



THE KOREAN
QUESTION

P6



POLITICS OF
FEAR IN NEPAL

P7



'BRITONS SHOULD BE
REALISTIC ABOUT
FOREIGN HOLIDAY'

P10



JUST HOW SECURE
ARE CRICKET'S
BIO BUBBLES?

P12



The Statesman

PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 36 and 19 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 65%	Min: 27%
TEMPERATURE	
Max: 36.9°C (+2)	Min: 21.7°C (+2)
SUN RISES 06:02 hrs	SUN SETS 18:43 hrs
MOON RISES 04:45 hrs	MOON SETS 15:26 hrs

THUMBNAILS



Indian Youth Congress activists protest against the Rafale deal by the Central government, in the Capital on Wednesday.

EC notice to Mamata: The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday issued a notice to West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for violating the model code of conduct and sought her reply within 48 hours. The EC stated that it will take a decision on failing to get any response. The notice came following a complaint from a BJP delegation led by Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi. Speaking at a rally at Tarakeshwari in Hooghly on 3 April, Miss Banerjee appealed to the Muslim voters to unite against BJP.

Raipur lockdown: The Chhattisgarh government has decided to go for a 10-day total lockdown in Raipur from 6 pm on 9 April to 19 April as pandemic's second wave may soon assume grim proportions. Raipur is the first state Capital to have been forced to impose such a long lockdown, district collector S Bharathi Dasan said on Wednesday. A total of 26 people have died in Raipur in the last 24 hours. P5

RBI holds interest rates, pledges to buy ₹1 lakh crore govt bonds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) today kept key interest rates unchanged at record lows while pledging to buy Rs 1 lakh crore of government bonds this quarter to cap borrowing costs in a bid to support an economy facing a resurgence of the pandemic.

In the first monetary policy of the 2021-22 fiscal, the central bank stuck to its accommodative stance as long as necessary, amid concerns of rising infections that could derail the nascent economic recovery.

RBI's repo rate, which was cut by a total of 115 basis points last year to soften the blow from the pandemic, will stay at 4 per cent while the reverse repo rate will be unchanged at 3.35 per cent.

Governor Shaktikanta Das said the six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) voted unanimously "to continue with the accommodative stance as long as necessary to sustain growth on a durable basis and continue to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 on the economy while ensuring that inflation remains within the target going forward."

"The recent surge in infections has, however, imparted greater uncertainty to the outlook and needs to be closely watched, especially as localised and regional lockdowns could dampen the recent improvement in demand conditions and delay the return of normalcy," he said. Das announced a second market G-sec acquisition programme or G-SAP 1.0 wherein RBI committed to open market purchase of government securities.



In April-June, it is committed to buy Rs 1 lakh crore bonds, with first debt purchases starting from 15 April.

RBI had bought Rs 3 lakh crore of bonds in the last fiscal (2020-21) and planned similar or more spending in the FY April 2021 to March 2022.

While retaining its GDP growth outlook for FY22 at 10.5 per cent after a 7.5 per cent contraction in 2020-21, RBI revised the outlook for inflation, with price rise seen at 5 per cent in the fourth quarter of last fiscal year. It is projected to rise to 5.2 per cent in the first half of the current fiscal.

Das reiterated that the banking system liquidity will continue to remain in surplus even after meeting all requirements of the financial market segments and productive sectors of the economy.

This is the fifth time in a row that MPC has decided to

keep the policy rate unchanged. RBI had last revised its policy rate on 22 May 2020, in an off-policy cycle to perk up demand by cutting interest rates to a historic low.

He assured that RBI is committed to ensuring ample system liquidity in consonance with the accommodative stance of MPC.

To provide additional liquidity to states, RBI has decided to accept the recommendations of an Advisory Committee constituted by it to review the Ways and Means Advance (WMA) limits for state governments/UTs and other related issues.

Accordingly, it has been decided to enhance the aggregate WMA limit of states and UTs to Rs 47,010 crore, an increase of about 46 per cent from the current limit of Rs 32,225 crore which was fixed in February 2016.

"Further, it has also been decided to continue the enhanced interim WMA limit of Rs 51,560 crore granted by RBI due to the pandemic for a further period of six months i.e. up to 30 September 2021," he said.

Das further said that to nurture the still-nascent growth impulses, it is felt necessary to support the continued flow of credit to the real economy.

Accordingly, liquidity support of Rs 50,000 crore for fresh lending during 2021-22 will be provided to All India Financial Institutions (AIFIs).

He announced that Rs 25,000 crore will be provided to National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), Rs 10,000 crore to National Housing Bank (NHB) and Rs 15,000 crore to Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

India, China may hold military talks on 9 April

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

India and China are likely to hold the next round of corps commander-level talks on disengagement at other friction points in Eastern Ladakh on 9 April, army sources said today.

The 11th round of meeting will focus on disengagement in areas like Gogra, Depsang and Hot springs. The two countries have successfully completed disengagement of troops at the Pangong Tso Lake area.

The talks follow a meeting between senior diplomats of the two countries under the format of the Working Mechanism for Coordination and Consultations (WMCC) in border areas.

The two countries have been engaged in a military



stand-off for almost a year but the completion of disengagement at the Pangong Tso Lake area last month has raised hopes of the face-off coming to an end.

India has expressed its hope that China would cooperate to ensure completion of disengagement of troops in remaining areas.

"This (disengagement) would allow both sides to

consider de-escalation of forces in eastern Ladakh as that alone will lead to the restoration of peace and tranquillity and provide conditions for progress of our bilateral relationship," ministry of external affairs (MEA) spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said. India believes protracting the existing situation at eastern Ladakh was in neither side's interest.

China has, meanwhile, pitched for a final settlement of the complex boundary dispute to avoid recurring military stand-offs between the two countries.

Chinese Ambassador Sun Weidong said the recent disengagement at the Pangong Tso Lake was conducive to building trust and further easing the situation on the ground. "Against this backdrop, we should implement the consensus reached by the two leaders (of the two countries) and strictly abide by the existing agreements, step up dialogue and communication, and improve the border management and control mechanisms to further ease, stabilise and control the border situation, avoid relapse and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas," he said, last week.

Bengal ph 3 poll:
84.61% turnout

KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

West Bengal reported 84.61 per cent voter turnout in the third phase of polling yesterday.

Polling was held in 31 seats across three districts of south Bengal—Howrah, Hooghly and South 24 Parganas—which is considered to be a stronghold of the Trinamool Congress.

Among the three districts, highest voter turnout of 86.11 per cent was recorded in South 24 Parganas followed by 83.75 per cent in Hooghly and 83.55 per cent in Howrah. Both the highest and lowest voter turnout were recorded in Hooghly. Highest polling of 88.67 per cent was recorded in Ghatshila and lowest 78.25 in Khanakul. SNS

Details on page 5

Mukhtar Ansari back in jail, ferried in ambulance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BANDA (UP), 7 APRIL

After spending over two years in a Punjab prison, gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari was brought back to Banda jail early today morning.

He was ferried in an ambulance, part of a convoy carrying gun-toting policemen, throughout the 900-km journey from Rupnagar to this Uttar Pradesh town in the Bundelkhand region.

Hours later, his brother Afzal Ansari accused the police of treating him in an inhuman manner during the journey, claiming he was not given food or water.

But he did not substantiate the allegation and, according to the UP government, a medical panel examined the

57-year-old after his arrival and found no immediate health concerns.

The Bahujan Samaj Party MLA from Mau faces trial in UP in several cases, including attempt to murder and murder. His transfer from Punjab was ordered by the Supreme Court after the UP government approached it, seeking the politician's custody from Punjab.

An UP police team arrived on Tuesday at Punjab's Rupnagar jail, where Ansari was lodged in connection with an extortion case in Punjab. The hand-over formalities at the jail took about two hours.

The police convoy which included the ambulance equipped with life-saving equipment and an anti-riot Vajra vehicle raced across newly built expressways on an

over 14-hour journey. At 4.30 am today, the ambulance and three other UP police vehicles entered the Banda jail premises.

Afzal Ansari, who is the BSP MP from Ghazipur, accused police of ill-treating his brother.

In the over 15-hour journey, he was not given water and food and was also denied medical aid. Due to this, he became unwell and reached Banda jail in a semi-conscious state," he alleged.

Ansari, however, did not elaborate how he got to know about the alleged treatment meted out to his brother.

The UP government, however, said a team of doctors from the Banda Medical College examined Mukhtar at the jail and found no immediate health issues.

The family has earlier expressed concern over

The Banda prison area looked like a cantonment zone with policemen keeping a strict vigil.

The five-time MLA will spend time as an undertrial in barrack number 15 of the district jail, where he was lodged in the past before being shifted to Punjab.

Additional police force has been deployed at the request of prison authorities. He will be guarded by three security personnel round-the-clock inside the barrack.

"Security personnel have been posted inside as well as outside the jail premises," Banda jailor Pramod Tiwari had said earlier.

High towers have been put up outside the jail and extra police picks have also been set up to keep watch on visitors.



We will not allow the government to implement the (amended) Motor Vehicle Act with steep hike in fines and penalties, till proper, safe and secure roads and infrastructure is put in place

GIRISH CHODANKAR

GOA STATE CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Night curfew: Authorities get over 73K e-pass applications, clear only 1,271

PTI

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Soon after the night curfew was enforced in Delhi on Tuesday, authorities across districts received over 73,000 applications for e-passes, of which only 1,271 were approved, officials said. More than 34,000 applications were rejected as the applicants did not fall in the exempted categories according to the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) order, the officials said on Wednesday. The Delhi government on Tuesday imposed seven hours of night curfew, from 10 PM to 5 AM, with immediate effect for this entire month as an emergency measure for the "wellbeing and safety" of people in view of rising COVID-19 cases in the city.

People will require a soft or hard copy of the e-pass to travel during curfew hours. The e-pass can be obtained from the Delhi government website - www.delhi.gov.in.

After the imposition of the night curfew on Tuesday, a total of 73,154 applications were

The highest number of applications were received in New Delhi district at 13,139, followed by 11,661 in South West, 9,947 in South, 7,673 in West, 6,560 in North West, and 6,065 in East Delhi, the official data showed. New Delhi district also saw the highest number of rejected applications at 6,074.

received for e-passes. Of these, 34,759 were rejected and 30,940 were pending by Wednesday noon, official figures showed.

Only 1,271 applications were approved across all 11 districts. "Most of the applications were rejected as the applicants did not fall in the exempted categories as per Delhi Disaster Management Authority order," the officials said. The highest number of applications were received in New Delhi district at 13,139, followed by 11,661 in South West, 9,947 in

South, 7,673 in West, 6,560 in North West, and 6,065 in East Delhi, the official data showed.

New Delhi district also saw the highest number of rejected applications at 6,074, followed by 5,603 in East, 5,580 in West, 4,637 in South and 3,431 in West Delhi.

A total of 6,132 applications were accepted and verification was pending for 51 others.

The highest pendency of applications was seen in New Delhi at 6,525. As many as 5,093 applications were pending in South and 4,102 each in North West and South West.

In Shahdara district, 1,110 applications were received and 1,105 were pending, the data showed.

East Delhi district, which received 6,065 applications, had the lowest pendency at 42.

Several categories of people, including those going for COVID-19 vaccination, persons associated with essential services, pregnant women, central and Delhi government officials involved in emergency services, etc. are exempted from the night curfew.

In another sharp virus spike, Delhi reports 5,506 cases

Jain fears if Covid positivity rate rises and safety norms are not followed by people, new cases could breach the last single-day spike record registered in the city in November last year

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Delhi has continued to witness a sharp surge in coronavirus infections, recording today 5,506 fresh Covid cases - highest single-day count this year so far - that pushed its caseload to 6,90,568, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

The city reported 20 more coronavirus-linked deaths, which took its Covid toll to 11,133, the health bulletin said.

This is the second consecutive day when Delhi has crossed over 5,000 coronavirus infections. The city had reported 5,100 Covid cases yesterday. The national capital's Covid

positivity rate jumped to 6.1 per cent today from yesterday's 4.93 per cent, according to the bulletin. A total of 90,202 tests, including 52,477 RT-PCR tests and 37,724 rapid antigen tests, were conducted the previous day that detected these infections.

The count of those Covid patients who recovered during the past 24 hours was 3,363, which took the number of such cumulative recoveries in Delhi to 6,59,980 so far, the bulletin stated.

The number of active Covid cases in the city stood at 19,455. The number of people under home isolation increased to 10,048 from yesterday's 8,871, while the number of containment zones surged to 3,708 from 3,291 the day before, the bulletin added.

The national capital had reported 17 Covid fatalities yesterday. Yesterday's 5,100 cases

were detected out of the unprecedented 1,03,453 tests which included 69,667 RTPCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests and 33,786 rapid antigen tests.

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

Over 84,000 people were



A health worker collects samples for Covid tests, in the Capital on Wednesday.

yesterday given Covid vaccine in Delhi till 10 pm, of which 21,388 got the shots at private hospitals and 62,825 received the jabs at government hospitals, health minister Satyendar Jain said.

Over 12 lakh people have been vaccinated in Delhi, he had said. He iterated his demand that vaccination should be made open to all adults, except those who are

not medically compliant with the norms for inoculation against Covid.

Meanwhile,

interacting with reporters, Jain feared that if the positivity rate escalated and safety norms were not followed by people, the new cases could breach the last single-day spike record registered in November last year.

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

However, the minister added that it will be too early to speculate on that as of now, and government efforts are continuing to contain the coronavirus infections as effectively as possible.

Classified

LEGAL NOTICES

COURT NOTICE
(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)
IN THE COURT OF
MS. EKTA KHOSLA
Additional Civil Judge
(Junior Division),
Khaman

Jasdev Singh etc.

Versus

Bhag Singh etc.

CNR No. PH/2020/000277-2017

Next Date: 28-04-2021

Publication Issued to:

9. Sarabjit Singh, Didar Singh, s/o Najar Singh.

10. Paramjeet Kaur, w/o Ramesh Kumar, s/o Som Nath.

11. Sadhu Singh, s/o Nohria Singh, s/o Saun Singh.

12. Kamal Kaur, w/o Labh Singh, s/o Bachan Singh.

13. Kamaljeet Kaur, w/o Avtar Singh, s/o Ram Singh.

14. Manjot Kaur, w/o Darshan Singh, s/o Chintu Singh.

15. Jaswinder Kaur, w/o Lakhvir Singh, s/o Gurmukh Singh.

16. Dharman Singh, s/o Bachan Singh, s/o Nankoo.

17. Naresh Kumar, s/o Saptal Verma, s/o Rabbi Ram.

18. Avtar Singh, s/o Ajit Singh, s/o Hakan Singh.

19. Suninder Singh, s/o Gurcharan Singh, s/o Nirjan Singh.

20. Suninder Singh, s/o Karam Singh, s/o Bawa Singh.

21. Suninder Singh, s/o Karam Singh, s/o Bawa Singh.

22. Darshana Rani, w/o Subash Chander, s/o Des Raj.

23. Harish Kumar, s/o Amarnath, s/o Ram Lal.

24. Ashok Kumar, s/o Ishar Das, s/o Jawahar Lal.

25. Bachan Singh, s/o Rakha Ram, s/o Kishan.

26. Amitpal Singh, s/o Taran Singh, s/o Pritam Singh.

27. Narinder Singh, s/o Malvika Singh, s/o Gurdial Singh.

28. Jasmal Singh, s/o Sappho Singh, s/o Moti Ram.

29. Prithi Singh, s/o Harneet Singh, s/o Sunder Singh.

30. Sarabjeet Singh, s/o Jarnail Singh, s/o Gurnam Singh.

31. Lakhwinder Singh, s/o Gurbaksh Singh, s/o Sucha Singh.

32. Sarabjeet Verma, w/o Mathur Singh, s/o Asa Ram.

33. Gurdeep Kaur, w/o Gurkum Singh, s/o Arjan Singh.

34. Suninder Kaur, w/o Savitri Singh, s/o Arjan Singh.

35. Sandeep Rani, w/o Ravi Kumar, s/o Prem La.

36. Rohit Verma, s/o Kuldeep Rai, s/o Jamat Ravi Verma.

37. Sunita Devi, w/o Satpal Singh, s/o Mohan Lal.

38. Baljeet Kaur, w/o Kulwant Singh, s/o Ranbir Singh.

39. Ashok Rani, w/o Datinver Kumar, s/o Mohal Lal.

40. Gurdeep Singh, s/o Dalwar Singh, s/o Bahwan Singh.

41. Anil Kumar, s/o Partap Chand, s/o Kapoor Chand.

42. Daljeet Singh Sohanpal, s/o Khushbir Singh Sohanpal.

43. Gain Singh Sohanpal, s/o Khushbir Singh Sohanpal.

44. Mapreet Singh, s/o Hardip Singh, s/o Mohinder Singh.

45. Sonu Gupta, s/o Naresh Kumar, s/o Bhagat Ram.

46. Anshul Gupta, s/o Naresh Kumar, s/o Bhagat Ram.

47. Rajesh Khurana, s/o Kishan Lal Khurana, s/o Wadhwana Ram.

48. Narinder Khurana, s/o Kishan Lal Khurana, s/o Wadhwana Ram.

49. Sunil Kumar, s/o Prem Chand, s/o Jagannath Singh.

50. Arvind Gill, s/o Prem Chand, s/o Jagannath Singh.

51. Jagdeep Singh, s/o Harday Singh, s/o Mangal Singh.

52. Jasvir Kaur, s/o Gurvir Singh, s/o Harchand Singh.

53. Kuldeep Singh, s/o Sher Singh, s/o Ajit Singh.

54. Ramesh Kumar, s/o Som Nath, s/o Makhan Shah.

55. Amarjeet Kaur, w/o Dalwara Singh, s/o Balwant Singh.

56. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

57. Lakwinder Singh, s/o Gurbaksh Singh, s/o Sucha Singh.

58. Jagdish Kumar, s/o Kalyan Kumar, s/o Gangaram.

59. Sukhdev Singh, s/o Karmal Singh, s/o Ronak Ram.

60. Rajesh Kumar, s/o Kishan Das, s/o Uttam Chand.

61. Shinder Kaur, w/o Major Singh, s/o Amar Singh.

62. Arjinder, w/o Gurmeet Singh, s/o Fair Singh.

63. Rakesh Kumar, s/o Kishan Das, s/o Uttam Chand.

64. Anmol Verma, s/o Munni Lal, s/o Amar Chand.

65. Raman Verma, s/o Munni Lal, s/o Amar Chand.

66. Punit Kuamr, s/o Amit

Shinde.

67. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

68. Raman Verma, s/o Munni Lal, s/o Amar Chand.

69. Punit Kuamr, s/o Amit

Shinde.

70. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

71. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

72. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

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80. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

81. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

82. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

83. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

84. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

85. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

86. Shanti Devi, w/o Panna Lal, s/o Chiranjit Lal.

87. Shanti Devi, w/o P



TMC leaders swindled all Central aid for Bengal

UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER YOGI ADITYANATH
ADDRESSING TWO ELECTION RALLIES AT MAL ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCYThe Statesman
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 08 APRIL 2021

03

Virus surge: Capt extends night curfew to entire Pb till 30 April

Punjab CM orders ban on political gatherings, says violators'd be booked under DMA & Epidemics Act

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

As Covid cases continue to surge in Punjab, Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Wednesday ordered a total ban on political gatherings till 30 April and said that violators, including political leaders, will be booked under the Disaster Management Act (DMA) and Epidemics Act.

The CM also announced extension of night curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., which hitherto was imposed in 12 districts, to the entire state and reduced the number of attendees at funeral, cremations and weddings to 50 people indoors and 100 for outdoor settings. Wearing of masks has been made mandatory for all government employees while in office.

These restrictions, coupled with the ones imposed earlier, which include the closure of schools and educa-

tional institutions, will remain effective till 30 April.

However, there was some respite for shop owners in malls, as the CM allowed entry of 10 people per shop at any given time, as against the earlier order of not allowing more than 100 people in a mall at one time. This would imply that 200 people will be allowed in a mall with 20 shops at any given time.

Capt Amarinder, in his weekly review of the Covid situation, expressed concern at the high positivity and mortality rates in the state. He said it was matter of concern that over 85 per cent of cases in Punjab are of the UK coronavirus strain, which is more contagious and virulent.

He said he had no option but to go in for stricter measures to further control the ongoing surge, even though the number of positive cases had somewhat stabilised in the last few days due to curbs



imposed earlier.

The CM said he had been forced to order a ban on political gatherings, as his pleas to all political parties to refrain from organising

such events had been ignored, despite the point that his Congress party had unilaterally announced its decision of not holding any rallies or public meetings

last month.

He ordered the police and the districts administrations to register cases against the political leaders, organisers and participants of political gatherings under the DMA and the Epidemics Act, besides booking the owners of the tent houses, who provide the infrastructure for such gatherings.

Capt Amarinder said even the venue owners, who would provide space for such events, will not be spared and they too would be booked and their venues sealed for three months.

He further said that no social, cultural or sports gatherings and related functions will be allowed in the state till 30 April. The CM said the restrictions of running cinema houses at 50 per cent of their capacity and the closure of schools and educational institutions, except medical and nursing colleges, will continue till 30 April.

Haryana to vaccinate 35 lakh by April end

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

Haryana health minister, Anil Vija, on Wednesday said by April end, efforts will be made to vaccinate about 35 lakh people in the state. So far, about 21 lakh people have been vaccinated for Covid-19 in Haryana.

Apprising Union health minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan during a review meeting of 11 states, Vija said the state will take all necessary measures to control the second wave of Covid-19.

He said that at present there are 13,000 active cases in Haryana and about 25,000 tests are conducted daily and the positive rate is about 4.7 percent. "We are trying to increase testing further in the state," the minister added.

Vija said 35 labs, with a capacity of conducting 92,000 tests per day, for Covid-19 are functional in the state. He said that there are adequate num-

ber of isolation wards, ventilators, general beds, oxygen-equipped beds, ICUs, medicines and equipment in the state.

He requested the Union health minister the reports of samples sent by the state government for investigation should be sent soon so that new strains can be detected and treated accordingly.

Along with this, Vija said that a new protocol for treatment has been prepared by the Central government, then it

should also be shared with the states soon.

The Union minister said states will have to take concrete steps to control Covid-19 and follow the protocol properly. For this, masks, social distancing and all other guidelines have to be strictly adhered to.

Earlier, during a meeting chaired by Vija, he directed the officers connected with the health services of the state to start Covid-19 hospitals again in the state as per the requirement.

HP issues Covid guidelines for social gatherings

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 APRIL

Amid a spike in Covid cases in the state, the Himachal Pradesh government on Wednesday issued new guidelines restricting the number of persons in social gatherings in the state.

A state government official said keeping in view the spike in Covid-19 cases, the State Executive Committee for management of Covid-19 under the Chairmanship of Chief Secretary has issued orders to limit the number of persons in social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political gatherings and other congregations. "The orders have been implemented with immediate effect and will remain in force till further orders.

As per the new orders, the number of persons in open spaces/grounds in areas outside containment zones,

keeping the size of the ground/space will be 50 percent of the capacity subject to maximum of 200 persons.

In closed spaces in areas outside the containment zone, the number of persons allowed would be 50 percent of the hall capacity subject to a maximum of 50 persons," he added.

The official further stated that strict observance of social distancing, wearing of face cover/mask, provision of thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitizer would be mandatory in all such venues.

"The organizers would be responsible to ensure compliance of these conditions and other SOPs issued by the government. The respective District Magistrates/Superintendents of Police will take adequate measures to implement these orders with the support of all the PRIs and ULBs," he added.

Man held for duping real-estate investors

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

A 58-year-old civil engineer was arrested for allegedly duping people on the pretext of investing in real estate, police said on Wednesday.

Sanjay Chawla, a resident of Gurgaon, had cheated 53 people around Rs 9 crore, police said.

According to a complaint,

Adel Landmarks Ltd had in March 2011 made a pre-launch of a project named 'Cosmo Court', which was to come up at Sector 86 in Gurgaon, an officer said. The firm and its representatives misled the investors that it has already acquired 17 acres of land and obtained the licenses to start the project, the officer said. They urged the complainants to start making payments for bookings for the project in the pre-launch stage, stating that it was very nominal at this stage and the rates would be double once the project is officially launched, police said.

3 held in H'yan for bid to siphon off ₹16 cr from dormant bank account

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

Haryana Police has arrested three persons from Jind district for plotting to siphon off Rs 16 crore using information of a dormant bank account of a Kanpur based branch of ICICI bank.

They accessed the email linked to it, managed to fraudulently update a new mobile number in this account to receive one time password (OTP).

The fraudsters needed 48 more hours to transfer the fund but were apprehended. A beneficiary account where they planned to transfer the funds has also been identified.

Three arrested among the four accused were identified as Jagbir and Kaptaan, both residents of Jind district and Imran, a native of Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

"We are looking for who all are involved in it. One more accused is yet to be arrested in this connection. Further probe is underway," the DGP said.

NEastern Rly to operate 2 special trains for pilgrimage spots in Uttarakhand

PTI
MATHURA, 7 APRIL

North Eastern Railway will soon start two special trains to cater to the travel needs of pilgrims heading to pilgrimage spots in Mathura and religious places in Uttarakhand till the end of June, officials said on Wednesday. All the coaches in both the trains would be under the reserved category, Rajendra Singh, PRO, Izzatnagar division, said while talking to reporters through video-link. It is mandatory to adhere to COVID-19 norms for every passenger, the official said.

He said the Ram Nagar-Agra Fort Tri-Weekly Express (Train No. 05055/05056) would start from Ram Nagar in Uttarakhand on April 11. As per the train's schedule, Train No. 05056 would start from Ram Nagar at 19.50 hours every Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. It would terminate in Agra Fort station the following day at 06.55 hours, the official added.

For the return journey, Train No. 05055 will leave Agra Fort at 20.40 hours on April 12 and it will operate every Wednesday, Saturday and Monday. It will terminate at Ram Nagar station the following day at 07.20 hours, he added.

According to officials, the 16 coach train with six sleeper class coaches and one AC 3-tier and AC 2-tier each will stop at major stations like Pantnagar, Bareilly Junction, Budauli, Soron, Kasganj and Mathura Junction. Both the special trains would run up to June 30, the official added. Officials said the North Eastern Railway has also decided to run Howrah-Lalkuan Weekly Special train traversing important pilgrim centres.

Starting from Howrah every Friday, the train would run between April 16 to June 25, while the return train begins from Lalkuan in Uttarakhand every Saturday and will be operated till June 26, the official stated. The train will have 19 coaches nine sleeper coaches, four AC 3-tier and two AC 2-tier coaches, he added.

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HP providing opportunities to ex-servicemen: CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 APRIL

'The Atal Tunnel Rohtang dedicated to the Nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3 October last year, has opened the land locked Lahaul valley for the tourists. This tunnel besides ensuring all weather connectivity to the tribal district was also important from a strategic point of view'

ing. The Atal Tunnel Rohtang dedicated to the Nation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 3 October last year, has opened the land locked Lahaul valley for the tourists. This tunnel besides ensuring all weather connectivity to the tribal district was also important from a strategic point of view," he added.

The delegation had called on Thakur as a courtesy call and the purpose of the study tour to the state was to get a closer view of different aspects of development, including various State Sponsored Programmes for Socio-Economic Development.

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'Huge crowds unlikely on major bathing days during this Kumbh'

PTI
RISHIKESH, 7 APRIL

Kumbh Mela officials have made all arrangements for the three key bathing dates on the banks of Ganga but said they do not expect any huge turnout of devotees due to anti-Covid restrictions imposed amid the rising cases of infection.

"We always make arrangements for the Kumbh in accordance with the largest estimated turnouts. So, we are well prepared to tackle any situation," Mela IG Sanjay Gunjyal said.

But with the second wave of coronavirus infection getting stronger and the SOPs in force, we don't expect huge crowds on the ghats on the Shahi Snan days," he added.

Over 12,000 police and 400 paramilitary force personnel are keeping an eye on Kumbh Kshetra spread over an area of 670 hectares from Haridwar to Devprayag to maintain law and order and ensure that the anti-Covid protocol is strictly followed.

He said every 12 years from January to April, this year's Kumbh has been curtailed to just one

month from April 1 to 30 due to the surge in Covid cases in many states including Uttarakhand which is reporting more than 500 cases daily.

During the month, the three major bathing days (shahi snan or royal baths) fall on April 12, 14 and 27.

Top priority is being accorded to stop the spread of the coronavirus infection during the religious congregation with RT-PCR tests of devotees being conducted at 30 places in Kumbh area which is spread over 670 hectares from Haridwar to Devprayag, Mela official (Med-

ical) Arjun Sengar said.

A total of 12 labs are testing samples and a dedicated Covid hospital with 550 beds is also ready, he said.

Meanwhile, seers representing 13 Akhadas have also been asked to encourage devotees and their disciples and followers to take anti-Covid precautions.

Garhwali Commissioner Ravinath Raman also said following the SOPs issued by the central and state governments because of the second wave of infection is the only effective safeguard against the virus.

HP CM directs officials to focus on tourism projects nearing completion

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SHIMLA, 7 APRIL

HP CM Jai Ram Thakur presiding over the 11th meeting of the HP Tourism Development Board on Wednesday.

tourists visiting the state.

"The Culture Centre at Janjehli in Mandi District is almost

complete by spending an amount of Rs 25.17 crore which would be an added attraction to the tourists vis-

iting the virgin valley. The Centre would have an open air theatre, three new cottages, conventional hall, cafeteria and 12 modern rooms," he added.

The Chief Minister further

stated that Kangra Haat was being constructed at Kangra at a cost of Rs 17 crore.

Besides, beautification of Dal Lake and Art and Craft project at Bhatal Mata temple at Chamba was being carried out which will not only help in showcasing the rich cultural traditions of the state but would also be a major attraction for the tourists visiting the state as both these

projects were on the major national highway between Kalka-Shimla.

He directed the officers to ensure that Shiv Dham Phase-1 in Mandi district must be completed in stipulated time period and said the approach road from Mandi to Shiv Dham should be widened in view of future demand to cater the heavy flow of traffic.

He said that efforts must be made for effective fusion of landscape and avoid over construction of concrete structures. The Chief Minister said that work on renovation of Bantony Castle would be com-

pleted by September this year and the light and sound show at Town Hall and Bantony Castle would be an added attraction to the tourists visiting the state.

He also directed the officers to effectively pursue FCA cases so that work on various tourism projects could be acquired soon and work must also be expedited on the North and South portal of Atal Tunnel

Rohtang as it had emerged as the major tourist attraction. On its completion, the tourists would get better way-side amenities as well as boarding lodges facilities while visiting the Atal tunnel, he added.



A ragpicker looks for reusable items from a heap of garbage at Sevapura dumping yard, in Jaipur on Wednesday.

AGENCIES

Teg Bahadur birth anniversary: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to chair a meeting of the high-level committee of top government officials, Union ministers and dignitaries on Wednesday to discuss the preparations for the year-long 400th birth anniversary celebrations of ninth Sikh guru Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.

SNS

TK Katwa candidate lodges FIR against BJP MP: The Trinamul Congress candidate for the Katwa Assembly seat, Rabindranath Chatterjee on Wednesday lodged an FIR against Sunil Mondal, MP, East Burdwan and brought charges of anti-midation against the latter. Chatterjee claimed Mondal "instructed the BJP cadres to get prepared for 2 May and detain him so that he cannot flee the area."

SNS

Mizoram pig deaths: A preliminary test indicated African Swine Fever as the main cause behind the unusual pig deaths in a Mizoram village, an official said on Wednesday. Since 21 March, at least 125 pigs have died at Lunglei village, about 39 km from Lunglei town, in the southern part of the state near the Bangladesh border.

PTI

Congress demands CCTV feed from strong rooms

To allay doubts about security of EVMs kept there; asserts transparency

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI, 7 APRIL

The Congress on Wednesday demanded that CCTV feed from strong rooms across Assam be made available to candidates.

Assam Congress president Ripun Bora wrote a letter to the state Chief Electoral Officer Nitin Khade seeking access to CCTV feed from strong rooms to allay doubts about the security of Electronic Voting Machines kept there, and asserting that it will make the process more transparent.

In the letter, the Congress also accused the Election Commission of acting "as per instructions of the BJP".

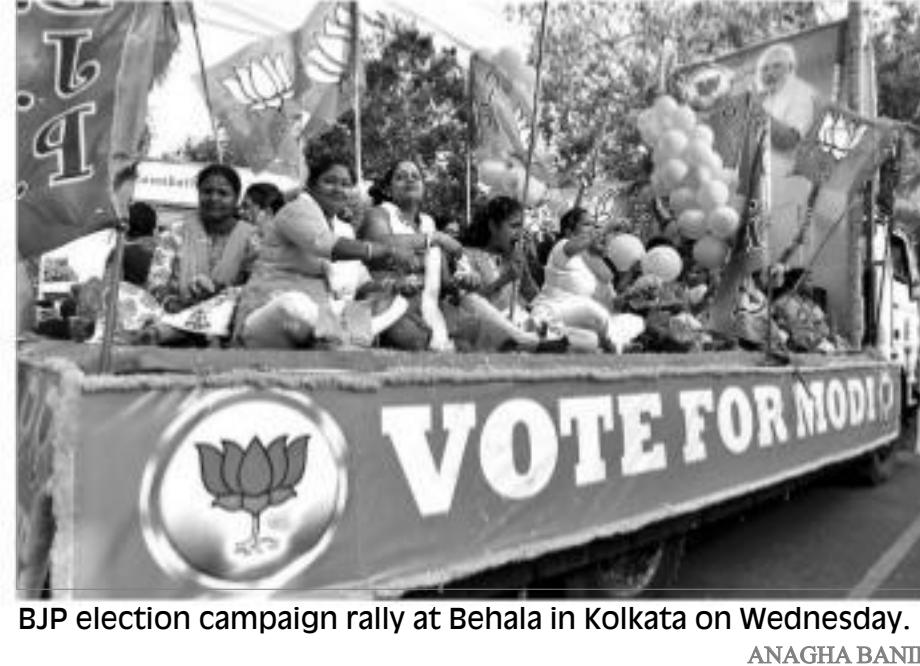
"After the second phase, when many issues relating to EVMs surfaced, the EC assured us that no such incident would happen in the third phase. But we are getting reports of people detecting EVMs being transported in unauthorised vehicles during the last phase of Assembly polls yesterday."

"We thought EC would learn from its mistakes, but we were wrong. It proves that EC functions as per the instructions of the BJP. It is not neutral," Bora said at a Press conference here.

Strong rooms can be manipulated by the BJP as "It is losing and now wants to win by any means," he added.

"This time, awareness among people is high. They are detecting anomalies and transportation of EVMs in private cars across the state. We appeal to them to remain vigilant outside strong rooms so that no one can manipulate the EVMs stored there," Bora said.

On poll prospects, he said the Grand Alliance will win over 100 seats of 126 as per "independent" surveys.



ANAGHA BANIK

Did not breach MCC by remarks on Swaraj, Jaitley: Udhayanidhi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHENNAI, 7 APRIL

DMK youth wing leader Udhayanidhi Stalin on Wednesday denied he had breached the Model Code of Conduct during the poll campaign for the just-concluded Tamil Nadu Assembly elections by making some remarks about late BJP leaders Sushma Sawaraj and Arun Jaitley.

Responding to an Election Commission notice, issued on Tuesday, he said it "has not taken the whole alleged speech into consideration and only referred to two lines" from his speech.

The EC had issued the notice to Udhayanidhi Stalin for his alleged remarks that Swaraj and Jaitley died as they were "unable to tolerate the pressure and torture" given by

Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The EC had asked him to respond to the notice before 5 pm on Wednesday, "failing which the Commission shall take a decision without any further reference to you".

In his reply, Udhayanidhi said the "tenor and intention of his speech must be appreciated" to decide the context of the extracted two lines uttered and urged the Election Commission to furnish a transcript of the entire speech for him to furnish a full and proper reply.

The clause referred by the Commission only prohibits criticism of private life of leaders and workers of other parties, he said and added that the said lines if appreciated in spirit of the delivery of the entire speech taken as a whole, do not breach the MCC.

A day after poll, rival fronts in Kerala claim verdict will be in their favour

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 7 APRIL

A day after the Assembly polls in Kerala, ruling CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front and the Opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front claimed their front would get a comfortable majority.

Though LDF and UDF camps claim the voters' verdict will go in their favour, the UDF camp is seen more excited over its prospects in the polls.

Congress leaders claim there was a wave in favour of UDF in Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram. They said UDF gained substantially in the coastal belt, which has 49 of 140 seats, following the deal signed by LDF government with US-based EMCC International.

Fishing community feels betrayed as the deal will adversely impact their livelihood.

BJP hopes to make its presence count with victory in 6-8 seats in addition to coming second in more than 10 seats.

CM Pinarayi Vijayan and LDF leaders, claimed a historic win for the CPI-M-led front in the morning. Later in the evening, the leaders said the party would make its opinions known after assessment at organisational level.

Water cannon used to disperse protesting farmers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SIRS (HRY), 7 APRIL

Police used a water cannon on Wednesday to disperse a group of farmers, who allegedly tried to go past barricades when local MLA Gopal Kanda arrived to cast his vote for the municipal council chairman's post in this Haryana district.

The farmers, protesting against the Centre's new farm laws, gathered near the spot where the police had put up barricades and raised slogans against Kanda, the president of the Haryana Lokhit Party.

Kanda had voted against a no-confidence motion brought

against the Manohar Lal Khattar government in the state Assembly by the main opposition Congress last month.

Farmer leaders had earlier said they would continue with their "peaceful social boycott" of the leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies.

Sirs Deputy Superintendent of Police Aryan Chaudhary said the protesters attempted to go past the barricades when the police tried to stop them.

Protesting farmers blocked BJP MP Nayab Singh Saini's car in Kurukshetra district's Shabad on Tuesday, smashing

its windscreen as he was about to leave a party worker's home, the police had said.

Farmers had held a protest against the chief minister in Rohtak on Saturday, resulting in a lathcharge by the police and forcing authorities to shift the landing site for Khattar's helicopter.

Farmers had also held a protest against Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala outside the Hisar airport last week.

These incidents are the latest in a series of protests by farmers against the ruling BJP-JJP coalition leaders in Haryana.

Pak visas to over 1,000 Sikh pilgrims for Baisakhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The High Commission of Pakistan in India today said it has issued over 1100 visas to Sikh pilgrims from India to participate in the annual 'Baisakhi' celebrations from 12-22 April.

The development comes amid attempts at reconciliation between India and Pakistan.

These visas have been issued as a "special gesture" by the government of Pakistan in view of the importance of 'Baisakhi' for Punjabis and Sikhs marking the start of their new year, the high commission said.

In a Press release, the high commission said the issuance of pilgrimage visas is a part of the government efforts for facilitating visits to religious shrines.

"This also reflects the commitment of the government of Pakistan to faithfully implement the bilateral protocol on visits to religious shrines of 1974, a large number of Sikh pilgrims from India visit Pakistan to observe various religious festivals/occasions every year.

Pastures for cattle along LAC with China pleaded

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 7 APRIL

Amidst restrictions on shepherds to move their cattleheads to the

TENDER

CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE

OPEN TENDER NOTICE No. : DRMWNP-08/2021 OF 05.04.2021
Sr. No. 1 : Proposal for RCC Box 6.0 x 7.0 x 2 by pushing / sliding method for WCL Nagpur between 847/R to 845/R/33 on deposit basis.
Approximate cost : Rs. 11115233.69. Date & time of closing of tender : 28.04.2021 at 15:00 hrs. Complete details and instructions for e-tendering and on line participation for the above work are available on Railway's website www.ireps.gov.in DRM(W) Nagpur RailMadad Helpline 139

RailMadad Helpline 139



in the adjoining areas.

The Divisional Commissioner of Ladakh Union Territory (UT), Saugat Biswas, recently made an aerial survey of the Khakjung pastures for a better understanding of the issues of the nomadic tribes. In the meeting with Army officers, concerned councillors, BDC chairpersons and village representatives of Leh border regions sought immediate interventions from both parties so that development activities do not suffer in the border regions of Leh Ladakh.

Shepherds of more than 15 villages of Ladakh along the LAC with China in Nyoma and Changthan are not being allowed to reach the pastures with their cattleheads, including Pashmina goats and Yaks, because of presence of Chinese troops

in the adjoining areas.

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According to him, Darjeeling Hills, along with the state, will see development if the BJP forms the government in West Bengal.

He also said that the long-

standing problems of Darjeeling Hills would be resolved once the BJP comes to power here.

In Kurseong rally, Yogi assures development in Hills

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KURSEONG, 7 APRIL

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and senior BJP leader Yogi Adityanath today played the development card as he addressed an election meeting at the Montiviet Ground in Kurseong in Darjeeling.

Mr Adityanath was campaigning for the BJP's Assembly election candidate for Kurseong constituency, BP Bajgain.

According to him, Darjeeling Hills, along with the state, will see development if the BJP forms the government in West Bengal.

He also said that the long-standing problems of Darjeeling Hills would be resolved once the BJP comes to power here.



Highlighting the various development work undertaken after the formation of the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh and at the Centre, Mr Adityanath said: "The Darjeeling hill region is surrounded by nature and its surrounding areas have a lot of tourism potential. As such, youths here do not need to go out in search of employment."

"If the BJP government comes to power in Bengal, various opportunities will come up here itself, and instead of Europe and Switzerland, people will visit the Darjeeling hills," he added.

He also criticised the Congress party, the Left Front and the TMC state government.

According to Darjeeling MP Raju Bista, heavyweight BJP leaders, including Home Minister Amit Shah, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and BJP president JP Nadda, are scheduled to visit North Bengal, including Darjeeling Hills and its surrounding areas, within this week.

Asked about the visit of Mr Adityanath and other senior BJP leaders to the Hills, Hill TMC President LB Rai said it does not matter who visits the

Hills. "Top BJP leaders are visiting the Hills by keeping in mind the importance of the three Hill seats, but they should understand that even if the PM comes, the TMC and candidates supported by our party will win this election," he said.

The general secretary of the Bimal Gurung-led faction of the Gorkha Jan Mukti Morcha, Roshan Giri, said nothing new will come out of the top BJP leaders' visit. "They will come again and again and give false assurances to the Hill people," he said.

The general secretary of the Binoy Tamang faction of the Morcha, Anit Thapa, on the other hand, said local drivers had to face harassment due to Yogi Adityanath's visit today as traffic had gone haywire.

Union leaders to mobilise farmers against BJP

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
SILIGURI, 7 APRIL

Calling for 'Vote Ki Chot' to the BJP in the Assembly elections, farm union leaders under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) are scheduled to conduct 'North Bengal Kisan Mahapanchayats' to mobilise the farming community against the saffron brigade.

The BJP should be defeated to maintain the culture of north Bengal. The government at the Centre adopted several repressive steps against the protesting farmers and cases have been slapped against them. Delhi borders like Singhu and Tikri have turned into an Indo-Bangla border. The farmers are branded as Khalistanis, separatists. The BJP has left no alternative with the farmers," he said.

The leaders explained that they were not campaigning for any political party and that farmers could vote for whichever party they wanted to.

Mr Patkar said the BJP has linked the votes with notes.

The leaders explained that they were not campaigning for any political party and that farmers could vote for whichever party they wanted to.

Mr Patkar said the BJP has linked the votes with notes.

Vote Ki Chot. They should cast votes to punish the BJP," said Jai Kisan Andolan founder Yogendra Yadav in Siliguri today.

Mr Yadav said the policies of the BJP were against the farmers, Adivasis and minorities in north Bengal.

The BJP should be defeated to maintain the culture of north Bengal. The government at the Centre adopted several repressive steps against the protesting farmers and cases have been slapped against them. Delhi borders like Singhu and Tikri have turned into an Indo-Bangla border. The farmers are branded as Khalistanis, separatists. The BJP has left no alternative with the farmers," he said.

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Mr Patkar said the BJP has linked the votes with notes.

Malda Covid surge: 101 new cases found in single day

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
MALDA, 7 APRIL

As Covid-19 returns with a bang, Malda has seen a sharp rise in cases in the past few days. A total of 101 new cases and one death were reported in the district last night. The tests were conducted at the VRDL in the Malda Medical College and Hospital.

Health officials have now started expressing concerns over the situation, even as the election process goes on in full swing, with overcrowded meetings and rallies being held every day. The people in general, meanwhile, alleged the administration was "indifferent" to the situation at hand.

According to sources, among the 101 fresh Covid-19 cases, 21 were from areas under the English Bazaar Municipality, 22 from Kaliachak-II, 11 from Kaliachak-II, eight from Habibpur and others from various other towns.

The Morcha issued a 'letter' in Hindi and Bengali, appealing to farmers in north Bengal to not vote for the BJP. Mr Saha said they had distributed around 1 lakh copies of the letter during the 'mahapanchayats' held in south Bengal districts.

According to Mr Virk, the movement was being watched globally.

The movements have drawn global attention. Around 350 farmers aged 18 to 80 years have been martyred at the protest sites. The BJP has never fulfilled its promises during its almost seven years of rule. It is h



It's ridiculous to debate needs and wants. Every Indian deserves the chance to a safe life...

CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI
BATTING FOR COVID-19 VACCINE FOR ALL

The Statesman
NEW DELHI, THURSDAY 08 APRIL 2021

05

THUMBNAILS



Farm workers dump tomatoes at a roadside near a farm in Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday.

AGENCY

Huge crowds unlikely this Kumbh: Kumbh Mela officials have made all arrangements for the three key bathing dates on the banks of Ganga but said they do not expect any huge turnout of devotees due to anti-Covid restrictions imposed amid the rising cases of infection.

PTI

Tripura CM tests Covid +ve: Tripura chief minister Biplob Kumar Deb Wednesday tested positive for Covid-19 and has self-isolated at home, he said in a tweet. "I have been tested positive for Covid-19. I request everyone to please follow all the covid appropriate behaviour and stay safe," he tweeted.

PTI

MoU for solar power project: A tripartite MoU has been signed between the Ladakh UT administration, LAHDC Leh and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI Ltd) for a 50-MW solar power project at Taru in Leh. The three parties signed the MoU in the presence of the Lieutenant Governor Ladakh, RK Mathur. SNS

SNS

LG confident of CRPF commando's safe return: J&K Lt-Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday expressed confidence that the abducted CoBRA commando held hostage by Maoists after the gun battle with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district would "return safely".

PTI

Trans Arunachal Drive 2021: Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday flagged off the Trans Arunachal Drive 2021 which will cover a distance of 2,500 km in the state. Intending to promote and create awareness around the state, the road trip started from Namsai in the eastern part of the state and will end in Tawang in the west.

PTI

Don't be fooled by BJP's false promises: Mamata

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 7 APRIL



Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee, while holding rallies at Jadavpur and Tollygunge, said that in a cabinet meeting, her government has passed a law to recognise all 184 refugee colonies which are on government and private lands in extensive areas of Jadavpur, Tollygunge, Ajayanagar, Mukundupur.

Banerjee also said: "Central government evicted people who are settled on rail land but they cannot be evicted now since we have given those refugees recognition. "She

warned people must not get carried away by false promises of BJP. "They will promise to grant citizenship - a trick they played in Assam where after

the NRC, 14 lakh Hindus were sent to a detention camp. You are the voter and by casting a vote you elect an MP and an MLA. Who is BJP to grant you citizenship?" she questioned. Mamata opined that voters must ask the Prime Minister and Union home minister to submit their forefather's documents when they raise this citizenship issue.

She was holding a public meeting for Debabrata Majumdar (Moloy) in Jadavpur and state PWD minister Aroop Biswas in Tollygunge. Mamata claimed after her government came to power, load-shedding became a thing of

the past while her government has developed improved infrastructure.

Banerjee said, "During CPI-M's rule, city streets remained waterlogged for days together but we spent Rs 8000 crore to improve the drainage system of Kolkata and added areas."

She in Tollygunge appealed to the masses to vote for Aroop Biswas. She also asked her party workers to release the video of Rose Valley where BJP leaders and Trinamul defectors were involved. She also asked them not to vote for BJP as it will disturb communal harmony.

Central forces working at the behest of BJP: Hakim

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

Senior TMC leader Firhad Hakim echoed chief minister Mamata Banerjee and alleged that the central forces deployed for peaceful conduct of the polls in West Bengal are working at the behest of BJP.

Hakim, also alleged that the CAPF were instructed by BJP to ask the electorate to vote for the saffron party and ransack TMC camps.

Banerjee in her poll rally at Cooch Behar earlier in the day had accused the central forces of harassing and physically assaulting people in the state at the behest of Union home minister Amit Shah. The TMC supreme had also alleged that the CRPF were molesting women and were also obstructing the people from reaching polling booths during the assembly election. "Going by the way some of the central forces are functioning in West Bengal,

it is quite evident that some of them are being used by the BJP. They (the CAPF) are being instructed by BJP to ask voters to vote for the saffron party and ransack the TMC camps ... Not in all, but in some places the central forces are working at the behest of the BJP," Hakim said.

He hit out at Shah for claiming that BJP has already bagged at least 68 of the 91 assembly seats where polling was held in the first three phases.

West Bengal phase 3 polls: 84.61% voter turnout

Among the 3 dists, highest voter turnout of 86.11% was recorded in South 24 Parganas

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, 7 APRIL

West Bengal reported 84.61 per cent voter turnout in the third phase of polling yesterday, keeping hopes alive for both the ruling Trinamul Congress and main rival BJP.

Polling was held in 31 seats in parts of the three districts of south Bengal - Howrah, Hooghly and South 24 Parganas - which is considered to be a stronghold of the Trinamul.

Among the three districts, highest voter turnout of 86.11 per cent was recorded in South 24 Parganas followed by 83.75 per cent in Hooghly and 83.55 per cent in Howrah.

Both the highest and lowest voter turnout was recorded in Hooghly. Highest polling of 88.67 percent



was recorded in Goghat and lowest of 78.25 in Khanakul, both centres had come to the limelight yesterday.

Hours before the third phase of elections was set to kick off, BJP

alleged that the mother of one of its party workers was killed by Trinamul 'goons' in Goghat. Again, In Khanakul, TMC candidate Najmul Karim was allegedly beaten up by the BJP activists and cen-

tral forces had later rescued him from the area.

According to ECI data the centre-stage voter percentage in South 24 Parganas are Basanti (81.44), Kultali (85.16), Kulpri (87.32), Raidighi (86.92), Mandirbazar (86.92), Joynagar (84.02), Baruipur East (84.38), Canning West (84.34), Canning East (88.3), Baruipur West (82.8), Magrahat East (85.09), Magrahat West (84.27), Diamond Harbour (88.04), Falta (87.2), Satgacha (86.94) and Bishnupur (85.2).

The voter turnout in the seven centres of Howrah are Uluberia North (82.65), Uluberia South (85.05), Shyampur (86.23), Baghna (86.37), Amra (79.71), Udaynarayapur (83.94) and Jagatballavpur (81.5). In Hooghly, the polling percentages were Jangipara (81.39), Harpal (81.47), Dhanekhali (85.37), Tarakeswar (85.27), Purusura (85.32) and Arambag (84.98).

Raipur goes for 10-day total lockdown

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, 7 APRIL

The Chhattisgarh government has decided to go for a 10-day total lockdown in the capital city Raipur ~ from 6 p.m. on 9 April to 19 April ~ as escalation of the second wave of Covid-19 may soon assume the uncontrollable proportion.

Raipur has emerged as country's first state capital to have been forced to opt for such a long lockdown, district collector S Bharathi Dasan said today.

All other services barring medicines, petrol pump, and other very essential amenities, shall remain closed during the lockdown.

A record 2,821 corona positive cases were reported today.

District administration has decided not to allow home isolation to corona-positive persons above 55 years of age. Instead, people of this age group will be taken to the hospital by ambulance.

The state with roughly the equivalent of Mumbai in terms of the population registered 37,000 patients in the first 6 days of April. It means, more than 6,000 new positive cases are being found every day.

The state received a record 9,921 cases and 53 deaths on Tuesday. Total 26 people lost their lives in Raipur in the last 24 hours. An average of 3.20 corona patients died every day during the last 312 days.

Covid-19: Punjab bans political gathering

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, 7 APRIL

and 100 for outdoors. Wearing of masks has been made mandatory for all government employees while in office.

These restrictions, coupled with the ones imposed earlier, which include closure of schools and educational institutions, will remain effective till 30 April.

He said even the venue owners, who would provide space for such events, will not be spared and they too would be booked and their venues sealed for three months.

He said it was matter of concern that over 85 per cent of cases in Punjab are of the UK strain, which is more contagious and virulent.

HP issues guidelines for social gathering:

HP spike in Covid cases in the state, the Himachal Pradesh government on Wednesday issued new guidelines restricting the number of persons in social gatherings in the state.

As per the new orders, the number of persons in open spaces/grounds in areas outside containment zones, keeping the size of the ground/space will be 50 per cent of the capacity subject to maximum of 200 persons. Strict observance of social distancing, wearing of face cover/mask, thermal scanning and hand wash or sanitiser would be mandatory in all such venues.

PoK youth handed over to Pakistan Army

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 7 APRIL

As a humanitarian gesture, the Indian Army on Wednesday repatriated to Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) a youth who had inadvertently crossed the line of control (LoC) into Karna in north Kashmir's Kupwara district.

The youth identified as Mausam son of Manzoor Ahmad from Lipa area of Kashmir under illegal occupation of Pakistan strayed into the Indian territory on the night of 5 April.

He was kept by the Indian troops deployed along the LoC for the night with due



care and Pakistani authorities were informed of the whereabouts of the boy.

Based on the interaction between the authorities of both sides on the hotline, the Indian authorities repatriated the youth to the Pakistani authorities from Tithwal crossing point as a humanitarian gesture.

The youth was presented clothes and sweets, on return

On the occasion of repatriation, the representatives of civil administration, Karanah were present. The exchange took place at 11.50 am Indian Standard Time.

Such inadvertent crossings have taken place earlier also due to close proximity of villages along LoC on either sides.

However, the Indian side has always been prompt in returning the individuals keeping the humanitarian issue in mind.

That way Tithwal Crossing Bridge located on Kisanganga river has been acting as a point of peace between the two sides

TEMPORARY DIVERSION / REGULATION OF TRAINS DUE TO MAINTENANCE WORK

In order to further enhance the safety standards, Railway shall undertake construction work of Limited Height Subway (LHS) in lieu of L-Xing No. 255 & 256 between Baruachak - Gonda and L-Xing No. 235 between Swami Narayan Chhapia - Maskanwa in Lucknow Division. For these works, a Traffic Block of 06.00 hrs. shall be taken on 08.04.2021 in Baruachak - Gonda Section, and two Traffic Blocks of 08.00 hrs. and 06.00 hrs. on 15.04.2021 in Baruachak - Gonda and Swami Narayan Chhapia - Maskanwa Sections respectively. Consequently, the following trains will be Diverted/Regulated as under:

DIVERSION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Diverted Route	Date(s) (From originating stn.)
02512 Kochuveli - Gorakhpur Raptisagar Express Special	Via Gonda - Barhni - Gorakhpur instead of Gonda - Basti - Gorakhpur	06.04.2021 & 13.04.2021
02542 Lokmanya Tilak (T) - Gorakhpur Special	Via Gonda - Barhni - Gorakhpur instead of Gonda - Basti - Gorakhpur	07.04.2021 & 14.04.2021
05118 Mathura Jn. - Chhapra Express Special	Via Gonda - Barhni - Gorakhpur instead of Gonda - Basti - Gorakhpur	07.04.2021 & 14.04.2021
05212 Amritsar Jn. - Darbhanga Jn. Special	Via Gorakhpur - Barhni - Gonda instead of Gorakhpur - Basti - Gonda	14.04.2021
02569 Darbhanga Jn. - New Delhi Clone Special	Via Gorakhpur - Barhni - Gonda instead of Gorakhpur - Basti - Gonda	15.04.2021

REGULATION OF TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Regulated	Dates (From originating stn.)
05212 Amritsar Jn. - Darbhanga Jn. Special	150 Minutes en route	08.04.2021
02598 C Shivaji Maharaj (T)-Gorakhpur Antodaya Ex.	130 Minutes en route	15.04.2021
00969 Laxmibai Nagar - New Guwahati Parcel Sp.	25 Minutes en route	15.04.2021
02563 Saharsa Jn. - New Delhi Clone Special	75 Minutes en route	15.04.2021

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

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

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Beyond Dantewada

Judging by the yardstick of casualties suffered yet again by jawans of the Central Reserve Police Force, Saturday's Maoist outrage in Chhattisgarh's Sukma region may not possibly stand comparison with the killings of security forces in Dantewada in April 2017. The latest outrage is both the same and different. It is rather puzzling that in a span of 24 hours, the toll has risen from five to 22. Yet the why and therefore of this four-fold increase has not readily been explained. Suffice it to register that the intelligence feedback was mortally inadequate, as in Dantewada and some other Left radical bastions that dot the Chhattisgarh landscape. As it turned out, Saturday witnessed by far the worst attack in the state in exactly four years, verily since the summer of 2017. Considering the nature of the injuries, not to forget the deaths, the state police has let it be known that the CRPF had walked into a trap laid out by the Maoists. The force was ambushed while returning to base and it has now been acknowledged that it was a meticulous, sudden and planned operation against the force that sustains the existing order. The security operation was executed by the District Reserve Guard (DRG), a Special Task Force (STF), and a Cobra unit. On the face of it, it was formidable enough; the teams "went the deepest" inside the forest and were the target of rapid fire by the Maoists. The purpose of the assignment against extremists turned out to be counterproductive. And then the giveaway - "We didn't find anything at the original site. We were attacked when we were returning. We didn't really know when the Naxals had encircled us from all sides. They have sophisticated weapons and they were using them in abundance."

By all accounts, it was a botched operation where the security forces were trapped by the Maoists who appear to have emerged unscathed. The fact that they used "sophisticated weapons" points to the build-up of arsenal over time, and these included guns and grenades. To that can be added the CRPF's inadequate knowledge of the rugged topography, as was painfully evident at Dantewada. Nor for that matter is it known whether the local Chhattisgarh police were in the vanguard... to guide the CRPF across uncharted territory. It is hard not to wonder too whether any lessons have been learnt through these repeated ambushes and deaths of CRPF personnel. The injuries were as severe as they were fatal. The dead included eight personnel from the District Reserve Guard, six from the STF, and eight from the CRPF. A cross-section of the security forces have thus lost the battle against the Maoists. Yet a visit to poll-bound Assam was more compelling to the Chief Minister, Bhupesh Baghel - an instance of remarkable insensitivity.

The Korean Question

The Biden Administration is on course to complete its comprehensive review of US policy towards North Korea. There is no decision yet on which way Team Biden will go on the critical choices it will have to make - including the basic one of whether to up the pressure on 'Supreme Leader' Kim Jong Un and compel him to make a strategic choice to abandon his nuclear weapons or to pursue the denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula as a long-term goal to be targeted in phases without insisting upon an immediate commitment from Pyongyang. The consensus in Washington seems to be veering around to the latter approach. The argument in favour of this option made by experts in the US policy establishment is that a phased approach to denuclearisation is much more likely to result in near-term limits that can arrest the growth of North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities, better enable the USA and its allies in the region to develop and deploy effective means of countering the threat posed by Pyongyang, and leave the door open to further steps in the future.

North Korea has provided a reminder over the past few weeks of the threat it poses to the security of the US and its allies in Northeast Asia. On 21 March, it test-fired two short-range cruise missiles, and on 25 March, it flight-tested two short-range ballistic missiles. Though Pyongyang has not tested nuclear weapons or intercontinental ballistic missiles since 2017, these escalations are intended as a warning of what may be in store if President Biden adopts a "hostile" policy towards the Kim regime. Conversely, a gradualist approach lays the Biden Administration open to the charge of having blinked first and rewarding the North for its confrontationist stand. While there are no easy choices in the matter for the USA, what is of crucial import is that South Korea and Japan are on board. They are, after all, the countries in North Korea's direct line of fire. It needs underlining that the option of stepping up pressure to force Pyongyang's acceptance of early and complete denuclearisation assumes that, notwithstanding periodic declarations of willingness to give up nuclear weapons (including in the 2018 Singapore Joint Statement), Kim Jong Un has no intention of eliminating the nuclear deterrent that he regards as critical to ensuring the survival of his regime. According to this approach, the key to denuclearisation is changing the North Korean leader's strategic calculus by forcing him to regard the continued possession of nuclear weapons as more damaging to prospects for regime survival than abandoning what he has called the regime's "treasured sword". Proponents of this view are in a minority in Washington, but the dire economic conditions currently faced by Pyongyang may provide an opportunity to bring Kim to the conclusion that only by reaping the economic, political, and security rewards that would follow the North's denuclearisation can he escape the regime-threatening pressures that could spell the end of the dynasty. It is a high-risk strategy. And if it goes wrong, North Korea's neighbours will pay the price.

Oh! Calcutta ~ II

This selection of responses to Calcutta, mostly written in English, trace interlinks, fractures and the chaos of the physical city, ranging from representations of the Imperial gaze, to the postcolonial gaze of privilege that characterize the representations of the educated, cultured, urban upper middle-class writers and public intellectuals



This was no city of dreams: it was a city where one came up against the face of reality at its most physical and ferocious. Eventually the Calcuttans adjusted to it, as people do, and learned to accept it as the truth. Out of that, today's Calcutta has emerged."

In her book, Krishna Dutta concluded her narrative of the imperial city evolving into a post-imperial, post-independence city since 1947, by referring to Calcutta in the era of globalization, that is after 1991. Dutta summed up her representations of Calcutta's past with the transformations that were impacting the city in the present, though change and continuity were intermeshed, as she observed, ".But a different kind of exchange is occurring today through the invasive channels of satellite television and the internet. Calcuttans now communicate with the world through chatrooms and websites... There is also rampant consumerism and hedonism among the large numbers of Calcuttans who can afford such a lifestyle... Indeed, during the terrible riots in Gujarat in 2002, Calcuttans came out in their thousands to march peacefully along the same route taken by Tagore in 1905 in protest against the partition of Bengal".

The adulatory tag that Dutta attached as she concluded her insightful appraisal, perhaps gestures towards a blend of nostalgia and romanticism, "Calcutta may lag behind much of the world economically, but it is still a city where the pursuit of knowledge, beauty and justice for their own sake are admired and cherished. It is still a relatively safe city for travellers. People here are hospitable, resilient and refreshingly witty."

In fact, almost every two to five years, there seems to appear on the book stands a new book on the indefinable, enigmatic and mesmerizing city of Calcutta. Strangely Beloved Writings on Calcutta, is a collection of essays, edited by Nilanjana Gupta. It includes an essay by Sanjoy Chakravorty titled, "Bypass". The psychic tension between the nostalgic moorings and the ground realities about the evolving city of Calcutta are represented here in graphic detail, "Calcutta's roads, lanes, and alleys, its cob-

blestoned tramlines, treeless avenues, and occasional flyovers, are important visual markers no doubt. But even more distinct and quintessentially Calcuttan are the city's pavements, mostly broken, many turned into open markets, pockmarked with tube wells, impromptu shrines and random holes dug by the monsoon or men from the power, phone or water department. This whole set piece is animated by people on foot, walking everywhere."

Moreover, Subhordan Dasgupta's essay "Calcutta and I" refers to one of the most traumatic experience that the city of Calcutta endured. It was the period that marked India's independence and the Partition of India, both in the eastern and western parts of the country. Dasgupta remarked, "Perhaps the most significant change to Calcutta was the massive influx due to the Partition of India which led to millions of people entering the city as refugees from the newly created, newly independent East Pakistan with literally nothing but the clothes on their backs." Also, in the second volume of Calcutta-The Living City, the editor Sukanta Chaudhuri elaborates the impact of historical facts that traumatized the city of Calcutta. Referring to Calcutta, Chaudhuri observed, "She is the "primate city" the great magnet for survival-seekers from one of the poorest and most populous segments of the subcontinent. More amazingly still, she has absorbed with incredible meagre resources, little attention and less sympathy, what is arguably the biggest mass migration in the history of man."

In conclusion, the following excerpts from two novelists, Amit Chaudhuri, who as he says, resides in India most of the year, and Jhumpa Lahiri, who is a non-resident Indian, more accurately a person of Indian origin, may seem intriguing. In his non-fictional narrative that focusses on the evolution of the city of Calcutta, titled Calcutta Two Years in the City, published in 2013, Amit

Chaudhuri, though lacking the wit and dark humour of the uninhibited prose of Gunter Grass, as it appears in the English translation of The Flounder, observes with scathing irony, "I live in India much of the year-but I can't say I like the India of today... And Calcutta had become, as the Americans might say, a dump. By the early eighties, Mother Teresa's profile as the face of eternity was so wide spread that, in the Western world, this great city (mahanagar) of modernity, with its contradictions and exacerbations, was seen as a present-day Galilee, a place of supernatural cures, of lepers awaiting the miraculous touch... Within India itself Calcutta had become a butt of jokes..."

Finally, in her novel The Lowland, also published in 2013, the same year as Amit Chaudhuri's book Calcutta was published, the diasporic writer Jhumpa Lahiri represents in her fictional narrative, the formidable Naxalite movement that rocked the city of Calcutta, destabilizing its colonial cultural legacy, interrogating shibboleths and monoliths, yet ultimately surrendering to the establishment due to its many lapses, excesses and over-commitment to concepts rather than ground-realities. Returning to the city in the era of globalization, Jhumpa Lahiri's protagonist observes not unlike Jemima Kindersley who visited Calcutta in the eighteenth century, that, "VIP Road, the old way to and from the airport to Dum-dum, had once been remote enough for bandits, avoided after dark. But now she passed high-rise apartment buildings, glass-fronted offices, a stadium. Lit-up malls and amusement parks. Foreign companies and five-star hotels... The city was called Kolkata now, the way Bengalis pronounced it."

It is obvious from this brief collage of impressions that the Calcutta chaos, its inclusiveness, its syncretic distinctness, sets it apart. Even in the nineteenth century, it was a melting pot of cultures, the fusion and

frisson resulted in the uniqueness of the city and the achievements of its cultured and educated intelligentsia, have been carried forward, now negotiating with the challenges of the era of globalization of the 21st century.

This selection of responses to Calcutta, mostly written in English, trace interlinks, fractures and the chaos of the physical city, ranging from representations of the Imperial gaze, to the postcolonial gaze of privilege that characterize the representations of the educated, cultured, urban upper middle-class writers and public intellectuals. It includes the fictional and non-fictional narratives of travel writers, international writers and diasporic writers; however, these significant narratives integrate into the undeniable impression that the more than three-hundred years old city of Calcutta challenges definition and leaves an indelible impression on both the resident and the non-resident Indians as well visitors and tourists.

Perhaps in response to all the euphoria and disillusionment, in the comprehensive compilation of essays in The Living City Vol 1, the editor Sukanta Chaudhuri observed, "The city grew in collaboration with colonial rule, or more broadly and humbly, by a necessary reliance on the colonial system. But this symbiosis bred resentment and disillusion, creating a classic tradition of protest politics and economic discontent, even while the collaborative role persisted. And in all these developments, Calcutta only focused, sharply and disturbingly, the basic spirit of colonial and post-colonial India. Calcutta and Bengal are now often placed in counterpoise in the rest of India; but the nation still finds itself ensnared by this reviled and fascinating city, which has taken upon itself so much of the burden of India's bitter inheritance."

As is evident, this essay is an endeavour to identify some milestones and signposts in literary representations of the city of Kolkata in Indian English writing and also to locate some responses of visitors that register the internalized dynamics of the imperial gaze, the arrogant gaze of the superiority of the colonizers, the gaze of privilege, the patronizing gaze of creative writers from.

(Concluded)

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gles, they should be sending small units of nimble-footed troops to act on solid, actionable intelligence.

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Surely, this heightened activity would have alerted the Maoists, who would have planned and laid the ambush.

The gunfight is said to have lasted over four to five hours. Why were the ambushed jawans not provided reinforcements, especially since there were hundreds of troops in the area? Was there a communications failure?

It is evident that the quality of intelligence input available to the security forces in Bastar is at best patchy. This is because the State is yet to win the confidence of the locals.

In Bastar, the benefits of development promised by successive governments have failed to reach the Adivasis, who are living a Sub-Saharan life.

These malnourished, poorest of the poor people have little reason to support the State and to provide the forces with inputs on the Maoists. One of the strongest armies in the world is fighting a war with its own people, for too long now.

A MEMBER OF THE ANN ASIAN VOICES

'The last land mine is cleared'

Kimhong had never played football before, but when she was invited to join a game with the other children living around Stoeng Toch Krom Primary School in Battambang province near Cambodia's border with Thailand, she joined in.

What made this invitation special was that the school's football ground had until recently been contaminated by landmines, a legacy of Cambodia's many years of internal conflict. "I wish there are more safe playfields, so that the other kids can also play with safety," Kimhong says. The conflict ended a few decades ago but the remnants of war still claim lives, and limbs. Children are most vulnerable. To clear that deadly legacy of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) scattered across the nation requires commitment, support and resources.

For Kimhong's mother, Thy, it was a special day too. Thy uses a prosthetic limb after losing a leg to a landmine several years ago. That has affected the life of her family. For as long as Kimhong can remember, she has had to help her mother cook, clean, and do other housework chores after school. That day, as Kimhong played football with her friends on the new pitch, Thy sat on the sidelines, beaming. In Cambodia, clearing the land of mines is first and foremost about saving lives and protecting youth like

The Phnom Penh Post CAMBODIA'S NEWSPAPER OF RECORD Kimhong. It is also about creating places free from fear, and an environment that is peaceful and conducive to inclusive development. Once cleared of mines, lands are released to local authorities, as was the case of the football ground, at Stoeng Toch Krom Primary School. More often they are handed back to farmers and their families, many who live along Cambodia's border with Thailand. The area was the last Khmer Rouge stronghold and is still one of the world's most heavily mine-contaminated areas.

Among the countries helping the Cambodian government clear landmines is South Korea. A long-time development partner for the Cambodian people, South Korea has become a high-income country in just over a quarter century, about the same time as the conflict in Cambodia came to an end. For children like Kimhong and her mother, this is a development story full of hope, peace and the opportunity for prosperity.

Photo supplied South Korea not only brings much-needed financial support but also contributes rich knowledge gained from its own experience of conflict recovery, as well as one of the world's most remarkable transitions from low-to high-income country status.

The "Saemaul Undong", or New Village Movement, was a key part of South Korea's remarkable transition in less than a generation. This national movement was instrumental in improving conditions in rural communities as it strengthened social cohesion. It significantly reduced rural poverty by increasing household incomes, improving basic infrastructure and services, revitalising local communities and empowering women. South Korea's approach to mine clearance is not simply to maintain peace, but to build the foundations for prosperity.

In Cambodia, through the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), South Korea has partnered with UNDP to support the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA).

THE FEMALE REFEREE

SIR, Football referee Rebecca Welch ~ the highest ranked female official in England ~ should be hugely congratulated for becoming the first female referee to take charge of an English Football League match and making a history. She recently officiated the Easter Monday's game between Harrogate Town and Port Vale in League Two. Undoubtedly, by achieving this amazing feat, she has become a role-model for many others and would surely encourage several women to follow in her footsteps.

Yours, etc., Sourish Misra, Kolkata, 6 April.

This should come to an end.

Yours, etc., Shovonali Chakraborty, Kolkata, 6 April.

CIVILIAN RULE

SIR, Your editorial "Myanmar's civil strife" (4 April) is on target. The army in Myanmar has captured power through a coup and unleashed a reign of terror against its own citizens. The army is killing unarmed citizens which must stop. International community including India must not remain a passive onlooker and let these atrocities continue

unchecked. It must create maximum pressure on the junta to return power to the Suu Kyi-led National League for Democracy that won a landslide majority at the hustings which is projected by the Myanmar army as fraudulent.

An army is maintained not to kill its own people but to thwart external aggression. The army must return power to the democratically elected government. A coup is unacceptable in a civilized society.

Yours, etc., Aranya Sanyal, Siliguri; 5 April.

Maoist mayhem in Chhattisgarh

SIR, Two major attacks that Maoists have carried out in Chhattisgarh's Bastar region in a span of 10 days underscore their continuing capacity to inflict heavy losses on the security forces.

While details of what transpired are still emerging, it appears that a major security operation was underway in the area to nab Hidma, commander of the Maoist's Battalion who was reported-

ly in the area.

In the Bastar region, it is the rebels who continue to call the shots. Here the Maoists hold the advantage, adept at playing the security forces by feeding them "intelligence" and then drawing them into a trap.

In contrast, the security forces continue to operate like a big bumbling army. Rather than sending thousands of troops into the jun-

gles, they should be sending small units of nimble-footed troops to act on solid, actionable intelligence.

Senior police and paramilitary officials were being brought in by helicopter over the last 2-3 weeks to plan the operation.

Surely, this heightened activity would have alerted the Maoists, who would have planned and laid the ambush.

The gunfight is said to have lasted over four to five hours. Why were the ambushed jawans not provided reinforcements, especially since there were hundreds of troops in the area? Was there a communications failure?

It is evident that the quality of intelligence input available to the security forces in Bastar is at best patchy. This is because the State is yet to win the confidence of the locals.

In Bastar, the benefits of development promised by successive governments have failed to reach the Adivasis, who are living a Sub-Saharan life.

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PRAFULL GORADIA

There are repeated mentions in the print media about the astronomical number of cases which are pending in the Supreme Court, the various High Courts and the lower courts. The reported numbers are close to 4 crore cases in the apex, high and lower courts respectively. The explanation for this state of affairs usually is a shortage of judges in most courts. What is to be done, except request the governments to expedite appointments? Overall, the legal fraternity is responsible and intelligent but it has not occurred to anyone influential that the system is defective.

Foremost ought to be the question of why so many adjournments are sought, and given freely by the courts. Not only freely, but also free of charge. In other words, the court's time and facilities including the time of judges is misused. The court fees are paid according to the prescribed list, but the fees listed are regardless of whether a case gets over in two or three hearings or takes 30 hearings over several years. For the sake of freedom, I concede that litigants should have the basic right to seek adjournments. But on their part, they must be enjoined with a duty to pay some rate of fee for each adjournment. Say, the court fee to be paid for filing a suit is Rs.1 lakh, an adjournment should cost the side to the tune of about Rs.50,000 or at least Rs.25,000. The habit of adjournment seeking would come down drastically.

As a layman, who has to litigate from time to time - I run a school - I can say that litigants have a fancy for famous, known and popular advocates. Such advocates are busy because they argue many briefs simultaneously and also in out-stations, like Chennai, Jabalpur and so on. At times, the same distinguished advocate has to appear in the Supreme Court for a matter. My experience is that a litigant should choose an advocate who would have the leisure to study the matter thoroughly and be mostly available to argue the matter, rather than being in Chennai or elsewhere that particular day. All these factors should begin to count once litigants realize the price of their advocate's absence.

Our school had an unusual experience in one of its initial cases in the Delhi High Court. The Advocate-on-Record suggested we go in for so-and-so advocate, who is not only very capable but enjoys the respect of the High Court judge. The expense would be only one or two times more. We did as advised and the conference with the advocate was fixed for the Saturday

Justice can be speedy



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day preceding the Monday when our matter was listed. The advocate could not make it that day, so he postponed it to Sunday. That too proved to be very busy for him. Then we were told we would have a quick meeting on Monday morning at 10 a.m. in the lobby of the Court. We waited until 10.30 when news came that the advocate had had to go to the Company Law Board on a big and urgent matter.

By 11 a.m., our matter was slated to come up. So I asked the young man (who had never before argued in Court) to represent us, no matter what could happen. When the time came, my young advocate stood up, most likely trembling. Before he could say much, the judge said "Oh yes, this type of a matter was decided by the High Court only about two months ago. Has anyone got a copy of that judgment?" We had the copy but in his nervousness the young man had forgotten to present it. The moment he produced it, the judge said "Fine, leave it with me and I will write my order in a few days". It eventually was a victory for the school! Although it was unusual, such flukes do not succeed often.

Apart from adjournments, another

cause of delay is the freedom of advocates arguing for unlimited length of time. Some hearings go on for hours. Why shouldn't the judge, in consultation with advocates of the two sides, fix say, half an hour or 45 minutes for each side? If one of the advocates crosses his time limit, he may but at his cost for every five minutes extra, rather like a taxi meter. The charge for every extra five minutes should be a standard one. Long arguments usually contain repetitions, although the advocates' explanation is to make the judges understand their viewpoint as if they are not educated with more than a modicum of common sense. Nevertheless, this suggestion does not take away the freedom to argue at unlimited length.

If the plea is a shortage of judges, it should not be difficult to appoint more. If and when there occurs a shortage of space, a second shift can be introduced. Court could begin at 8 a.m. and go on without a break until 1 p.m.; the second shift could commence at around 1.30 p.m. and go on until 6 in the evening. Advocates can be found as there is no dearth of them.

Appeal upon appeal is yet another phenomenon that causes delay.

When I was in college in the 1950s, I knew several law students who told me that the Supreme Court was essentially a court of final appeal, mainly for constitutionally significant issues. It admitted some matters of high importance like fundamental rights or issues, which provinces were concerned about. Later, I found that cases which began in Small Causes Courts like landlords wanting their tenants to pay higher rents or vacate their premises would reach the Supreme Court. Think of the layers of courts that the matter must have crossed and climbed before reaching the apex court to finally decide whether the tenant should pay Rs. 6,000 p.m. or quit the flat he occupies. The suggestion to cut out such traffic is to allow appeals only up to two higher courts above where the issue was petitioned. There may be as many tribunals for specific trades, professional as possible to free the normal courts. But here again the appeals, if any, should not extend beyond one higher court.

Most common litigants continue to have faith in the higher judiciary as long as they are not asked for under-the-table money to win their case. In

other words, in the popular mind, the reliability of a court is judged by its integrity. Delays are a matter of debate, but have not yet become a criterion of the judiciary's efficacy.

But times are changing, and a point may be reached when courts would begin to be judged as much for their efficiency and quickness of justice, as for their honesty. I know of three cases of shoplifting in London, which were decided between 11.00 in the morning and noon. In two of the cases, the well known Old Bailey's Court gave the litigants some kind of an informal bail in lieu of depositing their passports as a surety. At four o'clock, the matter was taken up and the fines in two cases were 100 pounds and 175 pounds sterling in another. In the third case, justice was even quicker, as the young man was made to sit in the court and was fined 40 pounds, without availing of the services of a lawyer. The matter was decided by 4.30 pm, in half an hour.

The reason for quoting these instances is to bring to notice how speedy justice can be.

The writer is an author, thinker and a former Member of Parliament.

100 YEARS AGO

OCASIONAL NOTE

The appeal issued by the Prince of Wales on behalf of the Boy Scout movement is supported by Lord Reading in terms which should elicit a cordial response from all classes and races in India. The Prince, who during his recent tour has seen a good deal of the Scout movement, appealed for the funds which are needed to put it on a sound financial footing, and which may be offered as a mark of appreciation for its splendid work. Lord Reading expresses confidence that India will not be content to be behind the other great States of the Commonwealth in its response. The movement is still young in this country, but it has received a great impetus from the visit of Sir Robert Baden Powell, and a more rapid development is looked for in the future. Lord Reading bears testimony to the high value of the Boy Scout training "in chivalry, in self-control, in personal efficiency and fitness, and the use of the qualities so developed in the service of others." Sir Robert Baden Powell, indeed, wrought better than he knew when he first brought into existence this healthy and vigorous influence in the training of the young and the development of good citizenship. "The Scouts' dharma," says Lord Reading, "is service and brotherhood, and this fact will appeal to every section of Indian society."

NEWS ITEMS

CONTROL OF TAXI TRAFFIC IN CALCUTTA

The report of the Committee appointed by Government to examine existing regulations for the licensing and control of taxi-cabs in Calcutta, in connection with the recent strike of taxi-drivers in the city was published yesterday. Last evening, a representative of The Statesman discussed the report with a number of taxi-drivers at various stands in the city, and learnt that the majority of them knew little about the result of the inquiry. Some of the men who had heard something about the new proposals said they had not gone into them, as they looked to the officers of their Union to study the new rules and to keep them advised. Some drivers complained they saw nowhere in the rules that they were not to be arrested and taken to the thana for petty street offences.

CALCUTTA MILLIONAIRE'S ESTATE

At the High Court yesterday the Chief Justice and Mr. Justice Richardson disposed of the appeal preferred by Gour Mohan Mullick, one of the defendants in the suit brought by Nyanmanjuri Dassi against Kanta Mohun Mullick and others. Mr. N. Sircar and Mr. B.K. Ghose appeared for Nyanmanjuri. Mr. Langford James and Mr. S.R. Das represented Gour Mullick. Brindarani Dassi, the guardian of Nyanmanjuri who is a lunatic, brought a suit to set aside a consent decree in which the whole of the estate of Kumudini Dassi, the wife of the lunatic, was claimed. The defendant, Gour Mullick, applied before Mr. Justice Rankin to have the case taken off the file. Their lordships held that Mr. Rankin's order was not appealable against and directed that the case should proceed.

THE KUMBAKONAM RIOTS

With reference to the Kumbakonam riots it is stated that after the arrested man was brought to the Police station, sureties were tendered on his behalf. These were rejected by the Inspector of Police, who referred the parties to the Magistrate. The crowd protested that the Inspector, having arrested the man under the Police Act, possessed powers to grant him bail. Eventually the Sub-Magistrate arrived and allowed bail, but too late to prevent the lawless proceedings of the mob. During the afternoon the Collector held a conference with the leading citizens of Kumbakonam and told them that the turn of events in the town would probably lead to the adoption of strong measures, such as quartering of punitive police.

NON-COOPERATION AND POONA STUDENTS

Mr. Shaukat Ali and Mr. Zahur Ahmed, barrister-at-law, this morning addressed an open air meeting consisting mostly of students from the different colleges of Poona. Mr. Shivaram Mahadev Pranjye presided. Speaking in Hindustani, Mr. Zahur Ahmad said that so far in India, Englishmen had come first and Indians next, while in the new order of things they would have Indians first and Englishmen next. He advised the meeting to follow Mr. Gandhi's programme of non-cooperation. The names of about twenty students from the New Poona, Deccan Agricultural and Fergusson colleges, who had decided to boycott these institutions were announced. The Principal of the Fergusson College has addressed a letter to the guardians asking them to take steps to prevent their wards from taking any precipitate action.

Politics of fear in Nepal

AJAYA BHADRA KHANAL

NePAL has witnessed dramatic political developments in the past few months. At the most simplistic level, we see current politics as being driven by the conflict between Prime Minister KP Oli and his detractors within the former Nepal Communist Party. The Supreme Court's decisions have aided and abetted political dynamics. Those who were once close allies are diverging; those who were once hated enemies are converging.

Nepal's political parties, including Nepali Congress and Janata Samajwadi Party, are politically opposed to Oli. However, these parties appeared indecisive after the restoration of Parliament by the Supreme Court. Several factors were responsible for the indecision. The first was the fear that if they didn't control the process, then Oli would hold the next elections under his leadership.

However, the incidents also reveal far more significant trends and patterns, which indicate that we are entering a new phase of political dynamics. This new phase is remarkable for geostrategic rivalry, the growing power of the Nepali state, and the transition from the politics of greed and impunity to the politics of conflict and fear.

That politics is about greed for power and money has become a commonplace idea. Parties and politicians

have been too willing to sacrifice the people at the altar of political power, their object of absolute faith.

Nepali politics has facilitated the rise of a kleptocratic network that cuts across all parties, the private sector and state institutions. To protect the network and its members, and to ensure impunity, the network has co-opted the state's core legal institutions, including the judiciary. The recent incidences of political conflict have revealed yet another dynamic to this feature. What happens when one group or individual is unwilling to share the spoils with other less powerful modules within the network?

Prime Minister KP Oli has single-handedly curtailed the influence of other political actors and asserted near-complete control over all institutions. In addition to preventing the access of other political actors to the machinery of extraction, he is also wielding the power of core state legal institutions like the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA).

What makes these dynamics even more significant is the growing powers of the state. Since the promulgation of a new constitution in 2015, the Nepali state has become much more powerful in terms of collecting taxes and in terms of security apparatuses. There have been significant upgrades in recent years regarding mechanisms of surveillance and policing. Part of this is due

ties and leaders wanted India's support in making moves against Oli. Such tacit encouragement did not come, and the parties were reluctant to act against Oli.

The series of events support at least two arguments. First, the government can influence electoral results - hence the desire to hold elections while in power. Second, political parties and leaders have a habit of relying on the support of foreign powers while making important political moves.

Foreign powers can provide many types of services. They can provide finance and other forms of support during elections. And, they can use their leverage, both within and outside Nepal, to enhance the status of leaders, facilitate benefits, or provide political protection in case of political or legal prosecution.

Another shift in strategy among the foreign powers is the realisation that they can no longer depend on the idea of permanent political allies and they have to work with whoever is in power. Such a shift in strategy is especially visible in the way foreign powers like China, India, and the US are conducting their diplomacy.

In the last 3-4 years, China made significant political investments in the sustainability and stability of the Nepal Communist Party, the 'nationalist' Nepali forces and Nepal's government, so that Nepal could become independent of India's influence. The strategy has failed because of the three-way splinter of the NCP that has made matters worse than before.

The three forces are now forced to contend with each other's manoeuvres, happy to extract small victories rather than go for an ambitious end game.

Interestingly, the most significant areas of contention, at present, are pushing forward infrastructures of connectivity, extending reach in political parties, obliging and streamlining security apparatuses, and protecting operating space in the civil society.

What is missing from current trends in political analysis is the dynamics of fear and vulnerability as well as the hidden role of international actors. While analysing Nepali politics, we must now be able to account for the transition from politics of greed to politics of greed-based networks, the transition from politics of impunity to politics of fear, the transition from a weak state to a powerful state, and the evolving strategies of external forces.

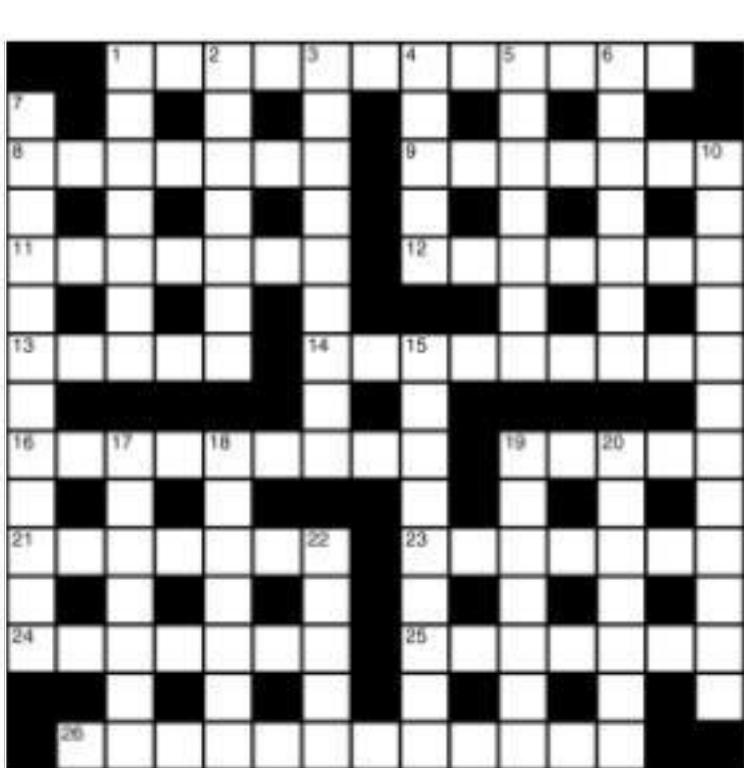
This is an issue of significant concern for all political parties because being in government allows parties and leaders to extract money from the state, abuse authority, and prevail psychologically over voter interests.

Given the significance of international actors, the conflicts over access to mechanisms of corruption, and the unequal control of a state that is growing more powerful, we are likely to see growing conflict in the future. These factors are also going to fundamentally alter the way in which parties practice politics in Nepal.

The Kathmandu Post/ANN

NO 28877

CROSSWORD



YESTERDAY'S SOLUTION

ACROSS

- 1 Perhaps cursory work for the young (7,5)
- 8 Drop of continental perfume (7)
- 9 Picked up grass with garden tool – I'm resigned to it! (5-2)
- 11 Attraction, touring Spain, is relaxation (7)
- 12 Character's lost outside after 31 days in band (7)
- 13 Cheer, say, with drink getting knocked back (3,2)
- 14 Soak Britain later in seawater, island swallowed (9)
- 16 Van of Amazon figure in old African region before delivery (9)
- 19 Work to keep little animal outside window (3-2)

DOWN

- 1 We're told any singer's building a tree house (7)
- 2 Painter's awful ear injury (7)
- 3 Hardliner wants exit terms renegotiated (9)
- 4 Ruffian provides company online (5)
- 5 Guy involved in job there is at work (7)

- 6 Sage Derby, say, eaten by parent (7)
- 7 Mixing English in sign a film's unsuitable for kids? (12)
- 10 To do with politician stopping as he is suffering too much stress (12)
- 15 Gutted Estonian to cheer up and act as informer (9)
- 17 What monarch wears brown in the capital? (7)
- 18 Trump's head exhaled in near bliss (7)
- 19 In more need of sunshine, doctor in seaside city (7)
- 20 Pastries with excessive filling where toddlers go (7)
- 22 A certain military group getting some heat (5)

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



There is evidence of normalisation of economic activities in India

GITA GOPINATH
CHIEF ECONOMIST, IMF

THUMBNAILS

Insolvency plea against Oyo Hotels: The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has admitted a petition for initiating insolvency proceedings against Oyo Hotels for recovery of Rs 16 lakh ~ an order that the lodging and vacation home rental startup has challenged before the appellate tribunal. Oyo Hotels founder Ritesh Agarwal took to Twitter to refute the company filing for bankruptcy after the supplier's claim. PTI

Nucleus Software CEO: Nucleus Software, provider of lending and transaction banking products to the global financial services industry, in a Press statement, said it has appointed Parag Bhise as the chief executive officer. He succeeds the outgoing CEO R P Singh, who retired after a career spanning 35 years with Nucleus Software. The appointment is effective from 1 April 2021, the statement said. SNS

Streak ropes in SRK: Streak, a leading hair colour brand by Hygienic Research Institute, has announced their partnership with actor Shah Rukh Khan to launch a campaign motivating men to turn on their charm like SRK in under five minutes with easy-to-use shampoo hair colour. The advertising campaign is being aired across all key Indian markets, said a release. SNS

Haier AC: Leading home appliances and consumer electronics maker Haier has augmented its AC line-up for the summer season with the launch of UV Clean Pro. This air conditioner has been designed keeping in mind the growing needs for clean and fresh air while ensuring energy savings for the consumers, said a company statement. SNS

Samsung: Samsung has launched artificial intelligence (AI) enabled bilingual washing machine with Hindi and English user interface. This new line-up of fully automatic front-load washing machines is truly made for India and is part of Samsung's new vision of powering digital India, according to a Press release. SNS

AUTO i CARE ropes in Sayaji Shinde: "Gaadi Bandh, No Fikar!" is the new campaign featuring veteran actor Sayaji Shinde to help address car breakdowns, finding a car mechanic in 20 minutes and assist stranded vehicles anywhere, anytime through the mobile app AUTO i CARE, a leading player in providing 24x7 emergency roadside assistance. The app roped in actor Sayaji Shinde as a brand ambassador, said a Press release. SNS

Refresh Botanicals forays into India: Refresh Botanicals, the Canadian organic skincare line, announced its launch in India on Wednesday. Launched in 2017 in Canada, Refresh Botanicals became a household favourite for natural and organic skincare and spread quickly across Canadian and US markets. It is packed with antioxidant and vitamin support for the skin through the curative properties of bioactives, said a Press release. SNS

Rupee falls 105 paise vs US dollar

BSE benchmark Sensex jumps 460 points

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

The rupee tanked 105 paise to close at 74.47 (provisional) against the US currency today amid concerns over surging Covid-19 cases in the country.

Meanwhile, the Reserve Bank of India maintained status quo on policy rates for the fifth time in a row.

The central bank kept its key policy repo rate unchanged at 4 per cent, but warned that the recent surge in Covid-19 infections has created uncertainty over economic growth recovery.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 73.52 against the greenback and traded in the range of 73.52 to 74.50 during the day.

The rupee finally ended at 74.47 against the American currency, registering a fall of 105 paise over its previous closing of 73.42.

"The Indian rupee depreciated amid concern over rising Covid-19 cases in India and lockdown restriction in some states. Furthermore, the Reserve bank of India kept its repo rate unchanged for the 5th consecutive policy meeting and maintained accommodative stance," said Saif Mukadam, research analyst, Sharekhan by BNP Paribas.

Further, the central bank said recent surge in coronavirus cases adds uncertainty to economic growth recovery. The number of new coronavirus cases in India hit a record daily high since the outbreak of the pandemic with over 1.15 lakh new infections being reported in a span of 24 hours, pushing the nationwide Covid-19 tally to 1,28,01,785, according to the Union health ministry data updated today.

Additionally, market remained cautious ahead of FOMC meeting minutes to get more cues on monetary policy. The rupee may trade in the range of 73.70 to 74.75 in next couple of sessions, Mukadam noted.

Meanwhile, the dollar index,

MARKET WATCH

- The rupee tanked 105 paise to close at 74.47 (provisional) against the US currency on Wednesday amid concerns over surging Covid-19 cases in the country.
- On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 460.37 points or 0.94 per cent higher at 49,661.76 points.
- The broader NSE Nifty advanced by 135.55 points or 0.92 per cent to 14,819.05 points.

which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.06 per cent to 92.28.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, was trading 0.53 per cent up at \$63.07 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 460.37 points or 0.94 per cent higher at 49,661.76, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced by 135.55 points or 0.92 per cent to 14,819.05.

Interest-rate sensitive bank and auto stocks led the gainers' chart on the Sensex.

SBI was the top performer, spurring 2.25 per cent, followed by ICICI Bank, Nestle India, IndusInd Bank, M&M, Bajaj Auto, Bharti Airtel and Maruti.

IT counters also posted robust gains after the rupee tanked 105 paise against the US dollar. A weak rupee is seen as a positive for export-oriented Indian IT firms.

On the other hand, Titan, NTPC and HUL were the laggards, shedding up to 0.78 per cent.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital market as they offloaded shares worth Rs 1,092.75 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Meanwhile, the dollar index,

Supporting growth priority for RBI: Das

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI, 7 APRIL

Stating that "growth is of paramount importance now", the Reserve Bank today said it will do whatever it takes to sustain the fledgling recovery by ensuring ample and assured liquidity and cheaper funds to oil the wheels of the economy.

Announcing the first monetary policy of fiscal 2022, the central bank left the key policy rate unchanged at 4 per cent for the fifth time in a row, after the rash of rate cuts earlier last fiscal.

It also assured of an indefinitely long period of accommodative policy stance which was topped by a historic move to commit its own balance sheet to the market with a new liquidity tool called "the secondary market government securities acquisition programme" or G-Sap, under which it will buy government

bonds worth Rs 1 lakh crore this quarter.

Addressing the media online, Governor Shaktikanta Das said: "As of now growth is of paramount importance...and we'll do whatever it takes to help sustain the recovery."

But he was quick to add that "inflation targeting is also important." More importantly, the government reiterating the plus-minus 2 per cent of 4 per cent inflation targeting gives us enough policy space to support growth as there are more downside risks to growth on the horizon now

than in recent past which make growth...of paramount importance," he added.

The central bank chose to retain its last forecast of 10.5 per cent GDP growth this fiscal, saying it is "too early to revise its own forecast done two months ago as we have just entered the new fiscal year."

Asked why the thrust was on growth despite pencilling in an upward inflation trajectory (5.2 per cent for the first half and 4.4 per cent for the second), and offering an indefinite period of accommodative policy stance, Das said: "We'll continue to be accom-

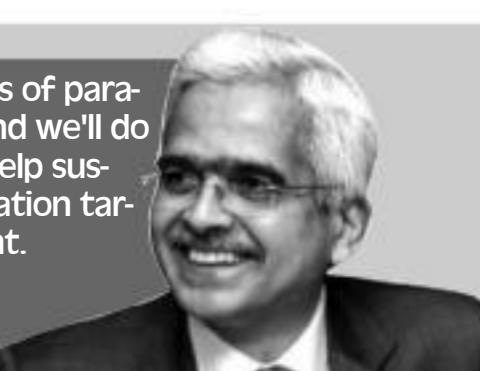
modative till growth becomes sustainable and we will do whatever it takes to achieve that."

Das continued to explain that "inflation is already in a well-entrenched and well-anchored framework now and so is inflation expectation, that's also well-anchored. This is very clear from the fact that the government notification has reiterated the plus-minus 2 per cent of 4 per cent inflation targeting."

"This framework gives RBI enough leeway, gives enough policy tools to manage any extraordinary situations like the current pandemic."

"For the time being and at the current juncture, growth is of paramount importance, while of course keeping in mind inflation targeting is also important. After all, the primary goal of the monetary policy is to maintain a certain level of inflation," the RBI Governor said.

As of now growth is of paramount importance...and we'll do whatever it takes to help sustain the recovery...inflation targeting is also important.

SHAKTIKANTA DAS
RBI GOVERNOR

Signum Hotels, IQI India form joint venture to develop hotel assets

PTI & SNS

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Signum Hotels & Resorts and real estate advisory firm IQI India on Wednesday announced the formation of a joint venture PDG Signum Hospitality to develop hotel assets.

The JV will invest \$150 million in developing hotel assets across the country and globally over 2-5 years, the companies said in a joint statement.

"Our team experience of decades in the India real estate and retail market coupled with our access and network through more than 200 cities across India fosters our confidence in the Indian hospitality market and we are eyeing an aggressive expansion in the commercial real estate segment," said IQI India chairman and MD Pankaj Jain.

Pandemic hits services sector growth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

investing \$150 million in the next 2-5 years," said Signum Hotels & Resorts founder & CEO Mehl Sharma.

While expansion in the Indian market will remain the focal point of this collaboration, opportunities to expand overseas will also be explored given IQI's strong international presence, the statement said.

The seasonally-adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 55.3 in February to 54.6 in March. Though the rates of expansion softened, it indicated growth for the sixth consecutive month.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"The elections supported the uptick in demand but the Covid-19 pandemic and reduced footfall restricted the upturn...

reduced footfall restricted the upturn," Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said.

Further, Lima cautioned that "the escalation of the pandemic and the reinstatement of restrictions could cause a notable slowdown in growth during April".

Moreover, external demand for Indian services continued to worsen, with new orders from abroad decreasing for the thirteenth straight month, the survey said.

As per the survey, growth was curbed by the detrimental impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on footfall.

On the prices front, the survey participants reported a sharp increase in input costs, the second-fastest since Feb-

ruary 2013. Selling prices rose only fractionally as the vast majority of companies left their fees unchanged due to competitive pressures.

With respect to employment, services companies posted another decline in payroll numbers during March.

Looking ahead, the survey said companies expect business activity to increase over the course of the coming 12 months.

"Service providers hope for an improvement in vaccine

REPORT CARD FOR MARCH

POLLYANNA DE LIMA
ECONOMICS ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR, IHS MARKIT

The elections supported the uptick in demand but the Covid-19 pandemic and reduced footfall restricted the upturn...the escalation of the pandemic and the reinstatement of restrictions could cause a notable slowdown in growth during April

► The seasonally-adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 55.3 in February to 54.6 in March. Though the rates of expansion softened, it indicated growth for the sixth consecutive month.

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and remained below its long-run average," Lima said.

Meanwhile, growth of India's private sector output eased in March. The Composite PMI output index, which measures combined services and manufacturing output, was at 56 in March down from 57.3 in February.

Transport and storage was the key source of strength during March, with the sector recording sharp and accelerated increases in sales and business activity.

Consumer services and finance and insurance remained in an expansion mode while contractions were evident in information and communication and real estate and business services, Lima noted.

Incentive scheme for ACs, LED lights

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

The government today approved a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods ~ air conditioners and LED lights - with a budgetary outlay of Rs 6,238 crore.

The proposal was approved in a Union Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal said the approval of the scheme for ACs and LEDs will give a boost to domestic manufacturing.

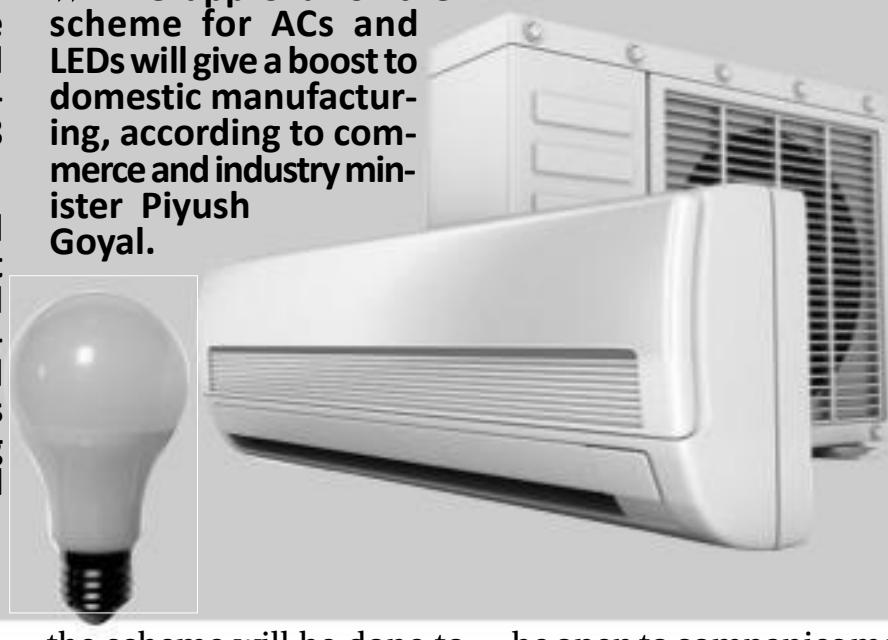
The prime objective of the scheme is to make manufacturing in India globally competitive by removing sectoral disabilities, creating economies of scale and ensuring efficiencies.

It is designed to create a complete component ecosystem in India and make India an integral part of the global supply chains. The scheme is expected to attract global investments, generate large-

MOVE TO BOOST DOMESTIC PRODUCTION

► Production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for white goods ~air conditioners and LED lights ~will have a budgetary outlay of Rs 6,238 crore.

► The scheme will extend an incentive of 4 per cent to 6 per cent on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India for a period of five years to companies engaged in manufacturing of air conditioners and LED lights.



scale employment opportunities and enhance exports substantially.

The PLI scheme for white goods shall extend an incentive of 4 per cent to 6 per cent on incremental sales of goods manufactured in India for a period of five years to companies engaged in manufacturing of air conditioners and LED lights.

Selection of companies for

the scheme will be done to incentivise manufacturing of components or sub-assemblies, which are not manufactured in India presently with sufficient capacity.

Mere assembly of finished goods will not be incentivised, the statement said.

"Companies meeting the pre-qualification criteria for different target segments will be eligible to participate in the scheme. Incentives shall

be open to companies making brownfield or greenfield investments," it said, adding thresholds of cumulative incremental investment and sales of manufactured goods over the base year would have to be met for claiming incentives.

The scheme, it said, is expected to be instrumental in achieving growth rates that are much higher than the existing ones for AC and LED

industries, develop complete component eco-systems in India and create global champions in India.

They will have to meet the compulsory BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) and BEE quality standards for sales in the domestic market and applicable standards for global markets.

It is estimated that over five years, the scheme will lead to an incremental investment of Rs 7,920 crore, incremental production worth Rs 1,68,000 crore, exports worth Rs 64,400 crore, earn direct and indirect revenues of Rs 49,300 crore and create additional four lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Goyal said that the scheme would help in increasing value addition from 25 per cent to 75 per cent in the AC segment and 40-45 per cent in LED lights.

About Rs 35 lakh crore worth of additional output is expected from 13 sectors, which avail PLI benefits in the next five years, he added.

Vedanta's 'waste to wealth' programmes foster MSMEs in Odisha & Chhattisgarh

IANS

NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Vedanta Aluminium & Power Business, India's largest producer of the aluminium and its value-added products, is fostering hundreds of MSMEs in remote rural areas with its innovative 'waste to wealth' programmes.

Waste to wealth projects form a key pillar of Vedanta's sustainability agenda that is centred around 'Zero Harm, Zero Waste and Zero Discharge'. With a world-class alumina refinery at Lanjigarh (Odisha) and state-of-the-art alumina smelters at Jharsuguda (Odisha) and Korba (Chhattisgarh), the company has been instrumental in triggering socio-economic development in some of the country's aspirational districts.

One such innovative programme being run by Vedanta for fostering local micro-enterprises is fly-ash brick making. The company supports over a hundred brick manufacturers, the government said.



Around the world, countries are facing a very serious third wave of this pandemic and right now so is Canada

CANADIAN PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU

REFERRING TO THE RISING CASES OF COVID-19 IN THE COUNTRY

Clear link between AstraZeneca vaccine, blood clots: EMA official

The findings come as a major hurdle in the global fight against the pandemic and a shift in the stance of regulator

AGENCIES

AMSTERDAM, 07 APRIL

Europe's drug regulator on Wednesday found a possible link between AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine and rare blood clotting issues in adults who had received the shot and said it had taken into consideration all available evidence.

"One plausible explanation for the combination of blood clots and low blood platelets is an immune response, leading to a condition similar to one seen sometimes in patients treated with heparin," the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said.

The findings come as a major hurdle in the global fight against the pandemic and a shift in the stance of the regulator, which had last week backed the vaccine and said there was no increased risk of blood clots in general from the shot.

It is also a blow to AstraZeneca, which was a frontrunner in the race for making an effective vaccine against COVID-19 ever since it began working with the University of Oxford.

The EMA's safety committee, which was assessing the vaccine, has requested for more studies and changes to the current ones to get more information. Australia's prime minister on Wednesday blamed restricted vaccine



People line up outside a public ambulatory on Tuesday as they wait to receive a dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine in Paris, France.

supply from Europe for his country's halting coronavirus inoculation efforts, as he faced growing public frustration over the sluggish rollout.

Scott Morrison said vaccine shortages and "strict export controls" introduced by the European Commission meant Australia received just 700,000 of a contracted 3.8 million doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

His government, which received global praise for successfully containing Australia's coronavirus outbreak,

has fallen far behind its vaccine rollout schedule.

It had initially pledged to administer four million doses by the end of March, but had instead managed about 920,000 shots by Wednesday - drawing increasing criticism that Morrison tried to address at a hastily organized news conference.

"[About] 3.1 million vaccines didn't arrive in Australia - that's just a simple fact," he said.

"It's not a dispute. It's not a conflict. It's not an argument.

It's not a clash. It's just a simple fact." Australia has received around 870,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine, which it is administering to frontline workers. Authorities had been counting on imported and locally made AstraZeneca shots to cover most of the population.

But trouble surfaced in March when Italy blocked the export of 250,000 AstraZeneca doses as it struggled to cope with a severe coronavirus crisis at home - a delay Morrison's government insisted

would not affect its overall vaccine rollout plan.

A wider debate across Europe on whether to export vaccines when EU countries are struggling to contain the virus has also held up supplies.

Morrison said on Wednesday he had been reassured by statements from EU officials overnight that AstraZeneca export requests were being processed. He said he was also still awaiting an EU response to an urgent request for one million of Australia's AstraZeneca doses to be diverted to neighboring Papua New Guinea, which is facing a worrying COVID-19 surge.

Early in the pandemic, Morrison boasted that Australia would be "at the front of the queue" for vaccines after a slew of deals with AstraZeneca, Pfizer and Novavax.

But public frustration over the actual rollout has prompted angry exchanges last week between the Morrison government and state officials tasked with administering the program.

"Scott Morrison needs to stop pretending like there's no rush. Vaccinations are our ticket back to normal - the government needs to get a move on," opposition leader Anthony Albanese said.

Adam Finn, a professor of pediatrics at the University of Bristol, said the latest surge of cases that is filling up hospitals across Europe should prompt people to get vaccinated as possible.

Woman dies after receiving Covid vaccine

QUEENSLAND, 07 APRIL

An elderly woman has died in a Queensland aged care facility just hours after receiving her coronavirus vaccination.

The 82-year-old woman was a resident at the Yurana aged care facility in Springfield, west of Brisbane.

She received her shot of the Pfizer coronavirus vaccination around 10am this morning. Emergency services were called less than three hours later, at 1.30pm, to reports the woman was unresponsive.

The Courier-Mail reported the woman's death may not be linked to the vaccine as she was suffering from other health issues, including lung disease.

A Blue Care employee, the parent company of the Yurana home, confirmed a woman had died after receiving the vaccine.

A Queensland Police spokesman confirmed the report was being prepared for the coroner to understand how the woman had died. Over 855,000 people across Australia have been vaccinated in the federal government's rollout.

AGENCIES

val of between four and 12 weeks. Like the Pfizer jab, it is an RNA vaccine and works by injecting part of the virus' genetic code into the body, where it enters cells and tells them to create antigens.

These antigens are recognised by the immune system and prepare it to fight coronavirus.

No actual virus is needed to create an mRNA vaccine, meaning the rate at which it can be produced is accelerated.

For storage, the Moderna vaccine requires temperatures of around -20°C for shipping similar to a normal freezer.

According to Moderna, no serious safety concerns have been identified among those who have taken its vaccine.

Severe events after the first dose have included pain around the injection site, while some have reported fatigue, muscle pain, joint pain and headaches after receiving their second dose.

The latest addition, described by Welsh Health Minister Vaughan Gething as significantly adding to the United Kingdom's defences against Covid-19, comes as Oxford University paused a trial of its Covid-19 vaccines being produced by AstraZeneca in children amid regulatory investigations into rare blood clots.

An Oxford University spokesperson stressed that there were "no safety concerns" with the specific study, but that further information was being awaited from the UK's Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.

Turkey sentences 2016 coup plotters to life imprisonment

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANKARA, 7 APRIL

A Turkish court sentenced dozens of people, including former soldiers attached to the presidential guard regiment, to life imprisonment on Wednesday over their involvement in the 2016 failed coup attempt against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's government, the state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

A total of 497 defendants had been on trial since 2017 for attempting to seize the military headquarters in Ankara, occupying the headquarters of the state broadcaster TRT, and of forcing a television broadcaster to read out a statement on behalf of the



coup-plotters.

The massive trial was one of hundreds of trials against suspected members of a network led by US-based cleric Fethullah Gulen, whom Ankara accuses of orchestrating the failed attempt. Gulen, a former Erdogan ally, denies the accusation.

The court in the outskirts of Ankara sentenced 32 defend-

dants to life, including six who received aggravated life terms without the possibility of parole, Anadolu reported.

Among those sentenced to the aggravated life term is a former lieutenant colonel who forced the anchorwoman to read the statement, a former colonel accused of giving the order for the takeover

of the TRT building and a former major who led a team that attempted to take over the military headquarters, the agency said.

The court also sentenced one person to 61 years in prison while 106 defendants received terms ranging from six to 16 years. Other defendants were either acquitted or were not given prison terms, Anadolu said.

On July 15, 2016, factions within the Turkish military used tanks, warplanes and helicopters in an attempt to overthrow Erdogan. Fighter jets bombed parliament and other spots in Turkey's capital. Heeding a call by the president, thousands took to the streets to stop the coup.

He is accused of fabricating licensing deals with Netflix, HBO, as well as other platforms, in order to secure funding for his film distrib-

Hollywood actor Zach Avery arrested in multi-million dollar Ponzi scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LOS ANGELES, 7 APRIL

Actor Zach Avery has been arrested in connection with a massive Hollywood Ponzi scheme.

According to Los Angeles Times, Avery, whose real name is Zachary J Horwitz, was taken into custody on Tuesday with the federal investigators alleging that he defrauded investors out of more than USD 227 million.

Horwitz has appeared in minor roles in movies such as "Fury" "Curvature", "Farming" and "The White Crow".

He is accused of fabricating licensing deals with Netflix, HBO, as well as other platforms, in order to secure funding for his film distrib-

ution company, 1inMM Capital LLC, according to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

In a criminal complaint filed Monday in United States District Court, FBI agent John Verrastro alleged that Horwitz cheated investors of significant sums by persuading them to invest in 1inMM Capital.

According to Verrastro, Horwitz allegedly sent investors bottles of Johnny Walker Blue Label scotch with the company's 2015 annual report that highlighted a "library" of 52 films that his company was supposedly distributing in Africa, Australia, New Zealand and South America.

He lured investors with the

promise of a return of up to 40 percent within a year, Verastro said.

Horwitz used some of the money from the investors to buy a six-bedroom home in LA's swanky Beverlywood neighbourhood for USD 6.5 million three years ago.

When the payments were due, Avery fabricated email correspondence with Netflix and HBO executives to justify delays.

FBI agents arrested Horwitz on a wire fraud charge Tuesday morning at his home in Beverlywood.

They also searched the home for evidence of securities and mail fraud, money laundering and other crimes, according to the FBI affidavit.

Chile postpones landmark elections

SANTIAGO, 7 APRIL

Chilean President Sebastian Pinera announced that this week's landmark polls to elect for councillors, mayors and, for the first time ever, regional governors and members of a constituent assembly to draft a new Constitution, will be postponed till May 15-16 due to a Covid-19 resurgence.

In a speech at the government palace, Pinera on Tuesday said the decision prioritises the health of both the country's democracy and its people, reports Xinhua news agency.

"Given the strong re-emergence of the coronavirus pandemic and the appearance of new variants, not only in Chile, but throughout the world, and considering the high demand our health system is facing it did not seem prudent or advisable to hold elections this coming weekend," he said.

The much-anticipated elections are set to elect 155 constituents to draw up a new Constitution as a political solution to the social unrest that erupted in October 2019.

Similarly, the Governors of each of the country's 16 regions will be elected for the first time.

LIFELINE



Dozens of empty oxygen cylinders lay across a dirt road, as people wait for a shop to open in order to refill their tanks in the Villa El Salvador neighborhood, as the lack of medical oxygen to treat Covid-19 patients continues in Lima, Peru.

Pandemic amped up anti-Semitism, forced it online: Report

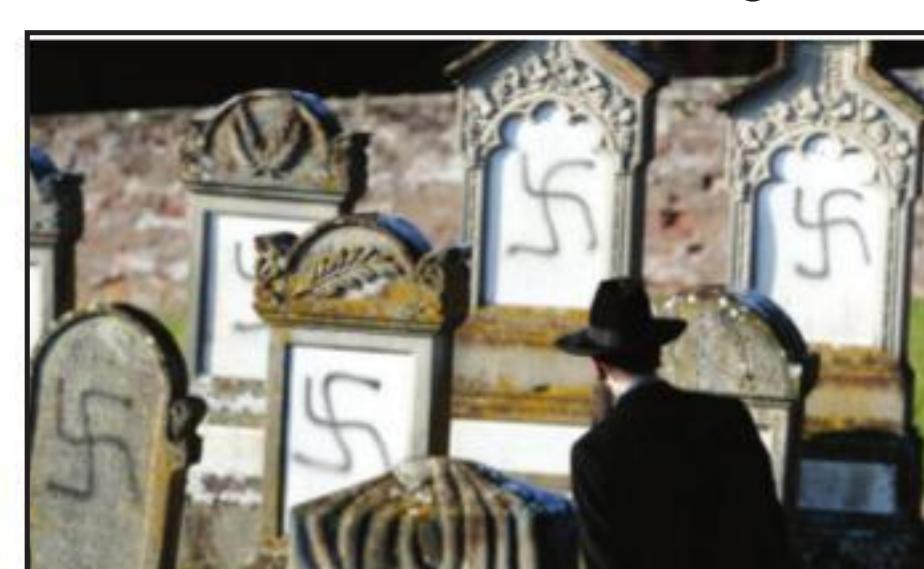
ASSOCIATED PRESS
TEL AVIV, 7 APRIL

ly the same levels the researchers reported from 2016 to 2018.

Online, the scene was much different, researchers reported a potential warning sign that as pandemic restrictions ease, hateful conduct toward Jews could intensify as it has during some of humanity's other historic struggles.

Anti-Jewish hatred online never stays online," said Moshe Kantor, president of the World Jewish Congress. "We have to be prepared that anti-Semitic conspiracy theories could lead to physical attacks on Jews when lockdowns end."

Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary European Jewry releases its report every year on the eve of Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, which



begins Wednesday at sunset. The research team found that anti-Semitic conspiracy theories blossomed as soon as the coronavirus began spreading around the world in February 2020.

When the world's health authorities declared a pandemic in March, people were forced inside and away from each other.

But there, they went online and many were exposed to conspiracy theories blaming an array of ethnic and reli-

gious groups for the catastrophe, including Jews.

The false theories generally went like this, according to the report: Jews and Israelis created and spread the virus so that they could rescue the world with lucrative vaccines.

The trend echoed an ancient form of anti-Semitism that blamed Jews for spreading illnesses and other tragedies.

Researchers also noted that conspiracy theorists drew false comparisons between the health restrictions and vaccines and the Holocaust, in which the Nazis murdered more than 6 million Jews.

The anti-Semitic trend waned in the summer, the report said, but surged in the fall with news of the development of vaccines.

A divisive presidential election campaign in the US, meanwhile, served as fertile ground for the rise of conspiracy theories, it said.

Online, anti-Semitic messages spread, including worrying anecdotal evidence that those repeating them hailed not just from extremist circles but from populations with no well-defined political or ideological identities," the report said.

Those blamed included the Rothschild family, billionaire George Soros and ultra-Orthodox Jews who flouted safety rules and among whom the virus surged.

Meanwhile in 2020, the number of physical injuries in anti-Semitic incidents decreased by 37 percent, from 170 in 2019, to 107.

THE STATESMAN LTD.

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The Statesman
PEOPLE'S PARLIAMENT, ALWAYS IN SESSION

Delightful page-turner

Translator Sukanta Chaudhuri has seamlessly infused nuances of the Bengali source text into the English target text though there are no syntactic similarities between the two languages... A review

SAMBOKTA DASGUPTA

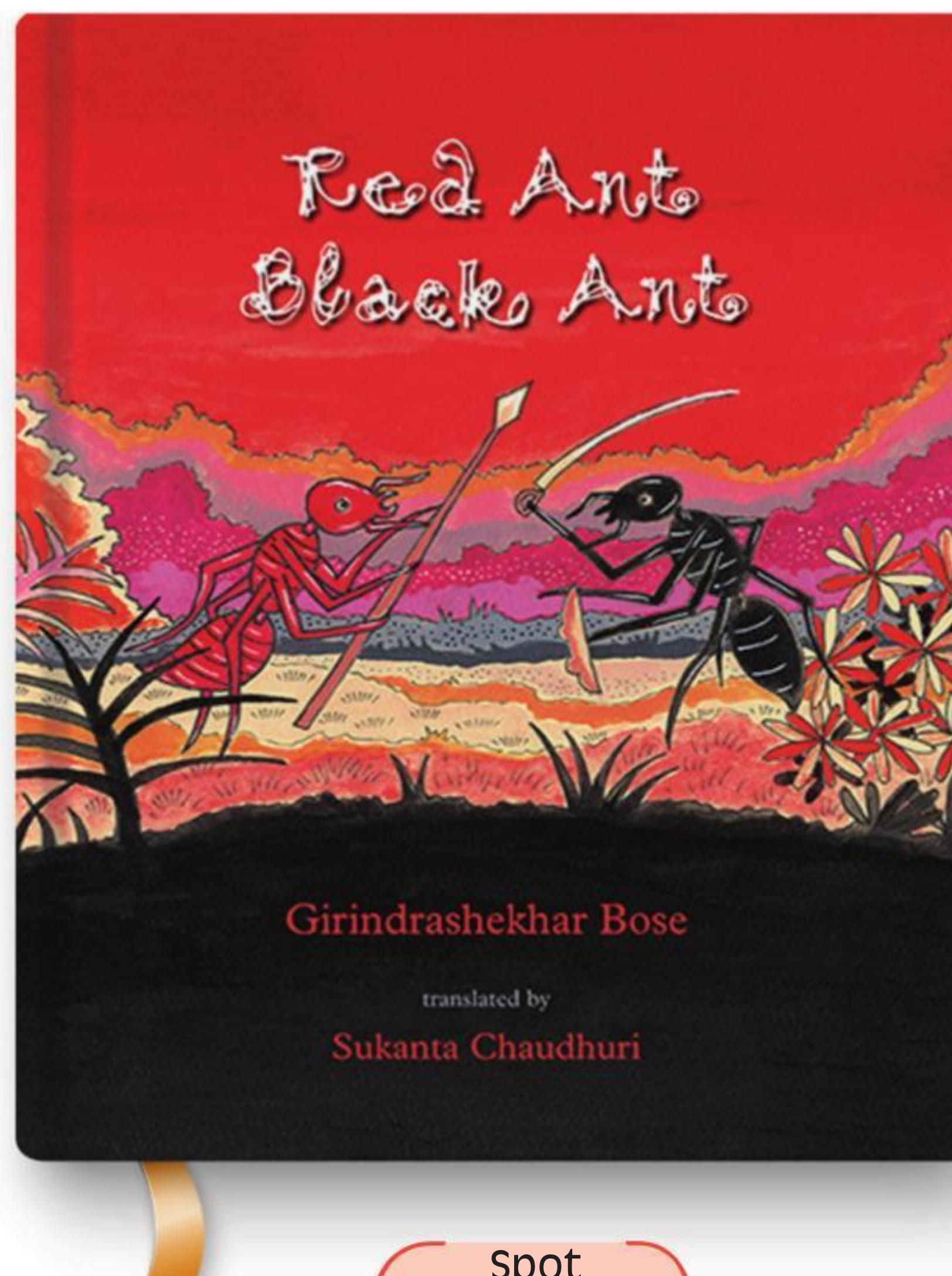
Red Ant Black Ant (*Lal-Kalo*) is a supremely attractive, large hard-bound book, with a black and red front cover, published by the Jadavpur University Press in 2020. The book reached me a few weeks before the pandemic set in and soon enough all the routine practices regarding schedules, publications and submissions of reports, reviews, manuscripts et al, went absolutely haywire. The abnormal unprecedented times were hailed as the new normal and truth became stranger than children's fairy tales and fantasies.

One may well state that reading *Red Ant Black Ant* restored the feeling of normalcy that has been so rudely disrupted in these troubled times. The English translation of Girindrashekhar Bose's *Lal-Kalo* is not just an engaging read. It proves once again the brilliance of translator Sukanta Chaudhuri, who is able to seamlessly infuse nuances of the Bengali source text into the English target text though there are no syntactic similarities between the two languages.

The original title of the Bengali book intended for a juvenile readership was *Lal-Kalo* by Bose, first published in 1930. The racy Bengali narrative is not just eminently readable; it is immensely enjoyable. The rhyming lines occasionally interspersed in the narration are presumably intended to regale young readers with the magical sway of rhymes that are phonetically resonant, and infused with a sense of fun and clever wit.

Interestingly, despite the success of *Lal-Kalo*, a book remarkably popular in most Bengali households which had school-going children, Bose did not write another book for children. He is most often remembered for his decade-long correspondence with Sigmund Freud and that he founded the Indian Psychoanalytic Society in Calcutta in 1922. Bose's major writings in both Bengali and English, dealt with various concepts of psychoanalysis. However, even a cursory glance through *Lal-Kalo* registers beyond doubt that this is a book that is multi-layered and lingering impressions about the narrative can be related to individual reader-response.

The book has been translated into English by Chaudhuri, who has already proved his brilliance as a translator of the challenging Bengali texts of Rabindranath Tagore, Sukumar Ray and Annadashekhar Ray. In the original Bengali title *Lal-Kalo* (Red Black) is not hyphenated, but these crucial micro changes, the addition of "Ant" in the translated title (*Red Ant Black Ant* instead of Lalkalo) con-



tribute to the easy reception of the book by young readers, the millennial kids of contemporary times.

After all, in the 21st century, reading Bengali children's literature is often not considered a priority by Bengali-speaking parents. One may recall Tagore's lament in his foreword to Dakshinaranjan Mitra Majumdar's book of fairy tales, *Thakur Jhuli* (*Grandmother's Tales*). Tagore stated categorically that in colonial times, children were not encouraged to read or listen to swadesi, home-grown

Spot Light

RED ANT BLACK ANT
BY GIRINDRASHEKHAR BOSE
TRANSLATED BY SUKANTA CHAUDHURI
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY PRESS, KOLKATA
67 PAGES, RS 200

tales, but were being systematically familiarised with the Western fairy tales by Hans Christian Anderson and the compilations of folk tales by the Grimm brothers.

In fact, in a jocular tone Tagore even suggested that for modern grandmothers a new school should be opened so that they could be familiarised with vernacular narratives. The suggestion seems relevant even more today, when "Pottermania" dominates the minds and imagination of the young, and the red ants,

black ants, frogs, geckos, pythons, mynahs, bulbuls, sparrows, crows, pigeons and parrots, the flora and fauna of rural Bengal remain unknown.

In the English translation, the title *Red Ant Black Ant* seems appropriate. A literal translation as Red Black without a hyphen would have been perplexing or absurd, perhaps both. The illustrations by Jatindrakumar Sen in the original Bengali book are undoubtedly spectacular. The illustrations in this English translation, by Koustab Chakrabarty, are a visual pleasure, and the elements of intertextuality enhance the distinctive features of the illustrations.

The translator's skill in handling both the source and target text become obvious from the translation of the key phrase in the first line of the original "Ghoshtder purano bhita..." as "Ghoshtes' tumbledown mansion". Of course, the translation of the rhyming couplet on the first page "kalo bou kalo kolo/jolo dhuo shamle cholo" as "Black bride, plump and pillowy/Watch your step, the water's billowy" assures the reader that *Red Ant Black Ant* is bound to be a rewarding read on many levels.

The underpinning of satire, irony, fantasy and a fable dealing with flora and fauna creates the required defamiliarisation necessary when the oppressive army of red ants and strategy of survival tactics of black ants supported by a friendly frog indicate the regime of the arrogant and militant coloniser. As in all narratives of war, there is inevitably a sagacious counsellor. Here it is the Pundit who informs the King of the Red Ants, "Your Majesty, ancient wisdom holds that when your enemy is strong, you must have recourse to your enemy's enemy. Our principal enemy is the Croaking Frog guarding the tunnel. The Frog's enemy is the Snake..."

Interestingly, many ethnic signifiers such as *sajina* tree, *bherenda* tree, pundit, have been retained without the use of italics. Use of italics for ethnic words is a common practice of translators. Also, no glossary has been appended to the translation.

Though it is said that in this era of globalisation, parents do not encourage their children to read story books rooted in their local culture, it is advisable that schools provide a recommended reading list of Indian and South Asian stories that have been translated into English. *Red Ant Black Ant* should obviously be a must read in such a list. Sadly, a few typographical errors have lingered, they could have been avoided.

The reviewer is a former professor of English, Calcutta University

BOOKS RECEIVED

Love in all forms



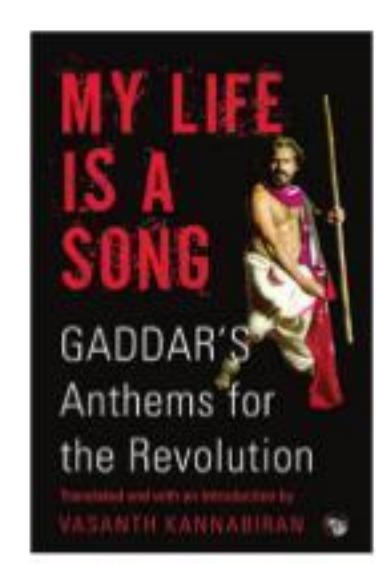
A RED-NECKED GREEN BIRD
BY AMBAI
TRANSLATED FROM TAMIL BY GJV PRASAD
SIMON & SCHUSTER INDIA
FICTION, 200 PAGES, RS 399

Myths and legends jostle with the contemporary in these stories where social issues of our times resonate with the inevitability of the past.

The lyricism of Carnatic *ragas* permeate the pages of this quiet and powerful book in which love is rendered in all its immeasurable avatars – parental, carnal, platonic, romantic, divine. The short stories are shorn of sentimentality but have a deep understanding of what it means to live, love and die.

CS Lakshmi, writing under the pseudonym Ambai, has been a significant voice in Indian literature for the last four decades. Prasad is a poet, novelist and translator.

Voice of revolution



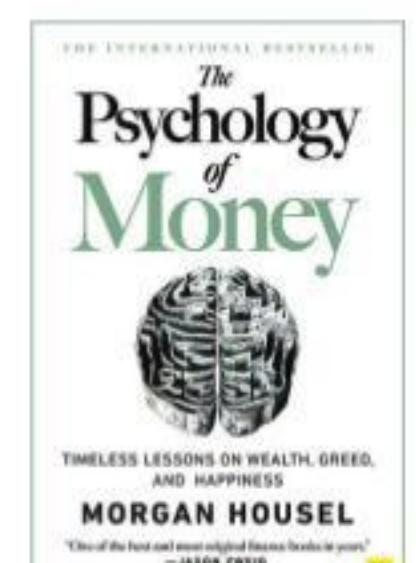
MY LIFE IS A SONG
BY GADDAR
TRANSLATED BY VASANTH KANNABIRAN
SPEAKING TIGER
POETRY, 146 PAGES, RS 299

Of the thousands of songs Gaddar performed, only a few were ever recorded in print. *My Life is a Song* brings together, for the first time in English translation, 23 representative songs, selected by his friend and fellow traveller, Vasanth Kannabiran. Translated from the original Telugu with an eye on Gaddar's unique style and delivery, this selection takes the extraordinary "anthems" of one of India's greatest singer-poets – and a living legend of revolutionary thought – to a wider audience.

Gaddar, born Gummadi Vittal Rao in 1947, is a revolutionary poet and activist. One of the most prominent faces of the Naxalite movement in India, he spent several years underground in the 1980s as part of the cultural wing of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) People's War.

Kannabiran is a poet, writer and campaigner for women's rights and communal harmony who has been active for more than five decades.

Money matters



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF MONEY
BY MORGAN HOUSLE
JAICO PUBLISHING HOUSE
NONFICTION, 242 PAGES, RS 399

How to manage money, invest it, and make business decisions are typically considered to involve a lot of mathematical calculations, where data and formulae tell us exactly what to do. But in the real world, people don't make financial decisions on a spreadsheet. They make them at the dinner table, or in a meeting room, where personal history, one's unique view of the world, ego, pride, marketing, and odd incentives are scrambled together.

In *The Psychology of Money*, the author shares 19 short stories exploring the strange ways people think about money and how to make better sense of one of life's most important matters.

Housel is a partner at The Collaborative Fund and a former columnist at *The Motley Fool* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

SMITA ABRAHAM

In *Newspaper English*, professor Kiran Thakur has written on ways to improve readability of news articles, specifically the lead or intro or the first paragraph. His University Grants Commission-funded research on the topic, along with the findings and his conclusions, is the content of this book.

Thakur's topic of research is surely worth serious contemplation and consideration. Expressing or narrating what is relevant in clear, unambiguous and lucid language while keeping it interesting has always been important in journalism.

newspapers in India and a few from abroad to ascertain the current trends and prove his point – the dire need, especially for journalists, to write plain and simple language for communicating with their readers. His own trick, "Thakur's Rule of Thumb", is also an interesting way for journalism students to practise writing crisp, short sentences.

Thakur's topic of research is surely worth serious contemplation and consideration. Expressing or narrating what is relevant in clear, unambiguous and lucid language while keeping it interesting has always been important in journalism.

Spot Light

NEWSPAPER ENGLISH
BY KIRAN THAKUR
VISHWAKARMA PUBLICATIONS, PUNE
172 PAGES, RS 225

It is essential now, however, because news is read more on screens than broadsheets. In a printed newspaper, the second paragraph of an article is within the reader's sight, whether one decides to read it or not. On a smartphone or tablet, readers cannot even see the second paragraph following the first within the screen area; so, unless the first paragraph holds their attention, they won't even take the trouble to scroll down!

There are some basic but brilliant advice collected by Thakur from renowned journalists, editors and linguists like Harold Evans, Jyoti Sanyal, Martin Cutts, William Strunk Jr and E B White, to write well. Using short and simple sentences; starting sentences with the principal clause rather than a subsidiary; using commonly used words rather

than pompous, obscure ones; using more nouns and verbs, and only essential adjectives and adverbs – these guidelines are universal and ought to be followed not only by journalists but anyone writing to communicate to a non-specific, diverse group of readers.

While I completely agree with Thakur on the use of simple (or plain) English in newspapers, here's where I see the problem. It is imperative for an aspiring journalist to "learn" how to think and assess, and how to best express that thought or conclusion to a varied readership; but does it make sense to have to do that by "unlearning" most of what is taught throughout school and college? The discrepancy has been noted by Thakur too in chapter five, but not discussed.

The present school system as well as college education, sadly, depends more on students memorising information only to regurgitate onto exam answer papers, and less on thinking, analysing and questioning. In most cases, students are conditioned to be exactly like everyone else; originality and uniqueness are discouraged. How can this education system magically produce young men and women who think clearly and originally, and write briefly and effectively as they enter journalism schools/institutes?

"Good writing is clear thinking on paper." Clarity of thought comes from being able to declutter and organise ideas and information in one's mind. It helps to reason, question, assess, decide or even judge. To be able to write "simply, precisely, and briefly", one must have good knowledge of grammar and a rich enough vocabulary. (The excerpt, in chapter six, of Mahatma Gandhi's writing in *Young India* proves it.)

Wouldn't it be worthwhile to start this "basic" training at a more basic level – in school and college? Could the UGC help – through collaboration (at school level) and intervention (at college level)? Maybe then, good writing will come "naturally" to most.

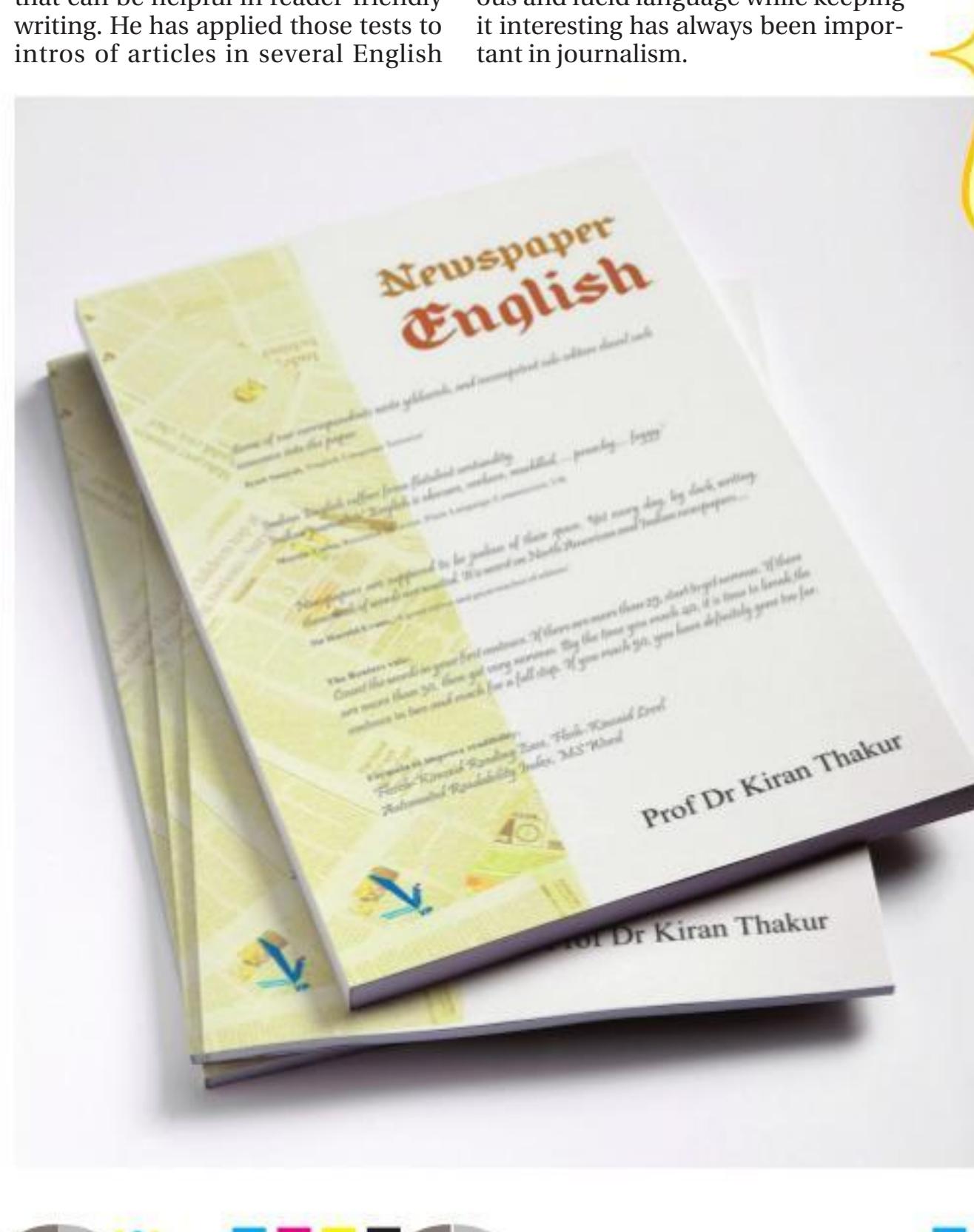
Two things seriously hamper the quality of this book: poor editing and a haphazard bibliography. Recurring editing errors like wrong indentations of quoted text of considerable length (which is confusing to readers because one does not know where the quotation ends, or in a few instances, begins); abrupt italicisations; incorrect, sometimes unnecessary, punctuations, and spelling inconsistencies make for tiresome reading.

The 29 tables are, at times, also an exertion. Except for a couple of them, the findings in simple terms would have sufficed.

The bibliography is either lazily or hastily put together. There is a section at the beginning of the book with all the website links used; there is another section called "References" at the end with all the names of books (and their authors) consulted. The detailed references have been strewn all over in running text. Such and so much information within text is distracting. It also becomes difficult for the reader to go back to a specific reference later to research or study further.

A well-compiled bibliography containing all the printed and digital sources, along with details (including page numbers for books), would have been immensely helpful for anyone willing to use *Newspaper English* for teaching, or learning to write or even edit well.

The reviewer is assistant professor of Communicative English, the Statesman Print Journalism School, Kolkata



MIND YOUR LANGUAGE



Jofra Archer (*in photo, left*) has hit back at Bangladeshi author Taslima Nasreen for using objectionable language in a tweet targeted at his England team-mate Moeen Ali. After Nasreen tweeted that Ali would have become an ISIS terrorist in Syria had he not stuck to cricket, Archer retorted: "Are you okay? I don't think you're okay."

For more updates

www.thestatesman.com

THUMBNAILS

Archers Vaccinated: The Olympic-bound Indian archers on Wednesday took their second shots of a Covid-19 vaccine, becoming the first fully vaccinated lot of athletes from the country ahead of the Tokyo Games. The initiative was made by the Army Sports Institute.

Covid patients: Bengaluru FC on Wednesday said three Covid-19 patients had been detected among their players and staff after they had assembled for training in Panaji ahead of their Asian Football Confederation qualifier (preliminary) match set for 14 April.

Green light: Italy is ready to let fans back into stadiums in time for Rome hosting European Championship games. Other countries are yet to offer the same assurance. The pandemic-delayed tournament is being staged in 12 cities in as many countries.

Munich's hope: Munich is optimistic it can stage Euro 2020 matches this summer with fans inside the stadium despite the Covid-19 pandemic. The month-long tournament kicks off on 11 June and the German football federation is discussing various scenarios.

Dhoni's tips: Left-arm yorker specialist T Natarajan says former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni's advice to bowl slow bouncers and cutters during the Indian Premier League last year helped him get better. Natarajan's victims later included Dhoni, of course.

Report secret: The Pakistan Cricket Board will not make public a report of its two-member inquiry committee on the departments and people responsible for the breach of the regulations during the Pakistan Super League in Karachi, resulting in its postponement.

Nadal beaten: India's highest-ranked singles tennis player Sumit Nagal lost in the opening round of the Sardegna Open to Slovakian qualifier Jozef Kovalik 6-3, 1-6, 3-6 in Cagliari, Italy, on Tuesday. Nagal collected 12 points for qualifying for the main round.

Federer's return: Roger Federer is to play his first match on clay in almost two years at next month's Madrid Open after he was confirmed for the event on Tuesday. The 39-year-old was listed among the players to have registered for the 2 May-9 May tournament.

Charanjeet Kaur wins Bronze: New Delhi's Charanjeet Kaur wins Bronze Medal at Dubai Para Badminton International 2021 for India and has brought name and fame for our country. Kaur has been playing badminton since 2007. She has participated in various National and International tournaments.

Taekwondo selection trials: Commonwealth champion Ajay Dalal is selected for Taekwondo selection trials for Tokyo Olympics with 4.32 points in the 87+ kg category. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) is going to conduct three-day selection trials at the Sports Authority of India Lucknow Regional Center from April 15 to April 17 for the Taekwondo players.

Olympic torch relay: KAI India is proud to announce that Mr. Koji Endo, CEO & President of KAI Group, participated in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Torch Relay, marking a new beginning for the global manufacturing giant, as this Olympic is "United by Emotion". Mr Endo was nominated by the Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee to participate in the Torch Relay.

Of Samson and the Royals' ill-kept secret

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL



A restructured Rajasthan Royals will aim at a fresh start but their weak Indian lot and an overdependence on foreigners could hurt the inaugural edition-winners in the forthcoming Indian Premier League. Last season's wooden-spooners RR have made some changes in their management as well as the squad ahead of the new season. Sanju Samson (*in photo*) replaced Australian Steve Smith, who was released, as skipper while coach Andrew McDonald has also gone with Kumar Sangakkara stepping in as director of cricket. To strengthen their pace attack, which was heavily dependent on Jofra Archer, RR bought South African all-rounder Chris Morris for a whopping Rs 16.25 crore, making him the most expensive buy in the IPL's auction history. However, an injury to Archer, deemed the league's most valuable player last season, ruled him out at least of the first few games. It is a massive blow. Here is an analysis of the side that will take on Punjab Kings in Mumbai on 12 April.

Strength

RR boast a number of destructive batsmen. Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes are two match-winning players who can subdue any opposition while Samson is a huge talent.

South Africans David Miller and Morris are two other powerful strikers and England's

Twenty20 specialist Liam Livingstone can turn a match on its head. Last season's revelation, all-rounder Rahul Tewatia, has also showcased his ability to hit the ball out of the park. With Sangakkara on their side, the Royals have got one of the most astute brains in the game. The Sri Lankan veteran has a lot of cricketing experience correctly to guide the team.

Weakness

For Royals, the problem is their weak Indian core which hasn't been consistent. It is their open secret. Samson, truth to tell, has rarely performed well in five straight games in any of the editions. Paceman Jaydev Unadkat, bought for Rs 11.5 crore in 2018, has been unable to deliver while Manan Vohra has been brilliant only on rare occasions.

This leaves the team with youngsters, including Rivan Parag and paceman Kartik Tyagi, who has shown flashes of brilliance, Yashasvi Jaiswal and new-ball bowler Kartik Tyagi, who was also impressive. They are big spenders but, Stokes apart, few of them have been useful.

Opportunity

Samson has found consistency elusive. He has failed to capitalise on the chances he was given in Twenty20 Internationals. With Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan doing brilliantly on their T20 debuts, the Royal wicketkeeper-batsman's chances of making the Indian team for the World Cup have taken a hit. But here is a perfect opportunity for him to prove his leadership skills and good, consistent performance

RR boast a number of destructive batsmen. Jos Buttler and Ben Stokes are two match-winning players who can subdue any opposition while Samson is a huge talent.

with the bat will significantly strengthen his case for selection.

Threat

Samson's lack of leadership experience and the impact that it might have on his batting are factors that must be taken into account. The flamboyant right-hander may not be able to play with the same freedom now that he has the tag of captain next to his name. The team struggled to perform as a cohesive unit last season. Consistency will be the key.

They are heavily dependent on Archer. While they have Morris to rely on, the pace attack seems weak in the 26-year-old England pace bowler's absence.

Squad: Sanju Samson (captain & wicketkeeper), Jos Buttler (wicketkeeper), Ben Stokes, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Manan Vohra, Arun Rawat, Rivan Parag, David Miller, Rahul Tewatia, Mahipal Lomror, Shreyas Gopal, Mayank Markande, Jofra Archer, Andrew Tye, Jaydev Unadkat, Kartik Tyagi, Shivam Dube, Chris Morris, Mustafizur Rahman, Chetan Sakaria, KC Cariappa, Liam Livingstone, Kuldip Yadav, Akash Singh.

Tennis ace Sania included in TOPS after gap of four years

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL



Indian tennis star Sania Mirza (*in photo*) was on Wednesday included in the government's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), four years after she opted out of the programme.

Sania was selected in the TOPS during the 56th meeting of the Mission Olympic Cell here.

The 34-year-old multiple Grand Slam winner had opted out of the scheme when she was selected last in 2017 because of an injury breakdown which had led to a lay-off.

"Yes, Sania has been selected in the recent TOPS list," a Sports Authority of India source told PTI.

Sania has already qualified for the Tokyo Olympics based on her protected ranking before she took a break from the game due to pregnancy. Sania is currently ranked 157th in the world but as per WTA rules when a player takes a lay-off from the game longer than six months on account of injuries or pregnancy, they can apply for a "special ranking" (also some-

Mary Kom, Lovlina in boxing squad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, 7 APRIL

Olympic-bound six-time world champion MC Mary Kom (51kg) will spearhead the Indian women's challenge in the Asian Boxing Championship slated to be held here from May 21 to 31.

Mary Kom is a six-time Asian medallist, including five gold medals. She had opted out of the previous edition of the event in 2019.

She recently won a bronze medal at a tournament in Spain, her first competitive outing since qualifying for the Olympics a year ago.

Another prominent name in the team for the continental showpiece is two-time world bronze-winner Lovlina Borgohain (69kg). The Assam boxer is also bound for the Olympic Games.

The Team: Monika (48kg), Mary Kom (51kg), Sakshi (54kg), Jasmine (57kg), Simranjit Kaur (60kg), Pwilao Basumatary (64kg), Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), Pooja Rani (75kg), Sawetty (81kg), Anupma (+81kg).

Hockey boys get off to winning start

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BUENOS AIRES, 7 APRIL

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