



THE WOMAN
BIDEN FEARS
THE MOST

P7



DEATHS OF MIGRANTS
SHAMEFUL: POPE

P10



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

BORIS JOHNSON
UNDER GROWING
PRESSURE

P10



KKR HOPE
TO REVIVE
CAMPAIGN

P12

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 38 and 19 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 62% Min: 28%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 37.7°C (-1) Min: 18.0°C (-5)

SUN RISES

SUN SETS

05:44 hrs 18:53 hrs

MOON RISES

18:07 hrs

MOON SETS 05:52 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A street boy sitting idle during the lockdown at Yamuna Bridge (ITO), in the Capital on Sunday.

SUBRATA DUTTA

Baghdad hospital fire: Iraq's Interior Ministry said Sunday that 82 people died and 110 were injured in a catastrophic fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe coronavirus patients. Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the Saturday night fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital.

P10

SC judge dead: Supreme Court judge Justice Mohan M Shantanagoudar died at a private hospital in Gurgaon, sources said on Sunday. He was 62. The mortal remains of the judge will be taken to his Rajaji Nagar residence in Bengaluru, where last rites will be conducted. Justice Shantanagoudar was admitted to the Medanta Hospital due to a lung infection and was in the ICU.

Wargames: The Indian and French navies on Sunday kicked off a three-day mega wargame in the Arabian Sea in the backdrop of rising concern over China's growing maritime presence in the Indian Ocean region. The French Navy has deployed its nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Charles de Gaulle, and its entire carrier strike group in the exercise.

3.49 L new cases, 2,767 fatalities

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI/KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

Showing no sign of slowing down, India logged a record 3,49,691 new coronavirus infections in a day, taking its total tally of Covid-19 cases to 1,69,60,172, while active cases crossed the 26-lakh mark, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Sunday.

The death toll increased to 1,92,311 with a record 2,767 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 a.m. showed.

Active cases have increased to 26,82,751 comprising 15.82 percent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has further dropped to 83.05 per cent.

The number of people who have recuperated from the dis-

ease has reached 1,40,85,110, while the case fatality rate has further dropped to 1.13 per cent, the data stated.

In Bengal, while fresh Covid cases crossed the 15,000 mark, the situation in Kolkata has deteriorated further with over 3,000 people being detected positive in a single day.

Bengal recorded a steep 15,889 fresh Covid cases and 57 deaths today. Kolkata logged 3,779 cases and 18 deaths while North 24-Parganas recorded 3,140 fresh cases and 15 deaths in the last 24 hours. The total Covid case count is 74,950 and death toll is 10,941 in the state till now while there are 88,800 active cases. The occupancy rate in Covid beds rose to 48.54 per cent while the discharge rate dipped to 86.51 per cent.



2nd wave has shaken the country, admits PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The second wave of Covid-19 is testing people's patience and their capacity to endure pain, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, adding that this "toofan" (storm) has shaken the country after it was full of enthusiasm, full of self-confidence, but this storm has shaken the country," he said.

In his monthly *Mann Ki Baat* broadcast, Modi spoke to doctors, nurses and frontline workers, who shared their experience and views on the disease, and expressed confidence that people will soon come out from this crisis.

The over 30-minute broadcast was entirely focussed on the pandemic, which has been rampaging across the

country for weeks, with Modi asserting that defeating the disease is the biggest priority.

"Many of our near and dear ones have left us untimely. After successfully confronting the first wave of coronavirus, the country was full of enthusiasm, full of self-confidence, but this storm has shaken the country," he said.

He urged people to go for vaccination against the disease and cautioned them against rumours about it.

The Centre, he said, will continue to provide jabs free of cost to the eligible people (those over 45 years of age).

"We have to accord priority to the expert and scientific advice at this time to win this battle," he said.

Modi also appealed to states to extend the benefit of

the Centre's free vaccine campaign to the maximum number of people.

"The government of India is applying its entire might to give a fillip to endeavours of state governments. The state governments too are trying their best to fulfil their responsibilities," he said.

A doctor, whose conversation with the prime minister was played in the programme, noted that people are scared about the pandemic situation, while saying that there is absolutely no need for it as 80 to 90 per cent of the infected people do not show any of these symptoms.

It is imperative that treatment protocol is as per the doctor's advice, he said.

Echoing his view, Dr Naveed Nazeer Shah from

Srinagar urged people to follow Covid guidelines to avoid getting infected and to get inoculated.

The prime minister said while people are getting infected by the disease, they are also recovering from it in big numbers, and also spoke to Preeti Chaturvedi of Gurugram, who shared her experience of dealing with the disease. She has now recovered.

Modi also lauded the help offered by citizens during the pandemic.

"Urge all of you to get vaccinated and we also have to take full care. 'Dawai bhi, kadai bhi', get vaccinated and maintain all precautions. Never forget this mantra. We will soon prevail together over this calamity," the prime minister said.

Bhowanipore among key constituencies in penultimate phase of Bengal polls

TIRTHANKAR MITRA/
SOMA MOOKHERJEE
KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

Marked by Election Commission clampdowns on campaigning to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the seventh phase of the ongoing state Assembly elections will witness a back-to-the-wall electoral battle by Congress in parts of Maldah and Murshidabad, its one-time political bastions, tomorrow.

Many migrant workers from these districts who have returned home will exercise their franchise with their choice being swayed by their takes on NRC and CAA.

Political heavyweights including Trinamul Congress

chief Mamata Banerjee and her Cabinet colleague, Sovandeb Chattopadhyay will cast their votes at Bhowanipore Assembly segment during the day.

Another Trinamul Congress stalwart, Subrata Mukherjee will cast his vote at Ballygunge tomorrow.

After Nandigram, the electoral battle at Bhowanipore Assembly constituency will be the next litmus test of the Trinamul chief's popularity. Miss Banerjee vacated this seat in her home turf and moved to Nandigram to take on Suvendu Adhikari amidst Opposition allegations of retreating to a rural Bengal constituency sensing a groundswell of discontent.

The state panchayat and rural affairs minister Subrata Mukherjee, state power

**AT STAKE: 34
ASSEMBLY SEATS**

- 9 in Murshidabad**
- 9 in West Burdwan,**
- 6 in South Dinajpur,**
- 6 in Malda**
- 4 in Kolkata**

In this last but one phase, some heavyweight ministers are also contesting not only from South Kolkata but also from Asansol (North), and Jangipur in Murshidabad. The state panchayat and rural affairs minister Subrata Mukherjee, state power

minister Sovandeb Chattopadhyay and former Mayor and state urban development minister Firad Hakim are contesting from Ballygunge, Bhowanipore and Kolkata Port respectively.

Sovandeb Chattopadhyay is contesting from Bhowanipore. Former Member-Mayor-in-Council Debasish Kumar is contesting from Rash Behari.

The state labour and law minister Moloy Ghatak is also in the poll fray and contesting from Asansol (North). The minister of state for labour Jakir Hossain who survived a bomb blast at the Nimitra railway platform while coming to Kolkata is also contesting in this election from Jangipur.

Elections in two seats have been postponed. Due to sudden demise of the RSP candidate for Jangipur, Pradip Nandi due to the coronavirus and the death of a Congress candidate Rizzaqul Haque in Samsergunj the election was shifted to 16 May.

While, minister Moloy Ghatak is contesting from Sagarighati, and Idris Ali from Bhagwalgola and Soumik Hossain from Raninagar.

Shaoni Singh Roy and Akkurzaman who defected to Trinamul Congress are contesting from Murshidabad and Raghunathgunj respectively. In South Dinajpur, Shekhar Dasgupta, a lawyer is con-

testing from Balurghat seat and veteran RSP leader and former minister Biswanath Chowdhury who defected to BJP from Trinamul and CPI-M's youth leader Abhas Roy Chowdhury. The former Asansol Mayor and Pandavaswar MLA Nitendra Tewari who defected to BJP is contesting from Pandavaswar in BJP's ticket.

In Malda six Assembly segments are going to the polls in this phase where former minister Sabitri Mitra from Manikchak and veteran Congress leader, now Trinamul candidate, Samar Mukherjee from Ratua are contesting.

The Election Commission, meanwhile, rabbished charges levelled by the Trinamul Con-

gress chairperson and chief minister Mamata Banerjee of arresting Trinamul Congress workers on the basis of purported instructions being given by the EC observers and other EC officials as "baseless," "false" and "misleading". Issuing a press statement, the Election Commission today said that no workers of any political party other than the criminals are being taken into custody as part of the preventive arrests with an eye to conduct elections without fear and intimidation.

No such acts of arresting Trinamul Congress workers have come to the notice of the ECI so far, the Election Commission said in a statement.



The #TMchhi terror machinery who I have handled (well) since 2014 may not rejoice. Will be doing my duties from my room...

UNION MINISTER BABUL SUPRIYO

AFTER TESTING COVID POSITIVE FOR THE SECOND TIME

Amid Covid catastrophe, Delhi govt extends lockdown by another week

Exemption extended to services of courier, electricians, plumbers, water purifiers repair, and shop selling books & electric fans

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

With the national capital at its knees in the throes of a catastrophic coronavirus storm, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal today announced extension of the ongoing lockdown in Delhi for another week, saying the severity of the raging Covidwave is unabated and positivity rate has been as high as 36 per cent in the last few days.

"We will have to watch the situation for a few more days whether the cases decrease or increase," he said.

The Covid-induced lockdown imposed in Delhi on April 19 night will now continue till 5 am on May 3, Kejriwal said. Before this extension, it was scheduled to end at 5 am on April 26.

Announcing this at an online press conference, the CM said, "The city continues to face a very difficult situation—an emergency scenario. There is no noticeable fall in the single-day number of coronavirus positive cases. Only a marginal decline has been recorded. There is a 36-37 per cent positivity rate, never seen before. The lockdown is the last weapon

in the hands of the government to fight the coronavirus pandemic. The public opinion is also in favour of the lockdown, which is, therefore, being extended for another week."

Delhi had recorded on Thursday 36.24 per cent positivity rate, the highest since the Covid-19 pandemic began. While the positivity rate came down to 32.27 per cent yesterday, the number of coronavirus-caused deaths rose to a record high of 357.

The city saw the number of cases marginally falling from last week's 28,000-plus a day to over 24,000. The continuing crisis with an acute shortage of oxygen, beds and medicines brought the national capital's healthcare infrastructure to the brink of collapse.

Kejriwal claimed the Delhi government was working hard to improve the medical oxygen availability in the city's hospitals. The problem has been complicated because Delhi has to get its oxygen supplies in accordance with its quota from other states and they have been creating obstruction.

He informed that Delhi's quota has been further increased by 10 metric tonnes to 490MT. But the government has estimated that the city requires 700



MT of oxygen daily so that its hospitals have no oxygen-related problem. Despite this, the city got only 330-335MT of oxygen yesterday.

Kejriwal said he had written to the CMs of other states to help Delhi in the supply of oxygen, and if they had its excess availability, it should be provided to the national capital. "Our officers are busy contacting the suppliers and others to ensure smooth supply of oxygen to Delhi. They are working day and night for this purpose. Success has been achieved to some extent. We hope the situation will improve soon," the CM said.

He pointed out that oxygen management has also become essential to bring the situation under control.

To keep a watch on oxygen availability, the Delhi government has decided that the manufacturers, suppliers and hospitals will update supply and consumption data every two hours on a portal set up by it.

"This is to ensure that the Delhi government knows where shortage might be felt and is able to divert resources in that direction in time.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), in an order for extension of the lockdown, allowed services of courier outlets, electricians and plumbers, repair of water purifiers, and shops shelling books and electric fans.

The CM pointed out that the onslaught of the coronavirus has not subsided even as the government had imposed a week-long lockdown as a last weapon in its arsenal.

"The public opinion is for extension of lockdown. The positivity rate reached up to 36-37 per cent in past few days although it has slightly dipped now. It is around 29 per cent today," he said.

The DDMA's order stated that the Covid situation in Delhi has again been reviewed and it is observed that positive cases as well as positivity rate is still very high, adding that "...therefore,

in order to contain the spread of virus and to further break the transmission chain, curfew needs to be extended for a further period of one week in Delhi (except for essential activities and services), as an emergency measure."

In the order, Delhi chief secretary and DDMA executive committee chairman Vijay Dev directed extension of curfew (lockdown) on movement of individuals, except for essential activities and services, in Delhi till 5 am on May or further orders whichever is earlier. There will be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of all types of goods, cargo and empty trucks including those for cross border trade under treaties with neighbouring countries, added the order.

City sees 22,933 new cases & 350 deaths

Meanwhile, Delhi today recorded 22,933 fresh coronavirus cases and 350 Covid-related deaths, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin. The positivity rate stood at 30.21 per cent. The fresh cases were detected out of 75,912 tests, the health bulletin said.

The city's Covid caseload mounted to 10,27,715 while its toll rose to 14,248, the bulletin stated. The recovered coronavirus patients numbered 21,071 during the past 24 hours.

The total number of active cases in the city jumped to 94,592. Those getting treatment under home isolation numbered 52,296.

The total number of containment zones in Delhi climbed to 27,366 now.

The national capital had yesterday recorded 24,103 coronavirus infections and 357 fatalities – its highest-ever single-day Covid deaths tally. Its positivity rate had then stood at 32.27 per cent while active cases had numbered 93,080.

Delhi had on Friday logged 24,331 coronavirus cases and 348 deaths while its positivity rate was 32.43 per cent.

The city had on Thursday recorded 26,169 Covid cases and 306 deaths while the positivity rate was highest-ever 36.24 per cent. It had on Wednesday recorded 24,633 coronavirus cases and 249 deaths. Its positivity rate was then 31.28 per cent. The national capital had last Tuesday reported 28,395 coronavirus cases – its highest-ever single-day infections tally – and 277 deaths.

CM sends SOS to top industrialists for O2, cryogenic tankers for Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday appealed to leading industrialists of the country to help provide oxygen and cryogenic tankers to Delhi amid an acute shortage of the life-saving gas required to save serious COVID-19 patients.

In a letter to the industrialists, he said owing to an unprecedented rise in the number of COVID cases, the national capital was falling woefully short of required oxygen and asked them to treat his request as an SOS.

"Delhi does not produce any oxygen, and as you are aware, Delhi currently faces an acute shortage of oxygen. I would be grateful if you could provide Delhi government with oxygen along with cryogenic tankers," Kejriwal wrote in his letter

and also sought their help in the import of cryogenic tankers. In similar letters to chief ministers of other states, Kejriwal had on Saturday urged them to help Delhi with their spare oxygen and tankers.

On Sunday, Kejriwal had said that Centre and Delhi government teams were working in a coordinated manner to ensure steady supply of oxygen to hospitals in the city. The Centre has increased Delhi's daily quota of oxygen from 480 MT to 490 MT, although the city is still receiving around 330-350 MT of it everyday, he said.

The Railways is transporting four liquid oxygen tankers from Raigarh to the national capital and has asked Delhi government to arrange tankers for it.

"While we have received help from the central government in meeting our oxygen requirements, the ferocity of the second wave is rendering the supply inadequate," he stated.

The chief minister requested the industrialists to provide stocks of oxygen being used or manufactured by them

This would help the government to find out shortage beforehand and ensure supply on time, Kejriwal had said.

11K construction workers to get ₹5K aid: Delhi govt

SNS & PTI
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

About 11,000 more construction workers in Delhi registered with the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board will receive a one-time financial assistance of Rs 5,000 in the coming days, a statement from the office of deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said today.

The Delhi government has been providing financial assistance to registered workers who are facing livelihood crisis during the coronavirus-induced lockdown.

"A total of 2,10,684 construction workers are targeted to be provided the aid, out of which two lakh have already been disbursed

a sum of Rs 100 crore and 11,000 workers will be granted the aid in the coming days," the statement said.

During last year's Covid lockdown, the Arvind Kejriwal government disbursed Rs 5,000 each to as many as 55,000 construction workers.

In the second phase, the Delhi government will disburse Rs 46.1 crore to the

construction workers, it said.

The government has also set up as many as 150 food distribution centres in various schools and construction sites to help migrant workers, daily-wage labourers and construction workers during the lockdown.

The lockdown imposed on April 19 night will now continue till 5 AM on May

3. It was scheduled to end at 5 AM on April 26 before extension.

Thousands of migrant workers had gathered at railway stations and bus stands to catch a ride back home after CM Kejriwal had announced a week-long lockdown on April 19, notwithstanding the state government's assurance of taking care of them.

LNJP gets O2 refill, situation grim for other hospitals

PTI
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Amid an acute oxygen crisis in the national capital, Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital here received a supply of the life-saving gas in a cryogenic tanker around 10 am on Sunday, officials said.

It came as a huge relief for the hospital which was running on its backup stock of oxygen.

However, the situation is grim for hospitals like Pen-tamed in Model Town that had sent an SOS on Twitter around 11.30 am saying oxygen stock was left for 30 minutes only.

The hospital officials claimed they didn't get any refill even after sending an SOS on oxygen shortage last night also. There are around 50 patients in the hospital and most of them are on oxygen support.

LNJP Hospital's Medical Director Dr Suresh Kumar said, "We had exhausted our oxygen stock and were using the backup which would have lasted for two hours only."

Verma blamed the "incompetence and negligent attitude" of the AAP government as the sole reason for the ongoing crisis in Delhi.

"If the entire Delhi is facing a crisis, it's solely because of incompetence and negligent attitude of the Kejriwal government. The central government had alerted all states about the emerging scenario but this was overlooked by the Kejriwal government with people now having to pay a heavy price for that," he added.

Delhi recorded the highest single-day rise in its COVID-19 deaths with 357 more people succumbing to the viral disease on Saturday as well as over 24,000 fresh cases.



Chaddha had also helped Sir Ganga Ram Hospital get one metric tonne of oxygen around 12.20 am. The hospital has also received five metric tonnes of oxygen in the early hours of Sunday.

The Delhi High Court on Saturday asked the Centre and the Delhi government to coordinate on the issue of making medical oxygen available to hospitals treating COVID-19 patients, observing that citizens cannot be left to die.

The court also made it clear that the efforts which Delhi government has to make in this regard cannot be trivialised and they should not leave it entirely to the central government.

While some hospitals have managed to make short-term arrangements, there is no immediate end to the crisis in sight.

Metro Hospital, in Gurugram's Palam Vihar, which

claims to be in its "last leg of medical oxygen", had made an urgent appeal for help to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and other ministers.

"INOX commitment to replenish liquid medical oxygen remain unfulfilled. Only 1.5 hours to go. Please help us urgently," the hospital tweeted around 10.41 am tagging the Prime Minister Office, PM Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, Haryana chief minister Mahender Singh, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal, Haryana Health Minister Anil Vaid among others.

Delhi recorded the highest single-day rise in its COVID-19 deaths with 357 more people succumbing to the viral disease on Saturday as well as over 24,000 fresh cases.

Gambhir says his foundation would distribute Fabiflu, oxygen cylinders across Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

BJP MP and former cricketer Gautam Gambhir on Sunday said that his foundation had got a donation of Rs 1 crore from Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar, according to the statement.

Delhi on Saturday recorded the highest daily rise in its COVID-19 death toll with 357 more people succumbing to the viral disease. It also recorded over 24,000 fresh cases.

The national capital has reported nearly 2,500 deaths due to the deadly virus in the last 12 days. Gambhir also accused Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of spending "Rs 600 crore on advertisements in the last six months but not enough on health infrastructure in the last six years".

"He is probably the only chief minister in the country who is obsessed with himself. What has he done for the health infrastructure in Delhi? He has been here for the last six years. It is an absolute shame that we have a CM who lies about everything," he alleged.

Classified

CHANGE OF NAME

I, RANJIT R. Naskar, S/o Late Rukumari Naskar, residing at 28, Mahendra Roy Lane, P.S.: Topsia, Kolkata-46 have changed my name from Sri Ranjit Rukumari Naskar / Ranjita Naskar vide affidavit of First Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore on 12.2020 & shall be known as same official identical person.

I, SRI DILIP AMBIA, D/o. Sri Hakka Lane, Kolkata-700017, Police Station: South 24 Parganas, do hereby declare that I, SRI DILIP AMBIA, son of Smt. Banashree Naskar / Banashree Marina Majumder Naskar to Smt. Banashree Ranjita Naskar vide affidavit at First Class Judicial Magistrate at Alipore on 12.2020 and shall be known as same official identical person.

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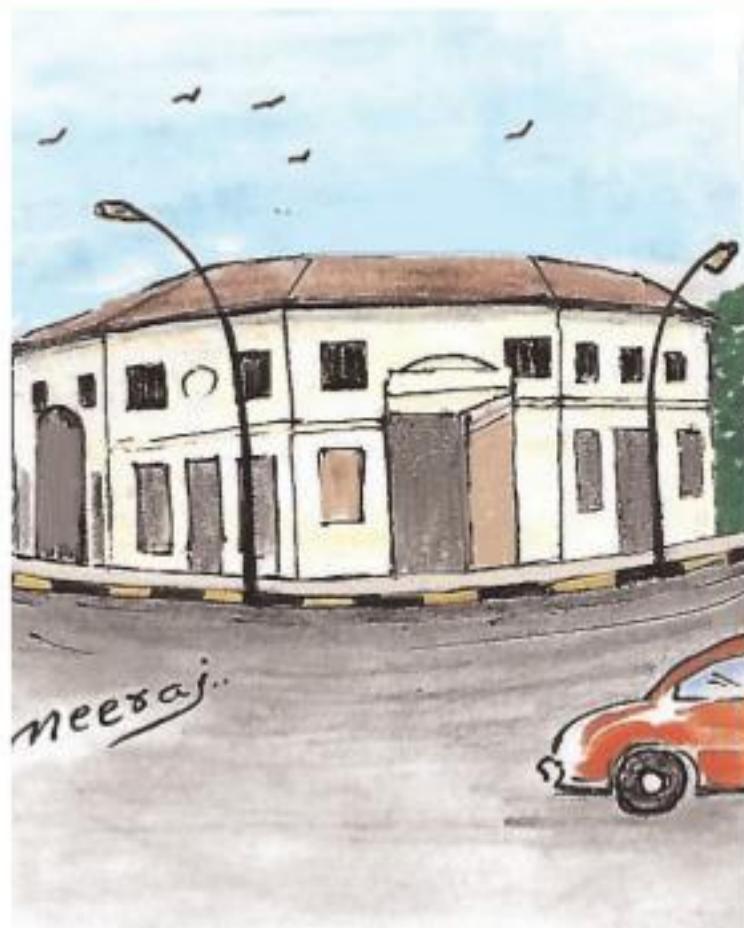
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I, SRI ANIL AMBIA, son of Smt. Banashree



The octagonal Gole Market building, designed by Sir Edwin Lutyens and built in the year 1921, was originally named Market Place and stood on the traffic roundabout which connected it to Gol Dak Khana, Connaught Place, Panchkuiyan Road and Mandir Marg (formerly Reading Road). It was one of New Delhi's oldest surviving colonial markets, till even less than a decade back, and was built as a daily shopping centre to cater to the government servants who worked in the Central Secretariat. These employees, originally uprooted from the Bengal and Madras Presidencies, were relocated from the Civil Lines area at least a decade before the formal inauguration of the Capital in New Delhi in 1931 and were accommodated in the three-roomed tenements comprising various "Squares" in the vicinity of Gole Market, which was also called the Delhi Improvement Zone (DIZarea). These "Squares" were, understandably, named after Dallhouse, Outram, Taylor, Albert, Diaz, Pershing, Foch, French, Baird, Nicholson, Lake, Haig, Havelock, et al. Hence the Gole Market area not only comprised the market but also the locality around it, which included renowned schools like St. Columba's, Convent of Jesus & Mary, Raisina Bengali and Harcourt Butler, places of worship like the Sacred Heart Cathedral, Kali Bari, Lakshmi Narayan Temple, Ramakrishna Mission, Gurudwara Bangla Sahib and the Kalai Bagh Masjid, hospitals like Willingdon (later renamed Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital) and Lady Hardinge Medical College and, of course, the upmarket shopping area Connaught Place. Gole Market and its immediate

vicinity on its fringes housed shops, big and small, selling fish, meat, vegetables, Bengali sweets, provision, books and periodicals, general merchandise, stationery, garments, tailoring, betel (paan), medicine and much else. The renowned artist BC Sanyal even opened his studio here just after Partition. A sizable number of these shops were owned by Bengalees as their native brethren formed a big chunk of buyers in those days. Most of these shops which were on its fringes have now changed hands except, perhaps, Basu Boarding House which still offers cheap accommodation and meals. Gole Market boasted of the best quality fish available in New Delhi in those days and one could even spot eminent Bengalees like Admiral A K Chatterjee, Chief of the Naval Staff, Air Marshal Subroto Mukherjee, Chief of the Air Force, Nandita Kripalani, grand-daughter of Poet Rabindranath Tagore (wife of Krishna Kripalani, Head of Sahitya Akademi), Chief Justice of India S R Das or B N Banerjee, Secretary General of Rajya Sabha rushing to the fish shops in the morning to get the first catch! Sadly, Gole Market's fortunes dwindled over the years, mainly due to all round neglect, and the structure was declared dangerous in 2012 by which time it was reduced to a sad spectacle of a few dengy shops. Eviction notices were duly served and the civic authorities decided to convert Gole Market into a Heritage Museum after due renovation. Last heard, the matter is now embroiled in court cases, even as the dilapidated structure stands as a mute witness to its century-old glorious history.

LOCKDOWN STRESS-BUSTER

The national capital wore a deserted look again last week as the authorities imposed a strict curfew or lockdown in the wake of surging Corona cases in the city. People were again sitting at home with their families, watching television, reading books

and magazines or trying their hands at cooking. The curfew reminded them of what they had gone through around the same time last year when a lockdown was in force in the city. But the IPL Tournament has come as a big relief for not only cricket buffs but also for those who have never taken much interest in this game. The excitement for cricket

is so much that people wait for hours in anticipation for the matches to begin. "When you have nothing else to do, just watch cricket and the excitement associated with it. Every game is acting as a stress-buster in these difficult times," a neighbour said and sought to encourage others also to watch cricket or any other sport which they like.

According to this neighbour, one should avoid watching news over 24x7 television channels constantly these days since they are only showing people dying due to Corona, queuing outside hospitals or not getting treatment for the infection. The authorities at all levels seem to have miserably failed in meeting the expectations of the peo-

ple while dealing with the crisis. People have been left to fend for themselves.

TAILPIECE

Upar wale ka shukra manana hai, paushitik bhojan khana hai, mask awashya lagana hai aur Corona ko bhagana hai (We have to thank God, eat healthy food, wear the mask

and defeat Corona)," a temple priest was heard advising devotees at a temple after reading holy scriptures during the "Navratri" festival.

Contributed by: Deepak Razdan, Bhaskar Roy and Ashok Tuteja

System collapse amid Covid inferno



April-May were college admission months in Delhi. Unfortunately, they have become months to run to hospitals because of Covid-19. People are rushing to hospitals for admissions, for themselves or their close ones. Lok Nayak, RML, Hindu Rao, Safdarjung, Ganga Ram or AIIMS — the list is long. The rush is everywhere, whether they are run by municipal corporations, private sector or the central government. Schools and colleges, like many other institutions, are approachable online. The hospitals have to be searched on the ground. The second wave of the pandemic has made the national capital, like the rest of the country, go round in circles. In spite of the flood of information on the web, or that circulated by the government on different media, people are running from one hospital to another for admissions. There is no clarity. The information in circulation is not trustworthy, many have found. They want to personally check the facts. This is a question of life and death. Whether one has means or not, people are running from place to place. There are hospitals on the periphery of the capital. And many across, in the adjoining towns of Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Noida and Faridabad. All hospitals are being approached. A place may not have a vacant bed. Another may not have a ventilator bed. Still another may not have oxygen. At many places, the staff have been telling visitors that until the beds are vacated for whatever reasons, the new patients have to wait in their ambulances. There are reports of patients breathing their last in the ambulances. This was never expected in Delhi. The city has not seen a plague in living memory. The wars had created an atmosphere for Remdesivir. The Covid-19 is an unprecedented challenge. It has shaken the city's

faith in its institutions. If the disease was big, there were big institutions, top medical experts, all over the capital and around. People met the high financial costs, but still lives could not be saved. The migrant workers left the city as they knew the city could not sustain them. They had another place called home, to go. The mighty seat of power could not convince them of safe shelter or life support. In this hour of fear and helplessness, they were not alone. Even those who called this city their home from ancestry, enjoyed no better sense of security. The current crisis is like the spectre of death passing over the city, they know. There is little that human intervention can do in the circumstance, is the feeling. People have seen their relatives die in their presence. In some cases, they did not have even this privilege; waiting outside hospitals for days, they were told their loved ones had

died battling the disease. The world thought the solution to all its problems lay in the cyber-space, and devoted all its energy expanding its horizons. A virus and its mutants have brought home a fact-check moment for most. There were a few challenges still lurking in the physical environment. They too wanted to be counted. The hospital system in Delhi is not just inadequate but sick too, people in Delhi said. Ad hoc conversion of banquest

halls or convention centres into treatment facilities cannot meet the challenge, which can grow in the subsequent phases of Covid-19. Unscrupulous elements can be prevented from making profits from the scarcity of medicines and essential supplies, only if the medical infrastructure is enlarged several times. When the city is looked upon as a medical destination by people from all over the country, it needs to grow up accordingly.

India

HP imposes curfew in 4 districts till 10 May

The Jai Ram govt took this decision after the state logged highest single-day surge in Covid cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 25 APRIL

After recording the highest single day spike in Covid cases in the last 24 hours, Himachal Pradesh on Sunday decided to impose Corona curfew in four districts from 27 April to 10 May.

A state government official said the decision was taken at a high-level meeting held here today under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur.

"Keeping in view the sharp surge in number of Covid cases in Himachal, the state government has decided to impose Corona curfew in the four districts of Kangra, Una, Solan and Sirmour from 10 pm to 5 am from the midnight of 27 April," he said, adding the Corona curfew will continue till 10 May.

The official stated that it was also decided to make RTPCR tests within 72 hours mandatory for all the visitors visiting the state.

In case, the persons visiting the state had not undergone RTPCR test, they will have to remain in home quarantine/isolation at the place of



their residence for fourteen days. They would also have the option of getting themselves tested after seven days of their arrival and in case the test comes negative, they do not require to remain in quarantine, he said.

He further stated that the state government has also

decided that local bodies, both in urban and rural areas would be closely involved in effective enforcement of all the SOPs and guidelines in their respective areas.

Besides, the local bodies had been empowered to initiate legal action against the violators so as to check the spread of Covid pandemic. "It was also decided in the meeting that a Special Task Force would be constituted at the local level for effective enforcement of SOPs during all the religious, social, political and cultural gatherings. They would be empowered to initiate strict action against

'HP ensuring social security for weaker, backward sections'

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 25 APRIL

The Himachal Pradesh government is giving top priority to ensuring social security to the persons belonging to weaker and backward sections of the society and several steps have been taken for their economic and social upliftment.

A Himachal government official said the state government had reduced the age limit of eligibility for social security pension from 80 years to 70 years without any income limit to bring maximum people of the state under social security.

"With this decision of the state government, in the last three years 1,63,607 people of the state have got direct benefit in the form of social security pension, which is one of the major achievements of the present state government."

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, the state government has been continuously striving for the upliftment of the weaker and backward sections during its three-year tenure," he added. He said the government had enhanced the social security pension from time to time and had also provided social security to the weaker and

backward classes by approving new cases for three consecutive years.

The state government is currently providing social security pension to 5,77,604 eligible persons in the state.

He further stated that the government had enhanced social security pension being provided to widows and specially-abled people from Rs 850 to Rs 1,000 per month with effect from 1 April, 2020.

The state government was providing a social security pension of Rs 1500 per month to eligible pensioners in the age group of 80 years and above and with more than 70 per cent disabilities with total spending of Rs 862 crore on social security pension.

The state government has announced a budget provision of social security pension to additional 40 thousand beneficiaries from 1 April for the year 2021-22 on which Rs 60 crore would be spent.

With a view to provide social security pension to senior women, the government has started Swaran Jayanti Nari Sambal Yojana and under it, all women in 65 to 69 years of age will get Rs 1,000 pension, benefiting around 60,000 women," he added.

Shoolini varsity to implement NEP from Aug

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 25 APRIL

Solan-based Shoolini University is all set to fully implement the recommendations of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 from the coming academic session beginning from August this year.

The university, which would be among the few in the country to implement the policy from the ensuing session, has drawn up a detailed plan which includes introduction of four year undergraduate programmes in various disciplines.

Students would have the option to exit and re-enter at different stages, as provided in the policy, Shoolini University vice chancellor Atul Khosla said on Sunday.

"The newly developed programmes are in line with the policy document released last year and mandated by HP Governor Bandaru Dattatreya.

Shoolini University has modified some of the existing programmes and has added several new skill-based programmes to successfully implement the policy," he added.



Milkmen ensure the supply of milk during corona curfew, in Jammu on Sunday.

■ AGENCIES

Gaganyaan mission: The ISRO will launch a data relay satellite that will help maintain contact with the Gaganyaan mission throughout after the launch, sources said. The satellite will be launched before the final leg of the Gaganyaan mission, which will send astronauts to the Lower Earth Orbit (LEO). PTI

Avalanche toll 11: The death toll in an avalanche at Sumna near the Indo-China border in Chamoli district rose to 11 on Sunday with the recovery of one more body, officials said. So far, 384 BRO workers caught in the Friday avalanche, have returned to safety. PTI

Bangladesh closes border: Bangladesh on Sunday closed its border with India for two weeks in view of the sharp increase in the Covid cases in the neighbouring country. "We are closing border for the passengers for the time being," foreign minister AK Abdul Momen told. The land routes for people's movement would be closed for two weeks but the goods-laden vehicles would be allowed. PTI

Rahul: Deaths being under-reported

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday alleged that the truth about the pandemic is shrouded and deaths are being under-reported.

"Shroud the truth. Deny oxygen shortage. Under-report deaths. Government of India is doing everything.....to save his fake image," he said on Twitter.

He shared the front page of The New York Times showing a picture of cremations being conducted and headlined, "As Covid ravages India, true toll is under-counted".

Rahul Gandhi earlier alleged that the "system has failed" and it is the duty of the party to provide help to fellow citizens suffering due to the sudden spurt in Covid-19 cases in the country.

His comments came on a day Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Mann ki Baat' radio programme said the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the country and assured the people that the Centre was working with all its power to help the states.

"System failed, so it's important to do Jan ki baat," Gandhi said on Twitter.

"In this crisis, the country needs responsible citizens. I request my Congress colleagues to leave all political work - just provide all help and ease the pain of our countrymen," he added.

'Covid recurrence in March could be due to lack of anti-bodies in seropositive people'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The recurrence of coronavirus outbreak in March could have been due to lack of "meaningful antibodies" in seropositive people after a peak in September last year, suggests a survey by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The CSIR conducted a sero-survey on 10,427 people comprising the staff members of its 40 laboratories, including contractual employees, and their family members from 17 states and two union territories.

In 10,427 people, the average sero positivity was 10.14 per cent.

The survey suggested that

Covid & crematorium: Slum dwellers grapple with smoke, fear of disease

They wake up to the smell of burning bodies and sleep to it at night and have lost peace of mind

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The smoke hangs in an ash grey cloud over their homes and the acrid smell from more than 200 cremations a day doesn't leave, they say, permeating as it were their very pores. For the residents of Shaheed Bhagat Singh Camp, living next to a crematorium is as much a struggle as keeping Covid-19 at bay.

Being in such close proximity to a crematorium is never easy, say the residents of the slum colony in west Delhi. But when the number of bodies being burnt goes up from about three to four a day to about 200-250, it's about visitations of death and also the fear of the contagion looming large over every aspect of their lives. They wake up to the smell of burning bodies and sleep to it at night, said Saroj, one of the 1,500 odd people living in the 900 shanties in the slum colony located just a few metres away from the Paschim Puri crematorium.

"It is a very scary situation. We keep seeing ambulances pass by and constantly there is smell and smoke, whether it is day or night, the 38-year-old ragpicker told.

The fear of contracting Covid-19 is constant and the glowing fires from the crematorium that now operates 24X7 allows neither peace of mind nor sleep, she said.

On the night of 14 April, a fire broke out in the slum cluster and Saroj and scores of her neighbours are still recovering from that. There were no casualties but 30 shanties were burnt.

Though there are no official figures, Saroj's neighbour, 35-year-old Kakoli Devi, said



Smoke due to cremation of Covid-19 victims in Ranchi.

about 300 bodies were cremated on Thursday. In the last two days, about 200-250 bodies were cremated. "We have arranged for a truck and we will leave this place for our village in Maharaiganj (in Uttar Pradesh). At least we will be spared this constant looming feeling of death," Kakoli said.

"Everyone is holed up inside the house. We don't even switch the fans on because we fear we will get corona through the air. The atmosphere has been particularly traumatic for children," said the mother of three.

Many others, mostly from Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, are also planning to leave for their villages. Many residents said it was not so bad earlier because the cremations took place at the far end of the crematorium. Now with the numbers going up, Delhi on Saturday recorded 357 deaths, its highest yet, and over 24,000 fresh cases the entire area is being used. When the residents protested, officials, they said, told them they have government orders to do so.

With the cases rising, she has lost her job as a ragpicker. "Some days we just drink water, some days we get food through NGOs. The situation is terrible." The stigma of living adjacent to a crematorium has also led to some people losing their jobs as domestic workers in the upscale Paschim Vihar colony nearby.

Tears, prayers, police, JCB: How Saroj Hospital saved lives

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

On a gloomy Saturday afternoon, the distraught staff at the Saroj Super Speciality Hospital in Delhi broke down and started praying anxiously as lives of more than 100 patients hung by a thread amid rapidly depleting oxygen supply.

An oxygen tanker had reached the hospital after the staff spent hours running around in search of supplies. But the tanker could not enter the area where the hospital's oxygen tank is. The problem: its larger-than-normal size. The solution: an excavator, which broke down a portion of a ramp. The dramatic scenes began to unfold as the hospital ran out of oxygen.

"We really didn't know what to do," Pankaj Chawla, the owner of the hospital, said. "This was the time we started discharging patients. We told families that we don't have oxygen and they can take their patients to some other healthcare facilities," Chawla said.

"Most of the patients said, 'we will stay... it's the same situation everywhere,'" Chawla said.

The hospital went to the high court to get an order for urgent relief, but help still did not come immediately. By the time the order comes and gets implemented, things were changing.

A 16-year-old girl, who worked as a part-time domestic help, said her employers

asked her not to come to work because her house is close to a shamshain ghat'.

ing every minute.

The facility borrowed oxygen cylinders from various healthcare facilities. Later, the government allotted a tanker to it on a sharing basis. "The tanker came to the hospital, but it was so big that it couldn't get into the area where our LMO (liquid medical oxygen) tanks," Chawla said. "We started breaking down a wall and a ramp with electric jackhammers and whatever we had, but it was taking time and the tanker had to go to the Tirath Ram Shah Hospital."

Officials told that the tanker would come back after an hour.

"That's the time everybody thought nothing can save us. All of us, my doctors, my staff started crying. We were running out of luck, too," Chawla recalled.

The hospital staff and some police personnel frantically rushed to get some cylinders filled. Twenty cylinders were brought to the hospital in a Delhi Transport Corporation bus. Those cylinders lasted 40 minutes and saved the day, he said.

"In the meanwhile, we called the Mayor, fire department... brought in a JCB (excavator), which broke a portion of the wall and the ramp," Chawla said.

The police brought the tanker back after delivering oxygen at the Tirath Ram Shah Hospital.

Gujarat Dy CM draws flak for hospitalisation with mild Covid symptoms

AHMEDABAD, 25 APRIL

Gujarat deputy chief minister Nitin Patel, who was admitted with Covid-19 symptoms to a government-run hospital on Friday, has created a social media storm with his Twitter remark.

Soon after getting admitted to the UN Mehta Hospital, Nitin Patel, who is also the health minister, tweeted that he had shown mild symptoms and got admitted as his RT-PCR reports were positive.

The social media soon questioned why the deputy CM was allotted a bed at the hospital with only mild symptoms while much more serious patients are made to wait outside the hospital for hours.

Such unsavoury controversy has hit the state when the daily Covid-19 cases have crossed the 14,000 mark with 1.08 lakh active cases.

Amidst long queues of ambulances outside hospitals and dead bodies waiting for cremations, several reports about black marketing of crucial drugs, injections and oxygen cylinders are pouring in from different corners of the state.

One doctor and three others have been arrested in Surat for black-marketing of Remdesivir injections to needy patients.

SNS

Kerala records highest single-day spike: Kerala on Sunday recorded the highest single-day spike with 28,469 new Covid-19 cases, pushing the caseload to 14,05,655. The week-end curbs imposed by the state government after unprecedented surge in cases continued on Sunday. The restrictions, similar to lockdown which came into force on Saturday, allowed only essential services and emergency activities. In this connection, the state police kept a strict vigil on social media platforms to track spreading of false news on Covid.

SNS

Differential Vaccine pricing is an open loot, says Chh'garh CM: Terming the diverse pricing of the Covid-19 vaccine as an open loot by the center, Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel has said that the Central government is the system of those who loot their own people by turning disaster into an opportunity. Addressing PM Narendra Modi through a letter, the CM said that the country's second vaccine producer Bharat Biotech has fixed different vaccine prices for the state governments and the open market. Accordingly, it will be sold at ₹600 to state governments and ₹1200 to private hospitals. "If you get a COVAXIN in a private hospital you will have to spend ₹1,200, while the same vaccine is being provided to the Central government for just ₹150. It is the public who has to face the disaster and the financial burden to ward it off as well," said Baghel.

SNS

Eco-friendly face masks: With discarded face masks becoming a major pollutant in the times of Covid-19, an NGO here has come out with the idea of biodegradable masks laced with seeds of plants and fruits, which can grow into plants when thrown out. Paper Seed Co., the NGO based at Pakshikere near Mangaluru, has started making such masks embedded with seeds of plants, which will sprout once discarded.

PTI

Free vaccination for all in Maha: Maharashtra government will float global tenders for providing affordable and quality anti-Covid-19 vaccines for free to adult citizens below 45 years, NCP leader minister Nawab Malik said. "It is clear that the Centre will not provide vaccination for the people below the age of 45 years, which will be done by states," he said.

PTI

TN CM urges PM to halt diversion of oxygen to AP, Telangana: Eighty metric tonnes of liquid oxygen has been diverted to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and this should be halted in view of increase in oxygen demand, Tamil Nadu chief minister K Palaniswami on Sunday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Oxygen allotment for Tamil Nadu under the national plan is 'inadequate' and 'wrong' and the diversion of oxygen could lead to a 'major crisis,' he said.

PTI

Total weekend lockdown in Puducherry: All shops and business establishments remained shut at important shopping centres in Puducherry on Sunday after a 55-hour long weekend lockdown was imposed to check the spread of coronavirus. All major thoroughfares wore a deserted look as people stayed indoors. However, functioning of essential services was permitted till 2 p.m. to facilitate the availability of vegetables, groceries and other requirements. There was very poor turn out of passengers in intra state buses.

PTI

SCBA urges CJI to advance summer vacations: The Supreme Court Bar Association on Sunday requested Chief Justice N V Ramana to advance the summer vacations in the wake of the rampaging second wave of pandemic. In a letter, SCBA president and senior advocate Vikas Singh also suggested that additional building on the court premises can be put to use for augmenting Delhi's already healthcare facilities. The bar urged the CJI to urgently approve temporary conversion of the Advocates' Chamber Block in the Additional Supreme Court Complex for use as a Covid-care centre or field hospital.

PTI

Irani: TMC goons to go to jail after 2 May

KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

Union cabinet minister and senior BJP leader Smriti Irani today said that Trinamul Congress-backed hooligans beat innocent voters and involved in clashes with BJP workers will be sent to jail after 2 May.

Addressing a rally at Maniktala she said that there is no place of the hooliganism in the democracy. "I want to warn the hooligans, those creating trouble, disturbing peaceful polling and engaged in post poll violence be prepared to go jail after 2 May. You have no place in democracy," she said. Smriti said that TMC is scared of common people as its government acted misdeed against public, so they are attacking them and terrorising the mass in a bid not to allow them to exercise their franchise since the beginning of the poll. She added that under leadership of chief minister Mamata Banerjee TMC goons thrashed octogenarian mother now urging people to vote for Mamata as she is the only daughter of Bengal. "So here I am to ask, which daughter, Didi? The one who beats up an 80-year-old woman? The one who kills BJP people and hangs them from trees? That daughter? The one who doesn't allow Durga Visarjan? Doesn't allow Saraswati Puja and comes to Nandigram and does Chandi Path," she said.

"We express our support to the people of India in the wake of the current wave of #COVID-19 infections that has hit our region hard. On behalf of the people of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt sympathies to the affected families beyond political consideration.

"We express our support to the people of India in the wake of the current wave of #COVID-19 infections that has hit our region hard. On behalf of the people of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt sympathies to the affected families in #India," Qureshi tweeted.

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phase. But the EC did not listen to me. The breakup of election days into eight phases was planned by the BJP, she said adding the Prime Minister Narendra Modi deliberately made it an eight-phase election. The Prime Minister has no time for India as he is busy to loot the Bengal election, Banerjee alleged.

Two lakh security personnel coming from outside without Covid test and staying in hotels and guest houses in Bengal are spreading the Covid infections here, she observed directing the TMC leaders and cadres to maintain safe distance from the central forces.

The Election Commission curried favour with the BJP during the polls at Jagadballabhapatra etc where central security forces accorded protection to the BJP's criminals from Asansol, Kolkata etc, the TMC chief alleged. There are polling personnel who, afraid of the Election Commission, keep mum but they do not know that the EC is there for one day while the government (if the TMC retains power) will be there for five years," said Miss Banerjee.

"I came to know that the police in West Bengal (that is going to polls tomorrow) were used to back musclemen who went door to door threatening TMC households to not move out of their homes. Even the TMC election agents were intimidated in this manner. But I tell you to move out. Don't fear anything. If cases are filed against you we shall see it because we are coming back to power again," Miss Banerjee said.

The Election Commission has become the mirror of BJP, she remarked with the warning that the TMC would move the top court against the EC. The Commission has posted one retired man, Bibek Dubey for controlling in-service officers, she said.



A newly-wed couple distributes sweets to police officials during lockdown in Kochi on Sunday.

AGENCIES

Pakistan expresses solidarity with India, offers relief materials to help fight Covid

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Pakistan has offered to provide relief support to India amid surging cases of Coronavirus disease.

"As a gesture of solidarity with the people of India in the wake of the current wave of Covid-19, Pakistan has offered to provide relief support to India including ventilator, BiPAP, digital X-ray machines, PPEs and related items," Pakistan foreign office spokesperson Zahid Hafeez Chaudhri said. He said the concerned authorities of Pakistan and India can work out modalities for quick delivery of the relief items.

"They can also explore pos-

sible ways of further cooperation to mitigate the challenges posed by the pandemic," he added in a Press release.



The Modi government is guilty of permitting brazen profiteering of vaccination... is also guilty of abandoning the young of India between the age group of 18 and 45 years

CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY AND CHIEF SPOKESPERSON RANDEEP SURJEWALA
TERMING THE NEW ANTI-COVID VACCINE POLICY 'DISCRIMINATORY AND INSENSITIVE'

THUMBNAILS



A health worker sanitizes a Covid care centre, in Nagercoil on Sunday. AGENCY

8 Oxygen plants in Assam: Assam has installed eight oxygen plants in government hospitals and the state government would provide support to private hospitals and nursing homes in setting up their own units, health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Sunday. PTI

Fire tragedy: Police on Sunday arrested CEO Dr Dilip Bastinal Shah and CAO Dr Shailesh Dharma Dev Pathak of a Palghar-based hospital where a fire killed 15 Covid-19 patients two days back, an official said. PTI

UP panchayat polls: Voting for the third phase of the panchayat elections in Uttar Pradesh will be held on Monday with more than 3.52 lakh candidates in the fray in over 2.14 lakh seats across 20 districts of the state. PTI

Kappan case: Eleven MPs of the Opposition UDF on Sunday sought SC Chief Justice N V Ramana's intervention for an urgent hearing of the case of journalist Siddique Kappan, arrested while on his way to Hathras, where a Dalit woman died after being allegedly gang raped. PTI

Oxygen shortage: Priyanka dares Yogi

Says 'lodge case against me but help to save people's lives'



INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 25

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi on Sunday dared Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath to lodge a case against her as she highlighted the oxygen shortage in the state.

"Mukhyamantri (chief minister), whole UP is under oxygen emergency and if you want to lodge a case against me, seize my property, please go ahead. But for God's sake, understand the gravity of the situation and help to save lives of the people," she said in a tweet in Hindi, attaching a media report of Adityanath directing seizure of property of those spreading rumours of oxygen shortage.

Ruling out any shortage, Adityanath has said that the state government will conduct an audit of the life-saving gas in collaboration with various institutes.

"There is no shortage of oxygen in any Covid hospital, be it private or government. The problem is black marketing and hoarding, which will be tackled with a heavy hand. We are going to conduct an oxygen audit in collaboration with IIT Kanpur, IIM Lucknow and IIT BHU for proper monitoring of medical oxygen. The system of live tracking of oxygen demand,

Mumbai has enough oxygen now: BMC chief



Relatives of Covid-19 patients wait to refill cylinders with medical oxygen, in Gurugram, on Sunday. AGENCY

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 25

Spelling breathing relief, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation on Sunday announced that it has sufficient stocks of oxygen to tackle the ongoing Covid-19 requirements in the country's commercial capital - the worst-hit in the country in terms of deaths.

"All issues relating to oxygen supplies under the BMC stands resolved now. Supply situation is normal," BMC Municipal Commissioner I.S. Chahal said, but did not give details.

This comes a day after the BMC said it would set up 16 oxygen plants in 12 Mumbai hospitals which would produce around 43 tonnes of the life-saving

supply and distribution will be implemented," the chief minister said in a virtual meeting with editors of various newspapers on Saturday evening.

air per day from the atmospheric air.

In another related development, a Western Railway train with three oxygen tankers left Hapai in Gujarat for Kalamboli in Maharashtra carrying around 44 tonnes of liquid medical oxygen (LMO).

So far, the Western Railway has carried 10 tankers with 150 tonnes of LMO by trains to Maharashtra from different parts of India, said its chief spokesperson Sumit Thakur.

Last week, chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had appealed to top industrialists in Maharashtra to supply oxygen plants in their factories and other premises and give the entire production to the state government to tackle the oxygen crisis.

He has also launched a digital platform for monitoring oxygen supply. Adityanath also said that oxygen is not in short supply, provided only the needy use it.

LAKE VIEW



A view of Sissu lake after the snowfall, in Lahaul-Spiti, on Sunday. AGENCY

20 isolation coaches for Covid-hit at Bhopal station

BHOPAL, 25 APRIL

Efforts are being made to provide better treatment facilities to coronavirus-infected patients with 20 isolation coaches, comprising 292 beds, ready by the Railways in Bhopal at platform No. 6.

These coaches are meant for patients with mild Covid symptoms or from those families where three or more persons are infected. All health facilities will be made available by admitting them to these coaches so that they recover fast.

Bhopal additional collector Umrao Singh Marawi said in these isolation coaches, Covid patients who have less space in their houses and comprise more family members will be admitted for treatment. All health facilities will be provided by railway doctors and staff working full time. Arrangements for other facilities, including food, have been ensured. IANS

'Sonowal, Himanta violating poll code in name of tackling Covid'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI, 25 APRIL

The Congress-led 'Grand Alliance' on Sunday alleged Model Code of Conduct (MCC) violation by Assam chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal and health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma in the name of Covid-19 management, urging the Election Commission to bar them from travelling to different districts to hold meetings.

In a complaint to the Chief Election Commissioner, the 10-party Opposition group said the MCC is still in force in Assam and it will continue till the declaration of the poll results on 2 May, making the status of the BJP-led government only a caretaker government.

"But the chief minister, finance and health ministers are deliberately violating the MCC of the Election Commission of India. Since 23 April 2021, Sarbananda Sonowal is visiting number of

districts like Nagaon, Morigaon, Majuli etc and holding discussions there with the officials of different departments," it said.

Similarly, Sarma and minister of state for health Pijush Hazarika are also visiting separately to some districts like Nagaon, Morigaon and Dima Hasao and holding meetings with government officials there, the complaint said.

"This is not only violating the MCC of the ECI, but also grossly violates Covid protocol," the letter claimed, adding that Sarma has announced many government policies related to the management of the pandemic in the state.

The Grand Alliance stressed that in this political transition period of the caretaker government, no minister should visit districts, hold official meetings and announce any policy matter.

Referring to some reports of "manipulation and looting" of EVMs from strong rooms, the signatories of the 10 par-

ties claimed that frequent visits by Sonowal and Sarma have created doubt in the minds of the public.

"Therefore, we urge upon you to restrain the CM, health and finance minister or any other minister of Assam government to make official visit to any place," the complaint to the CEC said.

It urged the EC to bar the duo from making any official comment on policy matters in the interest of maintaining transparency and strict compliance to the MCC.

The Congress, which was in power for 15 years in Assam since 2001, formed the 'Grand Alliance' with AIUDF, BPf, CPI(M), CPI, CPI(ML), Anchalik Gana Morcha (AGM), RJD, Adivasi National Party (ANP) and Jimochayan (Deori) Peoples Party (JPP) to fight the Assembly election against the BJP-led NDA.

Assembly elections for 126 seats in Assam took place in three phases - 27 March, 1 April and 6 April.

India, France begin 'Varuna' naval drill

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The 19th edition of the Indian and French Navy bilateral exercise 'Varuna-2021' started in the Arabian Sea today. The exercise will showcase the increased level of coordination, synergy and interoperability between the friendly navies of India and France.

The three-day exercise between the navies of two countries will see high-tempo-level operations at the sea.

From the Indian side, guided-missile frigates INS Talwar and INS Tarkash, guided-missile stealth destroyer INS Kolkata, Fleet Support Ship INS Deepak, with Chetak Integral Helicopters, P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft and a Kalvari Class Submarine are participating in the exercise.

From the French Navy side, E2C Hawkeye aircraft and helicopters Dauphin and Caiman embarked, aircraft carrier Charles-de-Gaulle with Rafale M Fighter, Aquitaine-class multi-mission frigate FNS Provence with Caiman M Helicopter embarked, Horizon-class air defence destroyer Chevalier Paul, and command and supply ship Var are taking part.

On the completion of the 'Varuna' exercise, the guided-missile frigate INS Tarkash of the Indian Navy will continue to exercise with the Carrier Strike Group of the French Navy from 28 April to 1 May for best practices and enhance interoperability.

During this time, the ship will also take part in the advanced anti-submarine, surface, and air-defence operations with the French Navy.

The units of the two navies in the Varuna bilateral naval exercise will endeavour to enhance their warfighting skills in order to demonstrate their ability as an integrated force to promote security, peace and stability in the maritime domain.

The Indian Navy is led by

Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet, Rear Admiral Ajay Kochhar while the French team is headed by Commander Task Force 473, Rear Admiral Marc Aussedat.

HARD TIMES



People walk near the statue of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Heritage Street near the Golden Temple during lockdown imposed by the state government in Amritsar on Sunday. AGENCY

BJP will file contempt of court case against MVA leaders in Deshmukh case, says Patil

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PUNE, 25 APRIL

Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil on Sunday threatened to file a contempt of court case saying leaders of the Maha Vikas Aghadi are raising allegations of misuse of the CBI by the BJP in Anil Deshmukh case even though the probe against him was ordered by the Bombay High Court.

"The CBI probe against Deshmukh is going on as per the orders of the Bombay

High Court. But, they (MVA leaders) are alleging that the BJP is misusing the CBI. So do you want to say anything against the HC? This (allegation by MVA) amounts to contempt of court and we are going to file a contempt of court case," Patil told reporters.

The ruling MVA comprises the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress.

The CBI has registered an FIR against Deshmukh, a former home minister of the state, in connection with the allegations of corruption raised

against him by former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh. The CBI on Saturday conducted searches at premises of Deshmukh in Mumbai and Nagpur.

"MVA leaders are fooling people by stating the CBI was only asked to submit a report in 15 days in connection with the corruption allegations against Deshmukh. But the HC had also said an offence can be registered if necessary. So the allegations of MVA leaders are meaningless," said Patil.

Patil told reporters

India welcomes ASEAN's call to end Myanmar crisis

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

India on Sunday welcomed an initiative by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to end the ongoing crisis in Myanmar which has been in turmoil since its military grabbed power in a coup in February.

External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India will continue to play a constructive and meaningful role in resolving the current situation in Myanmar.

"We welcome the ASEAN initiative on Myanmar agreed to at the ASEAN summit held on 24 April. Our diplomatic engagement with Myanmar will be aimed at strengthening these efforts," he said.

Myanmar has been rocked by massive protests since the military seized power in a coup on 1 February. Hundreds of people, including children, were killed in the crackdown against the protesters by Myanmarese authorities.

The ASEAN on Saturday released a "five-point consensus" on Myanmar that included immediate cessation of violence and holding constructive dialogue among all parties concerned to seek a peaceful solution. Myanmar is a member of the 10-nation grouping.

"India, as a friend of the people of Myanmar, will continue to play a constructive and meaningful role aimed at resolving the current situation in Myanmar. India's support to the democratic process in Myanmar remains steadfast," Bagchi said.

According to the five-point consensus, the ASEAN will provide humanitarian assistance in Myanmar and it will appoint a special envoy to facilitate mediation in the dialogue process.

"First, there shall be immediate cessation of violence in Myanmar and all parties shall exercise utmost restraint," the ASEAN said. Second, constructive dialogue among all parties concerned would commence to seek a peaceful solution of the people of the country.

Third, a special envoy of the ASEAN chair shall facilitate mediation of the dialogue process, with the assistance of the secretary general of ASEAN," it said, adding the fourth step would be providing humanitarian assistance to Myanmar. Fifth, the special envoy and a delegation will visit Myanmar to meet all the parties concerned.



Jai Ram directs for assessment of crops damage in recent rains

SHIMLA, 25 APRIL

Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jai Ram Thakur on Sunday directed deputy commissioners to assess damage to crops in recent heavy rains, snow and hail-storm.

Thakur, after a high-level meeting to review the immense losses caused to crops and fruits in the state due to untimely snow, hail-storm and heavy rains, said

the Central government to get relief.

He also directed the deputy commissioners to ask the insurance agencies to send their agents to assess the losses to the crops that had been covered under the Crop Insurance scheme so that the farmers and horticulturist could be provided compensation immediately.

HP urban development minister Suresh Bhardwaj, technical education Ram Lal Markandha, health minister Rajiv Saizal, forest minister Rakesh Pathania, chief secretary Anil Khachi, additional chief secretary Prabodh Saxena and other officers attended the meeting.

SNS

Courts should not enlarge history sheeters on bail with blinkered vision: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The Supreme Court has said that courts should not enlarge history sheeters on bail with a blinkered vision and must consider the impact of their release on witnesses and innocent members of the family of the victim.

A bench headed by Chief Justice (now retired) SA Bobde made the observation while setting aside the order of the Allahabad High Court granting bail to an accused.

The top court said that there is no doubt that liberty is important, even that of a person charged with crime

but it is important for courts to recognise the potential threat to the life and liberty of victims/witnesses, if such an accused is released on bail.

It is needless to point out that in cases of this nature, it is important that courts do not enlarge an accused on bail with a blinkered vision by just taking into account only parties before them and the incident in question.

It is necessary for courts to consider the impact that release of such persons on bail will have on witnesses yet to be examined and innocent members of the family of the victim who might be the next

victims, the bench also comprising Justices AS Bopanna and VRamasubramanian said.

Referring to its earlier verdicts, the apex court said when a stand was taken that the accused was a history sheeter, it was imperative for high courts to scrutinise every aspect and not capriciously record that the accused was entitled to be released on bail on the ground of parity.

We find in this case that the high court has overlooked several aspects, such as the potential threat to witnesses, forcing the trial court to grant protection, it said.

The bench said the Allahabad High Court granted bail

Committee (UPCC), was shot near Belaisa in Azamgarh in 2015 when he had gone for a walk.

The accused is alleged to be a contract killer and a sharpshooter and has been prosecuted in fifteen cases for serious offences including murder, attempt to murder and criminal conspiracy.

Referring to the recent incident involving UP gangster Vikas Dubey, the appeal contended that the grant of bail in a routine manner to gangsters, has had an adverse effect in the past, upon the law and order situation.

The appellant cites the example of a person who was

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Prospects in Kerala

The BJP presented itself as a secular party in Kerala and it is bound to improve its fortunes when votes of the 6 April Assembly election are counted on 2 May. Aligning with the BJDS, the political party of followers of Sree Narayana Guru who preached "one God, one religion and one caste," the saffron party has fielded more than 10 Christian and at least five Muslim candidates and proved itself to be as secular as any party in the ruling CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front or the Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front. Although the BJP's Chief Minister candidate E Sreedharan, the legendary 'Metro-man,' thinks he can pull it off, the Kerala unit of the party is not so optimistic. The LDF and the UDF have been in power alternatively for the last four decades, but neither has much to write home about. Sreedharan thinks he can transform the State. Except for the Kochi Metro, there is hardly any infrastructure in Kerala. Not a single industry has come up in the last two decades. A fully literate State, Sreedharan thinks he can turn it into an industrial hub. Age has not deterred him from a house-to-house campaign. If the BJP wins 10 seats or more in the 140-member House, it can lead to a hung Assembly. The only time Kerala faced a hung Assembly was in 1965, resulting in a prolonged period of President's rule, which no party wants. The strength of the House then was 133. No political party was able to mobilise 67 members to form the government and the Assembly was dissolved. That situation is unlikely to be repeated.

The winning Front should get a minimum of 71 seats to form the new government. If the LDF emerges as the largest Front but falls short of 71 by a few seats, the Muslim League, major constituent of the UDF, is likely to cross over to the LDF. It has done so in the past and will have no hesitation in repeating it. The two parties are already in touch, according to Malayalam media. If both Fronts bag more or less equal number of seats without touching 71, the CPI(M) coming to the rescue of the UDF or the Congress extending support to the LDF cannot be ruled out. Only in Kerala are the Congress and the CPI(M) rivals; in all other States, including West Bengal, they are allies. Whoever forms the new government will find the economy of the State shattered by Covid-19 and the seeming affluence of the people illusionary. Remittances from the Gulf which kept the standard of living relatively high, have diminished steeply and the accumulated borrowing of the State has exceeded Rs three lakh crore. Rice production in the State has dwindled from 45 lakh tonne per annum to just six lakh tonnes. Even vegetables raised in the State are grossly inadequate for its needs. But for the liberal grants from the Union government, starvation deaths could not have been avoided. Compared with neighbouring States, Kerala has missed the development bus. Only a stable and dynamic government can pull the State out of the morass.

Pledge to fulfill

The striking feature of the international climate change conference is the pledge by America to cut its carbon emissions by 50-52 per cent below 2005 levels by the year 2030. Sixteen years after that fateful level was reached by the generally impervious developed countries, Thursday's commitment on carbon emissions can be contextualised with President Joe Biden's appeal to participating nations to help "overcome the existential crisis of our time as we are in a decisive decade for tackling climate change". There may be hope yet as President Xi Jinping is in attendance and not the least because China, along with America, is one of the major polluters. The USA's new target, which was unveiled on Thursday at a virtual summit of 40 global leaders, essentially doubles the previous promise. Leaders of India and China, two of the world's biggest emitters, made no new commitments. "Scientists tell us that this is the decisive decade; this is the decade we must make decisions that will avoid the worst consequences of the climate crisis," President Biden said at the summit's opening address. And then the reality addressed to the comity of nations ~ "We must try to keep the Earth's temperature to an increase of 1.5C. The world beyond 1.5 degrees means more frequent and intense fires, floods, droughts, heatwaves and hurricanes ~ tearing through communities, ripping away lives and livelihoods." He said there was a moral and economic imperative to immediately act on climate change. Referring to America's new carbon-cutting pledge, President Biden added: "The signs are unmistakable, the science is undeniable, and the cost of inaction keeps mounting. The US isn't waiting, we are resolving to take action." President Biden's performance, as refreshing as it was robust, follows four years of negligent nonchalance on the part of Donald Trump. Climate activist Greta Thunberg, who was testifying before Congress on Thursday, challenged world leaders to do more on the climate crisis. The UK is playing a critical role this year as president of the crucial COP26 later this year. The government is tasked with achieving agreement in Glasgow when world leaders meet there in November. In his virtual conference address, Prime Minister Boris Johnson assured global leaders that tackling climate change was "not bunny-hugging". At the summit, Mr Johnson called President Biden's announcement about cutting US greenhouse gas emissions "game-changing". "We can do this together across the world. It's going to mean the richest nations coming together and exceeding the \$100 billion commitment they already made in 2009," he said. The Biden administration has been riveted to climate change ever since the inauguration on 20 January. The pledge to go beyond a 50 per cent cut will be welcomed by scientists and campaigners. The future of the world hinges on the fulfilment of Joe Biden's pledge.

Translation & Identity ~ II

Despite the problematics that are embedded within translation practices, it is translation as cultural transfer that sensitizes the world about cultural diversity



Tagore's caveat has not lost its relevance even in 21st century, more than 114 years after the essay was first published. Tagore had remarked, "Do not expect me to be your guide in the domain of world literature. We have to pave our own path according to our individual abilities. My only purpose for saying this is that world is not about your, mine and their separate farmlands, to know the world in this way suggests a region-centric myopia, similarly literature is not about your, mine or theirs. Ordinarily we however regard literature through this region-centric (Garmyo) myopic lens. We need to liberate ourselves from this regional conservatism in order to discover the world citizen in world literature, we should endeavour to discover in every writer a sense of wholeness, and within that inclusive wholeness we must discover collective human expression, the time has come for us to take such a pledge."

Since the advent of cultural studies and world literature studies awareness about intersectionality, standpoint parameters and the importance of translation studies have deconstructed definitions of the canon and grand narratives. Moreover, the emergence of translated literature from all over the world competing for international translation prizes, such as the Booker Prize, has turned the focus not only on the translated text, but the identity of the translator.

One reason for this perhaps is economic. Translation has often been construed as labour of love, implying unpaid labour. Translators therefore often belong to class of privilege, as maintaining one's livelihood, may become a challenge if translating from one language to another, is the only skill one has acquired and translation is a full-time profession. This is an undeniable fact despite the emergence of what is now being described as the translation industry. This is why perhaps literary translation is often defined as a passion or mission rather than a high-skilled profession.

We may well state that translation is the most democratic and dynamic mode of transcreation, it permits infinite combinations and play with words in a dance of approximation, and the translator can be a creator, an experimenter, the translator may have a fidelity fixation, or a fixation of prioritising the needs of the target readership, so that the source text can be modified and sometimes transformed to accommodate it with the target culture. The translator solves the problems of translation by dissolving it in

another linguistic medium, according to a practising translator. It is this dis-ease of the translator, that underscores the fact that there will perennially be a gap between the source and target translation, that is at the heart of the many re-translations of the same original text. Can there be a definitive translation? Many will say, definitely not.

Despite the problematics that are embedded within translation practices, it is translation as cultural transfer that sensitizes the world about cultural diversity. The awareness about the specificities of location, race, religion, cultural practices, gender, sexuality and ethnicity can be built through the medium of translated texts. The babel of unfamiliar tongues generating incomprehensible cacophony can be decoded, deconstructed and re-created in the translated target language that will lead to cultural understanding and a sense of universal humanism.

Translation of literary texts can be regarded as a cultural activist's committed crusade to promote cultural understanding that can engender world peace and harmony defeating the destructive agenda of foreign policies that are about power, profit and politics.

The writer and translator Ketaki Kushari Dyson had unequivocally stated that translation is at best a fine art of approximation. It is often a cross-cultural bridge spanning time and space, that enhances cultural understanding and enables cultural negotiations. However, it is apparent that there cannot be a definitive translation of a particular text and so for every translator, any original text, though previously translated, remains a challenge, thereby discouraging closure. A single text can be read and interpreted quite distinctly by different translators, and as a result translation of texts is variable, dependent on the culture, ideology and location of the translator. Translator response is no less crucial than reader response, for fidelity or cannibalism in translation results from the transmission of a particular translator's response that can be guided by ideology or idiosyncrasy. As a result, in the process of translation, selection and rejection however intelligent and judicious may often become subjective if not biased.

In his much-acclaimed book *The Translator's Invisibility* Lawrence Venuti outlined certain

parameters that define the objectives of literary translation. Referring to two widely followed translation practices, one being the domestication of the text being translated and the other being the foreignization of the text being translated, Venuti stated, "Translation can be considered the communication of a foreign text, but it is always a communication limited by its address to a specific reading audience. The violent effects of translation are felt at home as well as abroad. On the one hand, translation wields enormous power in the construction of national identities for foreign cultures, and hence it potentially figures in ethnic discrimination, geopolitical confrontations, colonialism, terrorism, war. On the other hand, translation enlists the foreign text in the maintenance or revision of literary canons in the target-language culture, inscribing poetry and fiction, for example, with the various poetic and narrative discourses that compete for cultural dominance in the targetlanguage..."

Translated literature facilitates making familiar the diverse world of races, religion and cultures, the Other no longer remains alien, literary translations construct bridges of cultural understanding, the unknown shrouded in mystery and the mists of ignorance becomes familiar, comprehensible and brings the people of the world closer, emphatically reiterating that universal humanism lies at the core of a literary text, irrespective of its medium of expression. Some incorrigible experts may sometimes rue the losses incurred in literary translation, due to the inadequacies of corresponding words in the source language. But literary translation is not about semantic jugglery, literary translation is not just about translating words, it is about translating the unknown in definable terms, it is about creating an intimacy between the home and the world. Literary translation is an enabling familiarizing process that deconstructs the traditional pride and prejudices about the unknown, unfamiliar Other. It liberates one from the myopia of national boundaries and creates international cultural understanding through literary texts though the context may be rooted in Bengal, Boston or Brazil. I conclude with my poem on translation, that I humbly feel addresses the issues discussed so long in a poetic format ~

*Lost in translation?
When we met
Our mutual words
transcended
Transformed in translation
We strung words like pearls
Mother tongue and
Other tongue
A new poem born out of
the womb
Of a well-known old poem
The original home-grown
poem
Became a global sapling
Rooted, uprooted, re-rooted
Unique avatar
Linguistic transfer
Cultural code switching
Those are puzzles for sages
And heat oppressed brains
Ethnic poems in global
syntax
Global poems in ethnic
inscription
Smiled in the new dawn
Reaching hearts and minds
Liberated from the intense
entrapment
In either/or- singular
tongues
Our willing translations
Our mutual spinning
of words
In an Other tongue, in our
mother tongue
To fill the gaps others hadn't
bridged
Insularity and isolation were
erased
A rainbow of words
Not a chaotic Babel
Brought us together
Isolated islands of words
Converged into continents
of communication
We never regretted any loss
in translation
We were incorrigible
dreamers, for us
Territories and borders were
life-threatening
We dreamt about bringing
together
A fractured world with our
healing words-
VasudhaivaKutumbakam
Our world as a single family
In translation
We gained an inclusive world
We mingled diversity and
difference
In our several tongues and
daring dreams
We translated uninhibited
For us, to be transfixed and
immobile
Was surrender and suicide
We translated and translated
and translated
And our mutual words
Became universal symbols,
signs and signposts
Our adhesive translations
made the Other our own
Fused into a holistic dream
come true
Translated, we became
indivisible
Not you and me, but us.*

(Concluded)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Eroding the will to resist

SIR, I refer to 'China eyes Taiwan' by Pran Vasudeva (*The Statesman*, 20 April). That Taiwan had to scramble frequently its Air and Marine defence systems is not surprising. Like the conflict with India, the Taiwan issue is decades old. It is interesting to note that China is pursuing a policy similar to Taiwan towards India, Japan, the Philippines and other South East Asian nations in what is often considered as a form of "grey zone" warfare. This irregular type of conflict stops short of an actual invasion or an occupation war. The aim is to subdue countries like Taiwan and others through exhaustion. China hopes

that such pressure tactics will erode the will to resist. China is adept in protracting negotiations only to buy



time and to consolidate its territorial gains.

It has extensively built

airports, railway lines, border roads and ramped up its Marine and Air capabilities. According to a recent statement by a PLA spokesperson, China plans to downsize its army by half, and instead boost its navy and

air force with a motive to transform it into a modern force. China has successfully subdued the democracy movement in Hong Kong, and in restive regions of Tibet and Xinjiang under

tight control through its many surveillance programmes and so called "transformation through education" centers.

Taiwan is the last remaining obstacle to the Communist Party's monopoly on power and Mr Xi has never hesitated to say that China regards Taiwan as a Chinese province that "must be, will be" unified with China. He has also said that he would not rule out the use of force. The long-term implications for India in this form of "Grey War" is not only the entire Indo-China border and decades old conflict but Arunachal Pradesh which China considers as 'South Tibet.'

Yours, etc., HN Ramakrishna, Bengaluru, 20 April.

BULLYING TACTICS

SIR, This refers to "An ill-advised step" by Harsha Kakar. The sailing of the USS John Paul Jones in the Exclusive Economic Zone of India without prior consent is a clear violation of its territorial sovereignty. It is a manifestation of bullying tactics and brute force. The US desire to dominate the world is manifest. On the complaint of India, it arrogantly explains that US has freedom of navigation in any part of the sea as per international law. But the law of the sea has never permitted any country to sail its warship by violating EEZ of another country without prior consent. India has not lodged a strong note of protest as it should have. India must inform the US president and seek an explanation. While other countries like China and Russia have disapproved it, it is time India stops being subservient to the will of the US. National sensitivity and sentiments must be honoured.

Yours, etc., Nimai Charan Swain, Bhubaneswar, 21 April.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Anniversary of April carnage

The Opposition MPs attended Parliament, wearing black, yesterday, when the second anniversary of the Easter Sunday terror attacks fell; their ruling party counterparts wore black armbands, instead. Did they do so as a sign of sympathy and condolence, or by way of a political statement? Christians traditionally wear black while in mourning, but when aggressive men who resort to fistfights, at the drop of a hat, wear black, they look minatory. How frightening Parliament would have looked if those with a history of throwing projectiles and chilli powder at their political rivals in the House and even threatening the Chair had also been dressed in black? The members of both sides did not care to behave themselves at least on the day when the country remembered the victims of the Easter Sunday tragedy. They invaded the Well of the House, yesterday, trading obscenities, according to media reports. What a way to remember the dead! The Presidential Commission of Inquiry (PCI) which probed the Easter Sunday attacks has held the Yahapalana government including the President (Maithripala Sirisena) and the Prime Minister (Ranil Wickremesinghe) accountable for the tragedy. Most of the current Opposition MPs were in administration at the time of the carnage (2019), and, therefore, cannot absolve themselves of the blame for the serious lapses that made the terror strikes possible. The fact that they have left the UNP, which was in power at the time, does not help diminish their culpability. If the former UNP MPs currently in the Opposition think they can pull the wool over the eyes of the public with the help of gimmicks such as wearing black, they are mistaken. The least

The Island

they can do to diminish their guilt, if at all, is to tender a public apology for their failure to heed the warnings of attacks and ensure public safety in 2019. Some of the maimed victims have said they have been forgotten, and the former Yahapalana MPs are duty bound to take up cudgels for these hapless people they failed to protect. The government grandees, who made a comeback by flogging the issue of the Easter Sunday terror and promising to punish the perpetrators thereof, also cannot dupe the public by bellowing empty rhetoric and wearing black armbands. They have to fulfil their promise at issue while granting relief to the terror victims. A small girl who suffered injury in the bomb attack on the Zion Church, Batticaloa, on 19 April 2019, is in need of funds to have her eyesight restored. Her family cannot afford the cost of surgery. So, the government MPs ought to reach out and help such victims. Boru shows won't do. Most of all, everything possible must be done to ensure that there will be no more terror attacks. There is no guarantee that the country is safe, for the masterminds behind the Easter carnage have not been identified. So long as they are at large, threats will persist and nobody will be safe. The incumbent government is full of politicians who brag that terrorism will not be allowed to raise its ugly head again, on their watch. True, they were instrumental in defeating northern terror, but let them be advised not to be cocky. It is said that terrorists only have to be lucky once, and their targets have to be lucky always. The general consensus is that the government cannot summon the political moxie to go all out to have the masterminds behind the Easter Sunday attacks traced because it does not want any more problems to contend with on the diplomatic front; it is also accused of having cut secret deals with some politicians with links to extremists to muster a two-thirds majority in Parliament and secure votes.

SUNIL SHARAN

Joe Biden is surrounded by a clutch of smart women. There is his wife, Jill, a PhD. There is Kamala Harris. There are many others. But the one who doesn't seem to be in his inner orbit, yet the one who seems to have the most impact on him, is none other than 31-year old Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (AOC), the youngest woman to have served in the United States Congress.

AOC was an organizer for the presidential campaign of US Senator Bernie Sanders in 2016. She has worked as a waitress and a bartender to help her mother - a house cleaner and a school bus driver - fight foreclosure of their home. A white Hispanic, she is blessed with good looks and strong intellect. But the media concentrates mainly on her looks. As also on her theatrics and her histrionics.

She has 12 million Twitter followers, surpassing her boss, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. She has 9 million Instagram followers and about half a million Facebook followers. She seems destined to run for the US presidency one day, a day not too far away it seems.

Joe Biden was a centrist candidate in 2020, but Bernie Sanders pulled him to the left. Sanders was completely overshadowed by his old protégée, AOC, who is anything if not woke. In the aftermath of Biden's victory, it was believed that the Democratic party would cleave between the centre, where Biden stood, and the left pole of AOC.

But Biden has gone woke woke too. He has taken every single one of AOC's ideas and made them his own. The right is terrified of AOC. More than the right, it is Biden who seems more terrified of her. AOC wants to turn America into a socialist paradise. Biden is helping her accomplish that.

When AOC doesn't get what she wants, she resorts to her considerable histrionics. She went on a video call with her Instagram followers and showed how threatened she had felt by the January 6 attack on the US Congress. She banged the walls, in simulation of what the protesters were doing to her office. Where is She? she wailed, explaining how they had come after her. I am sure many of her fanatic followers must have teared up.

She loves banging walls. She went to Trump's Mexican border wall, and banged hard against it, crying for it to

The woman Biden fears the most



be torn down. Let my Hispanic comrades in, she seemed to screech. Biden listened. He stopped any further construction of the wall. And now her comrades are streaming in to the US.

She came up with a ridiculous Green New Deal - solar cells and wind farms and electric vehicles and building retrofits everywhere - to combat climate change. Heaven's, solar cells and wind farms and electric vehicles have been around for a century. Solar and wind have an Achilles Heel - intermittency - that is the first doesn't work when the sun doesn't shine and the second doesn't when the wind doesn't blow. And since EVs pass emissions from the tailpipe to the smokestack, no one really seems to know if they pollute less or more than fossil fuel cars.

Biden wants a \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package that is essentially

about implementing AOC's Green New Deal. No innovation could take place. It is all about deploying old technology and labeling it as new wine in old bottles. Lots of the money will go to Democratic party financiers, contractors and constituents. It is so pork-filled that there wouldn't be enough pigs around to make sausages for it.

Biden has also passed a \$1.9 trillion Covid relief bill that is keeping many unemployed from returning to work because they are getting more unemployment benefits instead. Business establishments are starved for hiring, but people are not joining up. And it's not only because of the fear of contracting the virus at work. Close to 40 per cent of America's population has already received one dose of the vaccine, so that fear has come down dramatically.

Because of his age - he's 78 - it's

unclear whether Biden will be a one-term president or a two-term president. In the past, he has called himself a transitional president, but he has then corrected himself to say that he'll run for two terms. That has been one of the many flip flops in his long and illustrious political career. Certainly he seems to be an old man in a hurry right now. He has also unveiled a \$1.5 trillion budget. Trillions seem to mean nothing to this man. It's as if they were going out of style.

But that money will only be raised by printing money, or through borrowing, quiet likely from America's arch-rival, China, to whom the US already owes over \$1 trillion in debt, out of the overall US national debt of \$28 trillion. AOC seems to have gone quiescent now. Biden is fulfilling her agenda. Why should she shriek anymore when the president is already

doing her bidding?

Kamala Harris and all other presidential aspirants in 2028 (or 2024, if Biden doesn't run then), be warned. AOC is coming after you. She could well be the youngest person to become president in US history, and that too in her thirties. Teddy Roosevelt became president at 42, and JFK at 43. If Biden hasn't converted the US into a socialist haven by then, AOC will complete the makeover. There's no infighting in the Democratic party anymore. AOC has won. Biden has capitulated. The Democratic Party is in thrall to AOC; the Republican Party to Donald Trump, an extreme rightwinger. There is no centre left in America today.

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

IT CAME TO MIND | MANISH NANDY

The best is yet to be

My older friends complain that the young seldom heed their advice. I congratulate the young people on that. Never listen to anybody's advice, including mine. They are not you; they don't know what you want. Their advice is at best irrelevant, at worst misleading. Maybe you don't know yourself what you want. You have to find out what you want, what you care to do, what you would like to be. Not listening to others' advice is the first step. There are more steps to follow, but one has to begin by disregarding others' counsel.

I have probably made a hash of my life. Most people do. Without a dress rehearsal, you don't expect anybody to offer peak performance on the opening night. At least I can say I created my mess mostly by myself. It would have been a worse tragedy if I had bungled things on other people's advice. I have the satisfaction of knowing that I have lived my life in my own light, however dim that light may be. Certainly, I wouldn't have liked to live a life according to others' choices. The mistakes are all mine, and the credit for occasionally avoiding them is also mine.

This is the fun part of having reached the latter stage of my life. No one has much leeway when he or she is at the mother's breast or father's feet. Even in school and college, one's freedom of choice is quite limited. When you start working, the choice a little broader, at least for some. Still, there are too many rules to observe. That ends when you stop working, or – as in my case – you start working for yourself. Your choice is much broader. This is the time to live for yourself.

This is, therefore, the time to ask



writing a few pieces that had nothing to do with my work. Some essays, some memoirs. Even some stories. Some I write in my first language, that of my birthplace. Others I write in the language of my adopted land. I have also written some in a third language that has grown closer to my heart. In each idiom, I feel a unique sense of freedom that I can't seem to find in others. I am not trying to impress people with my versatility; I am just struggling to speak my heart. It is amazing how different the languages are, and how differently they let me express what I feel.

Nor am I trying to be Proust or Tolstoy, a great auteur. I am simply eager to express the ideas circling in my mind. That is my way of staying happy. Which is another way of saying: that is my way of living my own life, doing something that seems pleasant and meaningful.

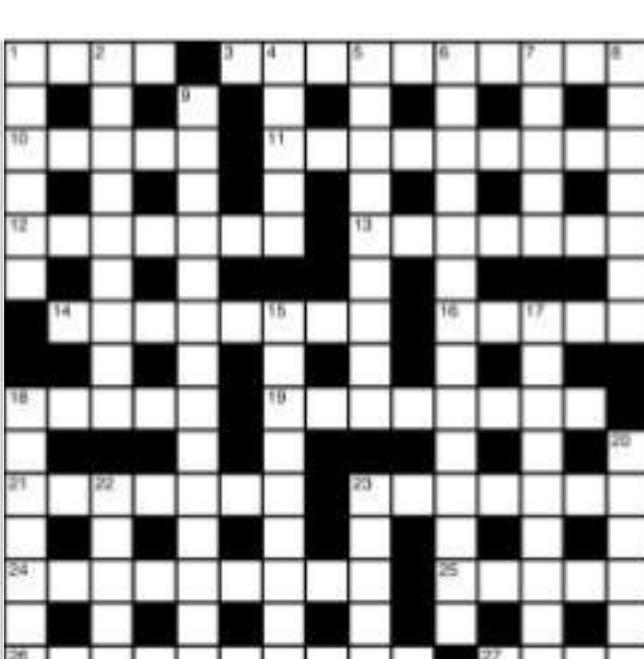
Like many of our other assumptions, the great assumption that life is the best when one is young seems increasingly false. The ups and downs of youth, its uncertainties and acute miseries, often overshadow its buoyancy, and researchers are telling us aging brings a bigger share of peace

and joy. It certainly allows a closer move toward your deepest values. It lets you do what you have long deferred: find yourself.

I would not take my dog's admiration as proof that I am quite wonderful. Nor would I, as Goethe once said, if I were to find myself, want to run away. Wonderful or not, I just want to live my life, uncluttered by others' expectations, undaunted by others' demands. Just my life.

The writer is a Washington-based international development advisor and had worked with the World Bank. He can be reached at mnandy@gmail.com

NO 28895



ACROSS

- 1 When abroad, use phone with nothing in memory (4)
- 3 Extremely tedious, going down to get water (4-6)
- 10 Very sick beginning to Animal House (5)
- 11 Advert around carnival city showing butt (9)
- 12 Eagles flying over North African country (7)
- 13 Italians make a meal of this reform of Riot Act (7)
- 14 Royal adviser on radio raised stakes (8)
- 16 After rejection, half-hearted

OFFSPRING PROCEEDED CAUTIOUSLY (5)

- 18 Territory taken back in Egyptianisation (5)
- 19 Cropped male nude I sent – not in post (8)
- 21 Snap up building land on basis of report and from appearance (2,5)
- 23 A Song for Europe? Have to go to bed! (3,4)
- 24 Hotlines, perhaps, between ideologies being different (9)
- 25 Metal bar from island (5)
- 26 Anger old queen – snake, being clasped, bit (10)
- 27 Message from old flame in Times (4)

DOWN

- 1 Transport similar to mass gathering? (6)
- 2 Wasted and full of oneself – no use whatever (3,2,4)
- 4 Old footballer chucking last boot out (5)
- 5 Seal savaged fish keeping its head down – ray? (5,4)
- 6 Excessive ego of one pursuing maiden? (14)
- 7 Fool regularly taking Air Djibouti (5)
- 8 Leaves fish out of water, might one suppose? (7)
- 9 Pub obtaining means of digital identification as business asset?

(10,4)

- 15 Breaking rule with date, right? I am (9)
- 17 Two options for gambler to make pair out of singleton? (3,6)
- 18 New player joining team in collapse (7)
- 20 Punk, notwithstanding trousers, to get out of bondage (6)
- 22 Made light of American replacing English language in Africa (5)
- 23 Composer, unknown, dropping down ranks of minor celebrity (5)

NEW DELHI, MONDAY 26 APRIL 2021

07

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

By the courtesy of the acting Consul-General for Japan we have received a copy of a pamphlet issued by the League of Nations Association of Japan describing the work that has been in progress for the furtherance of the cause of the League in that country. The movement appears to have been taken up in Japan with an earnestness akin to that evinced by the League of Nations Union in Great Britain. It is described as the greatest movement of international import ever undertaken by the Japanese people. Clearly an organisation which elicits such support as this, and which has been adopted by the majority of the civilised nations of the world, and it is a thousand pities that it should have become a shuttlecock in the game of party politics in America. President Harding has declared definitely against joining the existing League, but he is prepared to participate heartily in some other form of international association for the promotion of peace, and he is understood to be considering the matter with the view of submitting such an alternative for the League. Whether the desired object might best be attained by altering the constitution of the League, or by the formation of an entirely new body, is a question which would demand consideration. The League has at least prepared the ground, and a new move by America, if taken up in the right spirit, might have happy results.

NEWS ITEMS

SIKHS IN KASHMIR AND KAPURTHALA

According to The Sikh newspaper the Kashmir Durbar has prohibited the entry of Akalis into State territory, and the authorities in Kapurthala State have announced that all Sikhs found wearing kirpans longer than nine inches will be prosecuted and fined Rs 200 each. The Sikh advises Sikh inhabitants of States such as Kapurthala to emigrate to British territory. The Akali Sikhs of Lahore city met in the Bawali Sahib Gurdwara last evening to enlist volunteers for Gurdwara reform, under directions received from the Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar. Several volunteers were registered and the meeting dissolved. Three prosecution witnesses were examined today in the case against Sardar Partab Singh editor of the Akali, and the case was adjourned till April 29.

MOUNT EVEREST EXPEDITION

Colonel Howard Burry, the leader of the Mount Everest Expedition, arrived this morning by the steamer Malwa and it is understood that he is leaving for Simla to make arrangements with the authorities of the Geological Department. Interviewed by a Press representative the Colonel said that he appreciated the Government of India's interest in the project and he was supremely confident of the success of the expedition. He believed that after a fortnight's residence at an altitude of 15,000 or 10,000 feet, European explorers would be able to work successfully, that acclimatisation was possible up to 16,000 feet, and that there was no fear of communication with the expedition being cut off, at any rate during the period of reconnaissance, as there was a telephone and telegraph line from Darjeeling to Gyantze.

MADRAS CHRISTIAN COLLEGE

The report of the Madras Christian College for last year tells of general prosperity. The non-cooperation movement has been less in evidence in Madras than in many other places, and the work of school and college was carried on without interruption. There were 863 students in the college and 915 pupils in the school. The school department has recently introduced the plan of medical inspection of the pupils and it has proved a benefit. Every boy is examined carefully twice in the course of the year, and in this way many cases of diseases have been detected in the early stage and placed at once under treatment. The total expenditure in college and school amounted to Rs 2,05,824.

CAUSING OBSTRUCTION TO TRAFFIC

Madras, April 25
At the Egmore Police court today Mr. P.C. Lobo, Chief Presidency Magistrate, delivered judgment in the case in which Mahomed Ibrahim Saheb, a merchant, and Abdul Hajid Sahab Sharar, a Khilafat worker and non-cooperator were charged with causing obstruction to traffic by holding a public meeting on Pycroft's Road. His Honour convicted both accused and sentenced the first to pay a fine of Rs 45, or in default to ten days' simple imprisonment, and the second to pay a fine of Rs 20, or in the default four days' simple imprisonment. Both accused paid their fines with the remark that as civil disobedience was not in the programme, they had decided to pay their fines.

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



*Employee well-being is the biggest aspect that we are focused on.
We have an active vaccination campaign.*

C VIJAYAKUMAR
HCL TECHNOLOGIES PRESIDENT & CEO

THUMBNAILS

CarDekho plans to grow:
Automotive platform CarDekho Group is pressing ahead with its international expansion plans with an aim to be present across South-East Asia in the next two years, according to a top company official. The company, which is currently in the process of deploying \$25 million for the expansion programme, will enter Malaysia this year followed by Thailand and Vietnam next year. PTI

Morepen Labs betting:
Morepen Laboratories is betting big on the diagnostics devices segment going forward while building its presence in therapeutic pharmaceutical ingredient (API) segment, a top company official said. The company is also planning expansion of its pharmaceutical complex at Baddi in Himachal Pradesh and is looking at an investment of over Rs 178 crore for it, headed. PTI

Muthoot Microfin plans to raise Rs 350 cr: Muthoot Microfin is planning to raise Rs 350 crore by selling shares during the current year, to fund business growth. Besides, the micro-finance arm of Muthoot Pappachan Group is also looking to raise Rs 100 crore from Tier-II bonds. PTI

Oriental Hotels reports loss: Oriental Hotels Ltd, an associate company of The Indian Hotels Company Ltd, has reported a standalone net loss for the quarter ending 31 March, 2021 at Rs 4.64 crore. The company, which has several hotels, including the Taj Coromandel in Chennai, registered a net loss at Rs 18 lakh during the corresponding quarter last year. PTI

Arzoo plans fintech solution: Arzoo will soon launch a credit-driven fintech solution integrated with its B2B commerce platform that aims to create a capital cushion for about 10,000 partner stores, allowing them certain number of days to pay for the products they bought. PTI

Govt asks ports to waive all charges for carrying oxygen

The government had on Saturday waived customs duty on the import of vaccines

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The government on Sunday said it has directed all major ports to waive all charges for ships carrying oxygen and related equipment amid a massive surge in coronavirus infections across the country.

In a statement, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways said it has directed all major ports to accord the highest priority in the berthing sequence to the vessels carrying consignments of medical grade oxygen, oxygen tanks, oxygen bottles, portable oxygen generators and oxygen concentrators.

"In view of the excessive requirement of oxygen and related equipment in the country, the Government of India has directed all major ports, including the Kamarajar Port Limited, to waive off all charges levied by major port trusts (including vessel-related charges, storage charges, etc.)," the statement said.

Port chairpersons have been asked to personally supervise logistics operations



to ensure unhindered movement of such consignments for berthing of such vessel on top priority in the port, unloading of oxygen-related cargo, coordination with customs and other authorities for speedy clearance / documentation and expeditious evacuation, it further said. "We are facing an emergency situation due to the second wave of Covid-19. The major ports will start implementing the direction from today onwards," a senior government official said.

Meanwhile, Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterway Mansukh Mandaviya said in a tweet, "Ship 'MV Hai Nam 86' reaches @Deendayal_Port, carrying steel cylinder tubes used for

making #Oxygen cylinders. Vessel was given the highest priority for berthing on arrival at Cargo Jetty, owing to oxygen shortage in the country."

In case the vessel is carrying other cargo or containers in addition to the above said oxygen-related cargo, waiver of charges on a pro-rata basis, considering the overall cargo or containers handled at the port, should be provided for oxygen-related cargo to such vessels, the statement said.

The ports ministry will monitor the details of such vessels, cargo and time taken in the port from the time vessel entered in the port limits to exit of cargo from port gate, by public and private steel

plants as against 1500/1700 tonne/day a week earlier," it said.

Steel makers produced 3,474 ton/day liquid oxygen, more than capacity:

Domestic steel industry produced 3,474 metric tonne of liquid medical oxygen (LMO) on Saturday, higher than its daily production capacity to meet the shortage of the life-saving gas being used in the treatment of covid-19 patients.

According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Steel on Sunday, there are 33 oxygen plants in the Indian steel sector, of which 29 are tapped regularly.

The total daily oxygen production capacity of steel plants is 2,834 metric tonne (MT). The production of liquid medical oxygen is 3,474 MT as reported on April 24, 2021, the statement said.

"This is higher than the LMO production capacity because most units have reduced the production of Nitrogen and Argon and only producing liquid medical oxygen. With all these efforts, 2,894 tonnes were dispatched to different states on 24 April by public and private steel

plants as against 1500/1700 tonne/day a week earlier," it said.

The ministry further said all efforts are being made by the industry to enhance the production of liquid medical oxygen and dispensing the same.

All oxygen plants whether in private or public are working 24x7 and dispensing oxygen, it said adding steel plants are filling oxygen cylinders and supplying to the states/hospitals directly.

The statement also informed that the average delivery of liquid oxygen by SAIL has been raised to more than 800 tonne/day.

Around 1,150 tonne liquid medical oxygen was delivered on 23 April, and the quantity delivered by SAIL on Saturday was 960 tonne.

While RINL in 2020-21 fiscal, supplied 8842 ton liquid medical oxygen, the company has supplied over 1,300 tonne oxygen since 13 April till Sunday. RINL has also increased its daily supply from 100 tonne to 140 tonne in last three days.

Govt to meet bidders for 2nd coal mine auction



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 25 APRIL

The Centre will meet prospective bidders on Monday for 67 mines offered for sale in the second tranche of the commercial coal mining auction, industry sources said.

This is the highest number of mines on offer in a particular tranche after the commencement of the auction regime in 2014. The government has called for a pre-bid interaction on 26 April after it postponed the April 15 meeting.

SBI Capswill give a presentation on the tender process while Central Mine Planning and Design Institute (CMPDI) and the nominated authority will also be present there. "As the country is grappling with a raging second wave of covid-19 cases, a final call on the number of coal blocks that may go under the hammer may be taken during the

meeting," the sources said. Nineteen mines were auctioned in the first-ever tranche of commercial coal mining auction held last year with the premium quoted by the successful bidders in the range of 9.5-66.75 per cent. The agreements between the Ministry of Coal and the successful bidders were signed in January this year. Of the 67 mines offered by the ministry, 23 are under Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act and 44 under Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act.

The blocks on offer are a mix of mines with small and large reserves, cooking and non-cooking mines spread across six states - Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh.

The coal ministry had said the government was moving towards adopting a "rolling auction" mechanism.

The government expects that commercial coal mining will bring in new investments, create huge employment opportunities and boost socio-economic development in coal-bearing states, and a market-based coal economy will help the nation become Aatmanirbhar in the availability of the resource.

FPIs pull out ₹ 7,622 crore so far in April because of Covid-19



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

between April 1-23 stood at Rs 7,622 crore.

Previously, FPIs invested Rs 17,304 crore in March, Rs 23,663 crore in February and Rs 14,649 crore in January.

FPIs have been "net sellers" in the equity markets for five weeks in a row now", noted Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research, Morningstar India.

Srivastava said the recent spate of net outflows could be largely attributed to the enormous surge in the Covid-19 pandemic in India, which has led several states to impose restrictions to bring the situation under control.

According to the depositary data, overseas investors pulled out Rs 8,674 crore from equities, but invested Rs 1,052 crore in the debt segment.

The total net withdrawal

added.

For investment in the debt segment, he said, "The uncertainty in the equity markets has made the Indian debt markets relatively attractive from the short-term perspective".

VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services noted that as per the general trend in the market, there is selling in stocks like the banking sector, and buying shares with global linkages like IT, metals and pharma.

"FPIs also are more or less following this trend," he said.

Investments might turn positive again once the COVID-19 cases start declining and as the effects of the vaccination catch on, said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO at Groww.

"We do not see the volatility easing out this week too,

'Earnings & global trends to guide stock market'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

Quarterly earnings, Covid-19-related updates and global trends would drive sentiment in the equity markets this week and indices are likely to witness volatility amid derivatives expiry, say analysts.

Investors would also monitor trends foreign investment, Brent crude prices and rupee movement, they said.

Stock markets have witnessed volatility recently due to a record spike in local coronavirus cases amid the second wave of the pandemic in the country.

The benchmark BSE Sensex declined by 953.58 points or 1.95 per cent in the last week as surging Covid-19 cases and growing localised restrictions continued to dent investor sentiment.

"We do not see the volatility easing out this week too,

thanks to scheduled data and events. First, the monthly expiry of April month derivatives contracts will keep traders on their toes. On the data front, core sector data will be unveiled on April 30. Needless to say, the Covid-related updates will remain on the participants' radar," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking.

With the progress of the earnings season, some big names like Axis Bank, Maruti, Bajaj Auto, Hindustan Unilever and Indusind Bank

will announce their numbers this week.

Other major companies to announce their earnings are Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Hindustan Zinc, Titan Company and Reliance Industries Limited.

"Indian markets are likely to continue with volatility till Covid-19 cases continue the upward trajectory. Investors would continuously watch out government's course of action along with progress on vaccination drive.

"This week, market would

also keep an eye on Fed's monetary policy along with GDP data of the US, which would influence the global market in near term," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd said.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services said that the movement will be stock-specific based on Q4 results and would be dictated by developments on the Covid spread.

Nirali Shah, Head of Equities Research, Samco Securities said that investors across the globe would keep an eye on the outcome of the FOMC meeting. According to Hemant Kanawala, Head Equity, Kotak Mahindra Life Insurance Co. Ltd, "The focus of the investors and nation has shifted to sudden rise in Covid cases. The pace of vaccination will be crucial for quicker normalisation of economic activity."

Oil ministry tells ONGC to sell oilfields

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL



the oil ministry to get ONGC to privatise its oil and gas fields under the Modi government.

In October 2017, the Directorate General of Hydrocarbons, the ministry's technical arm, had identified 15 producing fields with a collective reserve of 791.2 million tonnes of crude oil and 333.46 billion cubic metres of gas, for handing over to private firms in the hope that they would improve upon the baseline estimate and its extraction.

A year later, as many as 149 small and marginal fields of ONGC were identified for private and foreign companies on the grounds that the state-owned firm should focus only on big ones.

The first plan couldn't go through because of strong opposition from ONGC, sources aware of the matter said.

The second plan went up to the Cabinet, which on Feb-

ruary 19, 2019, decided to bid out 64 marginal fields of ONGC. But, that tender got a tepid response, they said adding that ONGC was allowed to retain 49 fields on condition that their performance will be strictly monitored for three years.

The ministry note of April 1, 2021, said two years have elapsed since the Cabinet decision and non-performing fields need to be identified for divestment and privatisation.

It suggested market-friendly bid terms such as lower royalty rates and complete marketing and pricing freedom.

For medium-sized producing fields, the action plan wanted ONGC to identify maturing fields such as Panna-Mukta, Ratna and R-Series in western offshore and Gondar in Gujarat as well as fields such as Daman in western offshore which had upcoming development plans, for stake sale.

The awareness about

Mutual funds add 81 lakh investors account in FY21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL

The mutual fund industry added more than 81 lakh investor accounts in 2020-21, taking the total tally to 9.78 crore, and experts hope that the healthy growth in folios would continue in the ongoing fiscal also.

The industry had added 72.89 lakh investor accounts in 2019-20, according to data from the Association of Mutual Funds in India.

Investors are increasingly acknowledging the importance of making investments in mutual funds for meeting financial goals both long term and short term, Kaustubh Belapurkar, Director Manager Research, Morningstar India said.

"The awareness about

investing in mutual funds has been on the rise over the last many years with the investor awareness programmes, ground work done by mutual funds, financial advisors and distributors in educating and shepherding investors through their investing journey," he added.

Folios are numbers designated to individual investor accounts. An investor can have multiple folios.

According to the data, the number of folios with 43 fund houses rose to 9,78,65,529 at the end of March 2021 from 8,97,46,051 in March 2020, registering a gain of 81.19 lakh folios.

The mutual fund space saw an addition of 1.13 crore investors account in 2018-19, 1.6 crore accounts in 2017-18, over 67 lakh folios in 2016-

17 and 59 lakh in 2015-16.

Prateek Mehta, co-founder and Chief Business Officer of Scripbox, said there are a number of reasons owing to the folio growth, and some of the significant ones are due to the surge in digitisation driven by proliferation of technology, financialisation of savings and ease of transactions.

In addition, there is a clear migration from real estate and gold to financial products.

Improved offerings and larger distribution networks have also accelerated adoption, he added.

Investor account in equity-oriented schemes surged by 24.3 lakh to 6.68 crore at the end of past fiscal from 6.44 crore in March 2020. Besides, debt-oriented scheme folios count rose by 16.16 lakh to 88.4 lakh.

Price between completed, unfinished flats narrows to 3-5 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 25 APRIL



price of completed units is ₹ 4,650 per sq ft, while under-construction flats cost ₹ 4,500 per sq ft.

The average price of ready flats in Kolkata is ₹ 4,465 per sq ft, up 4 per cent from ₹ 4,300 per sq ft for under-construction units.

In Hyderabad also, the price difference is 5 per cent. The average rates of completed and under-construction units are ₹ 4,290 and ₹ 4,075 per sq ft, respectively.

In the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), the average prices of completed and under-construction flats are

completed and under construction homes in MMR was 12 per cent but the same has reduced to just 3 per cent now.

In Bengaluru, the price gap was 12 per cent in 2017 but now, it has shrunk to 4 per cent.



Russia is not necessarily behind 2014 ammunition blast

CZECH PRESIDENT MILOS ZEMAN

SAYING THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE 2014 EXPLOSION WAS AN ACCIDENT SHOULD NOT BE RULED OUT

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, MONDAY 26 APRIL 2021

09

Indonesia navy declares lost sub sunk, all 53 aboard dead

An underwater robot with cameras found the lost submarine lying in at least three pieces

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BANYUWANGI, 25 APRIL

Indonesia's military on Sunday officially said all 53 crew members from a submarine that sank and broke apart last week are dead, and that search teams had located the vessel's wreckage on the ocean floor.

The grim announcement comes a day after Indonesia said the submarine was considered sunk, not merely missing, but did not explicitly say whether the crew was dead.

Officials had also said the KRI Nanggala 402's oxygen supply would have run out early Saturday, three days after the vessel went missing off the resort island of Bali.

"We received underwater pictures that are confirmed as the parts of the submarine, including its rear vertical rudder,



Indonesian Cakra class submarine KRI Nanggala 402 docking at the naval base in Surabaya.

FILE PHOTOGRAPH

der, anchors, outer pressure body, embossed dive rudder and other ship parts," military chief Hadi Tjahjanto told reporters in Bali on Sunday.

"With this authentic evidence, we can declare that KRI Nanggala 402 has sunk and all the crew members are dead,

Tjahjanto said.

An underwater robot equipped with cameras found the lost submarine was lying in at least three pieces on the ocean floor at a depth of 838 meters (2,750 feet), said Adm. Yudo Margono, the navy's chief of staff.

That's much deeper than the KRI Nanggala 402's collapse depth of 200 meters (655 feet), at which point water pressure would be greater than the hull could withstand, according to earlier navy statements.

The wreckage is located 1,500 meters (yards) to the south of the site where the submarine last dove Wednesday, off Bali's northern coast, Margono said.

The underwater robot was deployed by Singaporean vessel MV Swift Rescue provided the images, while the Indonesian vessel KRI Rigel had scanned the area where the submarine was believed to have sank using multibeam sonar and a magnetometer, Tjahjanto said.

The cause of the disappearance was still uncertain. The navy had previously said an electrical failure could

have left the submarine unable to execute emergency procedures to resurface.

An American reconnaissance plane, a P-8 Poseidon, landed early Saturday and had been set to join the search, along with 20 Indonesian ships, a sonar-equipped Australian warship and four Indonesian aircraft.

The German-built diesel-powered KRI Nanggala 402 had been in service in Indonesia since 1981 and was carrying 49 crew members and three gunners as well as its commander, the Indonesian Defense Ministry said. Indonesia, the world's largest archipelago nation with more than 17,000 islands, has faced growing challenges to its maritime claims in recent years, including numerous incidents involving Chinese vessels near the Natuna islands.

Turkey summons US envoy over genocide announcement

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISTANBUL, 25 APRIL

Turkey's foreign ministry has summoned the US ambassador in Ankara to protest the US decision to mark the deportation and killing of Armenians during the Ottoman Empire as genocide.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sedat Onal met with David Satterfield late Saturday to express Ankara's strong condemnation. The statement does not have legal ground in terms of international law and has hurt the Turkish people, opening a wound that's hard to fix in our relations, the ministry said. On Saturday, US President Joe Biden followed through on a campaign promise to recognize the events that began in 1915 and killed an estimated 1.5 million Ottoman Armenians as genocide.

The statement was carefully crafted to say the deportations, massacres and death



marches took place in the Ottoman Empire. We see that pain. We affirm the history. We do this not to cast blame but to ensure that what happened is never repeated," it said.

The White House proclamation immediately prompted statements of condemnation from Turkish officials, although Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is yet to address the issue.

Turkey rejects the use of the word, saying both Turks and Armenians were killed in the World War I-era fighting, and has called for a joint history commission to investigate. For years, American presidents have avoided using genocide to describe what Armenians call Meds Yeghern, or the Great Crime.

The announcement comes as Turkish-American ties suffer from a host of issues. The US has sanctioned Turkish defense officials and kicked Turkey out of a fighter jet program after the NATO member bought the Russian-made S400 defense system.

Ankara is frustrated by Washington's support of Syrian Kurdish fighters linked to an insurgency that Turkey has fought for decades. Turkey has also demanded the extradition of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric accused of orchestrating a bloody coup attempt against Erdogan in 2016. Gulen lives in the US and denies involvement. Erdogan and Biden spoke on the phone Friday for the first time since the US elections.

US yet to find right way to deal with China: Wang

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BEIJING, 25 APRIL



The differences between the United States and China are continuing as Washington is yet to find the right way to deal with Beijing while holding on to misunderstandings, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi has said, warning that playing the "Taiwan card" is "playing with fire".

China hoped that the Biden administration would view its development objectively and rationally, and explore with China a new path of peaceful coexistence and win-win cooperation, Wang, also the State Councillor, said in a video conference with the US think tank Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) on Friday.

We think that the right approach to deal with the US-China relations should be strengthening communication, deepening cooperation, narrowing differences and avoiding confrontations," Wang said.

If confrontations are at the front, then both are going to suffer from loss, he was quoted as saying by the state-run CGTN news channel.

Referring to China's one-party political system headed by the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC), Wang said that China hopes the US would respect and accommodate the path and system that China has independently chosen. "China-US relations are entering a new cross-

road," Wang said.

The key to the future development of bilateral relations depends on if the US can accept the peaceful rise of China, a country that differs in the social system, historical culture and development stage, as well as recognises that Chinese people have the right to pursue a better life, he said.

Reiterating China's positions on Taiwan, Xinjiang and Hong Kong, the Chinese Foreign Minister asked the US not to interfere in China's internal affairs.

The US cannot expect China to cooperate on issues of America's interests while repeatedly challenging China's rights and interests, he said.

Speaking of Taiwan, which China considers as its part, Wang stressed that playing the "Taiwan card" is "playing with fire" and urged the US to strictly abide by the one-China principle and honour its commitments under the three China-US Joint Communiques.

Beijing claims the breakaway province of Taiwan to be part of the mainland that must be reunified with it, even by the use of force.

Armenians vote amidst bitter rivalry

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TIRANA, 25 APRIL

Albanians are voting in parliamentary polls on Sunday amid the virus pandemic and a bitter rivalry between the two largest political parties.

Some 3.6 million eligible voters, including Albanians overseas, will elect 140 lawmakers among some 1,800 candidates from 12 political parties or coalitions and those running independently.

No early or postal voting is allowed and people infected with Covid-19 cannot vote.

Following approval of electoral reforms last year, a new voters' electronic identifica-

tion, a partial depoliticising of the electoral commission and a pilot project on full digitalisation of the voting and counting process are being applied. The hope is that post-communist Albania's 10th parliamentary election will be free and fair.

To date, voting always has been marred by irregularities. Preliminary turnout at 11 am was 16.67 per cent.

Albania, which has a population of 2.8 million and has been a NATO member since 2009, is looking forward to launching full membership negotiations with the European Union later

this year. Sunday's vote is considered as a key milestone on that path.

Prime Minister Edi Rama of the governing Socialists, who are seeking their third consecutive mandate, wants to turn Albania into a champion on tourism, energy, agriculture and digital projects.

Pre-election survey polls showed Rama's left-wing Socialist Party likely to place first. Lulzim Basha of the Democratic Party accuses the government of corruption and links to organized crime, and pledges lower taxes, higher salaries and more social financial support.

Armenian PM resigns ahead of snap parliamentary polls

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

YEREVAN, 25 APRIL

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Sunday announced his resignation to pave the way for scheduled snap parliamentary elections on June 20, today I resign from the position of the Prime Minister of Armenia," Pashinyan said in a televised address to the nation.

"In order to implement the decision on holding snap parliamentary elections on June 20, today I resign from the position of the Prime Minister of Armenia," Pashinyan said in a televised address to the nation.

Earlier in March, Pashinyan said Armenia would hold early parliamentary elections on June 20 and that he would resign in April.

According to the Constitution of Armenia, snap parliamentary elections are possible only when the prime minister resigns and no new prime minister is nominated.

Agency reported.

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An Oscars unlike any other to get underway

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOS ANGELES, 25 APRIL

An Oscars unlike any before will get underway Sunday night, with history on the line in major categories and a telecast retooled for the pandemic.

The 93rd Academy Awards will begin at 8 p.m. EDT on ABC. There will be no host, no audience, nor face masks for nominees attending the ceremony at Los Angeles' Union Station this year's hub for a show usually broadcast from the Dolby Theatre. In contrast with the largely virtual Golden Globes, Zoom boxes have been closed out though numerous international hubs and satellite feeds will connect nominees unable to travel.



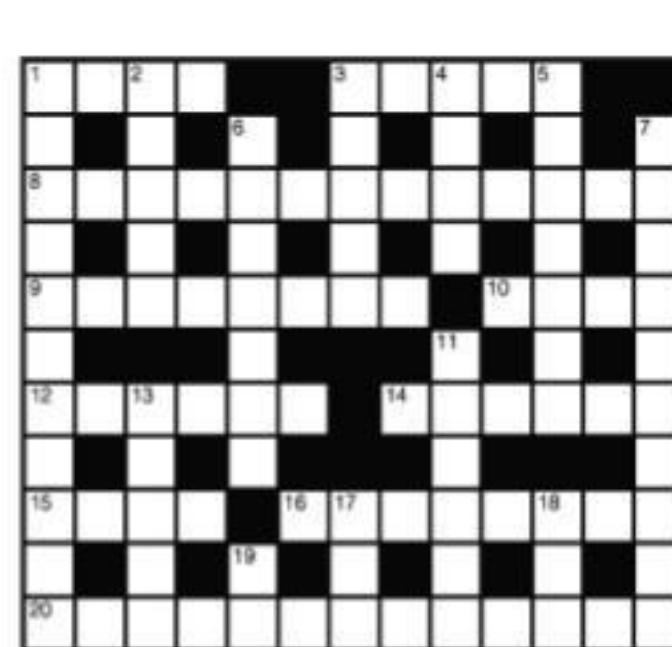
Chinese President Xi Jinping presents a People's Liberation Army flag and the naming certificate to the captain and political commissar of the Hainan in Sanya, on Sunday.

take winners to reach the podium will free up a lot of time in the ceremony.

The Oscars will look more like a movie, Soderbergh has said. The show will be shot in 24 frames-per-second (as opposed to 30), appear more widescreen and the presenters including Brad Pitt, Halle Berry, Reese Witherspoon, Harrison Ford, Rita Moreno and Zendaya are considered "cast members." The telecast's first 90 seconds, Soderbergh has claimed, will "announce our intention immediately." Netflix dominated this year with 36 nominations, including the lead-nominee "Mank," David Fincher's black-and-white drama about "Citizen Kane."

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. Peak (4)
3. Retch (5)
8. Preliminary event (7-6)
9. Channel Island (8)
10. Aquatic bird (4)
12. Submissive (6)
14. Bewilder (6)
15. Spoken exam (4)
16. Green vegetable (8)
20. Erratic, volatile (13)
21. Spacious (5)
22. Chew (4)

DOWN
1. To and fro (4,3,5)
2. Sensational (5)
3. Depend (5)
4. Not at home (4)
5. Relent (4,3)
6. Employee list (7)
7. Relative by marriage (7-2-3)
11. Schoolbag (7)
13. Smooth-taper (7)
14. Prepared (5)
15. Delicate, (7)
16. Green vegetable (8)
17. Prohibition (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1. 11 Dragon, 13 Mutate, 15 Peanut butter, 17 Table, 19 Aim.
3. 2 Rider, 4 Retreat, 5 Drive, 6 Hazelnut, 10 Humour.
7 Fund, 8 Abattoir, 9 Three-wheel-er,
11 Saunter, 14 Turmoil, 16 Event, 17 Table, 19 Aim.

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

BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker



RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson



DADDY DAZE/John Kovaleski



NEED TO KNOW

HOSPITALS

22586226, 22585007
23860626, 23864470, 23864471, 23868709

RAILWAY INQUIRY

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

ROADWAYS INQUIRY

ISBT (General Inquiry):
23868836, 23865181
Deen Dayal Upadhyay
25496320, 25494403
Guru Tegh Bahadur

FLIGHT INQUIRY

AIR INDIA Flight Inquiry and Reservation 18001801407
INDIGO AIRLINES New Delhi City Office 43513185, Call Centre 09910383838, Reservation 41528181
HIMALAYAN ROADWAYS 23861262
Kuwait Airways Flight Inquiry and Reservation 23466262 (City) 2565294 (Airport)

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TESTER'S SOLUTION BY JUDD
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FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

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PAR SCORE 120-130
by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

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We are confident that we will be able to produce a sufficient number of vaccines to achieve the goal of collective immunity



EUROPEAN INTERNAL MARKET COMMISSIONER THIERRY BRETON
EXUDING CONFIDENCE THAT 70% OF INOCULATION GOAL CAN BE ACHIEVED BY MID-JULY

World

WEATHER

CITY	MAX(°C)	MIN(°C)
SINGAPORE	31	26 H
HONG KONG	25	22 CL
TOKYO	18	08 CL
LONDON	13	02 CL
DUBAI	38	26 CL
SAN FRANCISCO	13	07 S
NEW YORK	17	07 S
MOSCOW	11	01 S

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

THUMBNAILS



People gather for a "Celebration of Life Memorial" for rapper DMX on Sunday, in New York. DMX died on 9 April after suffering a cardiac arrest. AGENCE

Spanish man infected 22 people with Covid: A Spanish man with Covid-19 symptoms who coughed on work colleagues and told them I'm going to give you all the coronavirus has been charged with intentionally causing injury after allegedly infecting 22 people. AP

Record number of permits for Everest expeditions: Nepal has issued a record 394 permits so far this year for expeditions to Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, despite the surging coronavirus pandemic. AP

Germany faces lockdown until June: Chancellor Angela Merkel urged Germans to stick to tougher rules imposed in areas with high infection rates, saying measures imposed were needed to break a third wave of infections. AP

Five held amidst investigation of French police station attack

PARIS, 25 APRIL

French authorities detained a fifth person on Sunday in an anti-terrorism investigation seeking to identify potential accomplices and motives after a police official was fatally stabbed at a police station outside Paris.

French police killed the 37-year-old Tunisian attacker shortly after he stabbed the unarmed administrative employee on Friday at the entrance of her police station in the town of Ram-bouillet.

Anti-terrorism prosecutor Jean-Francois Ricard said police are questioning a cousin of the suspect.

The suspect's father, a couple who had provided him with an address for mail and other administration, and another cousin were also being questioned, Ricard said. AP

Putin and Biden may meet in June, Kremlin aide indicates

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, 25 APRIL

Russian President Vladimir Putin and his U.S. counterpart Joe Biden may meet in June, RIA news agency reported on Sunday, citing a Kremlin aide, amid simmering tensions between Moscow and the West. The foreign policy adviser, Yuri Ushakov, said a firm decision on the meeting has not been taken yet.

"We will take a decision depending on many factors," Ushakov, the Russian ambassador to the United States from 1998 to 2008, was quoted as saying. Separately, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, cited by RIA, said on Sunday that Biden's proposal for the summit has been received "positively" and is now under consideration.

Earlier this month, Biden called on Putin to reduce tensions stirred by a Russian military build-up on Ukraine's border

82 killed in Baghdad Covid hospital blaze

Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the fire that broke out in the intensive care unit of a Baghdad hospital tending to severe coronavirus patients.

Negligence on the part of hospital authorities has been blamed for the Saturday night fire, which initial reports suggest was caused when an oxygen cylinder exploded in the ward of Ibn al-Khatib hospital in Baghdad.

Among the dead were at least 28 patients on ventilators battling severe symptoms of the virus, tweeted Ali al-Bayati, a spokesman of the country's independent Human Rights Commission. The commission is a semi-offi-

cial body.

Firefighters rushed to battle the flames that raged across the second floor of the hospital. Civil defense teams put out flames until the early

hours of the morning.

Ambulances transported dozens of wounded. The Health Ministry said at least 200 people were rescued from the scene. Doctors at the scene

were frazzled by the chaos unfolding around them. They said numerous burned bodies were carried out by paramedics from the hospital floor.

By midday Sunday, relatives

were still searching anxiously for unaccounted for loved ones. "Please, two of my relatives are missing. ... I am going to die (without news

about them)," posted a young woman on social media after a fruitless search for her family members. "I hope someone can help us find Sadia Abdul Kareem and Samir Abdul Kareem, they were in the ICU."

The fire came as Iraq grapples with a severe second wave of the coronavirus pandemic with daily virus cases now average around 8,000. PM Mustafa fired key hospital officials after the deadly blaze

In response to the fire, Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi held an emergency meeting at the headquarters of the Baghdad Operations Command, which coordinates Iraqi security forces, according to a statement on his Twitter account.

In the meeting he said the incident amounted to negligence. "Negligence in such matters is not a mistake, but a crime for which all negligent parties must bear responsibility," he said. He gave Iraqi authorities 24 hours to present the results of an investigation.

U.N. envoy to Iraq Jeanine Hennis-Plasschaert expressed "shock and pain" over the incident in a statement and called for stronger protection measures in hospitals.

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North-East Sailing towards choppy waters

Bubbling ethnic tensions have again risen to the surface in Manipur, ahead of the Assembly polls next year



A file photo of the blockade in 2016-17

VAMBEM LABA

The United Naga Council of Manipur has declared that chief minister N Biren Singh's government is not welcome in the state's hill areas. For some time, the CM's programme of "Go to the Hills and Go to the Villages" had succeeded in bringing the administration to the doorsteps of people in those areas. Every month, various officials, ranging from health personnel to people from the revenue department, would be present there.

But Biren Singh went one step further to organise Cabinet meetings in the district headquarters of the hill areas by rotation. By the looks of it, the exercise seemed a good one, but the last meeting was held on 15 January 2021 in the newly created Kampongong district, carved out of Ukhru. The UNC have said recently that henceforth no Cabinet meeting or "Go to the Hills" programme would be allowed in the Naga areas of Manipur. They contended that they have been opposing the creation of new districts in the state but even so, at the end of 2016, then CM O Ibobi Singh of the Congress Party did just that.

For the last five decades, Nagas in Manipur have been opposing the bifurcation of the Naga-dominated Senapati district. The plans to create Sardar Hills district out of Senapati

had led to numerous economic blockades and *bandhs* in the state. The Nagas had signed four Memoranda of Understanding with the state government, first in 1981, followed by 1992, 1996 and 1998. In 2011, the Government of India had intervened and asserted that all stakeholders, including Naga bodies, would be consulted before any new creation.

But Ibobi Singh went two steps further by not only dividing Senapati but also Chandel, Tamenglong, Ukhru and Churachandpur and created Jiribam, adding a total of seven new districts. The only solace he gave the Nagas after splitting Senapati was calling the new district Kangpokpi and not Sadar Hills. The Nagas were up in arms and called for a rollback. With the 2017 Assembly elections already announced, restrictions by the Election Commission of India was cited as an administrative roadblock.

Then a change of guard took place at Imphal with the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government assuming office. The ruling coalition had the support of four legislators belonging to the Naga People's Front, National Socialist Council of Nagaland (I-M)'s over ground political outfit, while the UNC served as a mouthpiece for the Nagas of Manipur in the form of a civil society organisation. Although the NPF maintained a studied silence over the new districts, it egged the UNC on to raise the issue. An accom-

modating Biren Singh government agreed to hold tripartite talks in the presence of the Union home ministry and two such meetings were held in Senapati.

The latest furore erupted after the Manipur Cabinet, on 27 March 2021, decided to hold elections to the Autonomous District Councils in the hill areas including the newly created districts. The UNC released a statement and asked the state government to expunge the resolutions arrived at during its Cabinet meeting in Kampongong. It further stated that deliberations relating to the creation of the new districts are still on and yet to be concluded, even after six rounds of talks at the political level to resolve the issue.

The UNC, which has been calling for the amalgamation of the Naga areas of Manipur, on the lines of the greater Naga Lim demand of the NSCN (I-M), must be in a quandary now. The Centre's interlocutor and Nagaland Governor RN Ravi has also hardened his stance against the NSCN (I-M) leadership over a lot of issues including the plans for Naga Lim.

Elections to the various ADCs have been overdue for about a year now. Putting pressure on the state government to hold the polls soonest is the All Tribal Students Union of Manipur, which had called for a total shutdown of the hill tribal areas

recently. On the other hand, the newly formed Demand Committee on Creation of Autonomous District Councils has urged the Manipur government not to kowtow before the UNC, which they think is aiming to deprive citizens residing in the newly created districts of Pherzawl, Kampongong, Noney, Tengnoupal and Kangpokpi. The DCCADC appealed to the UNC not to stand in the way of the development policy of the state government. It also reminded how the third Naga People's Convention had declared elections to the Autonomous District Councils in 2011 as null and void and prevented the functioning of the Councils in Naga areas.

Biren Singh's predecessor Ibobi Singh was a *persona non grata* in the Naga areas of Manipur during his 15-year-rule. Matters reached a head when he blocked the entry of NSCN (I-M)'s supremo, Thuingaleng Muivah into Manipur. He had barricaded the state's two road entry points at Mao and Jessami and posted police commandos there. An open letter was sent to the Centre that notwithstanding the NSCN (I-M) leadership over a lot of issues including the plans for Naga Lim, Muivah would be arrested if he set foot on Manipuri soil, which was his place of birth and where he was on the "wanted list" of rebel leaders according to a notification issued earlier by the state's home department. A sulking Muivah turned his cavalcade back from just two kilometres of the Mao Gate and returned to Hebron Camp near Dimapur.

The antipathy of the Nagas towards Ibobi Singh reached its nadir when sometime in October 2016, he

flew to Ukhru, Muivah's home district, to inaugurate a hospital. As soon as his helicopter landed, his entourage was fired at and the CM had to return to Imphal.

The NSCN (I-M) retaliated thereafter through its frontal organisation, the UNC, which blocked the two main National Highways that connect Manipur with the rest of India, one via Nagaland and the other through Assam. The oft-repeated reason was the fear of bifurcation of the Naga-dominated Senapati district and creation of a Kuki-dominated Sardar Hills district. The blockade's effect, which ran for almost 100 days from 1 November 2016, was devastating. All essential items including life-saving drugs, baby food and aviation turbine fuel went out of stock in Manipur and the Indian Air Force had to fly in relief materials on numerous occasions.

But then Ibobi Singh pulled the rug from under the feet of his Naga detractors. In a swift midnight operation, he announced the creation of six new districts in the hill areas. While other communities welcomed the CM's move, it amounted to showing a red cloak to a raging bull for the Nagas.

With elections to the Manipur Legislative Assembly due next year, each ethnic group seems to be falling back on its earlier formula of saying no to the demands and aspirations of other tribes or groups. That said, much like Ibobi Singh, Biren Singh's relationship with the Nagas also seems to be sailing towards choppy waters.

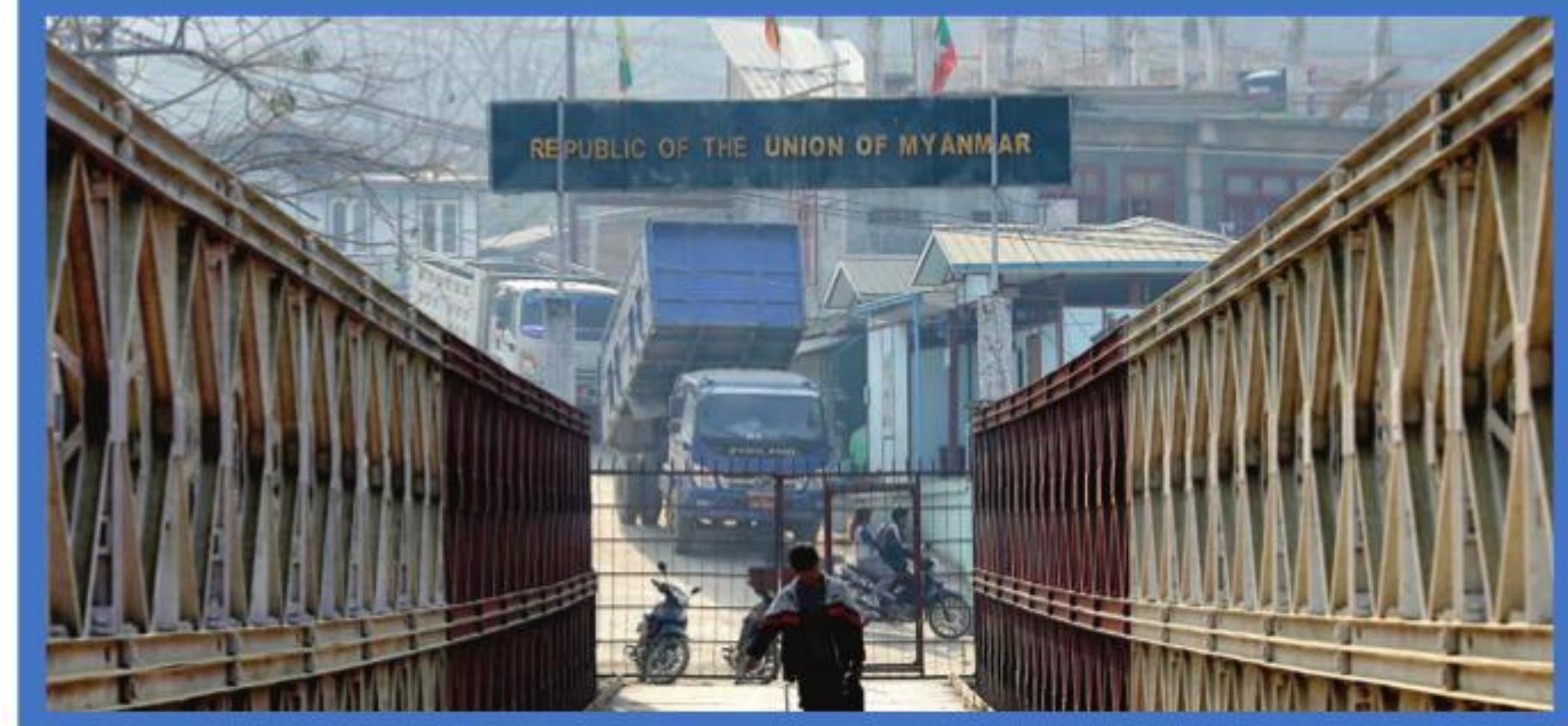
The writer is the Imphal-based Special Representative of *The Statesman*



Manipur CM N Biren Singh

Neighbourly concern

Governments of the North-eastern states bordering Myanmar have expressed sympathy for refugees fleeing military crackdown in that country



NAVA THAKURIA

The military rulers of Myanmar continue drawing international attention for their relentless and brutal crackdowns on peaceful demonstrators since 1 February 2021. Given such a situation, people in its neighbouring North-east Indian states of Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh are feeling sympathetic towards the oppressed in that country.

It is something neither new nor unusual. Myanmar-bordering Indian states have been supporting Burmese refugees since the days of the democratic uprising in the South-east Asian nation under the leadership of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Even during her earlier house

arrest by the military junta, Suu Kyi enjoyed visible support among the people in the North-east.

Historians explain that various ethnic communities living in Indo-Myanmar border localities were politically divided into two nationalities. But they share the same ancestors, ethnicities, religious and historical backgrounds. Communities like Chin, Mizo, Lusai, Chakma, Naga, Kuki, Zomi, Meitei, etc still bear the pain of separation as they were compelled to adopt separate nations.

Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh share an international border of around 1,643 kilometres with Myanmar. Mostly porous and unguarded, the border areas are routinely used by Burmese refugees to get into India (North-eastern militants

take the opposite route) and it is assumed that nearly 50,000 refugees are taking shelter in various Indian localities now.

Since the coup by Tatmadaw, Myanmar has been witnessing uninterrupted protest-demonstrations by common people across the country under a civil disobedience movement. It was called by the jailed National League for Democracy chief Suu Kyi to oppose the armed forces that overthrew a democratically elected government alleging voting frauds.

Armed military personnel have undertaken lethal attacks on demonstrators, who are hitting the streets with their demand to end the military rule and restore the democratically elected government in Naypyidaw. A series of protest programmes in Yan-

gon, Mandalay, Meiktila, Magway and Myingyan resulted in the killing of more than 700 people by the military.

Thousands of civilian protesters have been injured in the brutal crackdowns and more than 3,000 democratic activists, civil society representatives, influential social workers along with journalists have been arrested. Latey, the military authority, led by top general Min Aung Hlaing, has started publishing a list of journalists and social media users who are wanted under various cruel military rules. The Geneva-based media rights body Press Emblem Campaign informed that no less than 65 journalists were detained and arrested by the Tatmadaw with half of them still behind bars.

In a strong message to the military junta, PEC asserted that journalists performed their duties while reporting the unrest and hence, must not be harassed. "The arrested journalists face sedition laws under Section 505 (A) of the Myanmar Penal Code that may put them behind bars for around three years. The military authority run-Myanmar Radio and Television continues to broadcast the names of wanted journalists under the aforementioned rules, which is appalling," said Blaise Lempen, the general secretary of PEC.

Recently, a senior Burmese journalist commented that they apprehended the adverse situation in their country and were ready to face the consequences. Soe Myint, who leads the Mizzima media group, asserted that they would not bow to the military generals but continue reporting about their beloved country's present crisis. He claimed that it is now a frontal war between Tatmadaw and common people, and no longer remains a military versus NLD or Suu Kyi conflict.

The editor of both the English and Burmese versions of Mizzima newspapers, free-to-air Mizzima Television channel and digital daily newspapers added that he might be arrested by the military or even get killed by their

thugs. Myint, who is presently working from hideouts to avoid probable assaults by military personnel, finally admitted that he may go for exile once again in neighbouring countries, including India, if the situation demands so.

Amid reports of more people being tortured including politicians, rights activists and mediapersons in Myanmar, Mizoram chief minister Pu Zoramthanga made an amazing comment in the state Assembly. He declared that if people from Myanmar arrive in Mizoram, Aizawl would welcome them with food and shelter.

Similar sympathetic views were aired by several ethnic groups in the bordering states. Following that the Centre, which otherwise takes time to officially condemn military violence against Burmese protesters, asked the state governments in Aizawl, Imphal, Kohima and Itanagar to act against the "infiltrators" from Myanmar under prescribed laws.

Directing the four Myanmar-bordering governments to maintain a strict vigil and prevent people from entering Indian soil, New Delhi added that no state government has the power to grant refugee status to foreigners as India follows a centralised policy on refugees and is also not a signatory to the United Nations Refugee Convention (1951) or Refugee Protocol (1967).

Even then, the Manipur High Court recently asked the government to arrange safe passage for a group of Myanmar citizens from the bordering town of Moreh to Imphal. Listening to the petitioner for allowing those asylum seekers to approach the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees office in New Delhi, the court directed that no coercive steps or adverse action should be taken against them. They should be stationed under adequate security arrangements till further direction, it said.

The writer is the Guwahati-based Special Representative of *The Statesman*

PLUS POINTS

Reang rehabilitation



The resettlement of Reang (also called Bru) tribal refugees – sheltered in seven relief camps in northern Tripura after they fled from Mizoram 24 years ago following ethnic strife in the adjoining state – started last week; more than 15 months after an agreement was signed in New Delhi, officials said.

It was signed in January last year by the chief secretaries of Mizoram and Tripura, joint secretary of the Union ministry of home affairs Satyendra Garg, and representatives of the refugees in the presence of Union home minister Amit Shah. Officials of Tripura government's revenue and relief department said that according to the agreement, around 35,000 tribal refugees from 5,400 families of the Reang community would be resettled in different districts of Tripura.

District officials of North Tripura and Dhalai said that the first batch of around 650 tribal people would be rehabilitated in two villages under two subdivisions, Ambassa and Longtharai Valley in Dhalai. "The refugees were transported to the new locations from Kanchanpur subdivision and they would now temporarily stay in the newly built makeshift houses in Ambassa and Longtharai Valley before their permanent resettlement," Dhalai district magistrate Govekar Mayur Ratilal said.

Ratilal said that the departments concerned have arranged water, electricity and other basic amenities. Kanchanpur sub-divisional magistrate Chandni Chandran said that on the first day, 424 people of 92 families moved to new locations.

The agreement came in November 2019 after Tripura chief minister Biplab Kumar Deb agreed to accept the 35,000 tribal refugees, thus ending their 24-year-old imbroglio. His government agreed to rehabilitate them in the state and provide financial aid for the same. The Reang refugees would also be included as voters in Tripura as maintained in the agreement, which was signed on 16 January last year.

The Centre announced a Rs 600-crore package for the resettlement of the Reang refugees, recognised as a primitive tribe in Tripura. Of the package, Rs 150 lakh will be earmarked for the Tripura government to acquire land and the rest would be spent on the welfare of the tribal people.

A series of violent agitations against the resettlement was witnessed in November last year in Northern Tripura. The agitations in Kanchanpur and Panisagar districts, both adjoining Mizoram, caused two deaths – firefighter Biswajit Debbarma (41) and protestor Srikantha Das (45) – besides injuring 32 others, including security personnel, firefighters and protesters. The Joint Movement Committee, comprising two organisations – Nagarik Suraksha Mancha (Citizen Protection Forum) and Mizo Convention – both representing non-tribals and the Lusai people, had spearheaded the agitations opposing the resettlement of the internally displaced Reang refugees in Kanchanpur subdivision. –IANS

GHADC poll results



The Opposition Congress Party emerged as the single-largest party in the 29-member Garo Hills Autonomous District Council in Meghalaya, winning 12 seats while the ruling National People's Party won 11 seats, officials said. The election to the GHADC was held on 12 April.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, a junior partner of the NPP-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance, bagged two seats while the Garo National Council secured one and three seats went in favour of independent candidates. NPP sources said that the BJP is most likely to support it and the party is also trying to get the support of the three independents in order to govern the GHADC.

Meghalaya has three tribal autonomous district councils – the Khasi Hills Autonomous District Council, Jaintia Hills Autonomous District Council and GHADC – for the socio-economic development of tribal people, who constitute 86.15 per cent of the state's population of three million. –IANS



England off-spinner Dom Bess (*in photo, left*) has revealed that he had started "hating cricket" after his prolonged stay inside a bio-bubble during the Test tour of India earlier this year. "After India I had a good break away from it, because I really did start hating cricket," Bess was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. "It got too much at times, certainly in that bubble in India, there's a lot of pressure going on and it was really important for me to come back and get away from it," he said.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

CSK Chairman L Sabaretnam dead: L Sabaretnam, director and chairman of Chennai Super Kings Cricket Limited, and a cement industry veteran, died here on Sunday following a brief illness, family sources said. He was 80.

Tye leaves Rajasthan Royals camp: Rajasthan Royals' Australian pacer Andrew Tye on Sunday flew back home due to "personal reasons" making him the fourth overseas recruit of the franchise to pull out of the ongoing Indian Premier League.

FC Goa eye maiden win: Back-to-back defeats may have dented their confidence but FC Goa's maiden campaign in the AFC Champions League (ACL) can still be revived if they beat Al Rayyan of Qatar in a reverse fixture in Margao on Monday.

Amit settles for bronze: Olympic-bound Indian boxer Amit Panghal (52kg) settled for a bronze medal at the Governor's Cup in St Petersburg, Russia after going down to world champion and familiar foe Shakhsabdin Zoirov in the semifinals.

Real Madrid slip in title race: Another stumble by Real Madrid has cleared the path for Atletico Madrid and Barcelona to dethrone the sitting Spanish league champion. Zinedine Zidane's side produced a toothless attacking performance in drawing at home with Real Betis 0-0 on Saturday, its second scoreless stalemate in three rounds.

Jadeja shines in Super Kings win

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 25 APRIL



The irrepressible Ravindra Jadeja (*in photo*) blasted an IPL record-equalling 37 runs in one over and then grabbed three big wickets in an outstanding all-round display as Chennai Super Kings crushed Royal Challengers Bangalore by 69 runs here on Sunday. Jadeja pummelled 62 off 28 balls and lifted CSK to 191 for four after skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni opted to bat in a top-of-the-table clash. Then, with his slow-left arm spin bowling, the star all-rounder picked up the important wickets of AB de Villiers and Glenn Maxwell to derail RCB's run chase on a sluggish Wankhede pitch.

After a cracking start that saw them cross 50 in five overs, RCB were stopped at 122 for nine in 20 overs. The immensely-talented Devdutt Padikkal top-scored with a blazing 34 off just 15 balls. Veteran South African leg-spinner Imran Tahir (2/16) picked up two wickets for CSK while giving away very few runs. Jadeja began the final over of CSK innings by clobbering four consecutive sixes off Harshal Patel before adding another off the fifth ball.

He smashed the last ball over square leg for four as Harshal, who had figures of 3 for 14 going into the final over, finished with 4-0-51-3. Jadeja, batting at No.5, was yet to open his account when he was dropped by Dan Christian off Washington Sundar. Playing for RCB,

before Harshal delivered a double blow for RCB in the 14th over, getting rid of Suresh Raina (24) and the former South African captain off successive deliveries. Raina belted three sixes during his 18-ball knock which gave CSK the move-on after the openers had set up a good platform with a 74-run partnership.

Ambati Rayudu, who came in at No.4, hit a huge six in his 14 and looked good for more before he holed out off Harshal's bowling a few deliveries after appearing to have hurt himself while stretching to get back to the crease. Batting first, Gaikwad and du Plessis never let go of a scoring opportunity and put away the bad deliveries. Gaikwad, who began slowly, caught up with the South African veteran with some superb shots. The CSK openers raced to 51 in six overs with du Plessis and Gaikwad matching each other shot for shot. The RCB pacers -- Kyle Jamieson and Mohammad Siraj -- could not make much of an impression.

SCOREBOARD

Chennai Super Kings Innings:
Ravindra Gaikwad c Jamieson b Chahal 33
Faf du Plessis c Christian b Patel 50
Suresh Raina c Padikkal b Patel 24
Ambati Rayudu c Jamieson b Patel 14
Ravindra Jadeja batting 62
MS Dhoni batting 2
Extras: (lb-1, w-3, nb-2) 6
Total: (For 4 wickets, 20 Overs) 191
Bowling: Siraj 4-0-32-0; Jamieson 3-0-31-0; Chahal 3-0-24-1; Saini 2-0-27-0; Patel 4-0-51-3; Christian 2-0-12-0; Sundar 2-0-13-0.
Royal Challengers Bangalore Innings:
Virat Kohli c Dhoni b Curran 8

Devdutt Padikkal c Raina b Thakur 34
Washington Sundar c Gaikwad b Jadeja 7
Glenn Maxwell 6 Jadeja 22
AB de Villiers b Jadeja 4
Daniel Christian run out 1
Harsih Patel b Tahir 0
Naveen Jain c Raina b Tahir 2
Yuvendra Chahal not out 8
Mohammed Siraj not out 12
Extras: (lb-3, w-5) 12
Total: (For 9 wickets, 20 Overs) 122
Bowling: Chahar 2-0-25-0; Curran 4-0-35-1; Thakur 4-0-11-1; Jadeja 4-1-13-3; Tahir 4-0-16-2; Bravo 2-0-19-0.

Punjab Kings seek to build winning momentum against Knight Riders

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD, 25 APRIL



Their three-match losing streak finally over, Punjab Kings would seek to build a winning momentum when they face the struggling Kolkata Knight Riders in an IPL match in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Punjab made a winning start but then slumped to three straight losses before producing a clinical show to beat defending champions Mumbai by nine wickets on Friday, and they would look to notch up another triumph against KKR which have suffered four defeats on the trot.

Captain KL Rahul has been one of the few consistent performers in the formidable-looking Punjab batting unit and he once again led by example against MI with an unbeaten 60, his third fifty in five games.

Mayank Agarwal has been the other main performer and the return to form of Universe Boss' Chris Gayle against MI with a 43 not out should be good news for Punjab.

But Deepak Hooda, who has not done much after one impressive innings, will have to step up if Punjab want to perform consistently.

Gill has scored just 80 runs from his five innings. Morgan is even worse with just 45 from five innings. Sunil Narine has been used to boost to KKR innings on two occasions but the West Indian has not delivered till now with scores of 4 and 6. In the bowling department, Russell, Varun Chakravarthy and Prasidh Krishna have been doing reasonably well with 7, 6 and 5 wickets respectively. Cummins has been underwhelming performance so far with four wickets from five matches.

Match starts at 7.30 PM.

SRH restrict DC to 159/4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 25 APRIL



Prithvi Shaw (*in photo*) hit a sparkling fifty but Delhi Capitals frittered away a bright start to settle for 159 for four against SunRisers Hyderabad in their IPL match, here on Sunday.

The 81-run stand between openers Shaw (53) and Shikhar Dhawan (28) had set a perfect platform for DC for a huge total but Hyderabad spinners Rashid Khan (1/31 in 20 overs) and Jagadeesha Suchith changed the course of the innings with their tight spells.

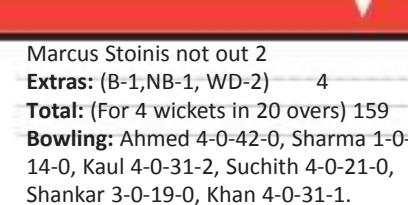
Skipper Rishabh Pant (37) and Steve Smith (34 not out) raised a 58-run stand for the fourth wicket to ensure a fighting total after electing to bat.

Shaw began with a hat-trick of fours off pacer Khaleel Ahmed. Those were breath-taking strokes, straight out of text book.

There was sheer elegance in his cover drives, both along the ground and the ones played over the field as Shaw backed his timing with precision and power.

His six off pacer Siddarth Kaul over long on and the ramp shot over short third-man off the same bowler bore testimony to his supreme touch.

Dhawan was happy playing the second fiddle as the Capitals put on board 51 without loss in Powerplay.



SCOREBOARD

Delhi Capitals Innings:
Prithvi Shaw run out 53
Shikhar Dhawan b R Khan 28
Rishabh Pant c Suchith b S Kaul 37
Steve Smith not out 34
S Hetmyer c Williamson b S Kaul 1

Marcus Stoinis not out 2
Extras: (B-1, NB-1, WD-2) 4
Total: (For 4 wickets in 20 overs) 159
Bowling: Ahmed 4-0-42-0, Sharma 1-0-14-0, Kaul 4-0-31-2, Suchith 4-0-21-0, Shankar 3-0-19-0, Khan 4-0-31-0.

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Contact:

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Directorate of Information and Publicity, Government of NCT of Delhi

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