



COMBAT TERRORISM,
INTENSIFY TIES: EAM
TO BIMSTEC NATIONS

P5



MISOGYNY IS ALIVE
AND THRIVING

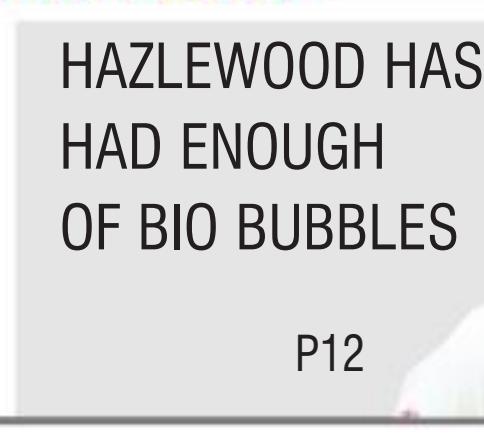
P7



PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

JOE BIDEN LETS
TRUMP-ERA H-1B
VISA BANS EXPIRE

P10



HAZLEWOOD HAS
HAD ENOUGH
OF BIO BUBBLES

P12



WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Strong surface winds during the day. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 34 and 17 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: NIL

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 53% Min: 19%
TEMPERATURE
Max: 34.0°C (+1) Min: 18.4°C (0)
SUN RISES SUN SETS
06:09 hrs 18:40 hrs
MOON RISES MOON SETS
23:57 hrs 10:27 hrs

THUMBNAILS



A woman quenches her thirst on hot Thursday afternoon in the Capital. ■ SUBRATA DUTTA

EC bars A Raja from campaigning for 48 hours: The Election Commission on Thursday banned DMK leader A Raja from campaigning for 48 hours after finding him guilty of violating the model code of conduct by making alleged derogatory remarks against Tamil Nadu CM. In its order, the poll panel reprimanded Raja and removed his name from the list of DMK's "star campaigners" and debarred him from campaigning for 48 hrs "with immediate effect". P4

Pak rejects bid to import cotton from India: In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected the recommendation of the Economic Coordination Committee to import cotton and sugar from India, with two senior ministers saying there can be no normalisation of ties with New Delhi until it reverses its decision in 2019 to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. P9

Kovind recovering well after bypass surgery: President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday said he is recovering well after his bypass surgery and thanked doctors and caregivers. The president said he was touched by messages from citizens and leaders from across the country and abroad wishing him speedy recovery.

Those above 45 begin getting Covid jabs

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

Covid-19 vaccination for all people aged 45 years and above commenced from Thursday, the Union Health Ministry said.

More than 6.5 crore vaccine doses have been administered across the country so far to frontline workers, health-care workers, those above 60 and for people aged above 45 with specified co-morbid conditions.

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 with healthcare workers (HCWs) getting inoculated and vaccination of frontline workers (FLWs) started from February 2.

The next phase of Covid-



19 vaccination commenced from March 1 for those over 60 years of age and for people aged 45 and above with specified co-morbid conditions.

The ministry said so far vaccine doses have been administered to 82,60,293 HCWs (1st dose), 52,50,704 HCWs (2nd dose), 91,74,171 FLWs (1st dose) and 39,45,796 FLWs (2nd dose), 78,36,667 (1st dose) and 17,849 (2nd dose).

As on Day-75 of the vacci-

GST mop-up at record high of ₹1.23L cr in Mar

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

GST collections in March touched a record high of over Rs 1.23 lakh crore, a 27 per cent growth over the year-ago period, the Finance Ministry said on Thursday.

"GST revenues crossed above Rs 1 lakh crore mark at a stretch for the last six months and a steep increasing trend over this period are clear indicators of rapid economic recovery post pandemic," the Ministry said.

Closer monitoring against fake-billing, deep data analytics, income tax and customs IT and effective tax administration have also contributed to increase in tax revenue. P1

Details on Page 8

The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION



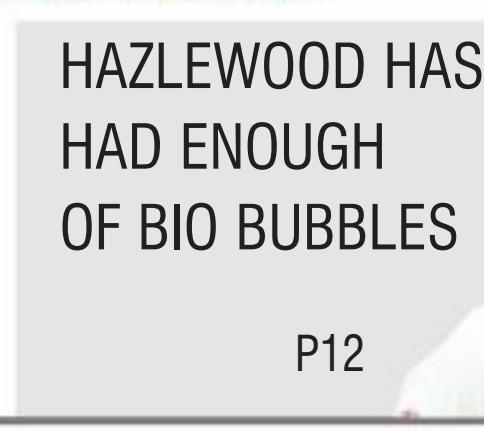
MISOGYNY IS ALIVE
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Bengal phase 2: Temperatures run high

Overall voter turnout at 80.43 p.c till 5 p.m.; sporadic incidents of violence as TMC accuses BJP, Central forces of voter intimidation

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA/BANKURA/EAST & WEST MIDNAPORE/SOUTH 24 PARGANAS, 1 APRIL

POLLING POTBOILER
30 SEATS IN PHASE II
171 CANDIDATES
10,620 POLLING STATIONS

The phase 2 polling of Assembly elections in West Bengal recorded an overall voter turnout of 80.43 per cent till 5 p.m. amidst sporadic violence with the ruling Trinamul Congress accusing the BJP and Central forces of stopping polling agents and voters from entering polling booths.

Trinamul traded allegations of booth capturing in Nandigram, where chief minister Mamata Banerjee slammed the Election Commission over inaction to complaints filed by her party and threatened to move court over it as well as raised the issue to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar over phone.

Tension erupted in Nandigram, where Miss Banerjee is locked in a high-stakes electoral battle with her former lieutenant Suvendu Adhikari, who has switched to the BJP, with Trinamul Congress accusing the BJP and the Central forces of stopping voters from casting their votes.

Later in the afternoon, Miss Banerjee rode her wheelchair to the polling booth at Boyal primary school and seated herself outside the booth while the situation aggravated outside.

Mr Sudip Jain, deputy Election Commissioner in charge of Bengal inquired about the Nandigram incident from Chief Electoral Officer Ariz Aftab while seeking information from Miss Banerjee at the booth. The Commission has also sought a detailed report from the district administration in connection to this incident.

Kovind recovering well after bypass surgery: President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday said he is recovering well after his bypass surgery and thanked doctors and caregivers. The president said he was touched by messages from citizens and leaders from across the country and abroad wishing him speedy recovery.



"There was disturbance between two groups following which tension had ensued. But re-enforcement of forces brought the situation under control," said Mr Aftab. Till 5 p.m., Bankura recorded the highest voter turnout of 82.92 per cent followed by East Midnapore with 81.23 per cent while South 24 Parganas recorded a voter turnout of 79.65 percent and West Midnapore saw a turnout of 78.02 per cent. In Nandigram, 80.79 per cent voters cast their votes.

"Polling was overall peaceful except a few stray incidents. Twenty eight people were arrested in connection to two incidents in Keshpur in West Midnapore," said Mr Aftab adding that decision on re-poll will be taken after scrutiny tomorrow.

Earlier, Mr Adhikari's car was attacked, and stones were pelted while he was visiting booths in the constituency. Two separate stone-pelting incidents took place in Tapakura and Satengabari in Nandigram.

A BJP worker was found hanging at his home at Bhekutia in Nandigram, triggering tension in the constituency. The deceased has been identified as Uday Sankar Dubey, a worker of IIT-Kharagpur and his family members lodged a complaint with the police stating that he committed suicide as some unidentified Trinamul workers had threatened him after he attended Mithun Chakraborty's rally in the area.

Soon after polling started it was reported that a TMC worker, identified as Uttam Dolui, was stabbed to death in the early hours today. SP of West Midnapore said that some unidentified miscreants killed a TMC worker with a sharp weapon last night in Dadpur. Eight have been arrested in connection with the murder.

A BJP polling agent at booth number 173 in Keshpur was beaten up allegedly by TMC workers and was rushed to a hospital. BJP leader Tanay Ghosh's car was also vandalised.

Bharti Ghosh, BJP candidate from Debra constituency, alleged that her polling agent was surrounded by TMC goons in Nowpara booth no 22 of Anchal-1 who were not letting him inside the booth.

There are a few spo-

radic incidents of violence in Chandipur, Nandigram, Keshpur, Ghatal and Chandrakona. Few media persons were attacked and their vehicles were damaged.

In the Gosaba area of South 24 Parganas, clashes were reported between Trinamul and BJP supporters while in the Mahisadal seat, the Trinamul alleged BJP workers had stopped voters from going to the polling stations.

An overall peaceful polling was witnessed in Bankura. In booth number 73 and 74 of Sonamukhi, trouble ensued after BJP polling agent was allegedly beaten up with sticks by Trinamul workers but police reached the spot bringing the situation under control.

Polling in a few booths were stalled for few hours due to technical problems. A total of 87 VVPATs were replaced while 12 EVMs reported malfunctioning in the district. CPI-M delegation led by senior leader Rabindra Deb complained to the EC against BJP and Trinamul workers for blocking voters from entering polling booths in Keshpur, Chandrakona and Ghatal.

More reports on Page 4

Sticks, rods and bricks: Forces prevent clashes in Nandigram



Central force personnel during violence at Boyalgram during election at Nandigram AC in East Midnapur on Thursday.

SAILENDRA MAL

SOUMYADIP MULLICK
NANDIGRAM, 1 APRIL

Hundreds of people gathered on a field with sticks, rods, bricks and bamboos, ready for a battle—such was the scenario in Boyal village in Nandigram where polling though began on a sombre note in the morning, turned bitter in the afternoon as TMC and BJP supporters clashed over allegations of rigging and booth capturing which could have well turned into a riot had large companies of CRPF not intervened at the right time.

With deployment of about 2,200 CAPF personnel, Nandigram people who put up a fierce resistance in 2007 refusing to allow law enforcement personnel inside their territory, today felt safe as they began gathering outside the 355 polling booths when the clock struck 6:30 a.m. However, little did one know that morning doesn't always show the day.

Just as the overall polling process was going smooth except for some isolated incidents, Boyalgram village turned into a battlefield as villagers who are apparently divided on the basis of political preferences, mainly TMC and BJP, charged at each other. Furious mob gathered on the field outside booth no. 7 at Boyal Mukta Prathamik Vidyalay, shouting slogans of "Jai Sri Ram" and "Mamata Chor Hai".

With trouble on the verge of breaking out, Trinamul supremo Mamata Banerjee reached the spot and stormed into the polling booth, and installed herself inside for the next two hours.

A huge contingent of CAPF arrived at the spot where the agitated villagers began raising a war cry. A section of villagers alleged that BJP booth agents chased their TMC counterparts out of the polling booth and began rigging. They accused Central forces of acting with bias by not taking any action despite receiving complaints.

"We demand repolling in this booth" shouted a section of the villagers who belonged to the part

of the village that is dominated by the minority.

On the opposite side where the Hindu population is the majority strength, men women and kids ran towards the booth while calling out to the rest to join them.

Between these two parts of the village stood a huge empty field that turned into an arena as both sides engaged in scuffle and fist fight, leaving the Central forces to call for more personnel to separate the two factions and prevent the break-out of a possible riot.

Police too reached the spot but tension ran high as the mob kept increasing in strength.

Mamata called Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and warned that a disaster is about to break out and Centre will have to take responsibility for this as Central forces failed to act, she alleged. Banerjee quickly wrote a complaint letter which she told the Press, will be deposited with the EC as an FIR.

After two hours of heated exchanges and vile slanging, the CAPF was able to contain the situation while Election Commission general observer reached the spot and spoke to Mamata Banerjee, assuring her of taking necessary steps.

However amidst all the action, what caught attention was, voters resuming to enter booths to cast votes even though the premises outside was still teeming with trouble. Nandigram witnessed 80.79% voter turn-out.

Steep rise: India logs 72,330 new cases

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

India recorded 72,330 new cases in the last 24 hours, highest since October 2020, taking the total tally to 1,22,21,665 on Thursday.

The active cases have now increased to 5,84,055 comprising 4.78 per cent of the total infections, while the recovery rate has further dropped to 93.89 per cent.

The death toll increased to 1,62,927 with 459 daily new fatalities. The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 1,14,74,683, while the case fatality rate stood at 1.33 per cent, the data stated. A total of 24,47,98,621 samples were

tested for Covid-19 up to 31 March. Of these, 11,25,681 samples were tested on Wednesday, said the Indian Council of Medical Research.

India fought through the first wave of infection six months ago and recorded a highest single-day spike of 93,617 cases on 16 September. The highest number of deaths recorded in a day were 1,169 on 15 September.

Eight states—Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Punjab and Madhya Pradesh continue to report steep rise in daily new cases, the Health Ministry said.

India today demanded a comprehensive and expedited mechanism to expeditiously investigate the origin of coronavirus, days after the WHO came out with a report on it that failed to meet expectations of the US, the UK and several other countries, which voiced concerns over the findings.

Contingents of the Royal Bhutan Army and the Sri Lankan Army will also take part in the exercise.

Exercise is "Robust Peace-Keeping Operations". Military observers from the US, UK, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Singapore will also be in attendance throughout the exercise.

The Indian contingent will comprise 30 personnel, including officers, JCOs and jawans of a Battalion from the DOGRA Regiment. Contingents of the Royal Bhutan Army and the Sri Lankan Army will also



I am used to such protests by TMC goons. They are all followers of Mamata begum (Banerjee).

BJP NANDIGRAM CANDIDATE SUVENDU ADHIKARI

AFTER HIS MOTORCADE WAS GHERAOED AS TMC SUPPORTERS SHOUTED SLOGANS AGAINST HIM

Corona cases jump to 2,790 in Capital, 9 fatalities logged

CM to hold urgent meeting today to prepare an action plan to curb continuing surge

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

Amid continuing surge in coronavirus infections in Delhi, the city today recorded 2,790 fresh Covid cases, the highest daily count this year, while 9 more people died due to the pathogen, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The positivity rate mounted to 3.57 per cent in the midst of a continuing spike in coronavirus cases in the last few weeks.

The national capital had reported 1,819 coronavirus cases yesterday with a positivity rate of 2.71 per cent, while 11 more fatalities were then logged due to the infection.

The number of Delhi's cumulative Covid cases today rose to 6,65,220 while its toll climbed to 11,036, the health bulletin said. Over 6.43 lakh patients have recovered from the virus in the city so far.

The number of active cases rose to 10,498 from 8,838 the previous day, the bulletin stated. A total of 78,073 tests, including 47,026

RT-PCR tests and 31,047 rapid antigen tests, were conducted to detect today's new cases.

Delhi had recorded 992 cases last Tuesday, 1,904 cases on Monday and 1,881 cases on Sunday. It had reported 1,558 cases last Saturday and 1,534 cases on Friday. On 8 December last year, the city had recorded 3,188 cases and 2,706 cases respectively. The city's Covid positivity rate was 2.70 per cent last Tuesday, 2.77 per cent on Monday, 2.35 per cent on Sunday, 1.70 per cent on Saturday, and 1.80 per cent on Friday.

The number of daily cases had started to come down in the city in February. On 26 February, the month's highest daily count of 256 cases was recorded. However, the cases began to rise again in Delhi in March, and it has been steadily surging over the past few weeks.

Meanwhile, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal will tomorrow hold an "urgent" meeting with the health minister and officials of departments concerned to prepare an action plan to meet the challenge of Covid

surge in the city.

"CM office to hold an urgent meeting at 4 pm tomorrow (Friday), Health Minister Satyendar Jain and other department officials to remain present," said a statement from the chief minister's office.

The CM will deliberate on preparing an action plan to fight the pandemic, including issues like number of containment zones, vaccination drive, and requisite availability of hospital beds, it said.

"The chief minister is keeping a close eye on the situation in Delhi, and is ensuring a daily review by receiving regular updates from the officials," it said.

According to orders given by Kejriwal, the health department has increased its vigilance measures, and has taken a number of steps to combat the Covid pandemic, it said.

In 33 private hospitals, there has been an increase of 25 per cent in the number of ICU beds as well as those in the normal wards, the statement said.

Surveillance and monitoring teams have been closely observing the situation at

the district level, it said. Moreover, tracing of up to a minimum of 30 contacts of those who have tested positive will be done. They will also be required to isolate themselves so that the spread can be contained at the initial stage, it stated.

The statement also said that it has been observed that the Covid protocols and guidelines issued by the Delhi government were not being followed at a number of public places, and some people have been showing negligence regarding wearing masks.

The CM has announced that stringent action will be taken against those found without masks in public, it said. Following the CM's orders, the daily target of conducting as many as 80,000 tests has been set, it said.

The number of Covid vaccination centres has been increased to around 600, the statement said. The vaccination of people above the age of 45 started from today. Those who could not register for vaccination can directly walk into a centre between 3 pm and 9 pm and get inoculated against Covid, it added.

3rd phase of COVID vaccination for people aged above 45 begins in Delhi

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

The third phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive, which will span 65 lakh people aged above 45 in the national capital, began on Thursday.

The inoculation drive is taking place at a time when coronavirus cases have again mounted in the last few weeks.

In the first phase, starting January 16, over 3.6 lakh beneficiaries comprising healthcare workers and frontline workers, were vaccinated in Delhi.

Jabs were given to persons aged 60 and above, and those in the 45-59 age bracket with comorbidities in the second phase.

"In the third phase, people aged 45 and above as on January 1, 2022, are eligible for vaccination, irrespective of their comorbidity status," a senior government official said.

The vaccination centres, both at government and private facilities, will operate from 9 am to 9 pm.

Only registered beneficiaries can be given vaccine shots between 9 am and 3 pm. The unregistered ones can take the jabs from 3 pm to 9 pm. They just need to carry their Aadhaar card or any other valid identity proof, an official said.

The third phase of the COVID-19 vaccination drive will span 192 health facilities, including 136 private hospitals in the national



capital.

The vaccines will be administered free of cost at government hospitals and health centres, while up to Rs 250 per dose will be charged at private health facilities.

Dr Sahar Qureshi, Medical Superintendent, Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital, Saket, said, "We commenced with phase three of the vaccination drive. The footfall was lesser than expected (if we compare with March 1) since it was a working day. However, this will rise during the upcoming long weekend, starting Friday."

"There are 10 vaccination centres being run here. We have enough vaccines in stock and can easily go up to 2,000 shots daily," she said.

From online registrations, the hospital is also taking walk-in beneficiaries and registering them on the spot, Qureshi said.

At some vaccination centres, a rush of beneficiaries was witnessed, but at many other sites

the response was moderate. On Wednesday, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain had said that 65 lakh eligible beneficiaries (aged above 45) will be given a coronavirus vaccine at 500 sites, starting Thursday.

"We have enough vaccines available. The number of eligible beneficiaries is quite large. We will make efforts to complete the inoculation as soon as possible," he had said.

According to North Delhi District Magistrate Ishika Khosla, training has been imparted to ASHA and anganwadi workers, who will visit areas in their district, to encourage people to take the vaccine.

Appointment for vaccination can be booked through the Co-WIN 2.0 portal. A mobile number cannot be used for making more than four registrations.

People eligible for vaccination also have to carry their photo identity cards, including Aadhaar card and voter card.

Schools to remain closed for all classes in new academic session till further orders

PTI
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

The Delhi government on Thursday announced that students of any class should not be called to schools physically in the new academic session till further orders.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) also told schools that teaching and learning activities may commence from April 1 for students through digital mode for academic session 2021-22.

"It is clarified that students of any class should not be called physically in school for the academic session 2021-22 till further orders. However, teaching learning activities may be commenced from 1 April 2021 for the students through digital modes for the new academic session," the DoE said in an official order.

The Directorate of Education (DoE) also told schools that teaching and learning activities may commence from April 1 for students through digital mode for academic session 2021-22 till further orders. However, teaching learning activities may be commenced from 1 April 2021 for the students through digital modes for the new academic session," the DoE said in an official order. The directive by DoE comes following a surge in coronavirus cases in the national capital. Schools in Delhi closed in March last year ahead of a nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of novel coronavirus. While several states partially reopened schools in October, the Delhi government allowed schools to reopen for students in classes 9 to 12 for practical works and remedial lessons, from January 18 and February 5.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

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

In the Court of Anurag Chhabra Civil Judge-03 Room No. 15 Central District Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Suit No. SCJ/11/2020

Shubham Housing Development Fin. Co.

—Plaintiff Versus Rajiv Kumar ETC —Defendant

To, 1. Ms. Shuktala Das, w/o Sh. Ajit Kumar Das, r/o H. No. 1334, Gali Ganesh Katra No. 2, Shor Kothi, Subzi Mandi, Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007.

Also: At: Municipal No. 1232, 3rd Floor, Property No. 1866-1877 (Old), (New No. 1231-1237, Sgria Kothi, Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007).

2. Sh. Ajit Kumar, s/o Sh. Anand Das, r/o H. No. 1334, Gali Ganesh Katra No. 2, Shor Kothi, Subzi Mandi, Malka Ganj, Delhi-110007.

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 27th day of April 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 24th day of February, 2021.

Additional District Judge West District-03 Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

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

In the Court of Shivali Sharma, Additional District Judge West District-03

Room No. 307 (Central)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

CIV/D/11/2017/2017

Mrs. Priti Jain

—Plaintiff Versus Ms. Beena Pandey (Alias Veena)

—Defendant

Ms. Beena Pandey, (Proprietor of Sushil Auto) Village-Kodari, Tehsil-Besi, Siddhart Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-272153

Whereas you are intentionally evading service of summons, it is hereby notified that if you shall not defend the case on the 27th day of April 2021, the day fixed for the final disposal, it will be heard and determined ex parte.

Given under my hand and the Seal of the Court on this 24th day of February, 2021.

Additional District Judge West District-03 Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 27 OF THE INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

In the matter of Test Case No. 33/2021

Shri Praveen Aggarwal

Petitioner Versus State & Ors.

—Respondents To, All Concerned

In the matter of estate of Late Dr. Sarla Gupta, d/o Late Sh. Brijendra Dass, r/o 102, Swasthya Vihar, Delhi-110092.

Whereas Sh. Praveen Aggarwal, s/o Ram Saroop, r/o B-107, Swasthya Vihar, East Delhi, Shakarpur Delhi-110092 has filed a petition under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for grant of Letter of Administration in respect of the estate of deceased Lt. Smt. Prem Lata Jain, w/o Kesri Chand Jain r/o H. No. F-24-A, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016, who died on 08-03-2003 at has been made by Sh. Kesri Chand Jain, s/o Late Sh. Mishri Lal Jain, r/o F-24-A, Hauz Khas Enclave, New Delhi.

Whereas the aforesaid case is fixed for hearing on 09-04-2021 at 11:00 am, before the Joint Registrar (Judicial) and 21-05-2021 at 10:30 am. This citation is issued, in terms of Section 28 of the said Act to all persons claiming to have any interest in the properties of the said deceased to come to this Court file objections, if any, and take part in the proceedings on the date specified above for the grant of Letter of Administration.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court on this 24th day of March, 2020.

Addl. District Judge-01 (West)

Room No. 307 (Central)

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Seal of the Court

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 11 OF ACT NO. VIII OF 1890 OF GUARDIAN &WARD ACT.

In the COURT OF SH. GIRISH KATHPALIA

Principal District & Sessions Judge (Hqs.), Delhi

Room No. 301, 3rd Floor

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

GP 14/2021

Smt. Moni Gupta, w/o Sh. Tarun Gupta, r/o 6132, Kucha Shiv Mandir Naya Bans, Delhi, GPO North, New Delhi-11006.

Given under my hand and the Seal of this Court, in terms of the order dated 23rd day of March, 2021.

Assistant Registrar for Registrar General

Seal of the Court

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 11 OF ACT NO. VIII OF 1890 OF GUARDIAN & WARD ACT.

In the COURT OF SH. GIRISH KATHPALIA

Principal District & Sessions Judge (Hqs.), Delhi

Room No. 301, 3rd Floor

Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi-54

GP 14/2021

Pinki, w/o Balvir Presently

Gaddi Nashi at Dera Baba Shri Chand Ji, r/o Village Jandiala, Tehsil Phialur Jalandhar.

Versus Krishna Rani and Anr.

—Respondent To, Smt. Krishan Rani, w/o Sh. Subhash Chander, 2-Sh. Subhash Chander, s/o Sunder Lal, Both r/o H. No. 169, Dr. Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009.

Mam/Sir A reference to initiate arbitral proceedings was made

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 11 OF ACT NO. VIII OF 1890 OF GUARDIAN & WARD ACT.

In the COURT OF SH. GIRISH KATHPALIA

Principal District & Sessions Judge (Hqs.), Delhi

Room No. 301, 3rd Floor



Co+WIN

Winning Over COVID - 19



अब आप

आरोग्य सेतु ऐप
के माध्यम से भी खुद
को कोविड टीकाकरण
के लिए पंजीकृत कर
सकते हैं



**खतरा अभी टला नहीं है
ज़रूरी है ↗ दवाई भी कड़ाई भी**



अपने हाथ साबुन और पानी से नियमित तौर पर अच्छी तरह धोएं



फेस-कवर/मास्क हर समय पहनें



दूसरों से 2 गज की दूरी बनाकर रखें

सूचना एवं जन सम्पर्क विभाग, हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार

www.himachalpr.gov.in | HimachalPradeshGovtIPRDept | DPR Himachal | dprhp

कोविड-19



रोग प्रतिरोधक क्षमता बढ़ाएं
आयुर्वेदिक उपाय
अपनाएं



सामान्य उपाय



पूरे दिन केवल गर्म पानी पिएं।



प्रतिदिन कम से कम 30 मिनट योगसन, प्राणायाम एवं ध्यान करें।



हल्दी, जीरा, धनिया एवं लहसुन आदि मसालों का भोजन बनाने में प्रयोग करें।

सामान्य आयुर्वेदिक उपाय

- नस्य-सुबह एवं शाम तिल/नारियल का तेल या धी नाक के दोनों छिंद्रों में लगाएं।
- कवल- 1 चम्मच तिल/नारियल तेल को मुँह में लेकर दो से तीन मिनट कुल्ले की तरह मुँह में ही घुमाएं। उसके बाद कुल्ले की तरह ही थूक दें। फिर गर्म पानी से कुल्ला कर लें। ऐसा दिन में एक से दो बार करें।
- च्यवनप्राश 10 ग्राम (1 चम्मच) सुबह लें। मधुमेह रोगी शुगर फ्री च्यवनप्राश लें।
- तुलसी, दालचीनी, कालीमिर्च, शुण्ठी (सूखी अदरक) एवं मुनक्का से बनी हर्बल टी/काढ़ा दिन में एक से दो बार पिएं। स्वाद के अनुसार इसमें गुड़ या ताज़ा नीबू का रस मिला सकते हैं।
- गोल्डन मिल्क-150 मिलीली 0 गर्म दूध में आधा चम्मच हल्दी चूर्ण दिन में एक से दो बार लें।

खांसी/गले में खराश के लिए

- दिन में कम से कम एक बार पुदीना के पत्ते /अजवाइन डाल कर पानी की भाप लें।
- खांसी या गले में खराश होने पर लौंग के चूर्ण में गुड़ या शहद मिलाकर दिन में दो से तीन बार लें।
- ये उपाय सामान्य सूखी खांसी एवं गले की खराश के लिए लाभदायक हैं, फिर भी यदि लक्षण बने रहते हैं तो डॉक्टर से परामर्श लें।

✓ आरोग्य सेतु ऐप डाउनलोड कर उपयोग करें

✓ मास्क का प्रयोग करें

✓ कोरोना से बचाव के लिए Social Distancing अपनाएं

✓ याद रखें: दो गज दूरी, बहद है जरूरी



The kind of statement he made against a deceased woman. I think they (DMK) have no regard for women.

HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH

WHILE SPEAKING AGAINST THE STATEMENT MADE BY DMK LEADER A RAJA

THUMBNAILS



AP chief minister Y S Jagan Reddy being administered Covid-19 vaccine during the third phase of a countrywide inoculation drive.

■ AGENCIES

Covid surge in HP: With Himachal Pradesh recording around 5,000 Covid cases and 53 deaths in March, the state government on Thursday decided to keep schools closed till 15 April. Earlier, the state government on 27 March had decided to keep the schools closed till 4 April.

SNS

ECI bans A Raja from campaign

Removes his name from DMK's list of star campaigners

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, 1 APRIL



The Election Commission of India (ECI) today banned DMK's deputy secretary and MP A Raja from campaigning for the party for 48 hours with immediate effect and also removed his name from DMK's list of star campaigners. The commission has reprimanded Raja for his comments against CM Edappadi Palaniswami.

Meanwhile, DMK filed a plea with Madras HC to revoke the ban and requested an urgent hearing in the matter. However, the principal bench of the court consisting Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Senthilkumar Ramamoorthy refused to list the case for urgent hearing.

The ECI took the decision to ban A Raja after considering his written response to the

Commission on a report sent by the chief electoral officer of Tamil Nadu Sayabratra Sahoo. "The Election Commission of India debars you from campaigning for 48 hours with immediate effect, reprimands you for violation of model code of conduct and delists your name from the list of star campaigners of DMK," the EC notice says.

The notice issued by ECI also cautioned Raja not to resort such acts anymore.

"The Commission also advises you to be watchful and not to make intemperate, indecent,

derogatory, obscene remarks and lower the dignity of women in future during the election campaign," notice said. The action by ECI was taken based on A Raja's comment at Thousand Lights constituency last week. While comparing DMK president MK Stalin and CM Edappadi Palaniswami's political career, he said, "Stalin is a child of good relationship and good birth while Edappadi Palaniswami is a child of bad relationship and a premature born child". The ECI referred to Rajas' speeches made on two different occasions to justify

its decision to impose a ban on him.

Earlier, the ECI had sent A Raja a notice, stating the Commission had found the contents of his speech "derogatory but also obscene" and that they "lower the dignity of motherhood of women."

The EC had said this was serious violation of the provisions of model code of conduct.

In his response to the Election Commission notice, A Raja had said his speech was taken out of context. He said AIADMK and BJP had "falsey propagated" that he insulted Palaniswami. He also said that he had "not spoken anything that is violative of the model code of conduct, which is obscene or which will lower the dignity of mother or women, much less any other provision of law."

He had denied making any "derogatory or defamatory speeches" against the chief

minister. He also denied that he made any speech that would "demean or defame women or motherhood."

Meanwhile, the issues related with violence against women continue to reverberate in TN election campaigns. DMK chief MK Stalin today lambasted UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath for his comments on DMK. On Wednesday UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath accused the DMK of failing to safeguard women during its regime. But Stalin hit out at him saying he had no moral right to speak of women's safety. Stalin said that according to the data of the Union Government, the highest number of atrocities and sexual assaults against women and girls were reported from Uttar Pradesh.

Shah lashes out at DMK

Union home minister Amit

Shah today hit out at the DMK over its leader A Raja's alleged vulgar remarks against TN chief minister K Palaniswami's mother, saying it showed the party had no regard for women. The "mothers and sisters" of the state should teach a "lesson" to the DMK in the April 6 Assembly polls by defeating it, he said, adds PTI.

According to a notification issued by the ministry of home affairs, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts of AP and four police stations bordering Assam were declared "disturbed" areas under the AFSPA. "Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of the following four police stations in other districts of AP bordering the state of Assam, are declared as 'disturbed area' under Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 up to 30 September, with effect from 1 April, unless withdrawn earlier," the notification said. PTI

Govt extends AFSPA in 3 districts of AP

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

The Centre has extended the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act in three districts of Arunachal Pradesh besides four police station areas in three other districts bordering Assam by another six months, and declared them "disturbed" in view of continuing activities of banned insurgent groups.

According to a notification issued by the ministry of home affairs, Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts of AP and four police stations bordering Assam were declared "disturbed" areas under the AFSPA. "Tirap, Changlang and Longding districts in Arunachal Pradesh and the areas falling within the jurisdiction of the following four police stations in other districts of AP bordering the state of Assam, are declared as 'disturbed area' under Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 up to 30 September, with effect from 1 April, unless withdrawn earlier," the notification said. PTI

TENDER

H.P.P.W.D. NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tenders are hereby invited/re-invited on form No 6 & 8 by the Executive Engineer, HPPWD Division Barsar on behalf of Governor of H.P for the following works from the approved and eligible contractors/firms enlisted in H.P.P.W.D. in the appropriate class so as to reach in this office on 26-04-2021 up to 10.30 A.M. and will be opened on the same day at 11.00 A.M. in the presence of intending contractors or their authorized representative. The tender application will be received in this office on 22-04-2021 up to 4:00 P.M. and tender form can be had from this office against cash payment [Non Refundable] on 24-04-2021 from 11:00 A.M. to 4:00P.M. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for 120 days.

Name of work No. 01: A/R & M/O Kalar Farnhat road km. 0/0 to 3/0 and Manipur Manjhiar Nauri road Km. 0/0 to 2/600 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes in km. 1/0 to 2/500,0/0 to 1/500 Respectively) Estimated Cost:- 1,96,784/- Earnest Money :- 4000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 02: A/R & M/O Thiri Sawin road km. 0/0 to 4/0 and Panyali Amroh Karasai Jarmani road Km. 0/0 to 7/0 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes in km. 0/0 to 2/00,0/0 to 1/500 Respectively) Estimated Cost:- 1,97,062/- Earnest Money :- 4000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 03: A/R & M/O link road from Hareta to Bhallow road km. 0/0 to 3/760.Badran Bandos road Km. 0/0 to 5/0 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes in km. 3/0 to 3/760,0/0 to 1/500 respectively) Estimated Cost:- 1,95,784/- Earnest Money :- 4000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 04: A/R & M/O link road from Rain Shelter Batiran to Harizan Basti Bholi Di Baran km. 0/0 to 2/500 and Dhar Jassi road Km. 0/0 to 3/0 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes km. 0/0 to 2/0,0/0 to 2/0 Respectively) Estimated Cost:- 2,97,796/- Earnest Money :- 6000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 05: Sepcial repair of Govt. Sr. Sec. School Sera Tehsil Nadauna (Sh:- Repair of toilet tiles, flooring cement plaster and paver block etc. disposal of unserviceable material) Deposit work Estimated Cost:- 1,13,200/- Earnest Money :- 2300/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 06: AMP on Tibi Di Bar Basaral road Km. 0/0 to 2/0 (Sh:- P/L infrastructure feature in between km. 0/0 to 2/0) Estimated Cost:- 1,04,500/- Earnest Money :- 2100/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 07: AMP on Jalari Galore Salouni Bijhari Deotsidh road (Sh:- P/L infrastructure feature in between km. 5/0 to 8/0) Estimated Cost:- 1,09,000/- Earnest Money :- 2100/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 08: Amp On Kheri Magnoti road km. 0/0 to 5/645 (SH:- P/L infrastructure feature in between km. 0/0 to 5/0) Estimated Cost:- 1,98,842/- Earnest Money :- 4000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 09: A/R & M/O Uled to Dhamani via Cho Khansara km. 0/0 to 5/540 & link road to village Balh Ratnu (Sh:- Repair of pot holes i/c G-III in between km. 1/0 to 5/0 & 0/0 to 1/0 Respectively) Estimated Cost:- 2,42,967/- Earnest Money :- 4900/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 10: AMP On Barsar Chambeh Naghbar road km. 0/0 to 8/0 & P/L & fixing road infrastructure feature in between km. 0/150 to 0/300,0/400 to 0/600,1/0 to 1/300,1/500 to 2/0, Barsar Gujrehra road km. 4/0 to 4/150,4/200 to 4/400,4/450 to 4/500,4/600 to 4/700, Barsar Dhaneta road 6/150 to 6/300 & Barsar Shahtali road km. 0/0 to 0/200,0/600 to 0/800,7/0 to 7/200,7/350 to 8/010 & 10/600 to 10/800) Estimated Cost:- 1,97,325/- Earnest Money :- 4000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 11: A/R & M/O link road to village Ghori (Sh:- C/O R/wall at Rd., 0/600 to 0/615,B/wall at Rd. 1/045 to 1/075 & P/L Cement concrete pavement at Rd. 0/600 to 0/615) Estimated Cost:- 1,82,432/- Earnest Money :- 3700/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 12: Restoration of rain damage on Khorpa Biar km. 0/0 to 5/500 (Sh:- C/O R/wall at Rd. 2/890 to 2/895.50) Estimated Cost:- 98137/- Earnest Money :- 2000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 13: A/R & M/O various roads under Barsar Sub Division (Chakmoh Section) Repair of pot holes i/c G-III at various rds.) Estimated Cost:- 2,53,778/- Earnest Money :- 5100/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 14: AMP on salouni Bijhari Deotsidh road & Chakmoh to Loharli (Sh:- P/L road infrastructure feature in between km. 14/0 to 15/0, 17/100 to 17/300 & 1/420 to 2/0 respectively Estimated Cost:- 1,08,500/- Earnest Money :- 2200/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 15: A/R & M/O Barsar Dhaneta road km. 0/0 to 14/0 & Dandron Nuel road at Km. 0/0 to 2/0 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes in between 6/0 to 14/0 & 0/0 to 2/0 respectively) Estimated Cost:- 2,61,391/- Earnest Money :- 5300/- Time :-Two Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 16: A/R & M/O various bridge under Barsar Sub Division (Section Chakmoh) (Sh:- P/L 25mm thick mastic asphalt wearing course bridge over gwaed khad on Bara Tajar road at Rd. 1/800 & balance work of bridge over Sukker Khad on Bijhi Ghori Dhahri road at Km. 15/00) Estimated Cost:- 4,97,925/- Earnest Money :- 10000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 17: A/R & M/O various roads under Bhotia Section (Sh:- Repair of pot holes at various rds.) Estimated Cost:- 2,44,977/- Earnest Money :- 4900/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 18: A/R & M/O Mehre Ghumarwan Barni Diapur Birswin road km. 0/0 to 1/0 (Sh:- Repair of pot holes at various rds. in between km. 0/0 to 1/0) Estimated Cost:- 1,06,617/- Earnest Money :- 2200/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 19: Repair of link road to Samshan Ghat village Chatoli (G.P.Joure Amb (Sh:- P/L interlocking paver block pavement at Rd. 0/0 to 0/50 & P/L tiles work in rain shelter of Samshan Ghat) Under SDP (Deposit work) Estimated Cost:- 1,20,202/- Earnest Money :- 2500/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 20: C/O link road to village Dugwar Km. 0/0 to 0/900(Sh:- C/O R/wall at Rd. 0/850 to 0/875 & B/Wall at Rd. 0/850 to 0/868) Under OTMNP Head Estimated Cost:- 4,85,772/- Earnest Money :- 9800/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 21: Restoration of rain damage on Maharan to Thiri road (Sh:- C/O R/wall at Rd. 0/570 to 0/578 & 0/747 to 0/765 and 0/777 to 0/805) Estimated Cost:- 3,49,624/- Earnest Money :- 7000/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 22: Restoration of rain damage on Chakmoh Satwin via Sakri Samele Jangli Holth road Km. 0/0 to 7/0 & Bihari Chalsai Ambota Chakrala road Km. 0/0 to 7/900 (Sh:- C/O B/wall at Rd. 6/930 to 6/957,6/885 to 6/925 & 2/225 to 2/247 respectively Estimated Cost:- 2,72,081/- Earnest Money :- 5500/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 23: Improvement of black spot on Barsar Dhaneta road km. 0/0 to 14/0 (Sh:- P/L 900mm dia RCC hume pipe culvert at Rd. 2/525 i/c wing wall) Estimated Cost:- 1,84,378/- Earnest Money :- 3700/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

Name of work No. 24: C/O link road to H/Basti Up Mohal Kardoh km. 0/250 to 0/275,0/750 to 0/775 & 1/450 to 1/462 (LHS) and B/wall at Rd. 0/750 to 0/765) RHS Estimated Cost:- 4,00,353/- Earnest Money :- 8100/- Time :-One Month Cost of form:-350/-

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

No.1:- The Earnest Money in the shape of National saving certificates /Time deposit Accounts/ Saving Account/ FDRs in any of the post office/ Nationalized Bank in duly pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Barsar must be accompanied with the application.

The tender document shall be accepted in Two Covers.(Cover-1 shall contain EMD and Cover-2 shall contain EMD and Cover-2 shall contain application and other documents).

No.2:- Conditional tenders and the tenders received without earnest money will not be accepted.

No.3:- The contractor shall accompany his enlistment/ renewal order, G.S.T. No. with latest clearance return and EPF No. with latest clearance return with his application for obtaining the tender documents.

No.4:- Executive Engineer Reserves the right to reject the tender without assigning any reason.

No.5:- The work will be completed by the contractor within the stipulated period.

No.6:- Tender forms will not be issued to those contractors who are not registered under HPGST Act-1988 and GST & photo copy of individual PAN No. allotted to them attached with their application at the time of applying for tender documents. Application will not be entertained without aforesaid documents.

No.7:- The contractor /firms are required to insert the rate of each item in words as well as in figures failing which Executive Engineer reserves the right to accept / rejects any overall tender.

No.8:- The tender shall be issued to only those contractors/firms who are found eligible suitable and competent.

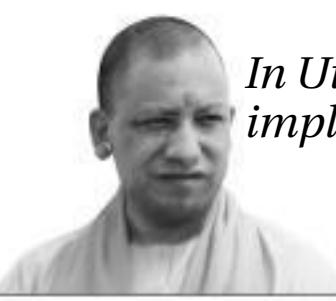
No.9:- The tender forms shall be issued to eligible contractor depending upon their past performance and work experience which shall be duly evaluated by the technical evaluation committee.

No.10:- The Tender forms of soling ,wearing and tarring shall be issued only to those contractors who will produce proper documents of ownership of required machinery and completion certificate of similar work issued by the concerned Executive Engineer also required & tender forms for Mastick Asphalt wearing course shall be issued only to those contractors who will produce ownership document/bills of equipments i.e. Tar Boiler, Mastick Cooker & Generator 62kv .

No.11:- contractor /firm having necessary documents past adequate experience shall be preferred.

No.12:- Contractor who have failed to start /complete the work in hand with in reasonable time shall not be issued tender forms.

No.13:- One contractor should not have more than two major works in hand at a time.



In Uttar Pradesh, an anti-'love-jihad' legislation has been implemented. Why is it not being implemented in Kerala?

UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH
TAKING POTSHOTS AT HIS KERALA COUNTERPART PINARAYI VIJAYAN

THUMBNAILS



Women carry firewood after collecting them from a nearby forest area, at Panikhaiti in Kamrup district on Thursday. ■ IANS

Labour Ministry panels: The government has constituted committees of experts to suggest standards under the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, one of the four Lab-u Codes enacted recently after amalgamating various labour laws. ■ SNS

Ex-bureaucrat joins PC: A former bureaucrat Mohammad Ashraf Mir on Thursday joined Peoples Conference (PC) in presence of party's Chairman Sajad Gani Lone. Besides various key positions, Mir held the position of law secretary. He was also state information commissioner. ■ SNS

ITBP jawan shot dead in HP: An Indo Tibetan Border Police jawan was on Thursday shot dead in Una district of Himachal Pradesh over a land dispute. Police said the incident took place in Nagra village of Una district at around 8 am in the morning when the ITBP jawan identified as Vipin (37) had gone to harvest wheat crop. ■ SNS

Delhi NCR tops insomnia across India, finds study: Wakefit.co, India's one of the largest D2C sleep and home solutions providers, recently released the fourth edition of its annual study "The Great Indian Sleep Scorecard (GISS) 2021". According to the report, the fear of insomnia increased from 19 per cent last year to 24 per cent this year, with Delhi NCR topping the list of cities where residents are most worried about sleeplessness. The 2021 report also reveals that 42 per cent of Gurugram residents complained about work keeping them up late at night. Last year, the corresponding number was 17 per cent, said the release. ■ SNS

Peaceful polling in Assam phase-2

Most constituencies witnessed straight battle between BJP-led alliance and Opposition Congress-led grand alliance

SNS & PTI
GUWAHATI, 1 APRIL

The second phase polling of Assam legislative Assembly elections passed off peacefully without any major troubles. However, there were reports of EVM glitches from some polling stations and upon their immediate replacement voting continued uninterrupted, an election official said.

According to election authority, the state recorded 67.60% polling till 5:10 pm.

The electoral exercise was conducted following strict security and Covid-19 guidelines, where the fate of 345 candidates, including 26 women, in 39 Assembly constituencies was locked in EVMs.

Most constituencies in this phase witnessed straight battle between the BJP-led alliance and the Opposition Congress-led Mohajoot (grand alliance). For the ruling alliance, state ministers Parimal Sukhadaiya, Bhabesh Kalita, Pijush Hazarika, Assembly deputy speaker Amrit Haque Laskar, saffron legislators Numal Momin, Rupak Sarma, Mihir Kanti Shome, etc were seeking re-elections from their respective constituencies.

BJP nominees Jayanta Malla Barua, Gautam Roy, UPPL nominees Biswajit Daimary, Gobinda Chandra Basumatary etc were also in the fray. For the grand alliance, Congress leaders Siddique Ahmed, Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha, Sum Ronghang, Santanu Sarma, Swapna Kumar Mandal, Ajit Singh, Nirmal Langth-

asa etc along with Bodoland People's Front leader Rihon Daimary, Karuna Kanta Swargiary, All India United Democratic Front leaders Sirajuddin Ajmal, Nijamuddin Choudhury etc were seeking voters' mandates.

Long queues were seen outside most of the 10,592 polling stations across the 13 districts in the Barak Valley, the Hill region and parts of Central and Lower Assam since early morning.

A significant number of women voters were seen turning up early for exercising their franchise.

At most places, voters were found wearing masks and maintaining social distance as they stood inside the rings drawn at six feet distance outside the polling stations.

Besides, they were examined with thermal scanners for body temperature, provided with sanitiser and disposable plastic gloves before they went into the polling booth to cast their vote.

Erickshaws were made available to ferry senior citizens in the Cachar district, and they were also felicitated for their will to vote.

Wheelchairs were also provided at all the election centres with volunteers navigating the old and disabled to their polling booths. Resting areas were also created for the senior citizens to wait for their turn to vote.

Several polling stations in Cachar were decked up, showcasing the cultural legacy of the district through the display of handicrafts and handlooms.



Voters show their fingers marked with indelible ink after casting their votes for the second phase of Assam Assembly polls on Thursday. ■ SNS

People of Assam have shown Cong-led alliance 'red card': PM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOKRAJHAR (ASSAM), 1 APRIL

Drawing a football analogy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday claimed the people of Assam have shown the "red card" to the Congress-led Grand Alliance in the state. He accused the previous Congress governments of being mute spectators for decades to unbridled violence in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) of the state.

"In the long years of its rule, the Congress threw Bodoland into bomb, *bandoos* (gun) and blockade culture. In 2016, we had come to you with the promise of peace and development. During the past five years, we made sincere efforts and gifted Bodoland peace and respect," he said. It was under

on the NDA in the first phase of Assembly poll and the voting that is going for the second phase today is also encouraging.

He alleged the Congress governments at the Centre did nothing for decades to check violence in the Bodoland areas.

"In the long years of its rule, the Congress threw Bodoland into bomb, *bandoos* (gun) and blockade culture. In 2016, we had come to you with the promise of peace and development. During the past five years, we made sincere efforts and gifted Bodoland peace and respect," he said. It was under

Addressing an election rally at Kokrajhar, the Prime Minister said people of Assam have bestowed their blessings

former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee that the first Bodo Accord was signed and the present NDA government has paved the way for permanent peace by sealing the historic Bodoland Accord, leading to progress and development of the region, he said. Thousands of militant youth have surrendered with their arms and the NDA is committed to their rehabilitation, it added.

"...the Commission is, prima facie, of the view that Sarma has violated the above said provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

"I also appeal to those who have not returned to the social mainstream so far to come back and join the process of peace and development," he said.

EC issues show cause notice to BJP leader Sarma

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

The Election Commission on Thursday issued a show cause notice to Assam minister and BJP leader Himanta Biswa Sarma for allegedly making threatening remarks against Opposition leader Hagrama Mohilary of the Bodoland People's Front.

He has been asked to respond to the notice by 5 pm tomorrow.

The Congress had approached the EC alleging that Sarma had threatened to send Mohilary to jail by misusing the NIA. The Bodoland People's Front is an ally of the Congress in Assam.

The notice to Sarma cited various provisions of the model code, including the one dealing with refraining from making unverified allegations against political rivals and avoiding "corrupt practices" and offences under the election law, such as bribing of voters, intimidation of voters, impersonation of voters.

"...the Commission is, prima facie, of the view that Sarma has violated the above said provisions of the Model Code of Conduct.

It also quoted transcript of the speech. "If Hagrama does extremism with Batha he will go to jail. This is a straight talk. If Hagrama encourages Batha, he will go to jail... This case is being given to NIA."

Fierce triangular fight in Palakkad

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 1 APRIL

The electoral battle in Palakkad Assembly constituency has captured national attention with the entry of 'metroman' E Sreedharan in the poll fray as a BJP candidate.

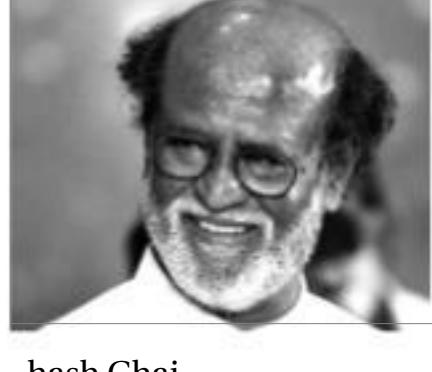
A fierce triangular fight is expected in Palakkad, a seat held by the Congress since 2011. The Congress has fielded its sitting MLA Shafi Parambil to take on the 'metroman'. The CPI-M has fielded a first timer CP Pramod.

Buoyed by its success in Palakkad municipality and its candidate's technocrat charisma, BJP expects to wrest the seat from the Congress. Palakkad Municipality is one of the two civic bodies in which the BJP is in power. While Congress is banking on the popular image and personal influence Parambil, the CPI-M expects that it can upset the plans of the two national parties as the popular mood is in favour of the LDF government.

Age seems to be no barrier for Sreedharan. At 88, he travels from one place to another making all attempts to reach out to the maximum voters in a limited time. All the parties are talking about development of the constituency. While the CPI-M is harping on the Pinarayi Vijayan government's welfare programmes, BJP praises the Central government for its definitive actions and people-friendly projects. The Congress talks about developmental schemes implemented by Shafi in the constituency. ■ SNS

Thalaiva conferred Dadasaheb Phalke

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL



hash Ghai.

Javadekar called Rajinikanth's contribution to cinema 'iconic'. "Happy to announce this year's Dadasaheb Phalke Award. The prestigious honor is named after Dhundiraj Govind Phalke who was a pioneer of Indian cinema and is awarded to an artist for his outstanding contribution to the field.

Information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar today announced the government's decision to award the 70-year-old, popularly known as Thalaiva (meaning boss in Tamil). The jury members of the award comprised Asha Bhosle, Shankar Mahadevan, Mohanlal, Biswajeet, and Sub-

After receiving the prestigious award, Rajinikanth tweeted:

ed. "My heartfelt thanks to the government of India, respected & dearest @narendramodi and @PrakashJavadekarji and the jury for conferring upon me the prestigious #DadasahebPhalkeAward. I sincerely dedicate it to all those who have been a part of my journey. Thanks to the almighty."

Among the first ones to congratulate the actor was Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He took to Twitter to praise the actor's body of work. "It is a matter of immense joy that Thalaiva has been conferred with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award. Congratulations to him. (sic)"

Prithviraj Kapoor, Raj Kapoor, Lata Mangeshkar and Yash Chopra are some of the previous recipients of this award.

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Gen Rawat launches JLN for 3 services

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

nts of all three services deployed in that region.

These JLN will provide integrated logistics cover to armed forces for their small arms ammunition, rations, fuel, general stores, civil hired transport, aviation clothing, spares and also engineering support in an effort to synchronise their operational efforts.

Gen Rawat said: "Establishment and operationalisa-

tion of JLNs is an important first step in the direction of logistics integration of our three services.

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Deepa, D/o: Raju Singh, R/o: H.No. 36, Gandhi Kust Ashram, Delhi, Age: About 28 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Thin, Wearing: Green Colour Suit, Grey Colour Salwar and Jutti in Feet has been missing since 09.03.2021 from her house. In this regard **DD No. 78-A, Dated 10.03.2021, has been lodged at P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi.****

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

Phone: 011-24368638 and 24368641, Ext. 2101.
Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cbs@nic.in
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/671/NE/2021

SHO
P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi
Ph.: 011-22583307, 22585985

IN THE HIGH COURT OF DELHI AT NEW DELHI
(TESTAMENTARY INTESTATE JURISDICTION)

CITATION U/s 283, INDIAN SUCCESSION ACT, 1925

In the matter of TEST CASE No. 14/2021

SMT. SHARMILA JAYANT DUA

....PETITIONER

VS

STATE & ORS.

To All Concerned.

In the matter of estate of Late Smt. Prabha Gupta, W/o Late Sh. D.N.Gupta R/o 52, SFS, DDA Flat, Hauz Khas Apartments, New Delhi-110016.

Whereas Smt. Sharmila Jayant Dua W/o Sh. Jayant Dua, B-66, G.F. Sarvodaya Enclave, New Delhi - 110017 has filed a petition under Section 276 of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 for grant of Letter of Administration in respect of Will dated 28.08.2020 of Smt. Prabha Gupta, deceased.

And whereas the aforesaid case is fixed for hearing on 17.05.2021 at 10.30 A.M. before the Hon'ble Court. This citation is issued, in terms of Section 283 of the said Act to all persons claiming to have any interest in the properties of the said deceased to come to this Court, file objections, if any and take part in the proceedings on the date specified above for the grant of Letter of Administration.

Given under my hand and the seal of this Court, in terms of the order dated 18th day of February, 2021.

Assistant Registrar
For Registrar General
DK

DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL-II, CHANDIGARH

S.C.O. NO. 33-34-35, 1st Floor, Sector 17-A, Chandigarh
RC No. 583 / 2019

STATE BANK OF INDIA
Vs
M/s Verve Integrated Marketing Services Certificate Debtor

Demand Notice under Rule 2 of the Second Schedule to Income Tax Act, 1961 read with section 25 to 28 of the RD&F Act, 1993.

1. Verve Integrated Marketing Services Pvt. Ltd., through its Director/Managing Director, Corporate Office, 301-312, 3rd Floor, Tower-A, Spazeid, Sector-47, Sohna, Road, Gurgaon-122002, Illm Address:- Verve Integrated Marketing Services Pvt. Ltd. through its Directors/Managing Director, Regd. Office: F-2/2-170-171, Gulmohar Park, Road, Gurgaon-122002.

2. Kamal Bhaskar S/o Sh. Abhimanyu Bhaskar, Managing Director of Verve Integrated Marketing Services Pvt. Ltd., R/o House No. 98 E Space, Nirvana Country, Near South City II, Sector-50, Gurgaon-Haryana-122003.

3. Smt. Gitangali Bhaskar S/o Sh. Kamal Bhaskar, Directors of Verve Integrated Marketing Services Pvt. Ltd., R/o House No. 98 E Space, Nirvana Country, Near South City II, Sector-50, Gurgaon-Haryana-122003.

4. Ashok Bhaskar S/o Sh. A. Bhaskar, R/o H. No. 1054, Indrapur, Jakabpura, Gurgaon-122001

5. Mrs. Precise Events & Travels Private Limited, through its Directors/Authorized Signatory Sh. Kamal Bhaskar, 6th Floor, 392, Sector-19B, Sanskriti Apartments, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075, Illm Address:- Mrs. Precise Events & Travels Private Limited, through its Directors/Authorized Signatory, 334, 3rd Floor, Centrum Plaza, DLF Golf Course Road, Sector-53 Gurgaon Haryana-122002.

In terms of the Recovery Certificate No. 583/2019 in O.A. No. 302/2017 used by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, a sum of Rs. 9,82,05,438/- has become due from you.

You are hereby called upon to deposit the above

Obituary of Democracy

China's geostrategy in embattled Hong Kong, as spelt out on Tuesday, has been choreographed to tighten the grip of Beijing, not least the People's Liberation Army, over its protectorate. China has limited the composition of Parliament to a segment that it calls "patriots". The sweeping changes effected in Hong Kong's electoral rules will tighten its control over the island nation. Small wonder the fresh changes have been greeted by the United States and Britain with an angry response. In this day and age, the clock has been turned back by 20 years, going by the perception of the champions of democracy. The changes introduced are an antithesis of the spirit of democracy that had propelled the "Umbrella movement" of 2014. It thus comes about that the number of directly elected seats in Parliament has been cut almost by half, and prospective MPs will first be vetted by a pro-Beijing committee to ensure their loyalty to the mainland. A more robust control over the legislature ~ theoretically the embodiment of the people's will ~ is difficult to imagine. China's goalpost, however dubious, is to ensure that only "patriotic" figures can run for positions of power. Critics have warned that the changes will spell the eclipse of democracy, fearing it will remove all opposition from Parliament. According to Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam ~ who kowtows to China all too often ~ the vetting committee will not screen people "outbased on their political views, but rather weed out any non-patriots". Mrs Lam said as long as the candidates can show allegiance to Hong Kong, uphold the Basic Law and pass national security checks, they will be permitted to run for election. Democracy, therefore, will be in force in Hong Kong as per the imprimatur of the mainland and its ardent supporters in the protectorate. Britain, which handed over Hong Kong to China in 1997, must be aghast at the calibrated turn of events. The first vote under the changes, which will elect members to Hong Kong's Legislative Council (LegCo), will be held in December. Beijing's rubber-stamp Parliament approved the plan during the National People's Congress (NPC) meetings earlier in March. On Tuesday, Chinese state media reported that the country's top decision-making body, the NPC Standing Committee, voted unanimously to pass the same. This amends Hong Kong's mini-constitution, the Basic Law. The changes are designed to keep anyone who is not aligned with Beijing's rule out of parliament. Political unrest could explode on Hong Kong's streets again. The plot thickens as Beijing crafts the obituary of democracy.

Heart of the matter

Pakistan's peace overtures to India over the past month have less to do with a sudden desire on the part of the radicalised political-military establishment in that country to seek mutual bliss points and more a function of American pressure on Islamabad to focus all its resources on its western border with Afghanistan. For, US President Joe Biden has a big decision to make come May when the deadline for the withdrawal of American troops from Afghanistan as agreed in the Doha deal comes into effect, and Washington is keen to ensure all stakeholders are on board. The significance of Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar's stand articulated at the Heart of Asia Istanbul Process (HoA-IP) on Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, needs to be seen against this backdrop. Emphasising the need for a "stable" Afghanistan as the bedrock of regional peace, Mr Jaishankar on Tuesday iterated the collective imperative for all stakeholders within and around the conflict-ridden country to work towards creating an Afghanistan free of terrorism, extremist ideology, and drug-criminal syndicates. To this end, his "double peace" formulation - that is, peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan - which requires harmonising the interests of all, both within and around that country, is the key. On the domestic front, at the heart of the matter is a fundamental dichotomy ~ neither Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's civilian administration nor the Taliban rebels consider the other legitimate. Yet, in a multi-ethnic nation such as Afghanistan where all other types of autocracy have failed, a democratic and decentralised system of governance is perhaps the only remaining option, argue some scholars. It may also be the only idea that both Mr Ghani and the Taliban could accept. Such a power-sharing concept is not new, but it is being pushed assiduously by the Biden Administration as it seeks the formation of a broad-based coalition government. It would appear counter-intuitive that those who took Afghanistan back to the Stone Age in the 1990s, protected the perpetrators of 9/11, and remain umbilically tied to Al-Qaida will voluntarily form a new interim government with elements of President Ghani's administration or other Afghan political and civil society leaders at precisely the moment when the US may be ready to leave. But Mr Biden's policy does sound better than another 20 years of war. The way of going about implementing it, however, is the key. It has been suggested that the best approach would be to test both sides with concrete proposals for power-sharing and hope they begin to hammer out compromises between themselves though the process may be slow. Even if that does not happen, the reactions of the Taliban and the government to such proposals will indicate to HoA-IP participants which side is trying harder for peace and thus help tweak strategy. Linked to this process would have to be a verifiable commitment by the Taliban that Al Qaida and other terror groups ~ whether they target the West or India ~ will not be invited back to Afghanistan, while Islamabad would have to act on shutting down terror sanctuaries in Pakistan. Anything less would mean the Heart of Asia conference is nothing more than a talking shop.

Ties reinforced

There is a strong bipartisan support in Washington for the Indo-US security partnership. Despite the fact that during the Trump era many international agreements were upturned, America's relations with India were not affected and did not face any stress



With the three-day visit of US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin that commenced from 19 March, Indo-US security ties have entered a new phase. As the strategic interests between the two countries converge in the wake of Chinese bellicosity on regional affairs, one can see a new alignment of power relations in the Indo-Pacific region. Austin arrived in India on the third and last leg of an Asian tour that also took him to Japan and South Korea where he and US Secretary of State Blinken had 2+2 talks on a host of issues. Prior to this, the four countries of the Quad grouping ~ India, the US, Australia and Japan ~ had the first ever summit level meeting, thereby injecting a new dynamism to the security outlook in the Indo-Pacific region. Austin had wide-ranging talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.

This was Austin's first overseas trip as Defence Department chief, and the first appearance in India by a top Biden administration official, underscoring the importance the US accords to India, especially to its defence relationship. China's rising influence stemming from its enormous economic and military muscle in the Indo-Pacific region is driving other nations in seeking common grounds to cope with this menace. The increasing bonhomie between India and the US in recent years needs to be seen from this perspective. Indeed, there is a strong bipartisan support in Washington for the Indo-US security partnership. Despite the fact that during the Trump era many international agreements were upturned, America's relations with India were not affected and did not face any stress unlike with many Euro-

pean countries.

The import of Austin's visit to India can be deciphered from the convergence of interests in many spheres ranging from strengthening security partnerships that include arms sales, technology transfers, defence agreements after Washington had identified India in 2016 as a "major defence partner". This was already visible in the form of expanded bilateral military exercises, joint training of international peacekeeping troops, and new arrangements enabling the two navies to refuel each other's warships. The latest Malabar exercise was another such example. As China continues to flex its military muscle unconcerned about other nations' sensitivities, the Biden administration feels compelled to accelerate the process of strengthening security ties with like-minded democracies like India, Japan and South Korea. The Biden administration understands and respects India's position, which is why it is keen to strengthen India's defence industrial base so that it is better equipped to partner with the US military. Further during the talks, both defence ministers resolved to expand their robust defence ties through deeper military-to-military and logistic support. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in a statement after the talks with his counterpart said a range of issues was discussed with a focus on "enhancing defence information sharing, cooperation in emerging domains of defence, mutual logistics support, and expanding military to military engagement across services.

Austin described the partnership as a "stronghold" of a free and open Indo-Pacific amidst China's growing assertiveness in the region. It thus transpires that with the China threat looming large across the 3,488-kilometre Line of Actual Control, India-US defence ties are poised to take off. Strengthening alliance relationship seems to have been a defined focus in the Biden administration's foreign policy strategy. The Quad summit and the subsequent reaching out to both Japan and South Korea in a short span of time are indicative of this. Shoring up alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific is in response to China's emergence as a military and economic challenge not only to the US but to several Asian neighbours, including India.

India's plan to procure around 30 multi-mission armed Predator drones from the US for the three services at an estimated cost of over \$3 billion also figured in the talks. Indeed, Indo-US cooperation on defence and intelligence has been of very high quality in the last 10 months, and involved sharing of high-end satellite images, telephone intercepts, and data exchange on Chinese troops and weapon deployment among the LAC. Other areas of cooperation included information sharing, logistics cooperation, artificial intelligence as well as in issues of cyberspace security.

However, amidst the strategic convergence, the US flagged its concerns over human rights and India procuring a batch of S-400 air defence missiles from Russia. There was veiled criticism

of India cracking down on protesting farmers and "intimidation of journalists and government critics".

Though the US disapproves of India buying arms from Russia as it urges allies and partners to move away from Russian equipment and avoid any kind of acquisitions that would trigger sanctions, the possibility of sanctions was far fetched as the actual delivery is yet to take place.

India's defence cooperation with Russia is not recent. Russia has remained a trusted friend of India for years. When India negotiated with Russia for the purchase of Russian made S-400 Triumph air defence system for \$5.43 billion (Rs. 40,000 crore) in 2018, the then Trump administration put pressure on India not to do it but India went ahead given the old and tested friendship with Russia. The missile systems are expected to be delivered in October 2021. When Turkey bought the same defence missile equipment from Russia, the White House was quick to slap sanctions. The US has desisted from imposing similar sanctions on India. When Russia annexed Crimea, the US passed the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), by which countries buying sophisticated Russian military equipment were to be slapped with sanctions. The act was passed by the US Congress and became operational in 2017. India has pushed for a waiver from the US law. India on its part has conveyed to the US that acquisition of S-400 missile systems is an "urgent national security requirement". Given the strategic convergence in the wake of a menacing China, the US is most likely to agree for a waiver to India. This single case is unlikely to derail the burgeoning ties that have become more robust.



RAJARAM PANDA
The writer is Senior Fellow-designate at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi

Covid danger after electoral bash

SIR, The Election Commission mandates anti-Covid measures at polling booths but political parties can't be restrained from conducting rallies and road shows. Curious

people wrestle at small urban health centres to get vaccinated with scant regard to physical distancing. Health workers themselves flout norms, let alone attempting

more than half of the global population. Demand is expected to rise 25 per cent by 2050. India is one of the world's largest producers of rice. Though rice not an aquatic crop, it has ability to tolerate submergence. The practice of submerging of rice is adopted to check weeds. Rice consumes about 4000-5000 litres of water per kg of grain produced. According to the UN backed Sustainable Rice Platform rice cultivation uses 30-40 per cent of the world's fresh water and is responsible for 10 per cent of manmade emission of greenhouse gas Methane.

In the words of Bertrand Russell: "Science confers two kinds of benefits: it can diminish bad things, and it can increase good things". To avail of the former an innovative method of rice cultivation, called the System of Rice Intensification (SRI), was developed by a Jesuit priest Henri de Laulani.

This method seems to reduce requirement of water from 30 to 60 per cent. Moreover, it involves less expenditure and gives more yield. Today it is practiced as many as 20 countries including India.

Moreover, an Israeli company has also developed a drip irrigation system to spread awareness. Danger is lurking after the month-long electoral bash is over. Future legislators please take some moral responsibility.

Yours, etc., Basudeb Dutta, Santipur, 31 March

RICE PRODUCTION

SIR, This is with reference to the write-up, 'Perils of unsustainable rice production' by Abhiroop Chowdhury et al. (The Statesman, 1 April). Rice is the staple food for

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for growing rice to replace the flooded paddies. Indeed, 'Necessity is the mother of invention.'

Yours, etc., Jaydev Jana, Kolkata, 1 April.

MITHALI & JHULAN

SIR, Your esteemed newspaper's edition dated March 16, bears two letters, one by Yugal Kishore Sharma and the other by Sourish Misra. Both have showered praises upon Mithali Raj, India's Women's Cricket Team Captain. For her exemplary performances in her international batting records.

However, your readers might feel disappointed as none of them chose to mention the name of Jhulan Goswami, Mithali's teammate and former India's Captain, still excelling at 38 years of her age in attacking South Africa's Women Team in ODI Matches, just concluded. Jhulan Goswami as a bowler, as an all-rounder and as a Captain of the India's team in International Women's Cricket, did not lag behind Mithali Raj, for her performances in the same.

She is the Highest Wicket taker in the history of Women's ODI Cricket. When she overtook the record (180) of Australian, Fritzpatrick, in 2017. She has taken her 300th wicket in International Cricket. She is

POWER OF THE SUN

SIR, I refer to the informative article "Looking beyond silicon" by S Ananthanarayanan. Enough solar energy falls on the surface of the earth and India as a tropical country is blessed to receive this bounty abundantly. Tapping the sun as a source of energy is rational. India should explore and if need be in collaboration with other countries like USA and Germany seek reserves and technology of Iron pyrite ~ also known as fool's gold ~ which could become a bonanza to the solar industry. Researchers are of the view that they could soon turn Iron pyrite into a cheaper alternative to the rare and expensive materials now used in making solar panels. Existing types of cells use materials that are very scarce, potentially toxic or not especially efficient. Cost of cells made with pyrite is likely to be cheaper because fool's gold is readily available. US is where photovoltaic technology was developed and US is facing a problem like India with the large influx of highly subsidised solar panels. China to realise its objective of 'Made In China 2025' is going out of its way to focus on cutting edge technologies to ensure its ascendancy and control over solar panels and India needs to be self-sufficient in renewable energy technology. Ideally to generate energy, nothing can come close to the natural alchemy and game changer technology called photosynthesis if only we could replicate this miracle. Plants, trees and all things green turn one of the most insubstantial things ~ sunlight into energy ~ food for insects, wildlife and people.

Yours, etc., H N Ramakrishna, Bengaluru, 31 March.

the fastest woman bowler at 120 km/hr. In 2007, she won ICC women's Cricketer of the year award. She captained India's Women's Cricket Team during 2008-2011. She has also scored overall 1,593 runs with several 50s. Even now, when India has been beaten by South Africa, Jhulan at the age of 38, has regularly taken 2 wickets per innings.

In November 2020, she has been nominated for ICC Women's Cricketers of the Decade Award.

Like Virat Kohli, she also has won both Arjuna and Padma Shri awards. So, Jhulan, from the soil of Bengal, richly deserves praise for her wonderful and consistent performances in World's International Cricket.

Yours, etc., Abhijit Sengupta, Kolkata, 18 March.



to spread awareness. Danger is lurking after the month-long electoral bash is over. Future legislators please take some moral responsibility.

Yours, etc., Basudeb Dutta, Santipur, 31 March

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ATANU BISWAS

In the UK, the Liberal Democrats have long been campaigning for Westminster to adopt proportional representation (PR) instead of the first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral system. They certainly have enough reason – PR might give minority parties such as themselves much more power. For example, in the 2010 UK general elections, the Liberal Democrats got 23 per cent vote share only to get 9.5 per cent of the seats. While a party in FPTP system might bag more than two-thirds of the seats with less than one-third vote share and might eventually enjoy tremendous power, a PR system might give smaller parties a better chance of getting into Parliament, and to represent varied voices of the national political landscape.

Small parties, however, may get disproportionately large number of seats in FPTP system if they enjoy clustered support base. Nicola Sturgeon's Scottish National Party (SNP), for example, got 48 seats (which is 7.4 per cent of the 650 seats) with a meagre 3.9 per cent vote share in the 2020 UK general elections. In a PR system, on the contrary, the whole country is treated as a single constituency, and a party needs 20 per cent vote to get 20 per cent of the seats. Simple.

PR can even be combined with FPTP. Japan, Germany and New Zealand did so to use 'mixed-member' proportional representation (MMP) where voters choose a local representative and also cast a second vote for a national party. While dozens of countries, mostly in Europe, have adopted some form of PR, the system is bound to be under the scanner due to some pathetic consequences. Take the example of Israel – there's no annual budget since 2018, and the country must be facing internal policy paralysis and erosion of state institutions. In fact, Israel just voted for the fourth time in two years! And, that's certainly not the endgame, the fifth election in this sequence is lurking in the shadows – maybe in 2021 itself.

On one side, Israel's debacle is a continuing political display of one of the finest politicians of the contemporary world – Benjamin Netanyahu, who is playing a fine balancing game by inducing an ultra-nationalist right-wing environment in the country. Yohanan Plesner, head of the Israel Democracy Institute thinktank, thinks Israeli voters were split "right down the middle with respect to the main question that divides Israeli politics, which is pro and against Mr Netanyahu". Israel's society – deeply divided across race, religion, ideology – is further divided about Netanyahu; Israel's recent elections apparently have turned into referendums on him. Netanyahu, at present, is on trial for bribery, fraud and breach of trust.



However, Netanyahu is up to taking credit for Israel's coronavirus vaccine rollout. And, more importantly, he is portrayed as 'Mr. Security' in the fight for the cause of the State of Israel and for Jews, and for perceived success in handling the Palestine issue. When then US president Donald Trump recognised Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and said that the Golan Heights, captured territories of Syria, belonged to Israel, the credit went to Netanyahu. And Netanyahu certainly got tremendous electoral mileage for the diplomatic achievement of forging ties with several Arab and Muslim states in the 'Abraham Accords' in August 2020.

However, the real problem is within the electoral system itself as it fails to offer any solution – election after election – for political stability and much-needed restoration of public trust. A total of 61 seats are needed to form a government in Israel's 120-member Knesset (parliament). Except for a brief period in 1969, when an alliance of the Labor Party and the leftist party Mapam was formed, a single party could never manage to get a majority in the Knesset. Typically, a party having around 30 seats has emerged as the leading party in the recent past. Thus, several types of short-term coalitions became

inevitable. And often a party with only a few seats might become king-maker and enjoy a lot of power. This time Israel voted to form the 24th Knesset for forming the 36th government. The difference in these two numbers is certainly an indicator of instability. And, it's clear that forming a stable coalition in recent times has become a daunting task in Israel, even in the domain of realpolitik.

There are voices in defence of Israel's PR parliamentary system, of course. In her 2013 book *'It's NOT the Electoral System, Stupid'*, former Member of Knesset and political analyst Einat Wilf demonstrated through comparative analysis why Israel's electoral system is no worse than those of other democracies and therefore should not be changed. Political analyst Shany Mor also batted repeatedly for Israel's PR system.

PR certainly has its pros and cons. Some believe PR might pave the path for the fringe extremists to Parliament. The example of the 2015 UK general election is often cited. If the election had been held under a PR system, the Eurosceptic, right-wing populist UK Independence Party (UKIP) would have been the third-largest in Parliament, with 83 seats instead of the solitary seat they actually got! In theory, however, stable and

centrist policies often prevail in the PR system. Also, PR is believed to eliminate possible 'tactical' votes. Lack of connection to the community of members of parliaments is a criticism against the PR system. And there's the argument that PR often produces weak and indecisive coalition governments.

It's astonishing how an electoral system might even change the outcome of an election. During his 2015 election campaign, Justin Trudeau promised to introduce PR system in Canada if voted into office. Had Trudeau kept this electoral promise, he would have possibly been voted out in 2019! For, in 2019, Trudeau's Liberal Party won 157 seats with 33.1 per cent vote share, while the Conservatives won 121 seats with 34.4 per cent.

How is a coalition formed under PR? In his 2012 book *'Patterns of Democracy'*, Arend Lijphart of the University of California, San Diego, exhibited a strong correlation between a metric standing in for the proportionality of a voting system and the effective number of parties in parliament. It usually takes 32 days, on average, for forming a coalition government in MMP and 50 days for PR. There are extreme examples though. After the 2010 election, Belgium needed 541 days to form a government, a

government was formed in the Netherlands 225 days after the 2017 election, and Germany took 161 days for forming a government after its September 2017 election. Northern Ireland was in crisis after a government made up of Protestant and Catholic coalition parties collapsed in 2017, and the stalemate continued until January 2020! And, we know, Israel is in the ambit of repeated elections.

It's widely argued that the PR only works in homogenous societies with high levels of civic trust. There is no doubt that PR becomes a difficult exercise when the concerned country is deeply divided in terms of one or more parameters. While Israel is a complex society having age-old conflicts between the Jews and Arabs, Belgium has a huge linguistic and cultural divide between French and Flemish speakers. However, as Israel's president Reuven Rivlin admitted, the political deadlock in his country has a price too. "Four elections in two years erode public trust in the democratic process," Rivlin opined. The uncertainty, deadlock and policy paralysis would, however, continue in Israel for the foreseeable future.

The writer is Professor of statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata.

Misogyny is alive and thriving

MAHIR ALI

It wasn't a particularly sensitive choice of words when the Australian prime minister, Scott Morrison, declared on Monday that his government would henceforth look towards women through a 'fresh lens'.

Not just because the male gaze, with or without the benefit of any kind of lens, is a huge part of the problem when it comes to women, but also since an accusation against one of his MPs involves taking inappropriate photographs of women.

Several other accusations have been made against the MP, who has agreed not to contest further elections. But Morrison has resisted calls to dump him right away, because were he to do so, the ruling Liberal-National party coalition would lose its parliamentary majority.

If that's a lame excuse for clinging on to Andrew Laming, the prime minister has other related woes to countenance. He announced a cabinet reshuffle on Monday, demoting but not sidelining two of his most prominent ministers. One of them, former attorney general Christian Porter, faces an allegation of rape as a teenager. The other, former defence minister Linda Reynolds, has apologised for belittling a staff member who was allegedly raped by a colleague in



Canberra's parliament house.

Not surprisingly, the response to these allegations has focused on political management of the consequences. And Morrison's clumsy reactions have tended to underline his discomfort with such matters. In responding to the rape allegation by the former Liberal Party staffer, for instance, he claimed to have been alerted to its enormity by his wife, who apparently asked him to contemplate the consequences if something like that had happened to one of his daughters.

The implication was that a man

needs a wife and daughters to grasp the gravity of such situations. When women across Australia, including outside parliament, were agitating for their rights, the prime minister compounded his faux pas by celebrating the fact that in Australia protesters at least weren't being shot in the streets.

What an amazing concession. By the same token, one could conclude that women in Australia should consider themselves fortunate not to be in the same predicament as women in, say, Saudi Arabia – or, for that matter, the subcontinent. Ladies, count your blessings. It ought to go without saying

that some of the issues highlighted in Australia are by no means exclusive to it. Misogyny and patriarchy are common to cultures across the world. And, by some standards, their manifestation in Australia is mild compared with other countries.

That can hardly serve as a valid excuse, though, for trying to brush the issue under the carpet. Australia was very much a part of the first wave of Western feminism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and significant advances in women's rights have been registered since Gough Whitlam's game-changing government in 1972. It has equally been clear since that legislation does not necessarily change very much. Almost a half century on, even basic advances made back then, such as equal pay for equal work, remain unimplemented in a meaningful sense.

Notwithstanding a few exceptions, the same story can be told about much of the Western world. It's even worse elsewhere. The formidable Egyptian feminist and writer Nawal el-Saadawi died at the age of 89 this month with too many of her hopes unfulfilled. Just days later, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan annulled Turkey's ratification of the Istanbul convention on violence against women. The absurd backlash against this month's Aurat March in Pakistan falls in the same category. Subtly or otherwise, the world we live in still thrives on sexism and patriarchy, because all too many men remain

trapped in a chauvinist mindset everywhere.

Obviously, there are vast differences between, say, Saudi Arabia — where women have only recently been afforded (by men) the right to drive cars — and Australia. Nonetheless, the fact that Australia's latest woes in this sphere have emerged amid the highest echelons of political power provides cause for a pause to ponder all that has gone wrong in the past 50 years.

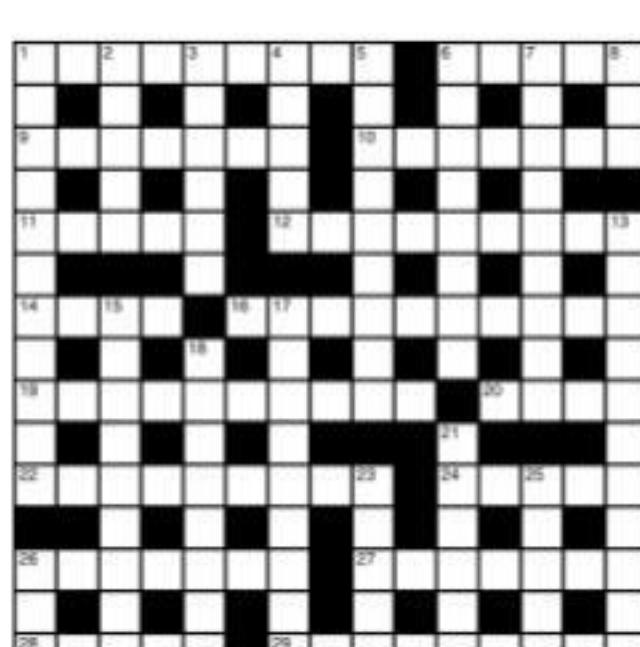
The biggest risk is that while a few heads might roll — although even that seems dubious — nothing will substantially change in the way women are treated in parliament and in homes and workplaces across the nation, beyond occasional lip service and hand-wringing by the very same people (again mostly, but not exclusively, men) who help to perpetuate the status quo.

Sure, there has been progress over the decades, but never enough to eradicate centuries of sexist prejudices, let alone to clearly illuminate the intersections of class, race and gender that continue to guide the destiny of individuals. My granddaughter turned two yesterday, and I would like to think she will come of age in a very different Australia and a world substantially changed for the better, for all human beings. There are depressingly few grounds, though, for imagining such a future.

Dawn/ANN.

NO 28871

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 One speculating alarm will see removal of second event in cruel sport (9)
- 6 Food I put in vehicle supplied by daughter (5)
- 9 Composer's heart in poor condition after relapse (7)
- 10 Friend slightly mad about beginning to ride horse (7)
- 11 Quiet leg-over will engross one (5)
- 12 Enthusiast to advance in most of French dance and lots of Spanish dances (9)
- 14 Restaurant encounter, with odd characters swapping places (4)
- 16 Perhaps unwelcome guest, last at banquet – hint
- 19 Aims tennis shot, getting round one in a hundred (10)
- 20 Enthusiasm at the heart of Pacific nation? (4)
- 22 Bar's got up pretentiously as this? (9)
- 24 European taking Englishman around second English town (5)
- 26 Hint limits one getting wrong kind of food (7)
- 27 Is Heather after a girl from Ireland? (7)
- 28 Glamorous indefinable something unknown in railway (5)
- 29 Produced fire in small space, getting warm type of light (9)

DOWN

- 1 Support involving group in type of holiday (11)
- 2 Nothing in odd bits of lyrics provided by a poet (5)
- 3 Man collapsed with cry of pain (6)
- 4 Government official limiting one's brother (5)
- 5 Sort of cricket pundit, an oddball about term for fielder (3-3-3)
- 6 Local resident more unpleasant about prisoner (8)
- 7 Undue pride shown by expert about right arrangement for organ (9)
- 8 Time period regularly featured in diary (3)
- 13 Religious component of
- 15 Is this possibly pursuing feet half-heartedly? One may think so (9)
- 17 Some covering provided by item in nude musical? (9)
- 18 The old-fashioned getting upset about standard technology producing outrage (8)
- 21 Individual rule accordingly adopted by writer (6)
- 23 Line held by defender, a player in game (5)
- 25 Throw small ball (5)
- 26 Motoring group raised – its main focus? (3)

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

100 YEARS AGO

OCCASIONAL NOTE

The British Ministry of Health has published a report on the pandemic of influenza of 1918-19 which contains a great deal of information, not only regarding this particular outbreak but about the disease generally, reviewing its history in England from 1658 to the present time and its recent epidemics in all parts of the world. It is pointed out that the two waves that swept over England in 1918, the first in June and July, the second in October and November, were of distinctly different characters. In the first the cases were as a rule mild, with three days of fever, and with a marked preference for youthful subjects. The second was much more virulent, more general, and complicated in many instances by pneumonia. Regarding the direct responsibility of influenza, the report is not able to give a decided opinion. The evidence furnished by this very extensive outbreak does not seem to strengthen the position of those who regard this germ as the main factor in the production of the disease; there is more evidence that it plays an important part in later complications. In a chapter on means of prevention the hope is expressed that eventually a vaccine may be introduced that will confer immunity; meanwhile, we are told, "the non-mystical methods which come within the scope of personal hygiene are those which both epidemiological and physiological research sanction."

NEWS ITEMS

NEEDS OF "SWARAJ" CAMPAIGNERS

Following Mr. Gandhi's speech in moving the main resolution before the Congress committee yesterday, Mr. C.R. Das, who seconded, said that he was one of those who did not take to the spinning wheel kindly, but he found by actual experience that the spinning wheel movement was in every way calculated to achieve their object of Swaraj. If Swaraj meant that India should be self-contained and self-efficient it was desirable that her people should be made to understand how this could be brought about. He considered the spinning wheel as a most simple, honest and straight proposition which could be put before the masses and taken to by them easily. It did not mean any particular system of Government which the Congress might argue about or settle.

PROTECTING HOME INDUSTRIES

The terms are published of resolutions which it is proposed to submit to the Committee of Ways and Means to give effect to the Government's promise of legislation to safeguard British industries from foreign competition. The resolutions, which as passed will be given effect in this year's Finance Act, provide for an ad valorem duty of 33 and one third per cent for five years on certain commodities, regardless of the country from which they have been imported, including chemicals and scientific instruments, glassware, magnetos and tungsten products. These come mostly from Germany and are already subject to a 50 per cent tax under the Reparations Act. The resolutions also provide for an additional customs duty of 33 and one third per cent in order to check dumping and protect British manufacturers.

INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS GENERAL SECRETARY

The Asiatic Society of Bengal has appointed Prof. C.V. Raman of the Calcutta University as General Secretary of the Indian Science Congress. This is the first time the charge of the work of organisation of this important and influential body has been entrusted to an Indian, and is a recognition of the prominent part taken by Prof. Raman in the work of the Congress since its inception seven years ago. Prof. Raman was the first Indian to occupy the presidential chair of the physics section of the Congress, and had the distinction of being thrice in succession invited to deliver a public lecture under the auspices of the Congress, besides reading one or more original papers at all its meetings.

DUKE OF CONNAUGHT TOUR

The Duke of Connaught attended a reception last night given by the Madras Landowners Association at the Senate House. There was a large and distinguished gathering, including many ladies. His Royal Highness in company with Lord and Lady Willingdon arrived at 9.30 PM. and was accorded a hearty reception. About thirty zemindars were presented to His Royal Highness. The programme of entertainment included selections of Indian music and concluded with a display of fireworks. The visit of His Royal Highness was a great success and he was received with great ovations from the public everywhere. Yesterday, the concluding day of the Duke's visit to the city, was marked by glorious weather and the whole city looked delightfully fine.





Paytm is around 30-50 per cent larger than mobile apps in the segment with over 1.2 billion monthly transactions

NARENDRA YADAV
PAYTM VICE-PRESIDENT

THUMBNAILS

Bombay Dyeing MD steps down: Bombay Dyeing and Manufacturing Company Ltd on Thursday said its managing director Jeh Wadia has stepped down and as an interim measure its day-to-day management would be looked after by the chief executive officer and chief financial officer of the company.

Brand ambassador: Pilot Industries, pioneer in e-rickshaw, inverter and solar battery segments in India, has signed Ajay Devgan as the brand ambassador for their leading brand "Leader Batteries". With this association, Leader Batteries aims to strengthen its pan-India brand presence, according to a Press release from the company.

Licious foray: Fresh meat, meat products and seafood brand, Licious has announced its launch in Kolkata. Having launched in 5 new cities in the last 90 days, the Bengaluru-based brand aims at capturing the highly evolved markets in the east beginning with Kolkata, the company said in a Press statement.

Haier launch: Home appliances & consumer electronics maker Haier has unveiled 17 new variants of big bottom mounted refrigerators in 3 and 4-star range. With triple inverter, dual fan technology and extra space, the big bottom mounted refrigerators promise maximum storage, freshness and energy savings for users, the company said.

Crompton partners Amazon: Crompton Greaves Consumer Electricals Ltd. has collaborated with an e-commerce platform Amazon to launch Immensa a wi-fi and bluetooth-enabled LED lamp. The lamp ensures the comfort of operating the lighting through its app while the convenience of managing it anywhere and anytime via its voice controls, said the Press release.

Sonalika growth: Sonalika has recorded its highest-ever annual sales of 1,39,526 tractors in financial year 2020-21. The company has registered a phenomenal domestic growth rate of 41.6 per cent over FY 20 volumes, which is the highest in the industry, and beaten industry growth (est. 26.7 per cent) by a significant margin, according to a company release.

Virtual programme for young social entrepreneurs: After an eight-month programme of learning, cross-border exchanges, and online mentorship, 14 teams comprising 27 youths reconvened for the Young Social Entrepreneurs (YSE) global's pitching for change finale, at which they presented their social enterprise ideas virtually to a panel of judges. The teams from Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, the Philippines, Singapore, and Uganda were shortlisted from 54 teams comprising 109 youths who took part in the SIEF's 2020 YSE global programme in July 2020 last year, said the release.

Jet fuel or ATF price reduced by 3 per cent

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

In the first reduction in rate in two months, jet fuel or ATF price today was cut by 3 per cent in line with softening international crude oil prices.

Air aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by Rs 1,887 per kilo litre, or 3 per cent, to Rs 58,374.16 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

This is the first reduction in rates after four rounds of increase since February.

Rates were increased by Rs 3,246.75 per kl on 1 February, followed by a 3.6 per cent hike on 16 February, and a steep 6.5 per cent raise on 1

GST mop-up at all-time high of ₹1.23 lakh crore

Revenues during March this year are the highest since introduction of GST

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

The goods and services tax (GST) collection in March this year registered a record high of Rs 1.23 lakh crore, informed the finance ministry today.

In a Press statement, the ministry said the GST revenues during March 2021 are the highest since introduction of GST and 27 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month of last year.

"In line with the trend of recovery in the GST revenues over past five months, the revenues for the month of March 2021 are 27 per cent higher than the GST revenues in the same month last year," reads the Press release from the finance ministry.

The collection of CGST stood at Rs 22,973 crore, SGST at Rs 29,329 crore, IGST at Rs 62,842 crore (including Rs 31,097 crore collected on import of goods) and Cess at Rs 8,757 crore (including Rs 935 crore collected on import of goods).

The government has set-

RECOVERY TREND

► GST revenues crossed Rs 1 lakh crore mark at a stretch for the last six months and a steep increasing trend over this period is a clear indicator of rapid economic recovery post pandemic, finance ministry said.

► Closer monitoring against fake-billing, deep



tled Rs 21,879 crore to CGST and Rs 17,230 crore to SGST from IGST as regular settlement. In addition, Centre has also settled Rs 28,000 crore as IGST ad-hoc settlement in the ratio of 50:50 between Centre and states/UTs.

"The total revenue of Centre and the states after regular and ad-hoc settlements in

the month of March 2021 is Rs 58,852 crore for CGST and Rs 60,559 crore for the SGST. Centre has also released a compensation of Rs 30,000 crore during the month of March 2021," reads the Press statement.

In March, the ministry informed, revenues from import of goods were 70 per

cent higher and the revenues from domestic transactions (including import of services) are 17 per cent higher than the revenues from these sources during the same month last year. It also said the GST revenue witnessed growth rate of (-) 41 per cent, (-) 8 per cent, 8 per cent and 14 per cent in the first, second, third and fourth quarters of this financial year, respectively, as compared to the same quarters last year, clearly indicating the recovery trend in GST revenues as well as the economy as a whole.

"GST revenues crossed Rs 1 lakh crore mark at a stretch for the last six months and a steep increasing trend over this period is a clear indicator of rapid economic recovery post pandemic. Closer monitoring against fake-billing, deep data analytics using data from multiple sources, including GST, income-tax and customs IT systems and effective tax administration have also contributed to the steady increase in tax revenue over the last few months," reads the Press statement.

A company official said, with this transaction RInfra's exposure to Yes Bank has been reduced from Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 2,000 crore and the company is committed to be a debt-free company by 2021.

RInfra sells Mumbai office to Yes Bank for ₹1,200 cr

With this, Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) has closed three major transactions in the last 90 days, including sale of a road asset.

NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

Anil Ambani-backed Reliance Infrastructure today announced sale of Reliance Centre, Mumbai, to Yes Bank for Rs 1,200 crore. With this, Reliance Infrastructure (RInfra) has closed three major transactions in the last 90 days, including sale of a road asset.

"RInfra and Yes Bank Limited (Yes Bank) announced a sale transaction of Reliance Centre, Santacruz, Mumbai to Yes Bank," the company said in a statement. The transaction value is Rs 1,200 crore, it said. Entire proceeds from the sale of Reliance Centre is utilised only to repay the debt of Yes Bank, it said.

A company official said, with this transaction RInfra's exposure to Yes Bank has been reduced from Rs 4,000 crore to Rs 2,000 crore and the company is committed to be a debt-free company by 2021.

Bengaluru-headquartered Manipal Hospitals operates 15 hospitals with focus on tertiary and quaternary care. It had recently announced acquisition of Columbia Asia Hospital.

"We are delighted to partner with Manipal Hospitals in their next phase of growth. Through this investment, NIIFL looks forward to playing a role in serving the healthcare needs of India," NIIFL MD and CEO Sujoy Bose said.

The strong governance, processes and track record of Manipal Hospitals resonates well with NIIFL's investment philosophy, he added.

"We are pleased to join hands with NIIFL as Manipal Hospitals continues on its path to reach many more geographies and under-served communities to provide both access and superlative clinical outcomes," Ranjan Pai said.

NIIFL is a collaborative investment platform for international and domestic investors, anchored by the government.

NIIFL to invest ₹2,100 crore in Manipal Hospitals

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

National Investment & Infrastructure Fund Ltd (NIIFL) today announced an investment of Rs 2,100 crore in Manipal Hospitals, through its direct private equity fund, Strategic Opportunities Fund, as the healthcare provider pursues its next phase of growth.

For the investment, NIIFL will get a minority stake in Manipal Hospitals as chairman of Manipal Education and Medical Group, Ranjan Pai, is selling a small percentage of his stake in the company, a spokesperson of the hospital chain said.

This investment marks the fund's first investment in the Indian healthcare sector and will support Manipal Hospitals' journey of growth to become one of India's largest hospital chains, NIIFL and Manipal Hospitals said in a joint statement.

The transaction has been signed by both parties and the closing of the transaction is subject to receipt of certain approvals, it added.

Passenger vehicles business unit president Shailesh Chandra said.

The company's passenger vehicle sales during 2020-21 stood at 2,22,025 units, up 69 per cent from 1,31,196 units in 2019-20.

Similarly, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said it had sold a total of 15,001 units last month, registering the highest-ever domestic sales in the month of March since 2013. The automaker had sold 7,023 units in March 2020, amid a nationwide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

M&M said it has sold 16,700 passenger vehicles last month in the domestic market. It had dispatched 3,383 units in March 2020.

Honda Cars India Ltd (HCIL) reported domestic sales of 7,103 units in March. It had sold 3,697 units in the same month last year.

Mastercard to invest \$100m in Airtel Africa mobile money biz

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

Airtel Africa today announced that Mastercard would invest \$100 million (about Rs 733 crore) in its wholly-owned subsidiary Airtel Mobile Commerce BV (AMC BV).

Mastercard would hold a minority stake in AMC BV on completion of the deal, with Airtel Africa continuing to hold the majority stake, an Airtel statement said.

Sources privy to the development said Mastercard would get about 3.75 per cent stake in the company.

AMC BV is currently the holding company for several of Airtel Africa's mobile money operations and is intended to own and operate the mobile money businesses across all of Airtel Africa's 14 operating

countries. The proceeds from the transaction would be used to reduce group debt and invest in network and sales infrastructure in the respective operating countries.

Airtel Africa, a leading provider of telecommunications and mobile money services, with a presence in 14 countries across Africa, announces the signing of an agreement under which Mastercard, a leading innovator and global technology company in the payments industry, will invest \$100 million in Airtel Mobile Commerce BV...

The latest deal values Airtel Africa's mobile money business at \$2.65 billion on a cash and debt-free basis.

Mastercard - via one of its wholly-owned subsidiaries - will make the investment

through a secondary purchase of shares in AMC BV from Airtel Africa. The transaction would close in two stages - \$75 million to be invested at the first close, once the transfer of sufficient mobile money operations and contracts into AMC BV has been completed, while \$25 million will be invested at the second close on further transfers.

Raghunath Mandava, CEO of Airtel Africa, said: "With today's announcement we are pleased to welcome Mastercard as an investor in our mobile money business, joining The Rise Fund which we announced two weeks ago. This is a continuation of our strategy to increase the minority shareholding in our mobile money business with the further intention to list this business within four years."

The country's largest car maker Maruti Suzuki India said its domestic sales stood at 1,49,518 units last month. The auto major had reported

ed sales of 76,976 units in March 2020. Both dispatches and production were hit last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Domestic sales in March 2020 had dropped about 48 per cent due to Covid related disruptions. It will be seen that domestic sales in March 2021 have only recovered to March 2019 levels," MSI said in a statement.

Rival Hyundai Motor India said its domestic sales last month stood at 52,600 units. The company had dispatched

Car makers report robust sales

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

Leading auto makers Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors today reported robust sales in March as a shift towards personal mobility and pent-up demand continued to help companies push dispatches to their respective retail partners.

Toyota Kirloskar Motor, Honda Cars and Mahindra and Mahindra (M&M) also reported strong sales last month as compared to the year-ago period, when dispatches were adversely impacted due to the impending transition to BS-VI from April 2020 and the nationwide lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

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ed sales of 76,976 units in March 2020. Both dispatches and production were hit last year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tata Motors' passenger vehicle sales last month rose to 29,654 units from 5,676 units in March 2020. The passenger vehicle industry witnessed strong growth in the fourth quarter last fiscal on a low base with robust demand for personal mobility and new launches driving demand.

The vertical posted its highest-ever sales in nine years, in March and the fourth quarter," Tata Motors pas-

senger vehicles business unit president Shailesh Chandra said.

The company's passenger vehicle sales during 2020-21 stood at 2,22,025 units, up 69 per cent from 1,31,196 units in 2019-20.

Similarly, Toyota Kirloskar Motor (TKM) said it had sold a total of 15,001 units last month, registering the highest-ever domestic sales in the month of March since 2013. The automaker had sold 7,023 units in March 2020, amid a nationwide lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

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Wipro to buy Oz firm for \$117 million

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL



IT services major Wipro today said it will acquire Ampion, an Australia-based provider of cyber security, DevOps and quality engineering services for \$117 million (about Rs 857 crore).

The acquisition is an important step for Wipro in this direction, and strengthens the commitment towards clients and stakeholders in Australia and New Zealand (ANZ), Wipro said in a regulatory filing.

The merged entity, Ampion is expected to close in the quarter ending 30 June 2021, it added.

"The purchase consideration is \$117 million (1 AUD=0.78 USD)," the filing said.

Ampion was formed through the merger of IT ser-

The Australian market is undergoing significant disruption through the adoption of cloud, DevOps, analytics and resilience related digital capabilities, across enterprises and public sector entities and delivery capabilities.

"I am excited to welcome Ampion to the Wipro family. Ampion has a successful track record and enjoys immense credibility with leading enterprises in the region, a collaborative work culture, and significant local subject matter expertise. We see Ampion as a complementary force that will help us expand our footprint and accelerate our journey in the Asia Pacific region," Wipro CEO, APMEA, N S Balaji said.

Jamie Duffield, CEO of Ampion, said the company's clients, employees and the entire market ecosystem will tremendously benefit from the synergies of Ampion and Wipro's combined portfolio of transformation offerings.

Wipro's new operating model emphasises strategic investments in focus geographies, proximity to customers, agility, scale and localisation.

Wipro has been present in the ANZ market for over two decades with deep client relationships across industry sectors and localised domain and delivery capabilities.

"Wipro and Ampion's combined offerings, powered by engineering transformation, DevOps and security consulting services, will bring scale and market agility to respond to the growing demands of customers, it added.

Last month, Wipro had announced it will acquire London-headquartered Capco, a global management and technology consultancy, in a \$1.45 billion (over Rs 10,500 crore) deal - its biggest acquisition till date.

Annual revenues run rate of Ampion for the year ending 30 June 2020 was \$85.5 million, of which about 12 per cent was related to products sale.

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Wipro has been present in the ANZ market for over two decades with deep client relationships across industry sectors and localised domain and delivery capabilities.

The introduction of a vaccine passport or 'Green Pass' will only allow those who have been vaccinated to experience the recovery to their daily lives



SOUTH KOREA PRIME MINISTER CHUNG SYE-KYUN
INTRODUCING COVID-19 VACCINE PASSPORTS TO IMMUNISED CITIZENS

NEW DELHI, FRIDAY 02 APRIL 2021

Myanmar remains mired in violence months after coup

Outside efforts including sanctions imposed by Western nations have failed to help restore peace

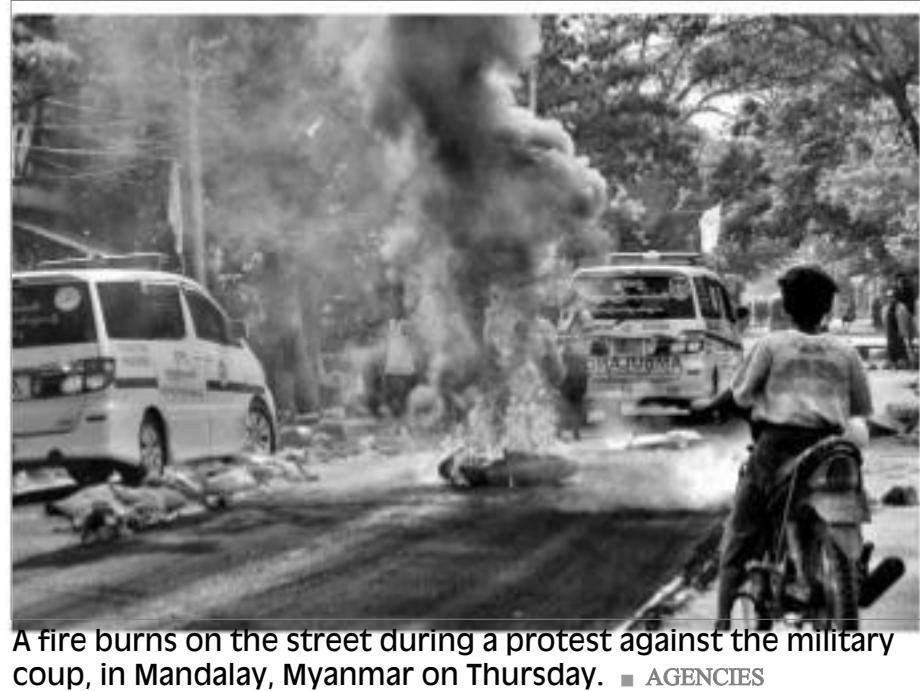
ASSOCIATED PRESS

YANGON, 1 APRIL

Protesters in Myanmar on Thursday marked two months since the military seized power by once more defying the threat of lethal violence and publicly demonstrating against the toppling of the democratically elected government.

The 1 February coup has been met with massive public resistance that security forces have been unable to crush through escalating levels of violence, including now routinely shooting protesters. Outside efforts including sanctions imposed by Western nations on the military regime have failed to help restore peace.

In Yangon, a group of young people shortly after sunrise Thursday sang solemn songs honoring the more than 500 protesters killed so far. They



A fire burns on the street during a protest against the military coup, in Mandalay, Myanmar on Thursday. ■ AGENCIES

then marched through the streets chanting slogans calling for the fall of the junta, the release of deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the return of democracy. Protests were also held in Mandalay and elsewhere. The demonstrations followed a night of violence including police raids and several fires. Several retail

killed and with the military launching airstrikes against the guerrilla forces of the Karen ethnic minority in their homeland on the border with Thailand. The UN special envoy for Myanmar warned the country faces the possibility of civil war.

That's a stark reversal for Myanmar, which prior to the coup had been making slow progress toward greater democracy following decades of brutal military rule.

In areas controlled by the Karen, more than a dozen civilians have been killed since Saturday and more than 20,000 have been displaced, according to the Free Burma Rangers, a relief agency operating in the area.

About 3,000 Karen villagers have fled for safety in neighboring Thailand in recent days, but many have returned under unclear circumstances. Thai authorities said those displaced went back to Myanmar voluntarily after a brief stay, but humanitarian aid groups say they are not safe and many remain in hiding in the jungle and caves on the Myanmar side of the border.

worker in touch with residents near the site.

Saw Kholo Htoo, the deputy director for Karen Teacher Working Group, said residents told him five people were killed at the mine and another six at a nearby village. The Bago Weekly Journal also reported the attack.

David Eubank of the Free Burma Rangers confirmed that a video of the attack's aftermath showed the gold mine and that there had been airstrikes in the area.

The somersault came a day after the high-powered committee under newly appointed Finance Minister Hammad Azhar on Wednesday decided to import the two key items from India, lifting a nearly two-year long ban on their import from the neighbouring country.

The issue was under speculation since afternoon but officials kept mum and finally the first confirmation came from Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari, who is known for her hawkish stand on Kashmir.

"Today Cabinet stated



clearly NO trade with India," Mazari tweeted soon after a Cabinet meeting chaired by Prime Minister Imran Khan on Thursday.

Mazari said that Prime Minister Khan, who chaired the first Cabinet meeting after testing Covid-19 positive on 20 March, "made it clear (that) there can be no normalisation of relations with India until they reverse their actions viz Kashmir of August 2019. Later, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in a video message said that the Cabinet discussed the issue of import of cotton and sugar from India.

"An impression is being created that relations with India have become normal and trade has been restored" he said. "On this impression, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet had a consensus opinion that until India reviewed the unilateral actions of 5 August, 2019, it would not be possible to normalise ties with India." Ahead of the Cabinet meeting, Mazari had said that all ECC decisions have to be approved by Cabinet and only then can they be seen as "approved" by the government.

India is the world's biggest producer of cotton and the second biggest sugar manufacturer. Pakistan had lifted the ban on import of medicines and raw material of essential drugs from India amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Pak Cabinet rejects proposal to import cotton and sugar from India: Minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD, 1 APRIL

In a volte-face, Pakistan's Cabinet on Thursday rejected the recommendation of the Economic Coordination Committee to import cotton and sugar from India, with two senior ministers saying there can be no normalisation of ties with New Delhi until it reverses its decision in 2019 to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

The somersault came a day after the high-powered committee under newly appointed Finance Minister Hammad Azhar on Wednesday decided to import the two key items from India, lifting a nearly two-year long ban on their import from the neighbouring country.

The issue was under speculation since afternoon but officials kept mum and finally the first confirmation came from Minister for Human Rights Shireen Mazari, who is known for her hawkish stand on Kashmir.

"Today Cabinet stated

Nepal to conduct population census despite pandemic

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KATHMANDU, 1 APRIL

Nepal's statistical agency is preparing to conduct the national population census from May 9 despite the coronavirus pandemic, an official has said.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), a government-owned body under the National Planning Commission, has already concluded training for the facilitators, supervisors and surveyors for the purpose and is mobilising around 55,000 volunteers and surveyors for the census that



said a senior officer at the CBS. "Even if there is a lockdown, the census wouldn't be affected much since only one surveyor would reach a family and the interview can be conducted outside the home in an open space by maintaining social distancing," Hem Raj Regmi, Deputy Director-General of the CBS said.

"We are providing health safety equipment like sanitiser, face shields and masks to the surveyors who are mobilised in the field. Unless there is a complete shutdown, the census won't be affected much," he pointed out.

PREPPIN'



A South Korean elderly woman arrives to receive the first dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at a vaccination center in Seoul, South Korea, Thursday. ■ AP

Hong Kong to resume use of BioNTech-Pfizer Covid shots

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 1 APRIL

Hong Kong will resume administering the coronavirus vaccine developed by Pfizer and BioNTech on Monday following a 12-day suspension over packaging defects detected in one batch, officials said.

An additional 300,000 doses of the vaccine are expected to arrive on Friday, Civil Service Secretary Patrick Nip said Thursday.

Health officials said a probe by BioNTech found no safety issues in the batch with packaging defects for some

Seven convicted in Hong Kong over 2019 pro-democracy protests

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG, 1 APRIL

Seven Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates were convicted on Thursday with charges of organising and participating in an unlawful assembly during massive anti-government protests in 2019 that triggered a crackdown on dissent.

The seven include media tycoon and founder of the Apple Daily tabloid Jimmy Lai, as well as 82-year-old Martin Lee, a veteran of the city's democracy movement. Lai had already been held without bail on other charges related to his pro-democracy activities.



They were convicted for their involvement in a protest held on 18 August, 2019. Organisers said that 1.7 million people marched that day in opposition to a proposed bill that would have allowed suspects to be extradited to mainland China for trial.

The activists, apart from those who have been remanded in custody on other charges, were granted bail on condition they do not leave Hong Kong and must hand in all their travel documents. They will next appear in court on 16 April, where mitigation pleas

will be heard before sentences are handed down. Taking part in an unlawful assembly or a riot in Hong Kong can result in a maximum sentence of up to 10 years imprisonment for serious offenses.

Ahead of the trial, supporters and some of the defendants gathered outside the court, shouting Oppose political persecution and Five demands, not one less," in reference to demands by democracy supporters that include amnesty for those arrested in the protests as well as universal suffrage in the semi-autonomous territory.

So on this day, in a very difficult situation in Hong Kong, political retaliation is on us,

Lee Cheuk-yan, one of the defendants, said ahead of the court session.

We will still march on no matter what lies in the future. We believe in the people of Hong Kong, in our brothers and sisters in our struggle, and the victory is ours if the people of Hong Kong are persistent, he said.

Previously, two other defendants former pro-democracy lawmakers Au Nok-hin and Leung Yiu-chung had pleaded guilty to organizing and taking part in an unauthorized assembly. Hong Kong was rocked by months of protests in the second half of 2019, sparked by the extradition bill.

Pak arrests six terrorists for plotting attacks

LAHORE, 1 APRIL

Pakistan's security agencies have arrested six terrorists belonging to Afghanistan-based Tehrik-i-Taliban terror group who were plotting attacks against army personnel, officials said.

According to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD), four terrorists were arrested in Rawalpindi, while two were nabbed in Lahore - the two main cities of Punjab province.

During an intelligence-based operation in Rawalpindi on Wednesday, law enforcement agencies arrested four terrorists involved in a grenade blast.

The arrested terrorists had also carried out a grenade blast in Rawalpindi in 2020 that killed one person and wounded 15 others, officials said.

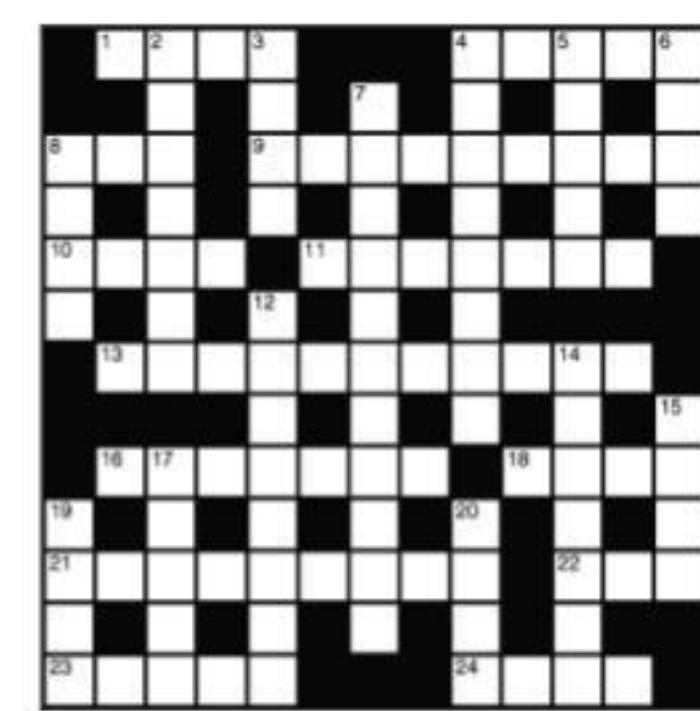
"The arrested terrorists were planning to target the law enforcement agency and army personnel," the CTD said.

Explosives, detonators, cell phones and other articles to be used for militancy were recovered from them, it added.

During interrogation, the terrorists disclosed that they had been radicalised and motivated by ideology of the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), but now they were working for the masterminds based in Afghanistan. PPI

LEISURE

10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Make weary through excess (4)
- Agitates (5)
- Cooking vessel (3)
- Financial obligation (9)
- 10 Ship's company (4)
- 11 Width (7)
- 13 Hollow (11)
- 16 Full of remorse (7)
- 18 Foot part (4)
- 21 Stamp out (9)
- 22 Appropriate (3)
- 23 Scope (5)
- 24 Go away! (4)
- 11 Ether
- 13 Source
- 15 Pieces of eight
- 16 Extra
- 18 Leonine
- 19 Rebud
- 20 Patella
- 21 Eerie
- 22 Pry
- 7 Inessential
- 12 Tremble
- 14 One-step
- 15 Toupee
- 17 Enter
- 18 Gully

DOWN

- Portable light (7)
- Shout (4)
- Stretchy trousers (3,5)
- Fool (5)
- Hebridean island (4)
- 7 Take responsibility (informal) (5,3)
- 8 Light kiss (4)
- 12 Calming drug (8)
- 15 Oversupply (4)
- 17 Killed (5)
- 19 Bring up (4)
- 20 Information (4)

SOLUTIONS TO YESTERDAY'S CROSSWORD

RED EYE/Bill Yates & Mel Casson

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*As our faith leaders, you have been housing the homeless.
You have been feeding the hungry.. Yet you are unwavering*

US VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS

DISCUSSING VACCINATION, HATE CRIME WITH FAITH LEADERS

WEATHER

CITY	MAX	MIN
SINGAPORE	29°C	25°C H
HONG KONG	26°C	20°C H
TOKYO	18°C	12°C CL
LONDON	14°C	9°C H
DUBAI	30°C	25°C S
SAN FRANCISCO	18°C	04°C S
NEW YORK	10°C	07°C S
MOSCOW	06°C	09°C H

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

THUMBNAILS



People come in for the first mass vaccination event at the Miramar Convention Center in Puerto Rico on Thursday. ■ AP

German pig farm fire: A fire at a pig-breeding facility in Germany is believed to have killed more than 55,000 animals, the operator said. The fire broke out at the facility in Alt Tellin, in Germany's northeastern corner. It spread quickly, in part through ventilation shafts, and destroyed the stalls where the animals were kept. ■ AP

Holy Thursday service held at Notre Dame: A Holy Thursday service in Paris was held at Notre Dame cathedral, which is still under construction after it was ravaged by flames in 2019. The ceremony involved a foot-washing ritual that symbolizes Jesus' willingness to serve. Paris Bishop Michel Aupetit led the rite, accompanied by Notre-Dame's rector. ■ AP

Amsterdam celebrates same-sex weddings: A huge inflatable pink cake with candles spouting rainbow flames glided through the Amsterdam canals Thursday as the Dutch capital celebrated the 20th anniversary of the world's first legal same-sex marriages. Gert Kas teil and Dolf Pasker were celebrating 20 years of married life Thursday. ■ AP

NZ child abuse row: One of New Zealand's most well-known businessmen pleaded guilty Thursday to possessing child sex abuse images, including some of children as young as 2. Ron Brierley's pleas on three charges in an Australian court have sparked a rarely invoked procedure to strip him of the knighthood he received. ■ AP

UK police officer convicted of neo-Nazi group membership: A serving Scotland Yard police constable was found guilty on Thursday of being a member of a banned far-right organisation and possessing documents that could have been of use to a terrorist after an investigation by the police force's Counter Terrorism Command.

Benjamin Hannam, 22, was also found guilty at the Old Bailey court in London of flying about his membership of National Action on his job application and police vetting forms so he could get a job as a police constable with the Metropolitan Police.

Following a trial, Hannam was found guilty of membership of a proscribed organisation, two counts of fraud by false representation and two counts of possession of documents likely to be of use to a terrorist. He will be sentenced by the same court on 23 April.

Hannam would not have got a job as a probationary police constable if he'd told the truth about his membership of a banned far-right group, said Head of the Special Crime and Counter Terrorism Division. ■ AP

US President lets Trump-era H-1B visa bans expire; Indian IT professionals to benefit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, 1 APRIL

On December 31, Trump extended the order to March 31, 2021, noting that an extension was warranted as the pandemic continued to disrupt American's lives, and high levels of unemployment and job loss were still presenting serious economic challenges to workers across the US.

Biden did not issue a fresh proclamation for the ban on H-1B visas to continue after March 31. He had promised to lift the suspension on H-1B visas, saying Trump's immigration policies were cruel.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoret-

ical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The expiry of the Trump's proclamation would now

AP

result in the issuing of H-1B visas by American diplomatic missions overseas that would result in US companies bringing in talented technology professionals inside the country.

No new proclamation was

issued by Biden till Wednesday mid-night, resulting in the automatic end to the ban on issuing of fresh H-1B visas.

The Wall Street Journal reported that the White House will not renew a ban on H-1B and other work-based visas imposed last year in response to the pandemic that is set to expire on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, a Republican Senator from Missouri on Wednesday urged Biden to issue a fresh proclamation to continue with the H-1B visa ban.

I write today to urge you to extend the freeze on temporary foreign worker entries into the United States that, without intervention, will expire today, Senator Josh Hawley wrote in a letter to

Biden.

The presidential proclamation suspending entry of certain temporary workers into the US has protected Americans suffering from the pandemic-induced economic crisis.

With millions of struggling Americans out of work and millions more desperate to make ends meet now is not the time to open the floodgates to thousands of foreign workers competing with American workers for scarce jobs and resources, he wrote.

In his letter, Hawley wrote that the unemployment rate remains at 6.2 per cent with nearly 10 million Americans out of work and looking for a job. The pandemic has been especially devastating for low-

income and working class Americans, many of whom have borne the brunt of the crisis and stand to lose the most from misguided policy decisions, he said. In periods of high unemployment, it makes no sense to allow a struggling labour market to be flooded with a wave of foreign competition, he said.

What makes even less sense is to willingly introduce further competition for the US workers at the same time that a disastrous illegal immigration crisis grows on our southern border. As at the border, failure to take meaningful action is, in itself, a policy decision with detrimental impacts for American workers, Hawley added.

WTO chief says vaccine inequity 'unacceptable'

GENEVA, 1 APRIL

The head of the World Trade Organization called Thursday for expanded capability in developing countries to manufacture vaccines, saying the gaping imbalance in access to coronavirus vaccines that mostly favours rich, developed countries was unacceptable.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said she supports the creation of a framework that would give developing countries some automaticity and access to technology transfer during future pandemics, decrying the vaccine inequity of the current one. The idea that 70 per cent of vaccines today have been administered only by 10 countries is really not acceptable, Okonjo-Iweala told reporters while hosting French Economy Minister Bruno Le Maire at WTO's headquarters.

Scores of the trade body's member nations have backed efforts led by South Africa and India to get the WTO to grant a temporary waiver of its intellectual property pact to help boost COVID-19 vaccine production at a time of insufficient supplies.

Some wealthier countries and those with strong pharmaceutical industries oppose the idea, saying it would crimp future innovation.

Europe's vaccination programme is unacceptably slow, says WHO: European nations' immunization campaigns against Covid-19 are unacceptably slow and risk prolonging the pandemic, a senior World Health Organization official said.

Dr Hans Kluge, WHO's regional director for Europe, said vaccines present our best way out of this pandemic, but noted that to date, only 10 per cent of Europe's population has received one dose and that only 4 per cent have been fully protected with two doses. As long as coverage remains low, we need to apply the same public health and social measures as we have in the past, to compensate for delayed schedules, Kluge said. Even those numbers hide the true scope of the problems facing the European Union's 27 nations, where only about 5.6 per cent of its people have had a first vaccine shot, according to the bloc. In Britain, that figure is 46 per cent of its population. ■ AP

'Pfizer Covid-19 shot 91% effective'

Citing updated trial data that included participants inoculated for up to six months and protective against SA variant as well

AGENCIES/AP
WASHINGTON, 1 APRIL

around the world since then Pfizer's Chief Executive Officer Albert Bourla said the updated result, which includes data on more than 12,000 people fully inoculated for at least six months, positions the drugmakers to submit for full U.S. regulatory approval.

The vaccine is currently authorized on an emergency basis by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The trial data "provide the first clinical results that a vaccine can effectively protect against currently circulating variants, a critical factor to reach herd immunity and end this pandemic for the global population," Ugur Sahin, chief executive officer at BioNTech, said in a statement.

While the new overall efficacy rate of 91.3 per cent is lower than the 95 per cent originally reported in November for its 44,000-person trial, a number of variants have become more prevalent

Company producing J&J vaccine had history of violations

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON, 1 APRIL

The company at the centre of quality problems that led Johnson & Johnson to discard 15 million doses of its coronavirus vaccine has a string of citations from US health officials for quality control problems. Emergent BioSolutions, a little-known company vital to the vaccine supply chain, was a key to Johnson & Johnson's plan to deliver 100 million doses of its vaccine to the United States by the end of May.

But the Food and Drug Administration repeatedly has cited Emergent for problems such as poorly trained employees, cracked vials and problems managing mold and other contamination around one of its facilities, according to records obtained by The Associated Press through the Freedom of Information Act. The

variant have been detected in more than 25 U.S. states and jurisdictions, according to federal data.

Lab tests have previously indicated that BioNTech's vac-

cines cover inspections at Emergent facilities since 2017. Johnson & Johnson said Wednesday that a batch of vaccine made by Emergent at its Baltimore factory, known as Bayview, cannot be used because it did not meet quality standards. It was unclear how many doses were involved or how the problem would affect future deliveries of J&J's vaccine.

The company said in a statement it was still planning to deliver 100 million doses by the end of June and was aiming to deliver those doses by the end of May. Human errors do happen, Dr Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said Thursday in an interview on CBS' This Morning. "You have checks and balances... That's the reason why the good news is that it did get picked up. As I mentioned, that's the reason nothing from that plant

be a future need for booster shots that specifically address new variants and that the group was preparing to upgrade its vaccine when needed. BioNTech has said that

the campaign comes amid worries that reluctance to get vaccinated will delay the nation's recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Johnson's senior black adviser resigns amid Downing Street tensions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, 1 APRIL

ing Street on Tuesday morning, just as the findings of the CRED report were released.

It comes as racial equality campaigners criticised the findings, and the Opposition Labour Party accused the government of downplaying institutional racism. Labour's shadow equalities secretary Marsha de Cordova called the report "divisive", adding it was "no wonder" the government was "losing the expertise from their team".

To your most senior advisor on ethnic minorities quit as you publish a so-called landmark report on race in the UK is telling of how far removed the Tories are from the everyday lived experiences of Black, Asian and ethnic minority people," she said. Former equality and human rights commissioner Lord Simon Woolley, who knows Kasumu, said he had been "disheartened" whilst at No 10 Downing Street.

The House of Lords peer, who has also criticised the CRED findings, told the BBC there is a "crisis" at No 10 when it comes to acknowledging and dealing with persistent race inequality".

The report has also attracted criticism from unions and charities all of whom accuse the commission of downplaying the role of wider factors in racial inequalities. Among its recommendations, the independent commission calls for greater focus on Commonwealth influences on Britain, including a new dictionary that traces words of Indian origin.

FIERY



Lava erupts from Mt. Etna volcano during its seventeenth eruption since the volcanic activity started on 16 February 2021, as seen from Pedara, near Catania, Sicily, southern Italy, on Thursday. ■ AP

Officer video shows Floyd struggle, then takedown

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MINNEAPOLIS, 1 APRIL

George Floyd's struggle with three police officers trying to arrest him, seen on body-camera video, included Floyd's panicky cries of I'm sorry, I'm sorry and I'm claustrophobic as the officers tried to push Floyd into the back of a police SUV.

At one point, Floyd bucks forward, throwing his upper body out of the car. Officers eventually give up, and Floyd thanks them and then is taken to the ground, face down and handcuffed. Officer Derek Chauvin's knee pins his neck, another officer's knee his back and a third officer holds his legs, with the officers talking calmly about whether he might be on drugs.

He wouldn't get out of the car. He just wasn't following instructions. Officer Thomas Lane was recorded saying,

Georgia moves to end citizen's arrest law over Black man's death: Georgia lawmakers have given a final passage to a bill to repeal the state's citizen's arrest law, acting little more than a year after the fatal shooting of a Black man pursued by white men who said they suspected him of a crime. The state House voted 169-0 on Wednesday to approve Senate changes to House Bill 479, sending it to Governor Brian Kemp for his expected signature. The legislation was one of the top legislative priorities this session in the aftermath of the killing of Ahmaud Arbery. "I look forward to signing it into law as we continue to send a clear message that the Peach State will not tolerate sinister acts of vigilantism in our communities," the Republican governor said. Many see the legislation as a continuation of an effort last year that gave Georgia a new hate crimes law, more than 15 years after the state Supreme Court overturned the state's first attempt. The pressure for the hate crimes law became overwhelming last year after a public outcry over Arbery's fatal shooting, which was recorded on video.

attempt to pass a phony \$20 bill at a neighborhood market last May escalated into tragedy one video documented step at a time.

A security-camera scene of people joking around inside the store soon gave way to the sight of officers pulling Floyd, who was Black, from his SUV at gunpoint. The extended body-camera footage gave jurors the fullest view yet of the roughly 20 minutes between when police first approached Floyd's vehicle to when he was loaded into an ambulance. When Floyd was finally taken away by paramedics, Charles McMillian, a 61-year-old bystander who recognized Chauvin from the neighborhood, told the officer he didn't respect what Chauvin had done.

The officers' video was part of a mountain of footage and witness testimony Wednesday in Chauvin's trial on murder and manslaughter charges in Floyd's death, showing how his alleged

guy... and it looks like he's probably something. Floyd was 6-foot-4 and 223 pounds, according to the autopsy, which also found fentanyl and methamphetamine in his system. Chauvin's lawyer said the officer is 5-foot-9 and 140 pounds.

The most serious charge against the now-fired officer carries up to 40 years in prison.

As Floyd was pinned down by Chauvin and other officers, McMillian, the bystander, could be heard on video saying to Floyd, "You can't win" and Get up and get in the car." Floyd replied: I can't. The defense has argued that Chauvin did what he was trained to do and that Floyd's death was not caused by the officer's knee, as prosecutors contend, but by Floyd's illegal drug use, heart disease, high blood pressure and the adrenaline flowing through his body.

Markers of sophisticated modernity

In the 1960s, Hindi cinema incorporated Western design elements to convey aspiration

ANUBHA KAKROO

There are multiple ways in which one can write about design and cinema. One can talk about the way cinema is designed or the role of design in creating a cinematic experience. Let's look at the way elements like interiors, furniture, products, cars or architecture have been employed in cinema, specifically in the Hindi film industry of yore.

In terms of the visuality of Hindi cinema, one needs to delve a little into the past. Colonisation had played havoc with the Indian sense of identity and purpose as the average citizen's inherited lifestyle was obliterated by years of dominance. Systems of living, working, eating, dressing and other aspects of material culture were fractured and rendered defunct or declared primitive and non-modern.

The arrival of foreigners brought about changes, essentially in the material culture. Like all colonised peoples, the subcontinent oriented itself to the West in matters of taste and style. Call it a hopeless human trait, but our aspirations acquired a distinct Western tint.

In all of that, could Hindi films be far behind? For a newly independent nation, whenever a depiction had to be made of an aspirational, urban, educated and modern lifestyle, Hindi cinema picked up markers from the material culture of the West. It was imbued in the sets, costumes and lives lived onscreen.

It is interesting to note how design was used as an idiom for conveying aspirational messaging. In their settings and scenarios, the furniture and interiors of many movies emulated international design trends of those times.

In Hindi cinematic history, the 1960s was a period that took maximum cues from the West to denote a certain upwardly mobile lifestyle and the international trend they followed most was the mid-century modern. A style popular in the post-World War II years in North America, it was characterised by clean lines, bold forms and a distinct influence of modernism but also art deco.

A look at the sets of Hindi movies from the 60s, and one will recognise the style. In fact, even as early as the 50s, merely a few years after Independence, which was won on the philosophies of *Swadeshi* and *Swaraj*, the iconic American design style was

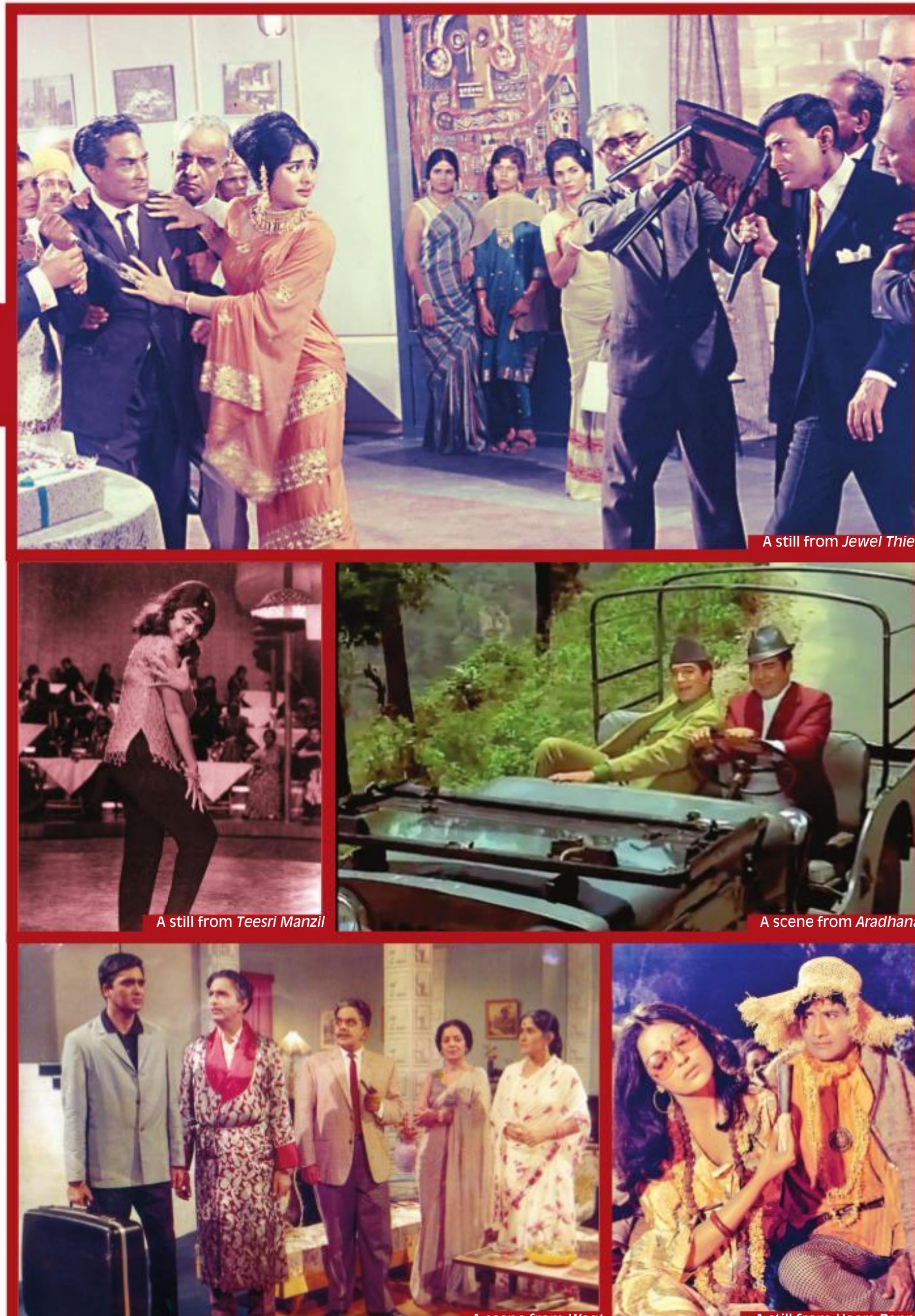
recreated in movies.

Many may remember drawing rooms of films from that time, with a mid-century modern sofa-set, three-legged peg tables, art deco sunnica patterns on dining tables and furnishings that were distinctly graphic. Yash Chopra and Dev Anand were possibly the most urbane of Hindi film folk, and their movies are a veritable treasure trove of classic design influences from the West. *Tere Ghar Ke Saamne*, *Teen Deviyan* and *Jewel Thief* are some such examples from Navketan, the production house of the Anand brothers (Chetan, Dev and Vijay), which used the mid-century modern in their styling. Dev Anand used a Hasselblad camera in *Heera Panna*, although most of the country did not know what it was!

Or take the example of one of the most extravagant technicolor movies of the 60s, the Chopra Brothers' *Waqt*, released in 1965. It is brimming with quintessential examples of the mid-century modern design style. One can spot the iconic Barcelona chair by Ludwig Mies Van der Rohe as well the equally famous lounge chair and Ottoman by Charles Eames in the same frame. If that is not enough, a young couple in the movie shares a driving lesson inside the American Embassy premises in New Delhi, designed by the renowned American architect Edward D Stone. That, incidentally, may be the easiest way to view the iconic building, considering the permissions and security clearances one requires to enter the premises now.

Apart from architecture, furniture and interiors, cars were, and still are, important and eye-catching markers for modern sophistication in Hindi movies. It was apparent in the cars heroes and heroines drove, which was usually a convertible. The Ford Model A (*Chalti ka Naam Gaadi*), Studebaker (*Kashmir ki Kali*), Chevrolet Impala (*Haathi Mere Saathi*) and Willys Jeep (*Aradhana*) – all featured in Hindi movies routinely. *Waqt*, too, had an absolute parade of 1960s American cars, be it the Buick or Standard Herald besides a couple of other convertibles.

Not just the objects, but activities associated with them were important in signifying modernity in Hindi films. The dining table and consumption of food and drinks as suited to a dining table brought in cues in the form of rituals associated with material culture.



As a quick example, one can recall the tea-set as an intrinsic part of aspirational life and the number of times it was used as a semiotic device in Hindi films, such as *Aradhana*.

Fashion and apparel were of course the most noticeable aspect of Western design sensibilities creeping into the Indian aesthetic. A look at all the bouffant hairstyles and shift dresses in movies from the 1960s (worn decorously with a *churidar* of course) will elucidate the point. Be it Sadhana in *Waqt*, Asha Parekh in *Teesri Manzil* or a glamourous Zeenat Aman in *Heera*

Panna, their hairstyles and clothing were completely in keeping with ramp trends across the world.

Those were aspirational movies, showcasing what could be called a more Western, modern, urban and exotic lifestyle, as opposed to the Eastern, pastoral and vernacular lives of the average Indian. It was almost as if the Western modern was light, airy and uplifting as opposed to the heavy and oppressive Indian traditional idiom, which was represented in films with nawabs, rajahs and *zamindars*.

It was a time when Hindi films

presented the West as a marker of sophisticated modernity. The artefacts and design that constituted the material culture, became a tangible means to represent it. The transmission of an aesthetic sensibility across cultures, at a time when cross-cultural, international communication was staccato, was easily achieved by use of high-design objects. They not only increased the glamour of movies but also fanned the aspirations of a newly independent nation.

The writer is professor and director, School of Design, Anant National University, Ahmedabad

SNIPPETS

Dreamers club



Actor Ranveer Singh is proud of how his music label IncInk has grown over the last two years. The actor, who started the initiative with Navzar Erane, said he does not want newcomers to go through what he experienced when he began his career as an actor.

"When I had decided to chase my dream of becoming an actor years ago, it wasn't easy getting my foot in the door. I was fortunate enough to build my career through a combination of hard work, passion and self-belief. I told myself back then that when I become relatively successful, I will try and do something for my fellow dreamers. That's when the germ of IncInk was sown in my head," he said.

The actor is especially proud of discovering artists such as Kaam Bhaari, Spitfire, Devil – The Rhymer and SlowCheeta. "They have evolved into serious musical prodigies of our generation who are now being appreciated far and wide. IncInk has tried to be a vehicle for their artistic growth, becoming the wind beneath the wings of these rare gems," he said.

Singh wants to work on his label and make it a genre-fluid collective. "Being fluid in this endeavour through genre music, video, visual art and experiences is what we do here. Ink is a beacon for artists. I would like it to be a lighthouse on the shore. If we can inspire something new, reach somebody unreachable and touch someone so they feel included, that would be fulfilling," he said.

With this initiative, Singh urges budding artistes not to give up.

Shown the door



Armie Hammer has been dropped from another film in the wake of sexual assault allegations made against him, reports claim.

In January, the actor stepped back from his role opposite Jennifer Lopez in the film *Shogun Wedding* after messages allegedly sent by him surfaced online. Earlier this month, a woman identified as Effie publicly accused the *Call Me By Your Name* star of raping and sexually abusing her, which Hammer's attorney once again denied.

However, *Variety* recently reported that Hammer will no longer star in the Cold War thriller *Billion Dollar Spy*. The film, directed by Amma Asante, was due to feature Hammer and Mads Mikkelsen. Representatives for Asante and film company Walden Media declined *Variety*'s request for comment.

Billion Dollar Spy was the last feature on Hammer's forthcoming films slate, meaning every studio officially planning to work with him but yet to film before the allegations has since cut ties.

In March, the Los Angeles Police Department confirmed it was investigating Hammer as part of a probe into alleged sexual assault.

—THE INDEPENDENT

MELODIOUS & AESTHETICALLY PLEASING

Two events on music and dance radiated with the cultural and mythological richness of India

concluded the programme was *Lucknow Hori*.

The members of the group were extremely well synchronised and the presentation was highly appreciated by the audience. Das and Sinha Biswas blended Bengali traditional folk music with semi classical in *Purab Ang*.

Both of them supported the group on harmonium while Nabaran Kumar Dutta and Abir Mukherjee supplied the rhythm. Subhayoti Guha, a reputed name in the field of Indian classical music, played percussion with Sanatan Goswami's support on harmonium. His performance was highly appreciated by the audience.

The talented duo started their Holi celebration with a *Hori Thumri* based on *raga Sohini* set to *Addha*. Their melodious presentation captivated the audience as well as veterans in the line-up. Together they sang *Dakshinaty Basant*, a *Chaturang* to a rare *tala* of *Ashta Jhaptala* of 8.5 beats. They concluded with the *Hori*-based *raga Peelu*, which had a rhythmic variety of *Deepchandi* and *Kaharua*. Ujjwal Bharti's tabla beats enhanced the quality of their vocal rendition. Senior Pandit Debaprosad Dey ably supported them on harmonium.

Das and Sinha Biswas' aesthetic presentation was commendable.

The evening ended with the performance of Vidushi Mandira Lahiri, who began her recital with a *hori thumri* based on *raga Mishra Kafi*. Her



bol banav – the demonstration of the musical phrases – was attractive and melodious at the same time. The other *horis* like *Mohey Chero Naa* based on *raga Kalawati* set to *Addha* and a Bengali song *Abirer Arekti Naam Prem* composed by Lahiri was enjoyed by both aficionados and the lay audience. As a grand finale she sang a *Hori*-based piece in *raga Pilu*. She enthralled the audience with the musical motifs of Holi. She was ably supported by Pandit Parimal Chakraborty on tabla and Goswami on harmonium. It was a pleasurable evening.

Divine rendition
Natyajali, the 17th Natyotsav and

Nataraja Aradhana recently organised by Shanmukh Priya, Mumbai, presented a remarkable Kuchipudi dance performance by Prashita Surana, disciple of Kuchipudi exponent Smita Shastri of Ahmedabad. The choice of an introductory text of Sandhya Tandavam – a rare number – taught to Shastri by her Kuchipudi guru CR Acharyulu was in itself a big challenge, because of all the Nataraja poses included in one piece. Surana is a petit young girl, merely 16 years old, whose performance was mind boggling to say the least – more so because of the awesome number of *karanas* she has learnt and practised to perform within minutes. She danced to pre-recorded music. The sonorous voice of late vocalist Akila Raman of Mumbai lingered in one's ears for a long time. The interpretation of Sandhya Tandavam – a temple dance in Kuchipudi style in *raga Shivaranjani* and *tala Talamalika* – requiring dexterity and stamina was incredible.

Shiva Tandava was all about Lord Shiva's cosmic dance in Kailash, revealing himself to his devout sages who are ultimately given *moksha* by the lord of dance. The episodes touched upon in the piece were giving the boy Markendaya a new lease of life; annihilation of Gajasura, and earning the epithet Neelakantha only to ecstatically dance to the rhythm he creates with his damaru. The dance is popularly known as Tandava as mentioned by Nandikeswara, the author of *Abhinaya Darpana*. The *shloka* chosen for the dance presentation was out-of-this-world, the composition of which required an exceptionally knowledgeable and creative composer of dance to translate into the body language of Kuchipudi.

Surana with her storehouse of energy and stamina was able to give the *rasis* a glimpse into the art of the great master. The *sollukattus* by Shastri aided the dancer to perform smoothly.

The writer is senior dance critic



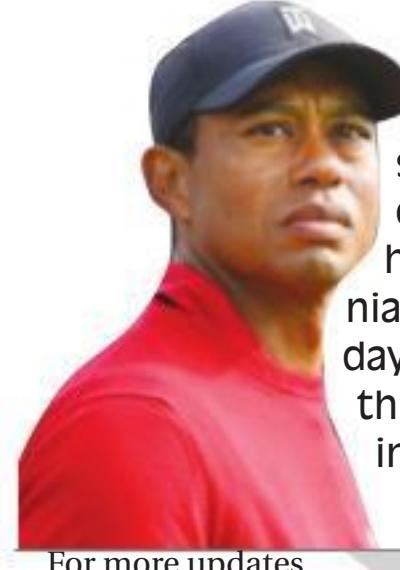
Prashita Surana

Sampuran, an initiative of Anirban Das and Diptam Sinha Biswas, recently organised a cultural programme in memory of *sangeet acharya* Pandit Chinmoy Lahiri at Gyan Manch, Kolkata. It also marked the advent of Holi.

The evening took off with a group performance by the students of Sampuran; it was conceived by the vocalist duo, popularly known as Anirban and Dipam. They performed *Ramaj Bandish-Ki-Thumri* (*tala Addha*), *Drut Bandish* (*tala Teentaal*) and *Ada Chautaal Tarana* followed by a *Hori bhajan* called *Hori Khelat Hai Girdhari* by Meera Bai. The song that

Natyajali, the 17th Natyotsav and

The writer is senior dance critic



THE BIG SECRET

Los Angeles County sheriff Alex Villanueva says detectives have determined what caused Tiger Woods (*in photo, left*) to crash his SUV last month in Southern California but did not release details on Wednesday, citing unspecified privacy concerns for the golf star. Woods suffered serious injuries in the 23 February crash.

For more updates www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Pant backed: Mohammad Azharuddin says Rishabh Pant will be a front-runner to lead India in the future, having established himself across the formats in the past few months. Pant is set to lead Delhi Capitals in the Indian Premier League this season.

Two-week rehab: Jofra Archer has had surgery to remove a fragment of glass that had been lodged in his right middle finger since January, when his fish tank broke as he cleaned it at home. Archer will begin a two-week rehabilitation, official sources said.

Osaka upset: Naomi Osaka's 23-match winning streak neared an end, with No 23-seeded Maria Sakkari upsetting her 6-0, 6-4 in the quarter-finals of the Miami Open. "The more stuff like this happens, the more I'll learn from it, the No 2-ranked Osaka said.

Armband auction: The captain's armband that Cristiano Ronaldo flung to the ground in disgust after Portugal were controversially denied a late winner at the weekend in a World Cup qualifier against Serbia was put on auction on Tuesday in a bid to help a sick child.

Ban order: Juventus goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon has been handed a one-match ban for making a "blasphemous expression" and will miss Saturday's Turin derby at Torino, the Italian Federal Court of Appeal ruled on Tuesday. He was initially given a 5,000 euros fine.

Lewandowski out: Bayern Munich's Poland striker Robert Lewandowski has been ruled out for four weeks after suffering a sprained ligament in his right knee. Lewandowski sustained the injury in Poland's World Cup qualifying win over Andorra on Sunday.

Aguero praised: Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola described striker Sergio Aguero as "irreplaceable" and backed the 32-year-old Argentine to finish his career at the Premier League club on a high. Aguero will leave when his contract ends at the end of the season.

World Cup: The 2023 women's football World Cup will be spread across nine cities in Australia and New Zealand. The opening match will take place in Auckland, with Sydney hosting the final. The semi-finals will be split between Australia and New Zealand.

Test dispute: An African Cup of Nations qualifying match between Sierra Leone and Benin has been postponed until June, the Confederation of African Football said on Wednesday, after it was called off this week because of a dispute over positive Covid-19 tests.

Spieth resurgent: Jordan Spieth may be in a lengthy victory drought but the former world number one has shown recent flashes of major championship form and finally feels invigorated ahead of next week's Masters. His last triumph came at the 2017 British Open.

Women weightlifter fails dope test: A woman weightlifter, who was part of the ongoing national camp at the National Institute of Sports in Patiala, has been provisionally suspended after testing positive for banned substance.

Ramos injured: Real Madrid defender Sergio Ramos injured his left leg while playing for Spain and said Thursday he will miss upcoming matches against Liverpool and Barcelona. Madrid said the 35-year-old Ramos has "a muscular injury to the inner part of his left lower leg." The Spanish club did not give an estimate on how long Ramos would be sidelined.

Supershow expected of CSK

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 1 APRIL

The return of Suresh Raina could boost the batting department but spin-reliant Chennai Super Kings will have to adapt to conditions which may assist pacemen as they seek to move on from the nightmarish show of the last season.

Three-time champions CSK put up a flop show, avoiding the wooden spoon thanks to a few victories at the back-end of the league phase as they failed to make the play-offs for the first time in the tournament's history. Here is a look at what works and what doesn't for the Mahendra Singh Dhoni (*in photo*)-led team, who open their campaign by taking on Delhi Capitals in Mumbai on 10 April.

Strengths

CSK have oodles of experience, which will stand them in good stead in crucial situations. The inspirational lead-



ship of Dhoni is another advantage. The return of Raina will strengthen the batting unit which faltered far too often last year. A batting-line-up featuring Raina, Faf du Plessis, Dhoni, Ambati Rayudu, Ravindra Jadeja, Sam Curran, new recruit Moeen Ali and fast-improving Ruturaj Gaikwad could prove a handful for rival

Weaknesses

A team comprising aging stars proved CSK's undoing last sea-

son. But they have stuck pretty much with the core squad. In the fast-paced world of T20s, senior stars could prove a handicap. With some CSK players, including Dhoni, Raina, Rayudu and Tahir having retired from international cricket and not playing domestic games, their lack of match time could hurt the team. That apart, the

captain'swaningfinishingpowers do not help the team's cause.

Ravindra Jadeja is returning from a long injury break. Veteran Trinidad all-rounder Dwayne Bravo's diminishing returns apart from his injury problems would worry CSK. With this year's IPL matches to be played at neutral venues, CSK, which rely so much on spin, will have to alter their strategy, especially in Mumbai where the wicket may also have something for pacemen. The spin department has experienced and skillful operators but the think-tank needs to get the combination right.

CSK squad: Mahendra Singh Dhoni (captain), Suresh Raina, Ambati Rayudu, KMA Sir, Deepak Chahar, Dwayne Bravo, Faf du Plessis, Imran Tahir, N Jagadeesan, Karan Sharma, Lungi Ngidi, Mitchell Santner, Ravindra Jadeja, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Shardul Thakur, Sam Curran, R Sai Kishore, Moeen Ali, K Gowtham, Cheteshwar Pujara, Harishankar Reddy, Bhagath Varma, C Hari Nishanth.

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New Zealand beat Bangladesh: Rookie Finn Allen made 71 from 29 balls as New Zealand beat Bangladesh by 65 runs on Thursday in the third Twenty20 cricket international, reduced by rain to 10 overs a side.

Tired of bio bubbles, Hazlewood steers clear of Indian league

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE, 1 APRIL



Australia and Chennai Super Kings fast bowler Josh Hazlewood (*in photo*) has pulled out of the next edition of the Indian Premier League to take a short break and stay fresh for the Ashes and the Twenty20 World Cup later this year.

Hazlewood was to depart with Australia's other IPL-bound players and join CSK but decided to skip the tournament, which would start on 9 April and go till 30 May, and bathe once more for the next two months.

The 30-year-old played three games for CSK in the IPL last season when the tournament was staged in the United Arab Emirates late in 2020.

"It's been a long 10 months in bubbles and quarantine at different times, so I decided to have a spell of rest from cricket and spend some time at home and in Australia in the next two months," Hazlewood was quoted as saying by cricket.com.au.

"We've got a big winter

ahead. The West Indies is going to be a long tour, with Bangladesh (Twenty20 tour) potentially thrown on the end of that. Then potentially the T20 World Cup leading into the Ashes, so it's a big 12 months. As it always is with Australia, and I want to give myself the best chance to be mentally and physically ready for that," he added. He follows compatriots Josh Philippe (Royal Challengers Bangalore) and Mitchell Marsh (SunRisers Hyderabad) in withdrawing from the IPL. Some other Australians may

consider opting out also, according to the report.

Hazlewood has been under restrictions since July last year before leaving for England with Australia's limited-overs team. He was in a strict bio-secure lockdown before heading to the UAE for the IPL where again safety protocols were tight. His return to Australia in November started with two weeks in hotel isolation in Adelaide before moving into the men's international bubble along with the visiting Indians for the Test series.

In another development, South African AB de Villiers today joined the RCB bio-bubble for the IPL. The 37-year-old batting great has been a key player for RCB since he joined the franchise in 2011. "The spaceship has landed! AB de Villiers has joined the RCB bubble in Chennai," the RCB tweeted. De Villiers retired from international cricket in 2018 after playing 114 Tests, 228 One-Day Internationals and 78 Twenty20 Internationals.

'Willing to play any role'

KOLKATA, 1 APRIL

Returning to action after serving a one-year ban, Bangladesh star all-rounder Shakib Al-Hasan is ready to play any role that his IPL side Kolkata Knight Riders expects from him in the upcoming season starting April 9.

The Bangladesh superstar, who was part of KKR title-winning campaigns in 2012 and 2014, played just three matches for Sunrisers Hyderabad in 2019 before the ban spelt his ouster from the game.

The ICC had banned him for two years, with one year of that sentence suspended, after he accepted three charges of breaching the ICC anti-corruption code as he had to learn the lessons the hard way.

Now in his second innings at KKR, Shakib is not averse to open the batting like Sunil Narine or play the role of a finisher; beside bowling those tidy left-arm spin -- to seal his place.

Germany go down to North Macedonia

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DUISBURG (GERMANY), 1 APRIL



Germany lost a World Cup qualifying game for the first time in 20 years as the 2014 champions were beaten 2-1 by North Macedonia. Germany levelled after Goran Pandev's opening goal in first-half stoppage time but had no answer to Ejif Elmas' (in photo) 85th-minute winner for North Macedonia, who moved above Germany into second place in Group J on Wednesday.

Armenia are the surprise leaders as the only team to win all three games so far, after coming from behind to beat Romania 3-2.

"The fact is that this obviously shouldn't happen," German midfielder Ilkay Gundogan told broadcaster RTL. Pandev opened the scoring when Germany's defence completely lost track of the veteran Genoa forward. However, Gundogan equalised from the penalty spot in the 63rd after Leroy Sane was brought down by Ezgjan Alioski.

Rijiju reviews Indian athletes' preparation for Tokyo Olympics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 1 APRIL

of Olympic preparations with officials and Indian Olympic Association President Dr Narinder Batra, Secretary General Rajiv Mehta and other members at SAI Headquarters. Will make short & attractive videos of our athletes who have qualified for Tokyo Olympic!" Rijiju tweeted.

It has been learnt that during the meeting, a periodic review was taken about Indian athletes' preparation for the Tokyo Games, which is scheduled to be held from July 23 to 8 August. According to sources, the matter of COVID-19 vaccination of India's Olympic-bound athletes was not discussed during the meeting.

Sri Lankans fight but rain plays spoilsport

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANTIGUA, 1 APRIL



Sri Lanka trailed the West Indies by 104 runs with only two second-innings wickets in hand after the rain-affected third day of the second cricket Test.

Only 40.3 overs were bowled on a day which saw four rain interruptions. Sri Lanka took their score from 136-3 overnight to 250-8 in reply to the West Indies' 354 before a final, heavy shower ended play on Wednesday.

First Test century-maker Pathum Nissanka (*in photo*) was left 49 not out and Lasith Embuldeniya had yet to score. Nissanka had faced 119 balls and provided a solid anchor

in the late stages of Sri Lanka's innings.

Sri Lanka resumed their first innings on Wednesday at 136-3 in reply to the West Indies' first innings of 354, with Dinesh Chandimal 34 not out and Dhananjaya de Silva 23.

Chandimal was dropped by Rhakeem Cornwall from the bowling of Shannon Gabriel in the first over of the

day, a lapse that wasn't too costly as Chandimal was caught by the substitute fielder Hayden Walsh off Gabriel when he was 44 and Sri Lanka were 152-4.

The first rain break of the day came at 11:10 a.m. but lasted only 10 minutes. Dhananjaya fell lbw to part-time off-spinner Jermaine Blackwood in the 80th over, six overs after the resumption.

He was slow to get his bat down on a shorter, flatter delivery from Blackwood which pitched on the line of middle and off. Dhananjaya made no attempt to review the umpire's verdict of out, a serious oversight when replays showed the ball was turning and missing leg. The rain

returned less than an hour later, harder and more persistent. The umpires called for an early lunch and the players eventually were able to return to the field at 1:25 pm, but there was another 1-2-hour rain delay not long after.

Wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella made 21 from 25 deliveries astride the rain break before falling to Jason Holder, who was the most threatening of the West Indies' bowlers in the last two sessions. Shannon Gabriel was impressive in the first session. The ball passed between Dickwella's bat and pad and the West Indies' appeal for a catch behind by wicketkeeper Joshua Da Silva was turned down.

The subsequent review showed the all had taken an inside edge before hitting the pad and going on to the keeper.

Suranga Lakmal was 6 when he mistimed a delivery from Alzarri Joseph in the 91st over and lobbed a gentle catch to West Indies captain Kraigg Brathwaite, standing next to the non-striker. Sri Lanka were 214-7.

Dushmantha Chameera faced a testing time, especially from Holder who mixed short and full deliveries, once striking Chameera on the shoulder. Holder set up Chameera for the dismissal in the 98th over, first beating him with a full delivery which just missed off stump.

'Tokyo Olympics could cause a global Covid-19 disaster'

AGENCIES
TOKYO, 1 APRIL

people arriving and the prevalence of the disease around the globe, the Olympics absolutely could become a super-spreading event that leads to quite a number of infections, as well as spreading internationally as people return home," said Spencer Fox, a research associate at the University of Texas at Austin who specialises in infectious disease modelling.

"The precautions they have in place are great, but you can never completely reduce the probability of infections."

Organisers are relying on a series of six "playbooks" of rules that detail how participants of the Olympics and Paralympics can compete, move around and socialise, in order to manage the risks of what will be the world's

biggest Covid-19 bubble. While those involved in the Games will be somewhat isolated from the Japanese public, Tokyo has ruled out using two core tenets of containment: quarantines and vaccinations. Without those, experts say infections could spread. If it does, not only could the Olympics become the site of a sizeable outbreak that spreads into Japan, it could become a cauldron of novel variants gathered from around the world. The risk is that athletes could bring them home, potentially fuelling the pandemic.

While Japan has seen much lower transmission rates compared with other rich nations, its vaccination campaign is only just starting months behind places like Britain, the USA, and even other parts of Asia. There are still many unknowns, including exactly how many people will be coming into Japan, and organisers have not decided yet on how many domestic spectators will be allowed into venues.

Depending on how infection rates develop, there is still a possibility that more stringent measures will be adopted, with the final version of the playbooks due in June. "The situation surrounding the coronavirus is constantly changing, and it's our hope that the efforts of the government, the city of Tokyo and other stakeholders will help to mitigate spread of infections," Tokyo 2020 said in an e-mailed statement. Sporting events have gone on around the world this past year - with both success stories and cautionary tales.

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