US will be to get all other countries to deliver their promised amounts for both 2020

and as well as 2021. An associated issue with the amounts made available is with the distribution for developing countries to either tackle mitigation or adaptation to the climate crisis. The demand from the vulnerable developing countries has always been for the ratio of support to be 50/50 for mitigation and adaptation, with the adaptation funds being targeted at the most vulnerable of the developing countries. However, from the data available so far, the ratio for 2020 was 80 per cent for mitigation going to a handful of bigger developing countries and only 20 per cent for adaptation in the majority of vulnerable developing countries. This imbalance must be rectified going forward.

The third and final major issue to be addressed is the fact that loss and damage due to a rise in the global temperature over one degree Centigrade due to human-induced climate change has become a reality in 2020, and people have lost lives, property and ecosystems due to super wildfires, cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes, and even droughts and heatwaves - all of which are now scientifically linked to human-induced climate change. While this does not mean that these climatic events occurred because of climate change, it is true that they have become more severe because of the higher global temperature due to the emissions of greenhouse gases over the last decades.

This topic remains a politically sensitive one, as the major-emitting countries do not wish to discuss funding for the victims of loss and damage for fear of being opened up to claims of liability and compensation. Indeed, John Kerry himself inserted a clause in the COP21 decision associated with the Paris Agreement in 2015, in which he insisted that acceptance of Article 8 on Loss and Damage in

the Paris Agreement could not be used for liability and compensation.

I had the opportunity during the lunch in Dhaka to ask Kerry about his views on funding the victims of human-induced climate change for the loss and damage they have suffered. His response was to acknowledge that this was now a reality but that we should focus on raising funds for adaptation and resilience rather than for loss and damage, which he felt would be too politically difficult in terms of convincing the US Congress, which is in charge of fund allocation.

I must say that this response disappointed me and I felt that he was repeating exactly what he had said in Paris back in 2015. The challenge for the Climate Vulnerable Forum (CVF) countries, and for Bangladesh as their leader, is to explain and convince the Biden administration that one of the most consequential outcomes of the US government refusing to fulfil its obligations under the Paris Agreement for the last four years has been to make the visible and scientifically attributable loss and damage from human-induced climate a reality. Even if the US does not want to make payments as forms of liability and compensation, they can still make funds available under a sense of solidarity with the victims of climate change.

President Biden finding it difficult to convince Republican Senators to fund victims of the climate crisis is not an acceptable reason for the rest of the world to give the US a pass on this issue.

We must challenge the US to demonstrate that it recognises that loss and damage is truly attributable to human-induced climate change and that it believes the victims deserve funds, which are well beyond adaptation and resilience only.

The Daily Star/ANN.

NO 2885

100 YEARS AGO

### OCCASIONAL NOTE

The Bernard Oppenheimer Diamond Works that were started a year or two ago at Brighton have now passed the experimental stage and are on a sound financial basis. There are two peculiar features of these works; they represent a new industry in England, and practically all the employees are men who were disabled by war wounds from following their former trades. Between 2,000 and 3,000 men are employed, and of these nearly half have had limbs amputated. One of the difficulties encountered in the earlier days of the enterprise was due to the fact that many of the men, had to leave their work in order to attend hospital for the dressing of their wounds or other treatment. This led to the institution of a surgical department within the works, with the approval of the Ministry of Pensions, so that the men can receive the necessary treatment with as little interruption to their work as possible. A still further development has been the erection of a British Red Cross Hut adjoining the works, for the special purpose of fitting the men who need them with artificial limbs and of keeping them in repair. The actual work of diamond polishing demands good eyesight, a sound nervous system, and more than average intelligence, but if the men are suitable in these respects it is found that as a rule they are able to earn their living after six months of training.

### NEWS ITEMS

#### BOY ATTEMPTS TO FIRE COLLEGE OFFICE

Cuttack, Apr 15  
At 2 o'clock this morning a young lad of seventeen, lately a 1st year student of the Ravenshaw College, was found on the verandah of the college office with matches, a bottle of kerosene and a candle. A servant of the college detected the boy and raised an alarm and students from the neighbouring hostel and others got up and caught hold of the boy. He confesses that his purpose was to set fire to the college office, his reason being that he had lately been fined by the Principal Rs 6 in connection with the strike troubles. He was handed over to the police. Only two days ago the office of the Deputy Inspector of Schools was burnt down. The boy is the son of a high official of Patna and a student of the National College Calcutta.

#### NATIONAL MEDICAL INSTITUTE

As a sequel to the attempt to boycott Government schools and colleges, Mr. C.R. Das last evening opened the National Medical Institute at Wellington Square, where Medical education will be imparted on national lines. There was a fair attendance, among those present being Sir Ashutosh Chowdhury, Rai Jotindra Nath Chowdhury and a number of doctors and kavirajes. Dr. Sundari Mohan Das, the principal, stated that the institution will be divided into three branches, allopathy, homeopathy and ayurvedic. So far 323 students have been enrolled from different provinces. The qualification for admission and the curriculum will practically be the same as obtain at the Medial College. Mr. C.R. Das delivered an inaugural address and was followed by other speakers. The proceedings throughout were conducted in English.

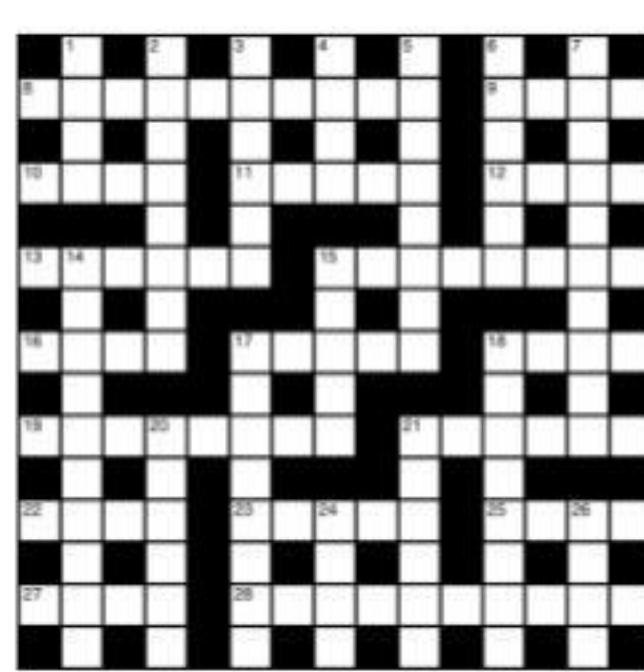
#### OIL TRUST RAMP DENOUNCED

The second report of the Board of Trade attacks the Oil Trust's present cost of production of fuel oil, saying that present prices are not justified and that producers are exploiting consumers owing to the large demand. This is the committed verdict, which adds that there is no possible justification for the recent increase of seven pence per gallon in the price of petrol. The committee, while saying it dislikes Government control, declares that there are only two ways of overcoming difficulties - firstly, by combined action through the economic section of the League of Nations, and secondly, by the production of substitutes and the adoption of alternative sources of power to such an extent that it will lower prices.

#### DELEGATIONS TO LONDON CONFERENCE

The Greek and Turkish delegations to the London Conference have arrived at Dover. Interviewed by Reuter's correspondent, M. Calogeropoulos declared that he was anxious that the Turkish Treaty should not be modified. He pointed out that Greece had brought good administration and security to all the new regions entrusted to her, and she remained practically the only Power in the East which defended Allied mandates. Any suggestion of modifying the Treaty in the direction of the creation of spheres of economic influence was bound to be rejected by the Greek people.

### CROSSWORD



#### YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

HEATHEN M S G C  
Y I R M I L K Y W A Y  
B E R G M A N M A Y P  
C H D L I S T E N E R  
C A N T H I A E E E  
N E C O O P E R A T E S  
D U N A G G H S  
Y S E T T H E O R Y M  
P A E A C O D E  
A G G R E S S I V E S R  
L I X R N O E S I S  
T I T M O U S E T M D  
R A C C P R A I R I E  
O N T H E D O T I T A  
W E E T T S C R E E N S

#### ACROSS

- 8 No dancer recalled mistake about line further down (10)
- 9 Type of sugar not popular for tooth (4)
- 10 Developer very much ahead (4)
- 11 Article in photo producing alarm (5)
- 12 Sandbank about to return and drift sideways (4)
- 13 Grant, perhaps, to import a new sweet wine (6)
- 15 Detectives are ditching English operations, backtracking on an irregular basis (8)
- 16 Immoral gamble absorbing number (4)
- 17 Informer comprehends losing power (5)
- 18 Opening without latest lead actor (4)
- 19 A lot of point in blocking attractive bargain (3-5)
- 21 Peevishly complain French article about wine is regressive (6)
- 22 No repetition in expensive part of programme (4)
- 23 Revolutionary piano melodies bearing fruit (5)
- 25 Hot gas is subject of clip (4)
- 27 University lecturer recalled in live university award (4)
- 28 Insect repellent dispersed into cellar (10)

#### DOWN

- 1 Give way over cereal (4)
- 2 Hannibal's introduction into European battle, nothing less? (8)
- 3 Incompetent work on piano – tricky getting round that (6)
- 4 Main role in ballet is lover I neglected (4)
- 5 Becoming mostly bitter, tucking into a lot of beef (8)
- 6 Plant account penned by American spies (6)
- 7 Make useless vain flapping over Liberal, I see (10)
- 14 Dreadful delay involving Queen worried sufficiently
- 15 Head of serpent mostly emulating Adam and Eve in Eden? Willy thing (5)
- 17 Hard work removing new bit of hair in jam (8)
- 18 Possibly overlooked source of smoke – burning? (8)
- 20 Quantity of energy given by a component of salad? (6)
- 21 No restricting one in series from an older time (6)
- 24 Some cloth to munch? That'll show me up (4)
- 26 Injured lady heartlessly, without much thought (4)

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



Within five years India will be number one manufacturing hub for electric vehicle in the world.

NITIN GADKARI  
UNION TRANSPORT MINISTER

## THUMBNAILS

**Union against privatisation of power distcos:** The All India Power Engineers Federation on Thursday urged the government to put on hold the privatisation of electricity distribution entities. The federation mentioned that neither the draft Electricity Amendment Bill 2021 nor the standard bidding document has been finalised but the Union Territories of Chandigarh and Dadra Nagar Haveli are moving very fast towards the privatisation of their electricity departments. PTI

**Domestic airlines may cut losses:** Lower domestic air traffic compared with pre-pandemic level coupled with high fuel prices and only a gradual recovery in international operations may lead to domestic airlines posting around Rs 9,500-10,000 crore losses this fiscal, ratings agency CRISIL said on Thursday. These losses, however, will still be 35-40 per cent lower compared to Rs 14,000-15,000 crore estimated losses in the previous financial year, CRISIL Ratings said. The indicative losses are based on a study of the top three airlines, which account for around 78 per cent of total passenger traffic, it said. PTI

**Etrio to supply 100 Touro 3-wheelers:** Electric vehicle maker Etrio on Thursday said it will initially supply 100 units of its Touro brand of e-three-wheelers to logistics startup Zapp Electric for last mile delivery, and scale it up to 1,000 units in the next 6-8 months, under a recent partnership. Zapp will deploy Etrio's Touro Mini in Delhi-NCR, which will further be bolstered by presence across geographies in the country, going forward, the EV start up said in a release. PTI

**Consumer durables industry may contract:** Godrej Appliances on Thursday said the consumer durables industry is likely to contract 12-15 per cent in 2020-21, compared to the previous year mainly due to the loss witnessed in June quarter and the worst hit was the air conditioner segment. Talking to reporters at a virtual press conference, Godrej Appliances Business Head and Executive Vice President Kamal Nandi said the company too faced challenges because of the unprecedented rise in commodity prices all across, which resulted in huge rise in input costs in air conditioners and refrigerators. PTI

**Labour Bureau to release employment:** Undeterred by the raging Covid wave in the country, the Labour Bureau has set a deadline of July this year to release the first report of the Quarterly Employment Survey. The Bureau, which is a wing of the Ministry of Labour and Employment, is also looking to release the Migrant Workers Survey. It would provide estimates for the demand side conditions of the labour market. PTI

# WPI inflation spikes to over 8-year high of 7.39% in March

RBI projected retail inflation at 5.2 per cent in the June quarter

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

The wholesale price-based inflation shot up to over 8-year high of 7.39 per cent in March on rising crude oil and metal prices.

Also, the low base of March last year, when the data was computed with a low response rate due to the nationwide lockdown, contributed to the spike in inflation in March 2021.

The WPI inflation was 4.17 per cent in February 2021 and 0.42 per cent in March 2020.

This is the third straight month of up-tick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation.

"The annual rate of inflation stood at 7.39 percent (provisional) for the month of March 2021 over March 2020," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said.

Such a high level of WPI was last recorded in October 2012, when inflation was 7.4 percent.

Inflation in food articles in March was 3.24 per cent as



prices of pulses, fruits and paddy hardened.

In pulses, it was 13.14 per cent in March, while in fruits and paddy, inflation was 16.33 per cent and 1.38 per cent, respectively.

In vegetables, the rate of price rise softened to (-) 5.19 per cent, against (-) 2.90 per cent in the previous month.

Inflation in the fuel and power basket was 10.25 per cent in March, against 0.58 per cent in February on higher fuel prices. In manufactured products, inflation was 7.34 percent.

"The prices of crude oil, petroleum products and basic metal substantially increased in March 2021 as compared to the corresponding month of last year. Also, due to nationwide lockdown, the WPI index for the month of March 2020 was computed with a relatively low response rate," the ministry said while releasing the WPI data.

Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the steep month-on-month jump in WPI-inflation was driven by metals, textiles, chemicals, rubber etc, as

many of them recorded large price increases globally in recent months on the back of the optimism generated by the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine.

"While crude oil prices have retreated from the peaks seen in March 2021, a falling base is expected to push up the inflation for this segment as well as mineral oils further in April 2021."

"Moreover, the depreciation in the INR will push up the landed cost of imports, adding to the inflationary pressures for the WPI going forward," she said.

Icra expects the headline and core WPI inflation to rise further over the next two months, peaking at around 11.0-11.5 per cent and 8-8.5 per cent, respectively in May 2021. "The expected trajectory of the WPI inflation, and its partial transmission into the CPI inflation going ahead, supports our view that there is negligible space for rate cuts to support growth, in spite of the growing uncertainty related to the surge in Covid-19 cases, localised restrictions and

emerging concerns regarding migrants returning to the hinterland," Nayar added.

India Ratings & Research Chief Economist Devendra Kumar Pant said higher wholesale inflation transmits to retail inflation with a lag, this makes the job of monetary authorities very difficult.

"The economy at present juncture needs both fiscal and monetary support (both low rates and ample liquidity). While Ind-Ra expects the policy rates to remain low at the same level and ample liquidity in most of FY22, spurt in wholesale prices may force monetary authorities to withdraw some of the extraordinary liquidity measures around the end of FY22," Pant added.

Retail inflation, as per data released earlier this week, rose to a 4-month high of 5.52 per cent in March.

The RBI in its monetary policy earlier this month kept policy rates unchanged and said it will maintain an accommodative monetary policy stance to support growth and keep inflation at the targeted level.

## Rupee snaps 6-session losing run, ends up by 12p at 74.93

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 15 APRIL

19 infections," Sriram Iyer, Senior Research Analyst at Reliance Securities, said.

The US dollar fell to a 4-week low against other major currencies on Thursday afternoon trade as Treasury yields eased from last month's surge as investors expect the Fed to remain dovish through the year despite a rise in inflation, he added. "Technically, the USD-INR Spot pair found resistance near 75.35-75.50 levels from where the pair settled below 75.00 levels and now could see a downside move up to 74.85-74.70 levels. The USDINR Spot pair could trade in a range of 74.80-75.20 levels," Iyer said. The Indian benchmark government bond yields rose on Thursday to 6.13 per cent, against 6.01 per cent at the previous close despite the central bank buying notes under its so-called government securities acquisition programme, he noted. The rupee is seen taking some breather after the sharp depreciation witnessed towards nine-month lows. It is majorly the softening of the dollar index, which has provided some cushion to the domestic currency around the 75.50 mark, Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President Commodity and Currency Research, Religare Broking, said.

## India Inc's outward FDI halves to \$1.93 bn in March



committed by the Indian investors in their foreign joint ventures/wholly owned subsidiaries in March this year, USD 1.15 billion was in the form of issuance of guarantees. Rest of USD 413.25 million was in the form of loan and USD 363.54 million was through equity capital, the data showed. The major investors were telecom major Bharti Airtel Ltd USD 750 million in a wholly owned unit in Mauritius; pharma firm Lupin Ltd USD 250 million in a JV in the US, SRF Ltd USD 83.83 million in a wholly owned subsidiary (WoS) in the Netherlands.

Mahindra & Mahindra invested USD 84.52 million in WoS in Mauritius and The Indian Hotels Co Ltd USD 59.59 million in its wholly owned subsidiary in the Netherlands.

Of the total investment

## Piramal aims to be among top-five NBFCs in retail space after DHFL deal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 15 APRIL

Piramal Retail Finance on Thursday said it aims to focus on scale, and become one of the top five retail non-bank lenders in five years, after the acquisition of mortgage lender DHFL and entering more products which ups the cross-sell opportunities.

The legal and regulatory process for the acquisition of DHFL, bought through a bidding process, is going faster than expected, but a timeline cannot be given by when it will be over, its chief executive Jairam Sridharan told reporters here.

It can be noted that the NBFCs space is highly competitive, and despite the reverses witnessed over the last three years, keeps witnessing newer entrants like the entry

of deep-pocketed Godrej and Poonawallas recently.

At present, the loan book of Piramal Capital and Housing Finance, which completely owns PRF is Rs 45,000 crore and only 11 per cent of it is retail, he said, adding that after the DHFL acquisition, the retail portion will rise to 45 per cent by the end of FY22.

Sridharan said the company's ultimate aim is to take the overall retail share to two-thirds of the book in the medium term, for which it will be launching new products, organically expanding its network and also need more people.

"We aim to scale, responsibly, the intent will be to underwrite appropriately, not for growth, he said. A company statement said it is aiming to disburse Rs 3,000 crore of fresh loans in FY22." The timing of the move is

very opportune, Sridharan said, pointing out that entrenched lenders are caught up protecting their portfolios which are under stress due to which lenders tend to go slow on new lending.

"It is the best time to start when things are at the bottom of the cycle. I would rather ride the way up a wave rather than riding the wave down, he said.

PRF presently operates in seven distinct product lines, including the mortgage business, and the newly launched used car loans and consumer finance, he said, adding that tie-ups with fintechs are at the forefront of entry into many product portfolios. Going forward, the company aims to enter loans against shares, education loans, unsecured financing for businesses and two-wheeler financing, he said.

## Wipro 4th quarter net profit up 27.7 per cent to ₹2,972 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

IT major Wipro on Thursday posted a 27.7 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,972 crore for the March 2021 quarter, and exuded confidence of sustaining strong growth momentum in the coming quarters.

Wipro had registered a net profit of Rs 2,326.1 crore in the year-ago period, as per Indian Accounting Standards. Its revenue from operations rose by 3.4 per cent to Rs 16,245.4 crore in the reported quarter from Rs 15,711 crore in the same period last fiscal.

Wipro, which gets a bulk of its topline from IT services -- said it expects revenues from that unit to be in the range of \$2,195 to \$2,238 million in the June 2021 quarter. This translates into a sequen-

tial growth of 2-4 per cent.

Wipro's IT services segment revenue was at \$2,152.4 million in March quarter, a sequential growth of 3.9 per cent. "Our Q4 performance was built on top of what we saw in the last quarter. We have reported a solid growth in revenue, healthy order booking and great execution, resulting in robust margins.

"This truly sets the stage for the next quarter and the next financial year," Wipro CEO and Managing Director Thierry Delaporte told reporters.

He added that revenue of 3.9 per cent in reported terms and 3 per cent in constant currency terms is at the top quartile of its guidance range.

"This is the best fourth quarter results we have reported in the last 10 years. This was

truly led by a very good volume growth.

"Despite the steep decline in the first quarter of the fiscal year because of the pandemic, we now bounced back to finish the year with only a marginal decline of 1.4 per cent y-o-y," Delaporte said.

He added that the robust demand environment is robust and the overall pipeline is healthy. IT services segment revenue for FY21 was at \$8,136.5 million, down 1.4 per cent y-o-y. "We have guided for revenue growth of 2-4 per cent outside of Capco and Ampion.

This would translate into a year-on-year double digit growth of 11-13 per cent. This guidance reflects the environment we are operating in, our increased focus on the market and our improved execution rigour," he said.

## India to augment hydrogen supply chain: Pradhan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL



India will augment its hydrogen supply chain infrastructure as it looks to accelerate plans to generate the carbon-free fuel, which may have an edge over other non-fossil fuel sources, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said Thursday.

"Hydrogen has great potential to emerge as a future source of energy," he said. "The enthusiasm about hydrogen has a simple reason -- whether it's used in a fuel cell or burned to create heat, wherever hydrogen replaces fossil fuels, it slows global warming." Carbon-free hydrogen can be produced from fossil fuels, such as natural gas or coal, by splitting water into

hydrogen and oxygen using a current of electricity. Hydrogen thus generated can be used as a transport fuel. However, hydrogen supply and distribution in India face challenges such as high production costs and complementary infrastructure requirements. Speaking at a round-table on hydrogen economy, Pradhan said the government is "committed to augmenting the hydrogen supply chain in the country", including integrating it with flagship programs like SATAT that generates compressed biogas from municipal and agri waste. Stating that work was on pilot projects to produce blue hydrogen (from fossil fuels) and green hydrogen (from renewable sources), he said hydrogen was being blended with compressed

natural gas (CNG) for use as a transportation fuel as well as an industrial input to refineries. "Fifty buses in Delhi are plying on CNG blended with hydrogen on a pilot basis. We plan to scale it up in the coming months across the major cities of India," he said.

Pradhan further said various initiatives for the greater use of hydrogen in India's energy mix are being taken, including the recent budget announcement of a National Hydrogen Mission for making a hydrogen roadmap for the country. Indian refineries, he said, are planning to leverage the available surplus hydrogen capacities for meeting the initial demand in mainstreaming hydrogen.

One of such projects is underway at Gujarat refinery of Indian Oil wherein the combination of hydrogen production through natural gas and its hyphenation with the carbon capture technology will result in the production of blue hydrogen. Stating that global efforts are focused on finding ways to develop a hydrogen economy, he said the contours of India's energy transition roadmap include the development of emerging fuels, particularly hydrogen.

"Energy is integral to sup-

## Amazon announces \$250 million fund for SMEs

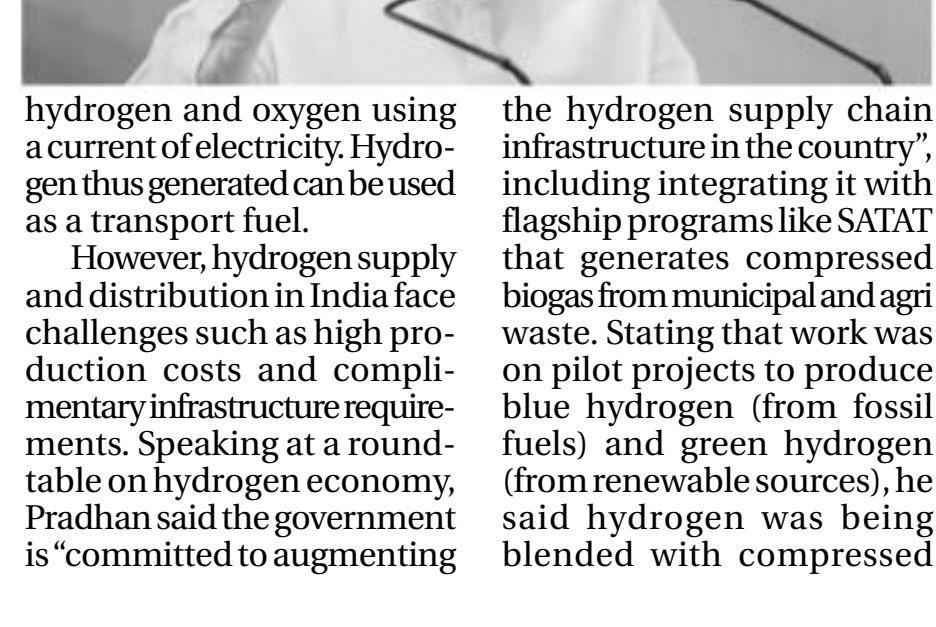
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

Amazon Web Services CEO Andrew Jassy CEO said.

Under this, Amazon intends to help inspire more SMBs to be able to build brand new businesses, Jassy, who will take over as Amazon Inc CEO later this year, said during the second Amazon Smbhav event.

Amazon India Global SVP and Country Head India Amit Agarwal said the fund is targeted at empowering the best ideas, and attracting visionary entrepreneurs.

"The fund is going to focus on three key priorities - SME digitisation, agri-tech innovations to empower farmer productivity and reach, and health-tech to provide universal and quality health care," he added.



affordable energy to improve the lives of Indians coupled with the need to have a smaller carbon footprint." The inclusion of hydrogen as an energy carrier in the future energy portfolio presents a unique opportunity to address emerging energy sectors, including power to gas, power to power, and power to mobility and even vehicle to grid applications, he said.

"India remains committed to environmental and climate causes with a massive thrust on deploying renewable energy and energy efficiency measures," he said, adding India's renewable power portfolio has grown from 32 GW to almost 100 GW in the last six years. India is targeting 450 GW of renewable energy generating capacity by 2030.



We are not in a hurry for negotiations to be held today or tomorrow, and that depends on the other part. We are ready and our position is clear

IRANIAN PRESIDENT HASSAN ROUHANI

REFERRING TO THE NUCLEAR TALKS IN VIENNA

The Statesman

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 16 APRIL 2021

09

# Blinken in Kabul to sell US troop withdrawal

After the announcement of US troops withdrawal, NATO followed suit, saying its roughly 7,000 non-US forces in Afghanistan would be departing within months

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KABUL, 15 APRIL

**T**he United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken made an unannounced visit to Afghanistan on Thursday to sell Afghan leaders and a wary public on President Joe Biden's decision to withdraw all American troops from the country and end America's longest-running war.

Blinken was meeting with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, chief executive Abdullah Abdullah, and civic figures, a day after Biden announced that the remaining 2,500 US soldiers in Afghanistan would be coming home by the 20th anniversary of the 11 September terrorist attacks that led to the US invasion.

His trip also came after NATO immediately followed suit, saying its roughly 7,000 non-American forces in Afghanistan would be departing within a few months, ending the foreign military presence that had been a fact of life for a generation of Afghans already reeling from more than 40 years of conflict.

Blinken sought to reassure the Afghan leadership that



Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, centre right, walks with US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, at the Sapi Dar Palace in Kabul, on Thursday. AP

the withdrawal did not mean an end to the US-Afghan relationship. "I wanted to demonstrate with my visit the ongoing commitment of the United States to the Islamic Republic and the people of Afghanistan," Blinken told Ghani as they met at the presidential palace in Kabul.

The partnership is changing, but the partnership itself is enduring. We respect the decision and are adjusting our priorities, Ghani told Blinken, expressing gratitude

for the sacrifices of US troops. Blinken arrived in the Afghan capital from Brussels where he and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin briefed NATO officials on the move and NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg announced the alliance would also be leaving.

Biden, Blinken, Austin and Stoltenberg have all sought to put a brave face on the pull-out, maintaining that the US- and NATO-led missions to Afghanistan had achieved their goal of decimating Osama

bin Laden's al-Qaida network that launched the 9/11 attacks and clearing the country of terrorist elements that could use Afghan soil to plot similar strikes. However, that argument has faced pushback from some US, lawmakers and human rights advocates who say the withdrawal will result in the loss of freedoms that Afghans enjoyed after the Taliban was ousted from power in late 2001. Later, in a meeting with Abdullah, Blinken repeated his message, saying

that we have a new chapter, but it is a new chapter that we're writing together.

We are grateful to your people, your country, your administration, Abdullah said.

Despite billions of US dollars in aid, Afghanistan 20 years on has a poverty rate of 52 per cent according to World Bank figures.

That means more than half of Afghanistan's 36 million people live on less than \$1.90 a day. Afghanistan is also considered one of the worst countries in the world to be a woman according to the Georgetown Institute for Women Peace and Security.

For many Afghans the past two decades have been disappointing, as corruption has overtaken successive governments and powerful warlords have amassed wealth and loyal militias who are well armed. Peace talks between the Taliban and the Afghan government are at a stalemate but are supposed to resume later this month in Istanbul.

Under an agreement signed between the Trump administration and the Taliban last year, the US was to have completed its military withdrawal by 1 May.

**US, NATO troops pulling out of Afghanistan can raise tremendous concerns for India: Experts**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON, 15 APRIL

After the withdrawal of the US and NATO troops from Afghanistan by September 11, India will have tremendous concern on the resurgence of the Taliban and the war-torn country being used as a safe haven for terrorists, according to experts here.

US President Joe Biden on Wednesday announced that all American troops would be withdrawn from Afghanistan by 11 September this year to end the country's longest war. Following suit, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) said it will also pull out its troops from Afghanistan.

Biden said his administration will ask other countries in the region to do more to support Afghanistan, especially Pakistan, as well as Russia, China, India, and Turkey. "They all have a significant stake in the stable future for Afghanistan," Biden

torn country.

"Regional countries, especially India, will have tremendous concerns about the US pullout from Afghanistan and the likelihood of a Taliban resurgence in the country," Lisa Curtis, who was Deputy Assistant to the President and NSC Senior Director for South and Central Asia from 2017-2021 under the previous Donald Trump administration, told PTI.

"When the Taliban controlled Afghanistan in the late 1990s, they welcomed militants and terrorists of all stripes to train, recruit, and fundraise from Afghanistan. Many of those militants, including the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), trained for operations in India, such as the 2001 attack on the Indian Parliament," Curtis said.

Curtis now is a senior fellow and director of the Indo-Pacific Security Program at the Center for a New American Security think-tank.

## Myanmar police arrest key anti-coup leader

AGENCIES  
YANGON, 15 APRIL

Myanmar security forces arrested on Thursday one of the main leaders of the campaign against military rule after ramming him with a car as he led a motorbike protest rally, friends and colleagues said.

Opponents of a February coup that ousted an elected government led by Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi have kept up their campaign against the military this traditional New Year week with marches and various other displays of resistance.



"Our brother Wai Moe Naing was arrested. His motorcycle was hit by an unmarked police car," Win Zaw Khiang, a member of a protest organising group, said on social media. Wai Moe Naing, a 25-year-old Muslim, has emerged as one of the most high-profile leaders of opposition to the coup.

Earlier, Reuters spoke to Wai

black car shown in two videos swerving into the rally did not match the vehicle model listed for that plate number on Myanmar's vehicle database.

A spokesman for the junta could not be reached for comment. Monywa has been one of main centres of the pro-democracy campaign with big rallies and repeated crackdowns by the security forces.

Some colleagues said they feared for Wai Moe Naing's safety. The Swedish embassy said it was following his case and urged that all detainees be allowed proper health care and their human rights be respected.

The license plate of the

## France urges its nationals in Pakistan to leave country after violent protests

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, 15 APRIL

The French embassy here on Thursday advised all French nationals in Pakistan to temporarily leave the country after violent protests by a radical religious group that has now been banned by the government.

The Tehreek-i-Labaik Pakistan (TLP) took to streets on Monday to launch violent protests to force the government to expel the French ambassador over blasphemous caricatures published

last year.

Though no French citizen was reportedly targeted so far but the embassy has urged all the French citizens to leave Pakistan, apparently as a precautionary measure.

Due to the serious threats to French interests in Pakistan, French nationals and French companies are advised to temporarily leave the country, the embassy said in an email message to its citizens in Pakistan.

It said that the departures will be carried out by existing commercial airlines.

Interior minister Sheikh

Rashid announced on Wednesday to ban the TLP and officials said that Prime Minister Imran Khan and his cabinet endorsed the summary by the interior ministry to outlaw the group.

The trouble began after police arrested the TLP chief Saad Rizvi on Monday by the group to expel the French ambassador. Initially the government had agreed that it would take action to fulfill the demand of expulsion of the French ambassador by February

Baghdad market explosion kills 1, injures 12

BAGHDAD, 15 APRIL

A powerful explosion rocked a market in east Baghdad on Thursday, killing one person and injuring 12 others, according to Iraq's military.

A police official said the blast in the capital's Sadr City, in the Habibiya neighborhood, was caused by a car bomb.

It sent a cloud of black smoke above the area. Shortly afterward, a crowd of people gathered around the mangled wreckage of a charred car and a burned-out white van. A fire engine was parked nearby.

A military statement said one person was killed and 12 injured, according to a preliminary investigation. Five vehicles were burned, it added, without saying what caused the blast.

Explosions in the Iraqi capital, particularly in the predominantly Shi'ite Muslim Sadr City district, were once almost daily occurrences but have become less frequent in the past few years, particularly following the defeat of the Islamic State group in 2017.

In January, twin suicide bombings ripped through a busy market in Baghdad, killing more than 30 people and wounding dozens.

## Indonesian police kill suspect linked to church attack

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAKARTA, 15 APRIL

Indonesian police on Thursday shot dead a man allegedly linked to last month's suicide bombing outside a church in South Sulawesi province, a spokesman said.

Members of the police anti-terrorism unit used lethal force after the suspect attacked them with a sickle during a raid on his home in the provincial capital Makassar, dpa news agency quoted a police spokesman as saying.

Investigators said a newly married couple linked to Jamaah Ansharud Daulah (JAD), a militant network that supports terror group, carried out the attack.

## N Koreans mark founder's birthday amidst economic difficulties

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
SEOUL, 15 APRIL

Mask-wearing North Koreans danced in a plaza or climbed a Pyongyang hill on Thursday to mark the 109th birthday of the country's founder amid pandemic fears and economic woes.

The day, called The Day of the Sun in North Korea, is the most important public holiday. No major events like a military parade were expected this year as North Korea typically stages them for anniversaries that end in zero and five.

Kim Il Sung, a former guer-



illa fighter during the Japanese colonial period, founded North Korea in 1948 and still maintains a godlike status in the North.

He was succeeded by his son, Kim Jong Il, after his death in 1994.

After Kim Jong Il died in 2011, his son and current leader Kim Jong Un took power in the country's second hereditary power transfer.

On Thursday, neatly dressed North Koreans visited Pyongyang's Mansu Hill to

lay flowers and bow below the towering bronze statues of Kim Il Sung and Kim Jong Il. Soldiers wearing masks saluted. Elsewhere in Pyongyang, women wearing colorful traditional clothes performed a folk dance. Other women

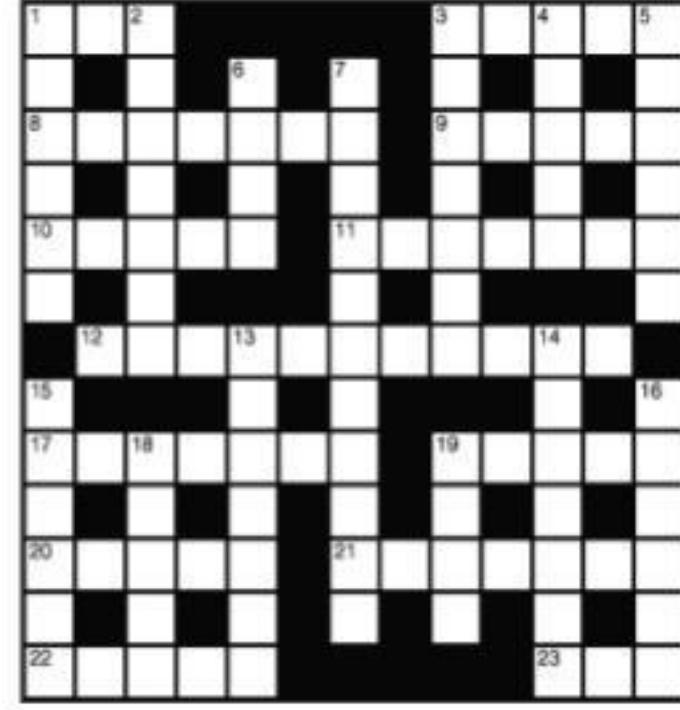
passed along a nearby street decorated with a poster that read, Kim Il Sung, our comrade and greater leader, will always be with us.

Thursday's anniversary comes as Kim Jong Un is rallying the public that's been struggling with an economy battered by shortages of imported goods and sharply reduced trade due to pandemic-related border closures, US-led sanctions and natural disasters last summer.

North Korea maintains it has not had a single case of Covid-19, which is disputed by outside experts.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



**ACROSS**  
1 Organ of sight (3)  
3 Reprimand (5)  
8 Variety of rice (7)  
9 Garret (5)  
10 Thick (5)  
11 Investigate (7)  
12 Very close of a race (4-3-4)  
17 Band's tour crew (7)  
19 Military body (5)  
20 Tarnish (5)  
21 Immoderate (7)  
22 Mollusc (5)  
23 Young child (3)  
  
**SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD**

**DOWN**  
1 Be an example of (6)  
2 Fundamental nature (7)  
3 Hone (7)  
4 Surpass (5)  
5 Edict (6)  
6 Strong wind (4)  
7 Children's game (4-3-4)  
13 Made with wool (7)  
14 Up-to-date (7)  
15 Free of charge (6)  
16 Feature (6)  
18 Farewell (5)  
19 Quote (4)

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

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SMS Inquiry Nos. 57886, 54959, 5676747

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ISBT (General Inquiry):

23868836, 23865181

INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi

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JET AIRWAYS Flight Inquiry

and Reservation 39841111

EMIRATES Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 33773377

Air Canada Flight Inquiry

25656421/25656431 Reserva-

tion 41528181

Air France Flight Inquiry and

Reservation 23466262 (City)

25652294 (Airport)

Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry

and Reservation 23354373

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D	T	I	E	V
I	P	N	S	L
E	O	R	R	N

3rd Letter Triple  
Triple Word Score  
Rack 1



We're seeing here how, in two years, a huge job has been accomplished,

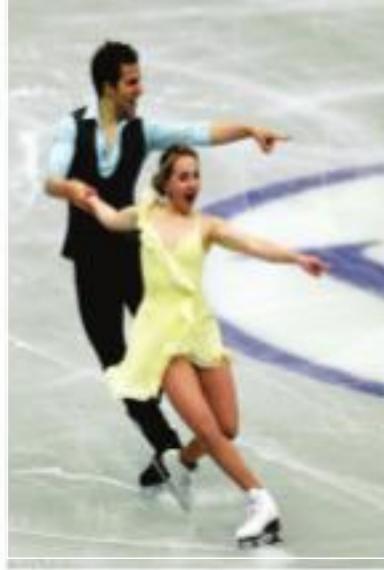
EMMANUEL MACRON

## WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	29	24 H
HONG KONG	26	20 H
TOKYO	15	07 H
LONDON	9	01 H
DUBAI	34	24 S
SAN FRANCISCO	15	08 CL
NEW YORK	13	07 S
MOSCOW	22	8 H

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

## THUMBNAILS



France's Adelina Galyavieva and Louis Thauron perform during the ice dance - rhythm dance programme of the ISU World Team Trophy figure skating competition in Osaka, western Japan. ■ AGENCIES

**Poland court rules:**  
Poland's top court ruled Thursday that it is unconstitutional for the country's human rights ombudsman to remain in the job indefinitely after his term expired. The ruling by the pro-government Constitutional Tribunal paves the way for the removal of the current acting ombudsman, Adam Bodnar. His term ended in September. AP

**Canadian lawmaker caught naked:** A Canadian Parliament member was caught stark naked in a virtual meeting of the House of Commons. William Amos, appeared on the screens of his fellow lawmakers completely naked Wednesday. The pandemic has meant many Canadian lawmakers participate in sessions via video conference instead of in person. A screenshot obtained by The Canadian Press shows Amos standing behind a desk between the Quebec and Canadian flags. AP

## WILD EYES



A ring-tailed lemur takes care of its new born baby at the zoo in Duisburg, Germany. ■ AGENCIES

## Senior royals to skip uniforms at Prince Philip's funeral

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON, 15 APRIL

Senior royals must wear civilian clothes to Prince Philip's funeral, defusing potential tensions over who would be allowed to don military uniforms.

Queen Elizabeth II's decision means Prince Harry won't risk being the only member of the royal family not in uniform during Saturday's funeral for his grandfather, who died last week at the age of 99.

Members of the royal family often wear uniforms to public events by virtue of their honorary roles with the British Army, Royal Navy and Royal Air Force. But Harry lost his honorary military titles when he decided to give up frontline royal duties last year. As a result, protocol suggests that Harry, an army veteran who served two tours of duty in Afghanistan, may only wear a suit with medals at royal functions, Britain's Press Association reported.

The decision also sidesteps another potential con-



troversy after reports that Prince Andrew considered wearing an admiral's uniform to his father's funeral.

Andrew retains his military titles even though he was forced to step away from royal duties after a disastrous interview with the BBC about his acquaintance with convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

The funeral is scheduled to take place Saturday at Windsor Castle, with attendance limited to 30 because of coronavirus restrictions. Philip, also known as the Duke of Edinburgh, served in the Royal Navy for 12 years and maintained close ties to the armed forces

it was an honour and privilege to perform the role.

It's incredibly important. We feel nervous, Sgt Bugler Jamie Ritchie. We feel the pressure, but we're recharging that and we're using that and we're going to deliver an outstanding performance.

Princes William, Harry won't walk side-by-side at funeral

throughout his life. Military personnel will have a large role in honouring him Saturday despite the attendance limit.

Members of the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the Royal Air Force and the British Army plan to take part in the funeral procession. Philip's coffin will be carried to St. George's Chapel on a specially adapted Land Rover, which he designed himself.

Military personnel rehearsed for the event Wednesday at Army Training Centre Pirbright, near London. One of the four Royal Marine buglers who will play

The Last Post at the service said

escort the coffin to St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle, west of London.

Prince Charles, the heir to the throne and the father of the princes, together with his sister, Princess Anne, will lead the 15-member procession.

The brothers had been closely watched as Saturday's funeral will almost certainly remind the pair of their shared grief at another royal funeral more than two decades ago. As young boys, both walked behind their mother Princess Diana's coffin in 1997 in London in a ceremony watched around the world. Palace officials refused to comment when asked whether the positioning of William and Harry was an effort to minimize family tensions, which have grown after Harry and his wife Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, gave an explosive interview to Oprah Winfrey that suggested an unnamed member of the royal family had made a racist comment to Harry before the birth of their child Archie.

Prince William and Prince Harry won't walk side-by-side Saturday as they follow their grandfather's coffin into the church ahead of Prince Philip's funeral, minimizing the chances of any awkward moments between the brothers who are grappling with strained relations since Harry's decision to step away from royal duties last year.

Buckingham Palace on Thursday released the broad outlines of the funeral program for Queen Elizabeth II's husband, who died April 9 at 99. The palace revealed that William and Harry's cousin, Peter Phillips, will walk between the princes as they

consider most at risk, and how are our adversaries thinking about this? the senator asked.

He said that the erosion of democracy partly has to do across the board with questions about the ability of democratic governance to deliver.

"I think you've seen some of that in our own country in recent years. We haven't been immune from that at all," he said.

"So, the challenge -- and I think President (Joe) Biden has emphasised this is working with other democracies, as an analytical judgment -- is to help restore that faith in the ability of democratic governance to deliver for people," Burns said.

## US expels Russian diplomats, imposes new round of sanctions

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 15 APRIL

The Biden administration on Thursday announced the expulsion of 10 Russian diplomats and sanctions against nearly three dozen people and companies as it moved to hold the Kremlin accountable for interference in last year's presidential election and the hacking of federal agencies.

The actions, foreshadowed for weeks by the administration, represent the first retaliatory measures announced against the Kremlin for the hack, familiarly known as the SolarWinds breach.

In that intrusion, Russian

hackers are believed to have infected widely used software with malicious code, enabling them to access the networks of at least nine agencies in what US officials believe was an intelligence-gathering operation aimed at mining government secrets.

Besides that hack, US officials last month alleged that Russian President Vladimir Putin authorized influence operations to help Donald Trump in his unsuccessful bid for reelection as president, though there's no evidence Russia or anyone else changed votes or manipulated the outcome.

The measures announced Thursday include sanctions on

six Russian companies that support the country's cyber activities, in addition to sanctions on 32 individuals and entities accused of attempting to interfere in last year's presidential election, including by spreading disinformation.

The 10 diplomats being expelled include representatives of Russian intelligence services, the White House said.

The White House also said Biden was using diplomatic, military and intelligence channels to respond to reports that Russia encouraged the Taliban to attack US and allied troops in Afghanistan based on the best assessments of the



intelligence community.

Reports of alleged bounties surfaced last year, with the

Trump administration coming under fire for not raising the issue directly with Russia. The White House did not publicly confirm the reports. The safety and well-being of US military personnel, and that of our allies and partners, is an absolute priority of the United States, the White House said Thursday.

It was not immediately clear what, if any, other actions might be planned against Russia. Officials had previously said they expected to take actions both seen and unseen.

The sanctions, presumably intended to send a clear retaliatory message to Russia and to deter similar acts in the future, are certain to exacerbate

bate an already tense relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

President Joe Biden told Putin this week in their second call to de-escalate tensions following a Russian military buildup on Ukraine's border, and said the U.S. would act firmly in defense of its national interests regarding Russian intrusions and election interference.

In a television interview last month, Biden replied I do when asked if he thought Putin was a killer. He said the days of the U.S. rolling over to Putin were done. Putin later recalled his ambassador to the US and pointed at the US history of slavery and slaughtering

Native Americans and the atomic bombing of Japan in World War II.

It remained unclear whether the U.S. actions would actually result in changed behavior, especially since past measures by the US have failed to bring an end to Russian hacking.

The actions would represent the second major round of sanctions imposed by the Biden administration against Russia. Last month, the U.S. sanctioned seven mid-level and senior Russian officials, along with more than a dozen government entities, over a nearly fatal nerve-agent attack on opposition leader Alexei Navalny and his subsequent jailing.

## Europe surpasses one million Covid deaths

Over 1.6 million new cases being reported every week in region; France becoming one of the worst affected countries on the continent

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
GENEVA, 15 APRIL



A specific date to honor those who died as the country is now fighting another rapid rise in confirmed cases.

There will be an homage for sure, a national mourning for the victims of Covid-19, Attal said Wednesday. That time will come. Today, we throw all our forces in the battle against the epidemic, he said.

Experts say the 100,000 mark is an under-estimate, by at least several thousands.

Analysis of death certificates shows that some Covid-19 cases are not reported when people die at home or in places like psychiatric units and chronic care facilities, they stress.

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South Africa suspends J&J Covid-19 vaccine

South Africa has joined the US in suspending its rollout of the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine, following reports that six women who received the immunisation doses had developed unusual blood clots with low platelet count.

"After this advice came to my attention, I held urgent consultations with our scientists, who have advised that we cannot take the decision made by the US Food and Drug Administration lightly."

"Based on their advice, we have determined to voluntarily

## Colourful coffins lift mood in New Zealand

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Wellington, 15 April

When the pallbearers brought Phil McLean's coffin into the chapel, there were gasps before a wave of laughter rippled through the hundreds of mourners. The coffin was a giant cream donut.

It overshadowed the sadness and the hard times in the last few weeks, said his widow, Debra. The final memory in everyone's mind was of that donut, and Phil's sense of humour.

The idea first came to Hall about 15 years ago when he was writing a will and contemplating his own death. How do I want to go out? he thought to himself, deciding it wouldn't be like everyone else. "So I put in my will that I want a red box with flames on it. Six months later, Hall, whose other business is a signage and graphics company, decided to get serious. He approached a few funeral directors who

had been glittering coffins covered in fake jewels, a casket inspired by the movie The Matrix, and plenty of coffins depicting people's favourite beaches and holiday spots.

There are people who are happy with a brown mahogany box and that's great, said Hall. But if they want to shout it out, I'm here to do it for them.

The idea began with a blank coffin and uses fiberboard and plywood to add details. A latex digital printer is used for the designs. Some orders are particularly complex, like the sailboat, which included a keel and rudder, cabin, sails, even metal railings and pulleys.

Depending on the design, the coffins retail for between about 3,000 and 7,500 New Zealand dollars (\$2,100 and \$5,400). Hall said the tone of funerals has changed markedly over recent years.

People now think it's a celebration of life rather than a

mourning of death, he said.

And they've been willing to throw out stuffy conventions in favor of getting something unique.

It begins with special

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It begins with special

# Of immense archival significance

**Shinjan Nrityalaya and Union ministry of culture collaborated to celebrate a few outstanding exponents of the Odissi form**

TAPATTI CHOWDHURY

Odissi dance institute Shinjan Nrityalaya along with the Union ministry of culture recently presented a virtual series on the "guru shishya parampara", a legacy handed down generations from gurus and mentors of the past. The festival which premiered on the YouTube channel of Shinjan Nrityalaya was of huge archival value.

The institute conveyed its respect to four great women whose contributions, to Odissi and in other areas of human endeavour, have been immense. Padma Vibhushan recipient Sonal Mansingh and Padma Shri awardees Priyambada Mohanty Hejmadi, Kumkum Mohanty and Geeta Mahalik – stars shining in their respective galaxies – were present in the virtual programme that will be preserved for posterity to draw inspiration from.

Mansingh is an Indian classical dancer with proficiency in Manipuri, Kuchipudi, Chau, Bharatanayam and Odissi. An orator and social activist, she is a pioneer in innovations in her learnt forms. With a wide range of choreographic work to her credit, literature has been her abiding interest. It was sheer grit that made her rise like a phoenix after an accident to dance with renewed enthusiasm. A Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha and recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, besides other accolades, she stands tall.

The legendary guru Kelucharan Mohapatra has especially choreographed *Saveri* or *Sringar Pallavi* and *Manikya Veena* keeping her in mind. She was indeed a fitting disciple of a great guru. As the artistic director and mentor of Shri Kamakhya Kalapeeth (Centre for Indian Classical Dances), New Delhi, she combines dance with music, yoga, learning Sanskrit and other connected cultural traditions of India. In the virtual presentation, Mansingh enriched viewers by sharing her experiences, rounding it off with performances from her archival material.

Mohanty Hejmadi is another luminous star among her kind and her achievements constitute a long list of exceptional activities. Former vice-chancellor of Sambalpur University,

Odisha, she is recognised for her contribution in science, engineering and dance. Sangeet Natak Akademi Award recipient for her role in promoting the Odissi dance form, she has penned books like *Odissi: An Indian Classical Dance Form and Gotipuas - The Boy Dancers of Odisha*. She was instrumental in establishing an arts stream for the first time in Sambalpur University, a performing arts school funded by the University Grants Commission. Her lecture and demonstration was a page from history. It was she who took the first steps to get the nod from the Union ministry of culture to acknowledge Odissi as a classical dance form of India.

Bureaucrat Mohanty used to wear many hats during her heydays. Her professional career began at the Indian Postal Service after completing her post-graduation in 1970. While she was deputed to Odisha at the invitation of then chief minister Janaki Ballabh Patnaik, she established the "Mecca of Odissi", the Odissi Research Centre, which is now renowned as Guru Kelucharan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre.

While helming the research centre, Mohanty's quest to archive the compositions of her guru's work made her collaborate with guru Kelucharan Mohapatra, Odissi exponent Sanjukta Panigrahi and several other music and Sanskrit scholars to prepare terminology for the basic stances, foot movements and mudras of Odissi and make visual recordings of each of them. As a compilation, Mohanty brought out a manual called *Odissi: The Odissi Dance Path Finder*. Through her initiative, performances of legendary gurus such as Pankaj Charan Das, Deba Prasad Das and Mohapatra were recorded and preserved at the research centre.

Mohanty has performed in all major dance festivals. She gave a new orientation to the style of Odissi and music. The mega dance festivals in Konark and Mukteswar have been initiated by her. Besides other prestigious awards, she has also received the Kalidas Samman from the Madhya Pradesh government. She is the writer of Odissi dance grammar – *Odissi Dance Path Finder* Volume one and two – which is one-of-a-kind in Indian

classical dance emphasising on the technique and its unique style. She has churned out outstanding students from her institution, Geeta Govinda in Bhubaneswar.

Odissi exponent Mahalik is the founder director of Geeta's Upasana, a dance academy in New Delhi, where she works tirelessly towards advancing the performing arts.

On the second day of the festival,

Shinjan Nrityalaya hosted a few personalities from the field of dance like photographer Avinash Pasricha, dance critic Manjari Sinha, scholar Arshiya Sethi and this writer. They provided a glimpse of their dance-related activities – something to treasure for amateurs.

The grand finale of the three-day festival welcomed four Odissi dancers who have all received the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award – Kiran Segal, Ranjana Gauhar, Madhavi Mudgal and Aloka Kanungo.



Aloka Kanungo



Kiran Segal



Sonal Mansingh



Madhavi Mudgal

Natak Akademi Award – Kiran Segal, Ranjana Gauhar, Madhavi Mudgal and Aloka Kanungo.

Sehgal spoke about how following dancer-choreographer Uday Shankar's style made her understand her body. She was first introduced to the style by her mother Zohra Segal, a direct disciple of the great legend. Choreography being her forte, she has done much work on manifesting the lyrics of Rabindranath Tagore's songs.

Mudgal with her refined sensibilities in dance and a firm grip on the technique and *abhinaya* of Odissi, considers the medium to be *prabham* or free-flowing.

Gauhar fell in love with Odissi the moment she witnessed it for the first time. Founder of the school Utsav Educational and Cultural Society, she practically eats, sleeps and breathes dance.

Besides Odissi, Kanungo has further explored Bandha Nritya, which is the acrobatic part of Odissi. She has also worked extensively with Sabda Nritya, performed in praise of deities, and Ravana Chhaya or shadow puppetry.

The writer is a senior dance critic

## SNIPPETS

### Honouring legends



Indian fans of Irrfan Khan and Rishi Kapoor are overwhelmed at the moving tribute paid by the 74th British Academy Film Awards to the late Hindi film actors in their "in memoriam" segment. Both actors died in 2020 after battling cancer.

Numerous fans from India took to social media to express gratitude towards Bafta for including the legends alongside other actors such as Sean Connery, Kirk Douglas, and *Black Panther* star Chadwick Boseman. Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh was also a part of the tribute.

The homage was in the form of a video dedicated to over 40 people from the entertainment industry across the globe, who lost their lives in the last 12 months. One fan wrote on Twitter, "Proud moment for India! Remembering Irrfan Khan just makes me miss him even more. What a legend. One of the best actors in my mind."

The Hindi film industry's oldest award ceremony, *Filmfare* also took to Twitter mentioning, "#Bafta pays tribute to Irrfan Khan and Rishi Kapoor."

Khan has featured in Hindi movies like *Paan Singh Tomar*, *The Lunch Box*, *Piku* and *Angrezi Medium*, while Kapoor has featured in films like *Bobby*, *Hum Kisi Se Kam Nahin*, *Kapoor & Sons* and *D Day*.

Khan also performed in international features like *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Life of Pi*, *The Namesake*, *Jurassic World*, *The Warrior* and *A Mighty Heart*.

Kapoor was to star in the Hindi remake of *The Intern* to play the part of Ben Whittaker, Robert De Niro's character.

—THE INDEPENDENT

### Adore your mother



Kangana Ranaut suggested that one should worship their mother and seek her blessings on the occasion of Navratri recently. The actress shared the thought while wishing fans on the occasion of Gudi Padwa and Navratri.

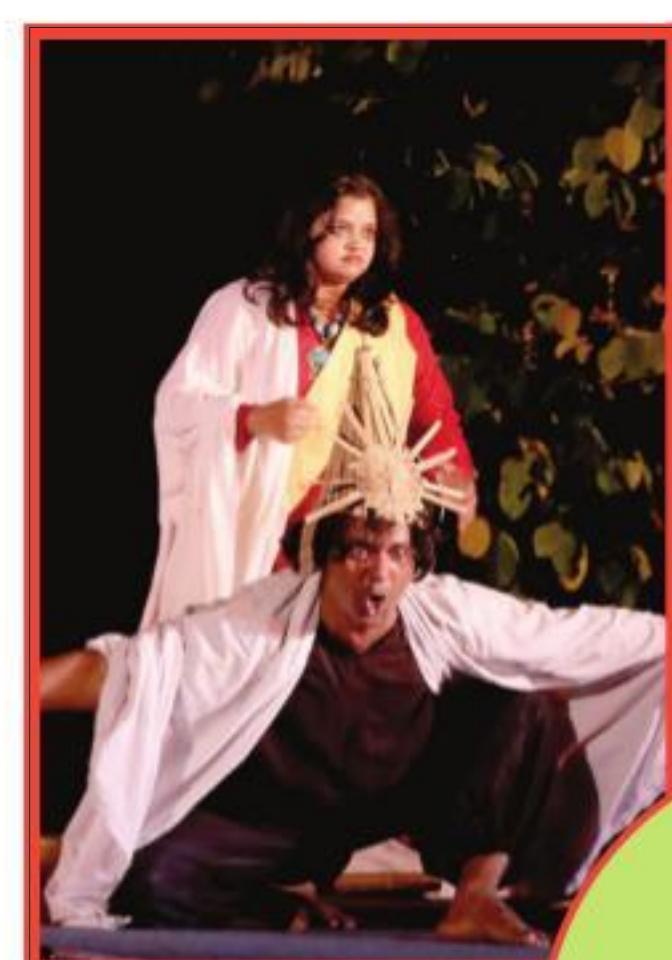
Ranaut shared a photograph of her praying to a goddess and wrote, "Wishing everyone happy #GudiPadwa #navratri #NewYear. This little *devi* picture that I am holding was given by my mother when I left home, lost a lot but this stayed with me, I believe she looked after me. Navratri if you don't know what to do, worship your mother and take her blessing."

On the work front, Ranaut is preparing for *Tejas*, directed by debutant Sarvesh Mewara. Meanwhile, the release of her upcoming film *Thalaivi* has been postponed amid the second wave of Covid-19 in India.

The film, which has the actress playing late Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa, was slated to release in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu languages on 23 April. A new release date is yet to be announced.

## THE BARD IN RURAL BENGAL

**Ebong Amra Production's interpretation of *Macbeth* was an uneven endeavour**



ANIT MUKERJEA

William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* has been taken out of the mothballs of a rich legacy to be rediscovered and reworked numerous times. Among the many interpretations of the play, both on stage and celluloid, director Akira Kurosawa's film *Throne of Blood* comes to mind first with its incorporation of Japanese folk traditions.

Recently, Ebong Amra Production under the stewardship of Kalol Bhattacharya staged *Macbeth* for a handful of Kolkata's theatre cognoscenti at the Alka Jalan Foundation. Ebong Amra Production is a repertory company based in Tepantar, a theatre village near Satkahonia in West Bengal's West Bardhaman district. Members of the group comprise youngsters from the tribal communities and economically disadvantaged sections of society who have cultivated a distinct sense of aesthetics using their ethnic forms and rit-

**Play:**  
William Shakespeare's  
*Macbeth*  
**Performed by:**  
Ebong Amra Production  
**Directed and adapted by:**  
Kalol Bhattacharya  
**Cast:**  
Sufi Morsadul Arifin, Tanushree Bhattacharya, Manik Bauri, Tapas Bauri, Bapi Bauri, Mithun Sarkar and Tapas Chatterjee  
**Staged on:**  
5 March 2021  
**Venue:**  
Alka Jalan Foundation, Kolkata  
**Performance time:**  
80 minutes

uals.  
Bhattacharya has been mobilising local youth with the objective of keeping them away from a life of crime and substance abuse.

The open-air theatre's pioneering exponent in Bengal was the late Badal Sircar and this time, *Macbeth* was set against the backdrop of Nature. Writer-filmmaker Sangeeta Datta curated the show in Kolkata, which began with a traditional Baul performance by Girish Mondal. It was a great prelude to the dramatic performance of *Macbeth*. Datta is a board member of the British Shakespeare Association and constantly on the lookout for innovative Shakespearean adaptations using local theatre techniques. She wanted to

showcase Ebong Amra Production's work to the Kolkata audience to let city slickers know about the theatre scene in rural Bengal.

Datta said, "I had attended the Shakespeare Mini Festival in Tepantar in December last year. It was a magical world spread over four acres of land. There is a black box in the centre for performances and a small outdoor stage also. There are five cottages and a dormitory for theatre companies. The company boys do the cooking, house-keeping, feed guests and run for their rehearsals in the afternoon. It is somewhat like a Gurukul structure in which classical musicians and dancers are groomed. In fact, it's the only theatre village and rural cultural centre in Bengal. For me, it was really theatre as social transformation."



Bhattacharya, who directed *Macbeth* in Bengali, is a post-graduate in mass communication. Establishing Ebong Amra in 1994, he selected actor-performers from a tribal settlement comprising underprivileged peasants and bricklayers. He was instrumental in assembling them into a community that earns its living from farming and poultry breeding while practicing theatre. Bhattacharya, a playwright, director and actor, has penned and directed 27 plays for the proscenium, open-air and experimental stage. He has worked with eminent theatre personalities like Ratan Thiyam, K N Panikkar, Chandradasan, Probir Guha, S Ramanujan, Harrold Fuhrman, Terry Converse and Pilar Echeverria, among others.

Bhattacharya worked for the Fly-

Theatre Company, Germany in November 2008. His most well-received plays till date have been *Oedipus* (2013), *Andhra Yug* (2015), *Khunir Maa* (2011), *Mahakabyer Pore* (2007), *Tale of Sunflower* (2004) and *Gadha* (2002). His other miscellaneous activities include conducting theatre workshops, managing national theatre festivals, seminars, training programmes, organising cultural *melas*, and staging plays for children.

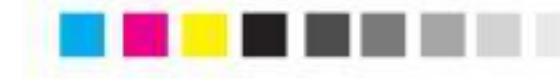
Bhattacharya's aim is to establish an ideal rural theatre centre and create a new language of theatre called "Tepantar". When queried on why he selected *Macbeth*, he said, "Primarily because it has political overtones that point to power and bloodshed. I have also used Baul songs to give it a typical rural essence."

It was truly a scintillating evening of folk music and theatre, building bridges between the rural and urban populace. The Alka Jalan lawns resonated with a sense of foreboding as the open-air environment attempted to represent the bleak Scottish landscape in which the play was set.

Though evocative, the acting occasionally lapsed into melodrama, especially during the sleepwalking scene of Lady Macbeth. The Baul songs by Mondal did not fit into the tone of the play. They are basically spiritual in temper and didn't feel appropriate with the gory content of the Shakespearean drama. The dance of the three witches whose faces were covered with matted jute coils enlivened proceedings with their evil prophecies. Bamboo poles with pointed metal ends were used as weapons for the killing of Banquo and Macduff's family members.

The Bard is still remembered for his immortal classics. If he were to witness this folksy re-interpretation of *Macbeth*, he would either have marvelled or been strangely curious at the way in which his original concept was moulded to suit the local ethnicity.

The writer is a freelance contributor



## RIOT ACT



Gareth Southgate (*in photo, left*) has warned his England squad to behave during Euro 2020 after several of his players were involved in disciplinary matters this season. He was frustrated to have to deal with the fall-out from Manchester United defender Harry Maguire's arrest following a street scuffle while on holiday in Greece.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS

**Vaccine snag:** A plan to give Covid-19 vaccines to professional footballers in Brazil hit a snag on Wednesday when the health authority said privately imported stuff must go directly to the public health system. Vaccines donated by Sinovac were yet to be okayed.

**Virus scare:** The secretary of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party, Mr Toshihiro Nikai, said on Thursday cancelling this year's Tokyo Olympics - rescheduled in 2020 because of the coronavirus - could be an option if the Covid-19 situation continued to worsen.

**Olympic uniforms:** Russians at this year's Tokyo Olympics will wear blue, red and white uniforms, but their country's tricolour flag will not appear because of doping sanctions. Zasport, the supplier of the Russian Olympic team, unveiled uniforms on Wednesday.

**Formula One:** Imola is the venue for the second instalment of this year's Formula One battle between title-holders Mercedes and contenders Red Bull, with a lack of overtaking opportunities at the Italian venue likely to be decisive on Sunday, say experts.

**Europa League:** Mikel Arteta has told Arsenal's under-performing stars to save the club's season in the Europa League quarter-final, second-leg clash against Slavia Prague on Thursday. They have no margin for error after being held 1-1 by Slavia in the first leg.

**Asian league:** FC Goa put on a defensive display to hold Al Rayyan to a 0-0 draw in their Asian Champions League match at Fataora Stadium, Margao, on Wednesday. At Bambolim, Sunil Chhetri's Bengaluru FC drubbed Nepal's Tribhuvan Army FC 5-0.

**Appeal rejected:** The Pakistan Cricket Board has rejected a request by Umar Akmal to pay a fine of Rs 4.25 million in instalments. The fine was imposed by the Court of Arbitration in Sports for the cricketers' involvement in spot-fixing in the Pakistan Super League.

**The Hundred:** The Hundred could replace the traditional use of "wickets" with "outs" when the new tournament launches this summer. The England and Wales Cricket Board has been considering ways to attract new supporters, even at the expense of some traditions.

**Women's Test:** England cricketer Sophia Dunkley hailed the "exciting" announcement that the women's team would begin the summer with their first Test against India in over seven years. The longest format has been on the periphery of the women's cricketing landscape.

**Asian Weightlifting Championship:** Former world champion Mirabai Chanu will look to put her best foot forward after spending more than a year without competition when she spearheads the Indian challenge at the Asian Weightlifting Championship starting in Tashkent on Friday.

**Sarita retains title:** Scripting a sensational comeback, an aggressive Sarita Mor reeled off nine straight points in the summit clash to retain her Asian Championship title in 59kg while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for bronze medals at the continental Championship in Almaty on Thursday.

**India v Latvia:** The Indian players have an onerous task at hand to compete against higher-ranked Latvians, including 2017 French Open champion Jelena Ostapenko, when they strive to clear the World Cup Play-offs hurdle at the Billie Jean King Cup in Jurmala (Latvia) from Friday. Ankita (ranked 174) and Karmen Kaur Thandi (ranked 621), who takes on host number one player Anastasiya Sevastova (ranked 47), both said they are ready for a good fight.

## RIOT ACT

Gareth Southgate (*in photo, left*) has warned his England squad to behave during Euro 2020 after several of his players were involved in disciplinary matters this season. He was frustrated to have to deal with the fall-out from Manchester United defender Harry Maguire's arrest following a street scuffle while on holiday in Greece.

For more updates [www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## Why CSK need inspiration

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 15 APRIL

**C**hennai Super Kings would look for inspiration from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni (*in photo*) and a much-improved bowling effort when they take on a power-packed Punjab Kings in the Indian Premier League here tomorrow. The two sides experienced contrasted fortune when getting going. While CSK lost by seven wickets against Delhi Capitals, PK eked out a four-run win over Rajasthan Royals in a high-scoring thriller. With the dew playing a crucial role at Wankhede stadium, the side winning the toss would want to bowl first.

In their first match here, CSK posted a competitive 188 for seven, riding on fine contributions from Suresh Raina (54), Moeen Ali (36), Sam Curran (34), Ravindra Jadeja (26) and Ambati Rayudu (23).

Despite the failure of the opening duo of Rituraj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis, and skipper Dhoni's fade-out, CSK managed to put up a decent total. But the Chennai outfit's bowling unit looked clueless against the DC opening pair of Shikhar Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw, who stitched up a 138-run stand to take the game away from CSK.

And come Friday, the onus would be on Dhoni to inspire his teammates to lift their per-



formance. But the CSK skipper himself needs to lead from the front. PK had a narrow escape against Rajasthan Royals despite posting 221 for six. Opening the batting, KL Rahul played a captain's knock of 91 off just 50 balls. He was ably supported by Chris Gayle (40 off 28) and

Deepak Hooda (64 off 28). But, as with CSK, PK's bowling unit is a major worry even after spending heavily at the auction. Young Arshdeep Singh (3/35) eventually emerged as Punjab's saviour. With their rivals needing 13 runs off the last over, the left-arm paceman gave away

just eight runs to pull off a fine win for his team. Mohammad Shami (2/33) too had a decent day but the performances of the Australian pace duo of Jhye Richardson (1/55) and Riley Meredith (1/49) would have left Punjab worried.

Match starts at 7.30 pm

## Warner flips his lid as SunRisers crash

AGENCIES

CHENNAI, 15 APRIL



## Wisden honour for Indian trio

LONDON, 15 APRIL



I think the wickets are going to get better. We need minimum damage in the first six overs and play simple cricket," added Warner.

According to him, the teams batting second should have won all the games in Chennai even though they struggled to chase modest targets. Royal Challengers Bangalore captain Virat Kohli was reprimanded for breaching the Indian Premier League's code of conduct, with an IPL statement saying: "He admitted the Level 1 offence, 2.2 of the IPL's code of conduct. For Level 1 breaches of the code of conduct, the match referee's decision is final and binding." Kohli was upset after being dismissed for 33 off 29 balls and took out his anger on a chair in the RCB dugout. Even the dropping of Sandeep Sharma from the SRH squad - he has dismissed the India skipper seven times in the IPL - did not help Kohli. Interestingly, he had also scored 33 off 29 balls against Mumbai Indians in the

Kapil Dev was chosen ODI Cricketer of the 1980s. Stokes was declared Leading Cricketer in the World for the second year in a row. Dom Sibley, Zak Crawley, West Indian Jason Holder, Mohammad Rizwan and Darren Stevens were named Wisden Cricketers of the Year. Australia's Beth Mooney was specified as the Leading Women's Cricketer in the World while West Indian all-rounder Kieron Pollard was named Leading T20 Cricketer in the World. PTI

tournament-opener on Friday. Kohli's dismissal started the RCB slide as they soon found themselves reeling at 110/6 after being 91/3 at the time of Kohli's departure. The eventually put up 149 for eight. No-ball row: RCB coach Trevor Bayliss has said the umpires got it right by calling Harshal Patel's waist-high full-toss no-ball in the final over before RCB clinched the game. SRH skip-

per David Warner was not happy with that call. "Warner was a little animated because we weren't playing very good cricket and we lost," Bayliss said, adding: "I think the umpires got it right. There was a bit of conjecture over obviously the second high no-ball, but the first one was not directed at the batter's body, so that wasn't a warning. I think the umpires got that one right."

Man City coach Pep Guardiola wants even more success after his team reached the last four of the Champions League for only the second time with a 2-1 win at Borussia Dortmund last night. The Spaniard, who has not won the trophy since his time at Barcelona 10 years ago, led City to quarter-final defeats in the last three seasons, and had said that another unsuccessful attempt to reach the last four would make him a "failure." Guardiola was also unable to win the top European club title in his three years at Bayern Munich from 2013 to 2016. "It feels incredible. This is the second time we have got to the semi-finals, so there is not much history for our club here," he said after reaching the last-four stage for the eighth time in his coaching career. "For the club it is so important, we cannot deny it," he said.

"Psychologically, for all of us to get past this moment (of the quarter-final stage) was necessary, of course. Now we want more. We know how tough (semi-final opponents) Paris St Germain are. They eliminated Bayern Munich. We will see what happens. But for the club and for the players a big moment." Guardiola's team had to come from a goal down with second-half goals from Riyad Mahrez and Phil Foden to earn a 4-2 aggregate win over Dortmund. It was the Germans who struck first through Jude Bellingham but City, who can win four titles this season, kept their cool to turn the game around. "We were brilliant except the first 15 minutes when they were

## The Statesman Sport

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

## Bitcoin transaction is new phenomenon, says ICC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 15 APRIL

So what is cryptocurrency? In layman's language, 'Cryptocurrency' is virtual money. It is the purchase of a digital asset based on an algorithm.

The bitcoins that are generated are regulated by any central banking authority in any country (like the Reserve Bank of India) and in many countries like India, it is still an illegal tender.

In simpler words, it is a "Blockchain Industry" where a financial transaction between two people sitting in two different parts of the world will not have any intermediaries. The valuation of one bitcoin is staggering. One bitcoin's INR value currently stands at Rs 46,83,000 or USD 62,453.

However, the bigger challenge is that coding of "cryptocurrency" is believed to be watertight. There are elaborately programmed vaults (digital) and the tracking can be infinitely more difficult when compared to paper tenders like INR, USD or GBP. Marshall said that ICC is up for the challenge in the coming days now that a new method of corruption has emerged. "Tracking bitcoin transactions may not be easy but we have the right people with the right expertise, understanding and network needed to ensure we stay ahead of the corruptors," Marshall said.

Even BCCI's new head of Anti Corruption Unit (ACU) Shabbir Hussain Shekhadam Khandwala said that he heard of payment through bitcoins for the first time.

## Mulani replaces Axar

Delhi Capitals on Thursday roped in young Mumbai left-arm spinner Shams Mulani as IPL's first short term COVID-19 replacement as he was brought in for Axar Patel, who is yet to recover from the dreaded virus and is still in a medical care facility. DC also has substituted injured captain Shreyas Iyer with Karnataka off-spinner Aniruddha Joshi.

However, the media release issued by the IPL doesn't have any details about paceman Anrich Nortje's RT-PCR result, which is believed to be positive.

"Delhi Capitals have brought in Shams Mulani as a short-term COVID-19 replacement for Axar Patel for their IPL-2021 campaign," the release stated.

"Axar had tested positive for SARS-CoV-2 virus during his mandatory quarantine ahead of the season and was subsequently taken to BCCI's medical facility for isolation and treatment," it further stated.

Axar tested positive for COVID-19 on April 3 and was transferred to BCCI's designated medical facility after it was learned that he showed mild symptoms. It's already 12 days since then and it is understood that the India international will not be available for match duty any time soon which led to Mulani being inducted. Mulani is a left-handed lower middle-order batsman and a slow left-arm orthodox bowler.

Match starts at 7.30 pm

## Unadkat's spell of 3/15 restricts DC to 147 for 8

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 15 APRIL



A brilliant three-wicket burst from pacer Jaydev Unadkat (*in photo*) helped Rajasthan Royals restrict Delhi Capitals to 147 for eight in their IPL match, here on Thursday.

Unadkat (3/15 off 4 overs) dismissed Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan and Ajinkya Rahane to trigger DC's top-order collapse from which they never recovered fully.

Captain Rishabh Pant's blistering 32-ball 51, studded with nine fours, was not enough as DC could only post a modest total after being put in to bat.

DC made a disastrous start as they were two wickets down for 16 runs in the fourth over with Unadkat dismissing the opening duo of Shaw (2) and Dhawan (9) cheaply.

Shaw was the first to go in the second over, caught at backward point before Dhawan perished while attempting a ramp shot with RR captain and wicketkeeper Sanju Samson taking a stunning diving catch to his right.

Ajinkya Rahane's (8) underwhelming IPL form continued as he offered an easy caught and bowled chance to Unadkat with a slow ball that clocked just 110km per hour.

DC were 36 for 3 at the end of power-play but the slump continued as Marcus Stoinis (0), foxed by a Mustafizur Rah-

man (2/29) delivery, checked his shot at the last minute to offer a running catch to Jos Buttler. The run re-started increasing once captain Pant came to the crease but still DC were 57 for 4 at the halfway mark.

Once he had a full measure of the pitch, Pant opened up and hit four boundaries, three of which were consecutive, to take 20 runs from the 11th

over bowled by Rahane. Pant, in excellent form this year, reached to his fifty off 30 balls in the 12th over, with a four off Mustafizur but he was run out the next over with bowler Riyam Parag's throw crashing onto the stumps. Delhi were 88 for 5 then. After Pant's exit, Tom Curran gave some respectability to the DC innings with a 16-ball 21.

## SCOREBOARD

Delhi Capitals Innings	
Prithvi Shaw c Miller b Unadkat 2	
Shikhar Dhawan c Samson b Unadkat 9	
Ajinkya Rahane c & b Unadkat 8	
Rishabh Pant run out 51	
Marcus Stoinis c Buttler b Rahane 0	
Laith Yadev c Tewatia b Morris 20	
Tom Curran b Rahane 21	
Chris Woakes not out 15	
Ravichandran Ashwin run out 7	
Extras: (WD-5) 5	
Total: (For 8 wickets in 20 overs) 147	
Fall of wickets: 1-5, 2-16, 3-36, 4-37, 5-88, 6-100, 7-128, 8-136	
Bowling: Chetan Sakaria 4-0-33-0, Jaydev Unadkat 4-0-15-3, Chris Morris 3-0-27-1, Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-29-2, Ryan Parag 2-0-16-0, Rahul Tewatia 3-0-27-0	

## Former Zimbabwe cricket captain Heath Streak banned

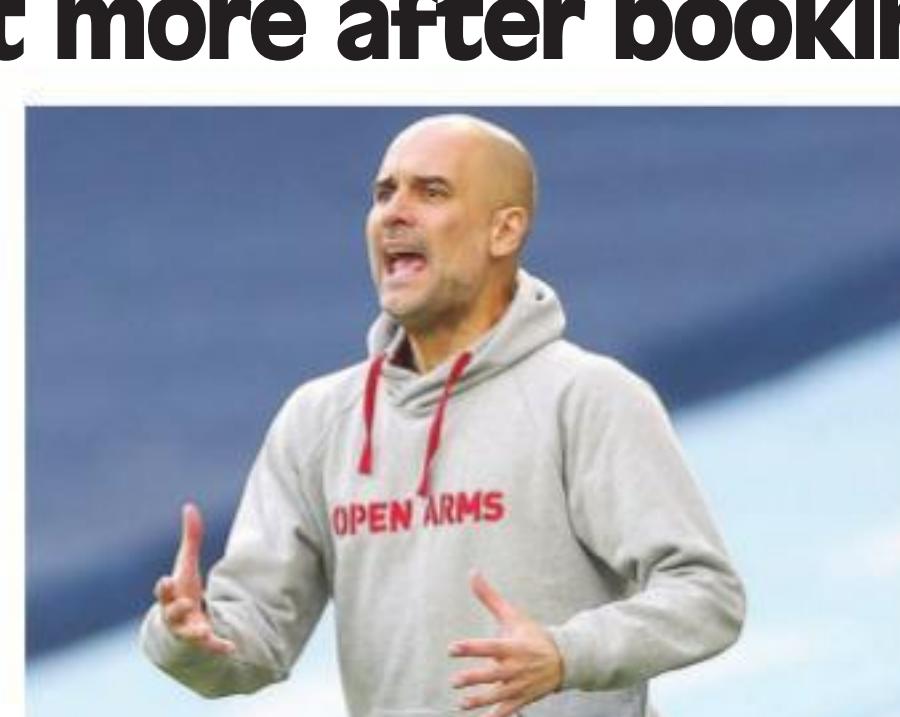
PARIS, 15 APRIL



## City want more after booking semi-final spot

AGENCIES

DORTMUND, 15 APRIL



Manchester City coach Pep Guardiola wants even more success after his team reached the last four of the Champions League for only the second time with a 2-1 win at Borussia Dortmund last night.

The Spaniard, who has not won the trophy since his time at Barcelona 10 years ago, led City to quarter-final defeats in the last three seasons, and had said that another unsuccessful attempt to reach the last four would make him a "failure." Guardiola was also unable to win the top European club title in his three years at Bayern Munich from 2013 to 2016.

"It feels incredible. This is the second time we have got to the semi-finals, so there is not much history for our club here," he said after reaching the last-four stage for the eighth time in his coaching career. "For the club it is so important, we cannot deny it," he said.

"Psychologically, for all of us to get past this moment (of the quarter-final stage) was necessary, of course. Now we want more. We know how tough (semi-final opponents) Paris St Germain are. They eliminated Bayern Munich. We will see what happens. But for the club and for the players a big moment." Guardiola's team had to come from a goal down with second-half goals from Riyad Mahrez and