

THE HINDU

WEEKLY HINDU ANALYSIS

23rd April

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Page 1: Sri Lanka names local Islamist group for Easter Sunday blasts

Situation in Sri Lanka

- Sri Lankan authorities named a little-known local Islamist radical group, the National Thowheed Jamaath, as responsible for the ghastly Easter Sunday serial blasts that claimed nearly 300 lives and injured over 500 across the island nation.
- President Sirisena also decided to enforce Emergency regulations with effect from midnight on 22nd April, official sources said.
- The police have arrested nearly 30 suspects in connection with Sunday's coordinated explosions at churches and hotels in and around Colombo and in Batticaloa, in the island's Eastern Province.
- President Maithripala Sirisena convened an emergency meeting of the National Security Council (NSC) and formed a high-level panel to probe the incidents.
- Sri Lanka said it would "seek international assistance", as intelligence agencies reported there were "international organisations behind these acts of local terrorists".
- India has assured Sri Lanka that it was ready to "provide any assistance at any time" to help combat terrorism.

Page 14: India issued alert to Sri Lanka on possible blasts

- India had issued an alert to Sri Lanka in early April on possible bomb attacks at different spots in the island, including the Indian High Commission building, sources in and New Delhi said, pointing to a possible lapse on the part of Sri Lanka's security agencies.
- Sri Lankan Health Minister told media-persons that "international" intelligence agencies had "warned the government on April 4" regarding an impending attack in the country. He did not name the country.
- The Colombo mission, which was among the potential targets, had since taken "necessary precautions".

Page 1: CJI violated procedure by hearing own case: SC lawyers

Context

- The CJI has been alleged of sexual harassment from a former employee of Supreme Court.
- CJI convened a Bench immediately afterwards and suo motu heard the case.
- The Bench was convened at short notice after online news portals published allegations levelled by a woman against the CJI.

Issue

- The hearing sparked a public debate on whether the CJI was sitting as a "judge in his own cause" and whether the Bench should have followed the principles of natural justice by giving the complainant a fair chance to be heard in the first place before passing remarks about her.
- The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA), a body of over 6,000 lawyers practising in the Supreme Court, said Saturday's hearing was "in violation of the procedure established by as well as the principle
- The Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association (SCAORA) also expressed "deep reservations against the procedural impropriety shown by the CJI in suo motu proceedings of natural justice."
- SCAORA said the law must apply to each and every one uniformly and that the allegations have to be dealt with as per the procedure established by law.
- The association said it "strongly disapproves the manner in which the complaint was dealt with."

- It urged for an inquiry and action into the woman's complaint. She has already written to 22 Supreme Court judges, detailing her allegations against the CJI.
- The association sought an "immediate appointment of a committee headed by the Full Court of the Supreme Court to impartially investigate and inquire into the allegations against the CJI and give an independent finding into the matter."
- The Women in Criminal Law Association (WCLA), a collaborative group for women in criminal litigation, had also issued a statement demanding a fair inquiry into the allegations.
- In a statement on April 20, the association said the "complaint should be treated as per procedure and principles of fairness and justice, including the fundamental right to equality before law."
- However, the Supreme Court Employees Welfare Association issued a statement "on behalf of all employees" strongly condemning the "false, fabricated and baseless allegations" against the Chief Justice.

Page 1: U.S. ends waiver for India on Iran oil

Context

- The U.S. will not renew exemptions from its sanctions for importing oil from Iran.
- The exemptions were granted last November for a 180-day-period for India and seven other countries, and are due to expire on May 2.

Impact

- India, China and U.S. allies Japan, South Korea and Turkey will be the most impacted by the non-renewal of waivers.
- The other three currently exempted countries — Italy, Greece and Taiwan — have already reduced their imports to zero.

Page 12: U.S. warns nations against trade with Iran

- U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned nations against interacting with Iran in violation of the sanctions.
- Oil exports from Iran hit a low of 1.0 to 1.0 million bpd in March this year – down from 2.5 million bpd in April 2018.
- The U.S. announced that it would withdraw from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or "Iran deal" in May.

- The U.S. has tried to allay fears that oil markets will be impacted following the decision to stop exemptions. Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), the global oil cartel led by Saudi Arabia, has been coordinating with Russia to cut oil supply since January.
- US said that Saudi Arabia and others in OPEC will more than make up the Oil Flow difference in the Full Sanctions on Iranian Oil.

Page 9: IMA threatens agitation over bridge course proposal

- The allopathic practitioners are up in arms over the NITI Aayog's proposal to bring in a bridge course between the Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) and the MBBS allowing dentists to practise family medicine with the Indian Medical Association (IMA) threatening nationwide agitation, in case the proposal is taken forward.
- The Central government noted that it was "trying to plug the shortage of doctors using the fact that the dental courses follow the same training and curriculum as the MBBS courses for the first three years."
- The NITI Aayog had earlier proposed a bridge course for Ayush (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) doctors in the National Medical Commission Bill meant to replace the Indian Medical Council Act. Following pressure from the IMA, the course was rejected.

Opinion by experts

- It is a criminal offence to let dentists into mainstream medicine by just doing a bridge course.
- The government is not able to generate jobs for medical graduates.
- 63,250 MBBS graduates come out of 494 medical colleges and there are only 23,729 post-graduate seats.
- Unemployment among medical graduates is a cause for concern, then how can government say that they will give jobs to dentists.

Demands

- The IMA demands that medical graduates be given their due, the health budget be flexed to include job creation and the government abandon their half-baked proposal to convert dentists, nurses, pharmacists and Ayush practitioners into mid-level medical practitioners.

Page 9: SC seeks replies from Centre, J&K on highway traffic ban

- The Supreme Court sought responses from the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir on a plea seeking quashing of an order which restricts civilian traffic two days a week on the national highway (NH) stretch from Udhampur to Baramulla for movement of security forces.
- The State government issued an order on April 3 in which it said that keeping in view the Pulwama terror attack, another car bomb attack on security forces' convoy at Banihal and movement of forces during the Lok Sabha elections, no civilian traffic movement would be allowed on the NH stretch from 4 a.m. to 5 p.m. twice a week.
- The order said there would be two "dedicated days every week" — Sunday and Wednesday — for movement of security forces' convoy when there would be no civilian traffic on the national highway from Baramulla to Udhampur. The regulation of the vehicular movement on the NH would remain in force till May 31.
- A plea challenging the April 3 order alleged that the "absurd and draconian decision" to restrict civilian traffic movement on the 270 km stretch on the highway directly affects lives of lakhs of people and "its indirect economic and social impact is interminable."

Virtual lockdown

- The impugned order means a virtual lockdown of the valley two days every week which will directly affect 10,000 vehicles plying every hour, which include vehicles carrying patients, students, tourists, businessmen and government officials," the plea said, adding, "such an extreme step was not even adopted during the Kargil War in 1999."
- The petitioner said: "It is further submitted that the illogical, vindictive and notorious order would result in offices, schools, colleges, banks, airports, railway stations shut every two days a week."
- It alleged that the prohibition on civilian traffic on the highway will have a "disastrous impact" on the tourism industry and it was a "collective punishment" for the people of Kashmir.

Page 14: Gokhale meets Wang for 'bilateral consultations'

- India signalled its urgency to resolve differences with China on listing Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.
- In his opening remarks during "bilateral consultations", visiting Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, said India and China should remain "sensitive to each other's concerns".
- During talks with Chinese State Councillor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Mr. Gokhale stressed that India "will work together with the Chinese side to deepen mutual understanding,

strengthen mutual trust to implement the decisions taken by our leaders and do it in a manner where we are sensitive to each other's concerns".

- Masood Azhar's designation was highlighted across the globe when China placed a "technical hold" on listing the head of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) as a global terrorist.
- During the talks, India appeared not to endorse China's position that Azhar's designation should only be confined to the 1267 Committee.
- The Ministry of External Affairs said India will continue to pursue "all available avenues" to ensure that terrorist leaders involved are brought to justice. He added India had shared with China "all evidences of terrorist activities of the Jaish-e-Mohammed and its leader Masood Azhar".

Page 20: Earth Day: saving the planet may cost \$100 billion per year

- Saving the diversity and abundance of life on the earth may cost \$100 billion a year, say scientists who have proposed a policy to prevent another mass extinction event on the planet.
- There have been five mass extinctions in the history of the earth. Scientists now estimate that society must urgently come to grips this coming decade to stop the very first human-made biodiversity catastrophe.
- 19 international authors have come up with a bold new science policy proposal to reverse the tide, called "A Global Deal for Nature" (GDN). The policy's mission is to save the diversity and abundance of life on the earth — for the price tag of \$100 billion a year.
- Societal investment in the GDN plan would, for the first time, integrate and implement climate and nature deals on a global scale to avoid human upheaval and biodiversity loss.
- While the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement was the first major accord to take global action toward climate change policies, the international team of GDN scientists believe a similar companion pact is desperately needed to implement the very first global nature conservation plan to meet these challenges.
- The Global Deal for Nature is a time-bound, science-based plan to save the diversity and abundance of life on Earth.
- The three overarching goals of the GDN are to
 - protect biodiversity by conserving at least 30% of the earth's surface by 2030;
 - mitigate climate change by conserving the earth's natural carbon storehouses; and
 - reduce major threats.

- The essence of implementing the plan is to set up protected areas of land as natural ecosystems.
- The study, published in Science Advances, outlines the guiding principles, milestones and targets needed to avoid the extinction threats of a two degrees Celsius warming forecast.

Jatin Verma's IAS Academy