



IT rules empowering,  
will protect users, says  
Ashwini Vaishnaw

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NIA raids seven  
locations in Kashmir,  
seizes digital devices

Page 9



Novak Djokovic wins  
sixth Wimbledon  
title-equalling 20th Slam

Page 13



Lionel Messi's Argentina  
beats Brazil to win  
Copa America

Page 13

## NEARBY



### DDMA allows school assembly halls to open

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on Sunday permitted the use of auditoriums and assembly halls in schools and educational institutions for meeting and training purposes. The DDMA said the move was taken owing to considerable decline in COVID-19 cases and overall improvement in the situation.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

### Kejriwal promises free power in Uttarakhand

NEW DELHI  
Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised up to 300 units of free electricity per month to every family in Uttarakhand and free electricity to the farmers of the state. He added that if AAP is voted to power in the 2022 Assembly poll in Uttarakhand, the party would also waive old electricity bills.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4



EDUCATION PLUS ▶ PAGE 5

## Shuttle to space



Richard Branson and crew are seen on board Virgin Galactic's passenger rocket plane VSS Unity before starting their untethered ascent to the edge of space above Spaceport America. The crew successfully flew to space and returned on Sunday. ■ REUTERS (REPORT ON PAGE 11)

## Chinese protest against Dalai Lama's birthday celebrations

VIIJITA SINGH  
DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

Chinese nationals displayed banners in protest from across Indus river, close to the Line of Actual Control (LAC), when Indian villagers were celebrating the birthday of the Dalai Lama in Demchok in eastern Ladakh.

According to Urgain Tsewang, village head of Koyul (Kakjung), one of the last settlements in the Demchok sector, the Chinese, comprising Army personnel and civilians, came in five vehicles down unpaved roads and raised the banners 200



Causing a stir: Chinese displaying banners from across Indus river, near the LAC in Demchok. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

m from a community centre where the Dalai Lama's birthday was being celebrated around 11 a.m. on July 6 at Dola Tamgo in Koyul village along Indus river.

The incident occurred CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Dhami holds off on Kanwar yatra decision

'We will consult neighbouring States'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

Any decision on allowing the Kanwar Yatra this year will be taken after discussions with neighbouring States, Uttarakhand's new Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami said, after weekend consultations with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. A senior official in the CM's office confirmed that he has also held consultations with Yogi Adityanath, his counterpart in Uttar Pradesh.

Among medical officers on the ground in Uttarakhand, however, there is a recognition that allowing the Kanwar Yatra could lead to an increased spread of COVID-19 cases and heightened challenges in managing the pandemic.

Uttarakhand is reviewing its earlier decision to cancel the yatra. This fol-

lows the U.P. government's announcement that the pilgrimage will begin from July 25, despite concerns that it could become another COVID super spreader event like the Kumbh Mela earlier this year.

Given the religious sentiments and health concerns involved, the decision on whether to cancel the yatra again has political ramifications, especially given that both Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are headed to the polls next year.

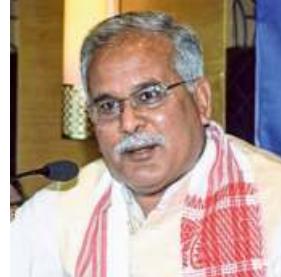
Mr. Dhami tweeted a link to his interview with the Aaj Tak news channel in which he said, "It is a matter of the faith of millions. However, people's lives should not be threatened. Saving lives is our first priority. God would not like it if people lost their lives to COVID due to the yatra."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## High command will decide on CM change

But no reason for it now, says Baghel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Bhupesh Baghel

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday said he was asked to take oath as the Chief Minister by the Congress high command, and it was for them to decide whether or not there should be a change of guard.

He added that "such arrangements take place while running coalition governments".

**Minister's demands**

Mr. Baghel's comments are significant in the wake of reports that Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo wants the high command to "honour" the rotation formula of changing the CM after two and a half years that was supposed to have been agreed to in December 2018.

Mr. Baghel was speaking after meeting Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra at 10 Janpath, the official residence of Con-

gress president Sonia Gandhi, where the leaders are said to have discussed next year's Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh.

"The high command instructed me to take the oath [as Chief Minister], so I took the oath. When they say someone else will be the Chief Minister, then it will be so," he said, adding, "Such agreements happen in a coalition government but Congress has three-fourths majority in Chhattisgarh."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



Advertisement for a mobile theatre group performance at a village in Assam.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Awahan theatre group, said. "Given the popularity of mobile theatres across Assam's rural landscape and the demand, we have to think of ways to stage plays while coexisting with COVID-19. Maybe we can cut

down the audience size of 1,500-2,000 during normal times to 700-800, and increase the number of shows per day," said playwright-director Abhijit Bhattacharya, who has been associated with the Bhramyaman for 25 years.

Suresh Ranjan Goduka, a mass communication design researcher at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati, said the annual turnover of the mobile theatre groups was ₹25 crore. "Mobile theatre owners said materials such as bamboo, iron poles and fittings, timber and tarpaulin have been damaged or are unusable because of almost two years of inactivity. They will need to pump in ₹40 lakh-₹45

lakh more to be back on the road," he said.

### No workers

The toughest challenge for the mobile theatre groups is to find technicians who handle a range of activities from setting up the stage and theatre halls to cooking for the unit and transporting them from place to place.

"Each theatre group involves 120-150 people who get paid on the condition of no-work-no-pay. The challenge for the theatre groups is that many workers have either moved out in search of jobs or are selling perishables for a living," Jayanta Kumar Sarma, professor of the university's Mass Communication Department, said.

Experts look at ways to revive the sector

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

The majority of the 30 mobile theatre groups in Assam may find it difficult to stage a comeback after almost two years of closure due to the two phases of the COVID-19 lockdown preceded by the unrest associated with the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests.

The Krishna Kanta Handique State Open University on July 9 organised a virtual meeting of Bhramyaman (travelling theatre) producers, directors and cultural

## Mobile theatre groups in Assam face a bleak future

economy experts, to find a way forward for the mobile theatre groups crippled by months of inactivity.

The meeting coincided with the birthday of Achyut Lahkar, who started the mobile theatre revolution by forming the Nataraj Theatre group in 1963.

"The Bhramyaman season from July to April suffered a bit towards the end of 2019-2020, before COVID-19 struck, to keep those associated with the industry virtually unemployed. The situation does not look like it is improving soon, and because the investment is huge for a theatre group, 99% may not survive this phase," Prastuti Parashar, an actor and head of the

group, said. "Given the popularity of mobile theatres across Assam's rural landscape and the demand, we have to think of ways to stage plays while coexisting with COVID-19. Maybe we can cut

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SHINJINI GHOSH  
NEW DELHI

It has been nearly a year since Ghaziabad resident Anshika Singh enrolled at the Delhi University (DU) for under-graduation. However, with online classes continuing to be the norm due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been difficult for her to gauge how college functions or access the facilities on campus.

For several first-year students like Ms. Singh, who are set to appear for their second-semester examinations next month, a lack of interaction with professors and peers, sans the computer screen, has meant that the "college life" they expected was in dissonance with the reality.

Ms. Singh, a student of Miranda House, said: "After boards, we thought we'll get to go out, explore an independent life which DU offers and meet people coming from different parts of the country. But we lost out on the chance. The exposure that DU offers, including extracurricular activities, is also why you want to join the university. But due to the pandemic, interactions got restricted."

The BA (Programme) student added: "At times attending online classes feel like listening to podcasts. Interaction with teachers

## Virtual reality and crash of expectations

First year college students have begun to lament online classes for a range of reasons — from boredom to lack of interactions, exposure and co-curricular activities

also gets restricted and you simply do not get the exposure you hoped for. For many, mental health issues are also on a rise. When there is interaction, you get to learn stuff, which is not present online. We do not even have direct interaction with the administration. The experience for which I joined Miranda House

is still unclear for me. Even for teachers, this is a whole new scenario."

Attending online classes was not equivalent to the "human connect" that you would expect on campus, others added.

Prithit Singh, a Political Science student of Ramjas College, said: "When you join a DU North Cam-

Students at the Delhi University campus. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA AND SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



It was more stressful during the onslaught of the second wave. "During the second wave, it was even more stressful when professors were also unwell. Everything around us was distraught and gradually the pace of classes was also reduced as several students and teachers were infected. The motivation is slightly slipping away but we don't really have an alternative at the moment," said the Kolkata resident.

### Stifled dreams

Stating that the current batch was "extremely unfortunate" due to curtailed dreams of independence and self-discovery, Dhruv Garg, a student of Kiroli Mal College (KMC) said, "In order to bond with one has to step out and college is essentially the first time people travel and live by themselves. That is something we missed out on. I have been able to make friends online but for a lot of people it is difficult."

"Last week I met a few of my

online friends for the first time and it did not really feel overwhelming. It was quite normal. I think the transition from online to offline will be okay for me," said Garg, a student of Economics.

Professors at the university also said that the current structure of teaching-learning, brought in due to the ongoing pandemic had an adverse impact on the students.

### Practical hurdles

Ramvir Aejaz, professor at Ramjas College, said: "Students have been impacted both academically and socially. Academically a lot of things we do in the classroom like impromptu discussions are missing in online classes. The liveliness and experience of the classroom are not there. This makes a huge difference. A majority of the students often do not have their videos on for several reasons which also make it difficult for the teacher to know if the student is even present."

There are manifold hindrances, he said. "Communication gets distorted online. University is a space that once students enter, they are in a different mind space altogether and there is some purpose. The academic charm is missing in online classes. Teaching-learning within a structured environment is not there and if that ecology is missing then the factors that determine learning also changes. Online students are getting impoverished in terms of learning and knowledge and it is a huge loss for them," said Mr. Aejaz.

### Dystopic reality

Speaking of a "dystopian reality" that professors and students are currently experiencing, St. Stephens College professor Nandita Narain said: "There is no sense of a community, class or college. This is not even a pale shadow of what is actually experienced in a college, mostly from each other and to a large extent from teachers. In this virtual reality, most people do not even switch on their videos so one doesn't even know who they are speaking to." "It is to be seen how the current batch copes in the second year as their first year foundation will be shaky," lamented Ms. Narain.

## Woman strangulates infant son

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old woman was arrested for strangulating her 11-month-old infant to death following a quarrel with her husband in south Delhi's Fatehpur Beri, police said on Sunday.

Accused Jyoti, who hails from Ritoz village in Gurugram, got married in 2011 when she was 16-years-old but did not share cordial relations with her husband, they said.

She told the police that her 11-month-old son was suffering from fever and her husband Satveer Tanwar refused to take him to a doctor, police said.

The woman used du-patta to strangulate her infant following the quarrel. The child was then taken to Apex Hospital, Chhatarpur by his father and other relatives where he was declared brought dead, a senior police officer said.

A case of murder was registered and during investigation, both parents levelled allegations against each other for killing the infant. CCTV footage from the village, call records, and statements of witnesses were taken which revealed that Jyoti had committed the murder, the officer said.

"Jyoti has been arrested and the dupatta was also recovered," he said.

"During interrogation, the accused disclosed that she had a quarrel with her husband, Satveer, on July 9 at around 3.30 p.m. as he didn't like her since their marriage. They argued on many things and never shared a cordial relationship. She also stated that her son was suffering from fever and Satveer refused to take him to doctor," the officer said.

## 390 families apply for COVID relief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Sunday announced that around 390 beneficiaries have applied under the government scheme to provide financial assistance to families who lost their relatives to COVID-19.

Social Welfare Minister Rajendra Pal Gautam said that 220 applications were for a pension of ₹2,500 per month and 170 for ₹50,000 one-time ex-gratia.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Mr. Gautam had launched 'Mukhyamantri COVID-19 Parivar Aarthik Sahayata Yojana' on July 6. Under the scheme, ₹50,000 ex-gratia will be given to every family that lost a member to COVID-19 and an additional ₹2,500 per month will be given if the deceased was the sole breadwinner.

## 3 held for 'honeytrapping' businessman

Techie, his aides demanded ₹1 crore and threatened to upload morphed pictures

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A software engineer and his two associates have been arrested for allegedly honey-trapping a businessman and demanding ₹1 crore from him after threatening to upload his morphed pictures on social media platforms, police said on Sunday.

The main accused, Raj Kishor Singh, a software engineer based in Gurugram, fell into bad company due to lavish lifestyle, they said.

He opened a spa and recruited women for call girl services. To meet his expenses, he used them to honey-trap rich and wealthy businessmen, shoot intimate pictures or videos and demanded money from them after threatening to upload them if they failed to pay up, they said.

Police said Singh along

**During the meeting, the woman would place the camera hidden in her handbag discreetly in the room and captured intimate videos and pictures**

**SENIOR POLICE OFFICER**

with Aryan Dixit (28) and another female associate, also a software engineer, would target wealthy businesses through Tinder. The woman would initiate chats to lure the victim and later fix up a meeting, police said.

"During the meeting, the woman would place the camera hidden in her handbag discreetly in the room and captured intimate videos and pictures. After a few days, the victim would get an

extortion call from Singh, who threatened to upload the videos and pictures on the social media platforms if the demanded money was not paid," a senior police officer said.

The arrests of all the three accused were made by Delhi Police's Crime Branch after it received a complaint from a businessman. In the complaint, the businessman stated that he had received calls from an unknown person who was demanding ₹1 crore from him and threatening to publish his nude and morphed pictures along with a woman on social media sites, according to the police.

### Deception, disclosure

DCP (Crime) Manoj C said during investigation, technical surveillance was mounted, manual information was collected and location of the

suspect was identified. "A raid was conducted and one of the suspects identified as Rajkishor Singh was nabbed from Gurugram who disclosed his involvement and revealed names of his two accomplices," the DCP said.

Another raid was conducted at DLF Phase II in Gurugram from where the woman was arrested while her co-accused and friend Dixit was nabbed from south Delhi's Chhatarpur, he said.

During the search, two handbags fitted with spy camera, memory card, USB pen drive, laptop containing videos and pictures of victims, and a mobile phone used to make extortion calls were recovered, he added.

Police said Dixit, who is an MBA graduate, runs an online garment business. Singh was previously arrested in a case registered at Connaught Place station, they added.

## HC rejects plea of overweight candidate in IAF recruitment

Court says it cannot dilute the rule by permitting its violation

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected the plea of an overweight candidate seeking recruitment as airman in the Indian Air Force (IAF), noting that he could end up being a liability for the force rather than being of any help in the defence of the country.

A Bench of Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw and Justice Amit Bansal remarked once there is a rule specifying the weight for the particular height, it "has to be abided by and a slight variation even therein cannot be tolerated".

"The court cannot dilute the said rule by permitting violation of the rule, in the name of being minuscule. To direct such a person to be re-



cruited, would amount to burdening the respondents — Indian Air Force — with an overweight airman who would be unfit to do the duties required from him and would end up being a liability for the respondents rather than being of any help in the defence of the country," the Bench remarked.

The High Court's direction came on a plea by one Shivam Kumar, who had ap-

plied for recruitment as airman in IAF. During the medical examination conducted as part of the recruitment process, he was found medically unfit on the ground of being overweight by 2 kg.

### Easily manageable

Mr. Kumar challenged the finding of medical unfitness and sought a direction to IAF to conduct re-examination of his medical fitness. In the alternative, he sought a direction for his appointment as an airman on the basis of the medical certificate of fitness issued by a private hospital.

Mr. Kumar argued he was overweight by 2 kg only, "which is nothing and which is easily manageable".

The High Court, however, denied his plea.

## Farmer electrocuted at Singhu protest site

Police have ruled out any foul play

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

A 46-year-old farmer died of electrocution at the Singhu border, the site of farmers' agitation, said the police.

Sohan Singh (42), was found dead near an electric transformer late on Saturday night, said Sub-Inspector Shamsher Singh of Kun-dli Police Station in Sonipat. "He died of electrocution. A post-mortem was conducted," he said, adding that the police have ruled out any foul play.

**Deep sorrow**  
Samyukt Kisan Morcha, a coalition of farmer unions spearheading the agitation, issued a press statement ex-

## 3 held for looting realtor's house in Uttam Nagar

One of the accused was his employee; others nabbed following encounter: police

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The police on Sunday arrested three men including the employee of a property dealer for executing an armed robbery of cash worth ₹8 lakh and gold ornaments at his house in west Delhi's Uttam Nagar after holding his family hostage, police said.

The two accused, Ankush (23) and Mukul (24), were arrested following an encounter that took place near Uttam Nagar bus terminal, they said.

When the police team tried to apprehend them, the duo opened fire which hit the bullet-proof jacket of one of the policemen. In retaliation, the police team opened fire which hit Ankush, police said.

Farmers, from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, have been protesting in huge numbers at Delhi's borders since November 2020, demanding the repeal of the three farm laws.

**The accused were asked to surrender but they defied and fired upon police team. In retaliation, our team fired back and one of the accused got injured**

**SANTOSH KUMAR MEENA  
DCP (Dwarka)**

(21), is a resident of Sadar Bazar. He is an employee of property dealer Vinod Lal, at whose house an armed robbery was executed, a senior police officer said.

Deepanshu was also arrested later for providing information to the accused men about the availability of cash and jewellery at Mr. Lal's

house," he said.

The incident took place on July 7 around 1.30 p.m. Four armed men posing as electricians entered Mr. Lal's house in his absence. All of them were carrying weapons and had their faces covered with masks to conceal their identity. While one of them was wearing a helmet, others were wearing a cap. They held the family hostage and fled with ₹8 lakh and gold ornaments, a senior police officer said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said: "Our team had been trailing them and at about 5 a.m. on Sunday, when two of the accused men were spotted near Uttam Nagar bus terminal, the accused were asked to surrender but they

defied and fired upon police team. In retaliation, our team fired back and one of the accused got injured."

### Out of danger

He was taken to hospital for treatment and is stated to be out of danger, he said. They also disclosed their involvement in two more robberies including one in Sadar Bazar which they executed on June 26 this year, he said.

The police have recovered a countrymade pistol, three live cartridges, three empty cartridges, a button-actuated knife and a stolen motorcycle. "Efforts are being made to nab the accomplices of the arrested accused and to collect corroborative as well as linking evidence for further investigation," he said.

## Five arrested in Bara Hindu Rao firing case

Two pistols with 5 cartridges seized

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Five men, including two contract killers, have been arrested in connection with a firing incident in Bara Hindu Rao area, which left two passers-by dead three days ago, police said on Sunday. Danish, the key conspirator, who is the partner of arrested builder Feroz, too was among the arrested.

Two pistols with five cartridges were seized from Rahul alias Charlie (23) and Himaanshu (21), both from Nand Nagri. The third arrested man is Mehtab, who is a relative of the absconding suspect, said DCP (North) Anto Alphonse. During initial investiga-

tion, it was found that the complainant Haji Naeem and his nephew Munib shared rivalry with other builders of Sadar Bazar and Bara Hindu Rao. Munib had managed to get a stay on the construction of a building at Ahata Kidara, which was later demolished. Upset, the builder conspired with his partner to settle scores.

He then got in touch with Mehtab, the partner's relative, to eliminate Munib and Naeem. Technical surveillance was mounted and sources were deployed to nab the accused. Acting on a tip-off, Rahul was apprehended from Civil Lines and the others were arrested later, police said.

## Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, JUL. 12
RISE 05:32 SET 19:22
RISE 07:22 SET 21:22
TUESDAY, JUL. 13
RISE 05:33 SET 19:22
RISE 08:22 SET 21:59
WEDNESDAY, JUL. 14
RISE 05:33 SET 19:22
RISE 09:22 SET 22:34

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	39	29
Safdarjung	39	29
Palam	39	30

**Delhi Palam Today**  
35°C Few spells of Light to moderate rain and thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky and gusty winds.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
34°C Few spells of rain and thundershower likely at many places with mainly overcast sky and gusty winds.

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## THE HINDU

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## IN BRIEF

## BIMTECH holds 3rd edition of Insurtech series

DEHLI

Birla Institute of Management Technology (BIMTECH) in association with India Insurtech Association (IIA) organised the third edition of Insurtech Leadership Talk Series. The chief guest at the event was Mayank Gupta, COO and co-founder at ZOPPER. An integral part of the discussion was about the growing importance of insurance in technology dedicated to the growing intensity in the field of insurance, which has been detailed on aspects such as underwriting and claims settlement.



Anna Nagar JJ cluster residents - who lost houses in July last after a heavy downpour- staying on rent in Vinod Nagar. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

demic. The family faced the same problem during the lockdown last year but they didn't have to bear the rent as they were at their own home last year.

Kamla Devi (58) and her husband Pan Singh are also struggling to make ends meet as their sons who used to previously stay with them now live separately on rent. "We need money. My husband can't walk properly. He works as a security guard outside an ATM," she said. "I hope we don't die waiting for the house".

It's Ms. Savitri daughter's fifth birthday next month and the mother is disheartened because due to financial crisis she won't be able to celebrate it the way her daughter is expecting. She started working as a house help in AshokaNiketan is East Delhi. "I need to first take an e-rickshaw and then a bus to reach the house. Sometimes, I walk the path instead of taking an e-rickshaw to save some money".

## Dodged by officials

Her husband Kuber Chand Kotiyal works as a security guard in Old Delhi and rides a cycle to work. He has been to government offices a multiple times to get updates about their house but has been dodged every time.

"In the last one year, I have tried to meet several officials in municipal department and the Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board [DUSIB] but they keep telling me that our work will be done. On July 5, along with a member from each affected family, I visited the DUSIB office in West Delhi. They told me to come next month. I told them that if nothing happens till next month, then all the families will come here and stay outside the office".

It has been learnt that survey of this JJ cluster has been conducted by the DUSIB for rehabilitation.

DUSIB member Bipin Rai said that the government body has completed the formalities for rehabilitation of these families. "However, the Central government is intervening and asking the DUSIB to allot houses on rent. The discussion over the matter is ongoing," he said.

whenever the situation improves further. However, schools and other educational institutions shall, however, remain closed and the teaching-learning activities shall continue online.

This decision will give a boost to ongoing education projects of the Delhi government like teacher training in offline mode also in a phased manner, the government said.

**Parent-teacher meeting**  
It is preparing to host a parent-teacher meetings for all government schools between July 19 and July 31.

"These meetings can now provide an opportunity to the schools to get the views of parents on schools reopening and will be conducted using staggered timings," the government said.

## A year after deluge, slum victims wait for rehabilitation

Anna Nagar JJ cluster residents, whose houses were swept away in the rain last July, live on rent and struggle to make ends meet as multiple visits to govt. offices fail to bear fruit

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

**S**avitri has not been able to pay house rent - ₹8,000 - for the last two months. She is worried as she doesn't know how she'll manage this month's as well.

A year ago, Savitri and nine other families lost their homes to a natural calamity. A heavy downpour swept away 10 houses in Anna Nagar slums, leaving their lives uprooted in a day.

Nearly a year after, the affected families are now scattered across East and Central Delhi and are living on rent. *The Hindu* met a bunch of families who had to move to VinodNagar and are now struggling to make ends meet while waiting for rehabilitation.

## Lived in tents

Along with her two children, Ms. Savitri recalls living in a tent for nearly 15 days, the Delhi government had set up right after the incident. They stayed there opposite to their damaged houses, close to Indraprastha metro station. "It was raining for days even after the incident and we used to lie wet under

the tent. Sometimes, we took refuge at the metro station," she said. With a permanent solution not in hand, the authorities asked the families to move to a school where they lived for a month and a half.

"When the school had to open for an examination, the officials again asked us to move to a rain shelter house at Sarai Kale Khan. It was so dirty, we refused. We were then asked to live with our relatives for a few days and were promised that we'll be allotted houses. However, days passed by and no one even came to look for us," said Janki who lives with her three children, husband and parents in-law in a house where she has to pay ₹4,500 as rent every month.

## Space constraint

Of the four families, presently living in VinodNagar, one is 60-year-old Jhima Devi. In a single-room accommodation, she lives with her husband and her 100-year-old mother-in-law. Her two sons and their families who used to live together with them in Anna Nagar, now live in separate rented accommodations because of space constraints.

I haven't paid rent for four months, said Ms. Devi. The COVID-19 induced lockdown only added to her woes.

Ms. Devi's husband, Nand Kishore, works at a hotel in Connaught Place and while he didn't lose his job during the lockdown, he was paid nothing for two months. He was asked to join work only a week ago.

"We have not paid rent for four months. Thankfully, one of my sons who works at a government school has been getting his salary. He helped us with money for food and other essentials," she said, adding that her 100-year-old mother-in-law fell while walking and broke a bone and was had to be hospitalised. "Though the treatment was free of cost, we had to bear the cost of some medicines".

## Adding to the woes

Ms. Devi has been getting calls from the landlord to pay up the rent which is now long overdue. "I told him that my husband has just resumed work and will pay up soon".

Adding to the miseries, Ms. Devi's daughter, Manju, also lost her job six months ago due to the pan-

## Halls, auditoriums to reopen in educational institutions, says DDMA

Only 50% seating capacity allowed

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority on Sunday permitted the use of auditoriums and assembly halls in schools and educational institutions for meeting and training purposes with up to 50% seating capacity.

The DDMA said the move was taken owing to the considerable decline in COVID cases in Delhi. It said there will be strict adherence to standard operating procedures and other guidelines of the government and compliance with COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The government said the notification by the DDMA provides an opportunity to the educational institutions to resume their academic preparation, including training, meetings for reopening

authorities. "These meetings can now provide an opportunity to the schools to get the views of parents on schools reopening and will be conducted using staggered timings," the government said.

## Lok Adalat resolves over 7,500 cases in Gurugram

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

More than 7,500 cases were disposed of involving a settlement amount of ₹2.79 crore at the Lok Adalats held in Gurugram on Saturday as part of the second National Lok Adalat this year.

Lalita Patwardhan, Chief Judicial Magistrate and Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, Gurugram informed that around 35,000 cases of all categories were taken up and 7,522 were disposed of, according to a press statement by the

authorities. As per the guidelines of Justice Mr. Rajan Gupta, Judge, Punjab and Haryana High Court and Executive Chairman, Haryana State Legal Services Authority and S.P. Singh, District and Sessions Judge, and Chairman, District Legal Services Authority, Gurugram, Lok Adalats were held at Gurugram Sessions Court and Sub-Divisions courts at Sohna and Pataudi.

Mr. Singh constituted 14 Benches for the Lok Adalats, including two Benches only for traffic challans.

## City sees lowest daily cases since April

Govt. orders closure of part of Sadar Bazar till 10 p.m. on July 13

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 53 fresh COVID-19 cases and three deaths on Sunday. The number of new cases added is the lowest since April 15, 2020.

The health bulletin released by the Delhi government said 76,823 tests were conducted in the Capital in 24 hours with a positivity rate of 0.07%. Out of the total tests conducted, 53,280 were RT-PCR tests. There are 743 active cases in the city, of which 252 are under home isolation. The Capital has recorded 14,35,083 cases since the pandemic started last year with 25,015 deaths.



A man gets tested for COVID in the city on Sunday.  
■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

The bulletin added that 79,527 beneficiaries had received the vaccination in 24-hours, of which 52,434 were administered the first dose. The cumulative beneficiaries vaccinated so far stand at 88,96,884.

To ensure that COVID-19

appropriate behavior is being followed in markets across the city, the government continued with its inspection drive. On Sunday, it closed a part of the Sadar Bazar - from Bara Tooti Chowk to Quattu Road - till 10 p.m. on July 13.

"Due to a large football, the market's association and shopkeepers were unable to ensure COVID protocols on 10-07-2021 in the aforesaid market. The guidelines and directions of COVID protocol are being contravened in the above-said market, which may cause spreading of the virus," the Central District Magistrate said.

The Council, in its plea, said shifting DRT to a place 600 km away "ruptures and disturbs the convenience, affording capacity, reach of the litigants". It said shifting DRT Jabalpur to other states is clearly arbitrary, dehorts the provisions of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDBFI Act).

Next hearing  
The Council has also sought the appointment of a regular full-time incumbent presiding officer for DRT Jabalpur.

The High Court will hear the case in August.

drinking water in Delhi was wasted due to mismanagement. According to experts, the amount of drinking water that is wasted is more than 30%.

It is a matter of great regret that the Haryana government was facing criticism of the Delhi government despite making positive efforts and following the orders of the Supreme Court.

He said Delhi has a share of 719 cusecs of water at Munak from Yamuna and Ravi Beas waters. In addition to it, 330 cusecs extra Yamuna water is being released by Haryana at Munak, as per compliance of Supreme Court orders pronounced on February 29, 1996.

He said the Upper Yamuna River Board in its 52nd and 54th meetings has already verified this position.

He said Haryana had no role in the water shortage in Delhi.

## Water shortage in Delhi due to mismanagement'

Haryana says full share given to Capital

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Haryana government on Sunday said the State was facing acute water shortage due to delayed monsoon but was still maintaining water supply to Delhi without any reduction.

**Delay in monsoon'**  
The people of Delhi were facing water scarcity because of delays in monsoon and poor water management, said a press statement issued by the Haryana Public Relations Department attributing it to an official spokesperson.

It further accused the Delhi government of making false political rhetoric to hide its failure, adding the national Capital was being given its full share of water despite 40% less water in the Yamuna.

The official spokesperson said according to the report of the Economic Survey 2017 of the Delhi government, 20% of the

## Court seeks Centre's reply on M.P. lawyers' body petition

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Centre to respond to a petition by a Madhya Pradesh lawyers' body challenging the transfer of the presiding officer of the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT), Jabalpur, to DRT Lucknow.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh issued the notice on the petition by the State Bar Council of Madhya Pradesh.

The Council, in its plea, said shifting DRT to a place 600 km away "ruptures and disturbs the convenience, affording capacity, reach of the litigants". It said shifting DRT Jabalpur to other states is clearly arbitrary, dehorts the provisions of the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act (RDBFI Act).

Next hearing  
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The High Court will hear the case in August.

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Farmers break glass of Deputy Speaker's car

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Agitating farmers allegedly broke the rear windscreen and a window glass of Haryana Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwa's official vehicle during a protest against his participation at a party function in Chaudhary Devi Lal University in Sirsa on Sunday.

Mr. Gangwa was coming out from the university in his car escorted by the police when around a hundred farmers carrying black flags blocked his way around 4 p.m. and prevented him from leaving.

"In the ensuing commotion, farmers broke the rear windscreen and a window glass of Mr. Gangwa's vehicle. Some stones were also pelted. But he was safely escorted out of the area," Deputy Superintendent of Police, Sirsa, Sanjay Kumar told *The Hindu* over phone.

Local MP Sunita Duggal was also present at the function inside the university, but she managed to leave from another gate.

However, she was earlier shown black flags at a function in Fatehabad.

## Kejriwal promises free power in Uttarakhand

300 units free for every household, old bills will be waived

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised up to 300 units of free electricity per month to every family in Uttarakhand and free electricity to the farmers of the State.

Mr. Kejriwal, on a visit to the State, said that if AAP is voted to power in the 2022 Assembly election in Uttarakhand, it would also waive old electricity bills and provide 24 hours of power across the State.

"Uttarakhand has been blessed by abundance of beauty and natural resources. There are rivers, mountains, trees, vegetation, and even herbs in the State. There are great, honest, and hardworking people as well in Uttarakhand. But the leaders and parties here have left no stone unturned to destroy Uttarakhand," he said at a press conference in Dehradun.

Mr. Kejriwal said two parties in the State have been looting it in turns and ques-



AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal addressing a press meet in Dehradun on Sunday. ■ PTI

tioned why a State that generates electricity and even sells it to other States was not providing free or cheap electricity to its people. He added that all-round development was taking place in Delhi and promised to do the same in Uttrakhand if voted to power.

**'Series of guarantees'**

"Kejriwal does what he says. This is our first guarantee in a series of guarantees. This means I will come again next month to talk about another issue. And then again next month to talk about another

issue. Today I am here to give you a guarantee on the issue of electricity. We will also announce a CM face for the State," he said.

Promising to stop corruption in the State, the AAP convener invited all those who wanted to do good work to join the AAP.

"The politics of Uttarakhand is taking a turn. The politics of Uttarakhand is about to change. All of you who are not being able to do good work in your respective parties can come and join the Aam Aadmi Party," Mr. Kejriwal added.

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**CORRIGENDUM**

Notice Publication Date: 09.07.2021, Notice Subject: EOI for Conversion of HHP Diesel Locomotives into Electric Locomotives, Details of Corrigendum: The website of BLW published as [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in) should be read as [www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.blw.indianrailways.gov.in). Dy. Chief Design Engineer/Vehicle P.R/BLW/M-04

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## Haryana govt. allows cinema halls, pools and spas to open

Lockdown extended by another week in the State

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

The Haryana government on Sunday allowed cinema halls, swimming pools and spas to open with certain restrictions in further relaxation in the Covid-induced lockdown in the State. However, the lockdown has been extended for another week till July 19.

Announcing the extension of the lockdown till 5 a.m. on July 19, the Chief Secretary-cum-Chairperson Haryana State Executive Committee, Vijai Vardhan, in a three-page order, allowed the cinema halls to open with maximum 50% seating capacity with strict adherence to Covid-appropriate behaviour. Spas are also allowed to open from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. with 50% capacity. The order also allowed the swimming pools to open, but only for the athletes and swimmers practising for a competitive event.

The State government also relaxed the restrictions on gatherings in open spaces allowing up to 200 people. The maximum number of people attending wedding, funerals



A vaccination camp in Gurugram. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

and cremations has also been increased to 100.

**Exams allowed**

Similarly, universities, colleges and Industrial Training Institutes are allowed to open for doubt classes, practical classes in laboratories, practical examinations and off-line examinations. Coaching institutions, libraries and training institutes, both private and government, are also allowed to open.

The Vice-Chancellor of National Law University, Delhi, has been allowed to hold Common Law Admission Test on July 23 in the State.

The Haryana government

had first imposed a week-end lockdown in nine districts from 10 p.m. of April 30 to 5 a.m. of May 3. The entire State was then brought under lockdown for a week on May 3 and the restrictions are being extended on a weekly basis thereafter.

As per earlier orders, all shops are allowed to open from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. and shopping malls from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

The restaurants and bars, including those in hotels and malls, are allowed to open from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. with 50% seating capacity and corporate offices are allowed to run with full capacity.

## Curfew in Rajasthan dist. after murder

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

KOTA

A curfew was imposed and internet services suspended for 24 hours in Rajasthan's Baran district following the murder of a teenage boy, police said on Sunday.

Asad, a resident of Shramik Colony in Talab Para area, was allegedly killed on Saturday evening by Hemant Rathore and his accomplices over a one and half-year-old dispute.

**'No communal angle'**

"The murder is the result of personal enmity and rivalry between two groups with no communal angle," ASP Vijay Swarnkar said.

The victim was shot twice and then attacked using iron rods outside Baran Grain Mandi gate, police said.

A video of the incident was posted on the internet on Saturday night, following which, the district administration imposed a curfew under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and banned internet services for 24 hours till 3 a.m. on Monday.

## Six of family die due to electrocution

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHHATARPUR (M.P.)

Six members of a family were electrocuted to death during a construction work at a village in Madhya Pradesh's Chhattarpur district on Sunday morning, a police officer said.

The incident took place at Mahua Jhala village, about 42 km from the district headquarters, while the construction work of a septic tank was underway, Bijawar police station in-charge Mukesh Singh Thakur said.

The deceased were in the age group of 20 to 65 years.

## Light and sound



Vehicles ply near the Hawa Mahal during a lightning strike in Jaipur on Sunday. ■ PTI

## Assam-Mizoram border row flares again

Two blasts reported on Mizoram side on Sunday after a blast in Assam a day earlier

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GUWAHATI

A day after a suspected IED blast was carried out inside Cachar district of Assam allegedly by miscreants from Mizoram during an eviction drive, two back to back explosions took place on Sunday along the inter-State border on the side of the neighbouring State, a police source said.

Tension is running high in Khulicherra area of the district, where people from Mizoram have reportedly entered up to 6.5 kilometres inside Assam land a few days ago, following which the Assam Police along with civil

administration carried out an eviction drive.

"Two blast sounds were heard coming from the Mizoram side at 2.40 am and 2.43 am. The CRPF, which is a neutral force deployed at Khulicherra Point-II, has been asked to enquire into the suspected blasts on the Mizoram side," an Assam Police source said.

The situation is at present normal although tension still prevails and Assam Police personnel are on alert in the entire border area, he added.

On Saturday, an explosion took place targeting a delegation of Assam government

officials, including senior police officials, who were on a visit to oversee the construction of a road along the border, but no casualty was reported in the incident.

**'Miscreants used IED'** Initially it was believed to be a grenade attack but the police later suspected that the miscreants used IED, the source said. Additional Director General of Police (Border) Harmeet Singh is camping at the spot and monitoring the situation.

Meanwhile, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that he has written to his Mizoram counterpart

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IN BRIEF



Gehlot sworn in as Karnataka Governor

BENGALURU  
Former Union Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot took oath as the 19th Governor of Karnataka on Sunday. He succeeds Vajubhai R. Vala. He was administered the oath of office by Karnataka Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka at a simple ceremony on the Raj Bhavan premises.

Child dies after beetle gets stuck in throat

KASARAGOD  
A one-and-a-half-year-old boy in Kasaragod died on Saturday after a beetle got stuck in his throat. The deceased was identified as Anved, son of Satyendran, a native of Nullipadi, Chennikara in Kasaragod. The boy suddenly collapsed while playing and was rushed to a hospital where he was declared dead.

Telangana to borrow ₹6,000 cr. from market

HYDERABAD  
The Telangana government has decided to raise ₹6,000 crore open market borrowings for the second quarter of the current financial year. The State government had raised total quantum of ₹13,500 crore through open market borrowings for the first quarter as against the ₹8,000 crore it had indicated for the period.

Kerala to set up online portal to pay for liquor

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Kerala government has initiated steps to mitigate long queues at liquor outlets. The government plans an online portal with a payment gateway for consumers to purchase legal alcohol. There is no home delivery of liquor. Instead, consumers can collect their purchases from a Bevco or Consumer-fed store of their choice.

# Telangana police deny entry to A.P. MLA

Udaya Bhanu, stopped from visiting Pulichintala, says Telangana is generating power against norms

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

Amid the raging controversy over the sharing of Krishna river waters, Andhra Pradesh MLA Samineni Udaya Bhanu was stopped by the Telangana police at Muktyala village from visiting the K.L. Rao Sagar Pulichintala Project on Sunday.

Following this, tension prevailed on the border.

The YSRCP MLA and Government Whip in the A.P. Assembly, objected to the "high-handed behaviour of the Telangana police," saying he was going to the multi-purpose project only to see the factual position.



Tensions rise: MLA Samineni Udaya Bhanu talking to the Telangana police at Muktyala village on Sunday.

Mr. Udaya Bhanu could not cross the barricades erected by the Telangana police, who were deployed

in large numbers there ever since tension escalated following the drawal of water by Telangana for power generation

allegedly without necessary clearances, including from the Krishna River Management Board (KRB).

Mr. Udaya Bhanu told the media later that Telangana was drawing water to generate 120 MW "in blatant violation of the established protocol," as per which the irrigation requirements in both States were to be met first before utilising the water for power generation.

'Water wasted'

The Jaggaiapet MLA pointed out that massive quantities of surplus river water (about 75 tmcft) was wasted as Telangana kept drawing

by ignoring Andhra Pradesh's "legitimate right to utilise its allocations".

Mr. Udaya Bhanu maintained that both States were bound by the awards of the Bachawat Tribunal.

It was Telangana that benefited the most out of the Krishna river water as former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy had built more projects in that region, the MLA said, and demanded that Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao help in reaching an amicable settlement and refrain from making provocative comments on the sensitive issue.

## Three more Zika cases take Kerala's tally to 18

Focus on mosquito control & screening of pregnant women

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Three more persons have tested positive for Zika virus (ZIKV) in Kerala, taking the total number of cases reported so far to 18.

So far, lab-confirmed diagnosis of ZIKV has been reported only from Thiruvananthapuram. However, given the high density of Aedes species of mosquitoes across the State, the virus could be in circulation across the State.

ZIKV was confirmed in three of the eight samples sent from a private hospital in the city, from where the first ZIKV case had been reported, to the lab in Coimbatore. Two of the samples are of patients who sought treatment at the private hospital, including that of a 10-month-old infant. The third belongs

to a hospital employee.

Of the 27 samples sent by the State earlier to NIV, Alappuzha, 26 had tested negative. The eight samples, of which three turned out to be positive, were part of the third lot of samples.

Major worry

Senior health officials said the focus of the control measures would be on the screening of all pregnant women with fever and other symptoms as well as initiation of mosquito control measures on a war footing.

As microcephaly (a condition in which a baby's head is smaller in size than normal because of abnormal brain development) caused by ZIKV infection in pregnant women is a major concern, the district administration has sent an alert to

ultrasound scan centres and all gynaecologists that special attention be paid to the foetal biometric parameters at the scan at 6-8 weeks.

Similar symptoms

Sources said fever with rashes, red eyes and joint pain was being reported in the district from several urban locations since the past four or five months. But as all the samples tested negative for both dengue and chikungunya, not much thought had been given to it. "The possibility of ZIKV never struck us. The symptoms overlap with other viral fevers and that unless one specifically tests for ZIKV, we cannot confirm it," an official said.

A six-member team from the Centre held discussions with State officials on the steps to be adopted.

## No fresh investments in Kerala, says Kitex chief

Telangana received us royally, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

Managing director of Kitex Garments Limited Sabu M. Jacob has said the group will not make any fresh investments in Kerala.

He was speaking to reporters after returning from Hyderabad here on Sunday. The Telangana government had reached an agreement with the Kerala-based company for an investment of ₹1,000 crore in a garment unit at the Kakatiya Mega Textiles Park in Warangal.

Mr. Jacob, who arrived at the Kochi airport by a private jet sent by the Telangana government, said he was forced to go out of Kerala. He said he was received "royally" by the Telangana government. He said he was not involving himself in a political debate and did not want to counter Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

The Kitex Group and Ker-

ala government are at a standstill over "serial raids and inspections" at the company in June. The company said its operations were disrupted and staff were questioned for long durations. The Labour Department had found fault with the company on more than 70 counts, the group said.

Mr. Jacob had said earlier that Kitex was withdrawing from plans to invest ₹3,500 crore in an apparel park and three industrial parks in Kerala.

The Kitex Group and Ker-

ala government are at a standstill over "serial raids and inspections" at the company in June. The company said its operations were disrupted and staff were questioned for long durations. The Labour Department had found fault with the company on more than 70 counts, the group said.

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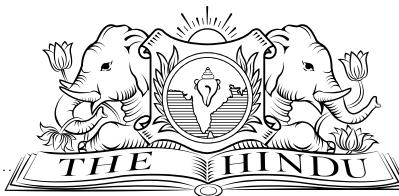
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## Cooperative spirit

The new Ministry should seek to be a catalyst, and not the command centre, of the sector

**A** longside the state and the market, cooperatives play a vital role in the country's development but are seldom the focus of policy planning. The creation of a new Union Ministry to oversee the cooperatives sector will redeem it from negligence, according to the Government. Critics fear that this Ministry is purposed to concentrate even more powers in the hands of the Centre. Cooperatives are dominant in agriculture, credit and marketing, but not limited to those. Some are big – IFFCO has around a third of the market share in fertilizers. In milk, cotton, handlooms, housing, edible oils, sugar and fisheries, they are formidable. As market conditions are evolving, cooperatives in States such as Kerala have got into complex operations: running IT parks and medical colleges. More avenues for expansion, such as insurance, remain untapped and the regulatory regime must evolve in step. The legal architecture of the sector began evolving since 1904 under colonial rule, and in 2002, the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act was passed, taking into account the challenges arising out of liberalisation. Considering the fact that cooperatives fall in the State list of the Constitution, the Centre will have to innovate to provide legal sanctity for the new Ministry. A separate Ministry can marshal the diffused capacity of the sector, however.

That said, this move will turn disastrous if the attempt is to appropriate the political capital of the sector, which is significant. Cooperatives are not meant to operate by the market logic of maximising profits but to share the benefits to all stakeholders equitably. Though not uniform across India, cooperatives have made significant contributions in poverty alleviation, food security, management of natural resources and the environment. True, the sector has become an instrument of patronage and pilferage. Mismanagement and corruption destroyed the sector in some States. The potency of cooperatives as an apparatus of political control is personally known to Minister-in-charge Amit Shah, once president of a district cooperative bank. Besides serving localities and segments that markets might ignore, cooperatives are also effective in mediating politics at the local level, outside of the parliamentary system. Despite regulatory oversight by the RBI and States, there is considerable autonomy for the sector which is often misused. The remedy is not an overarching Ministry and diktats from Delhi. The premise of a cooperative is that decisions are made by those affected by them. The case for transparency and efficiency in the sector is strong; that goal must be pursued not by scaring the very soul of the sector but by advancing the cooperative spirit. The new Ministry could indeed be a catalyst, but it must not fashion itself as a command authority.

## Silver win

Messi needed the Copa America more than the rest of Argentina

**S**port is a distillation of micro-tragedies and mega-eccstasies enmeshed with whirring limbs, glistening sweat, unabashed tears and boozing laughter. And football presents a wider canvas for all these attributes, which were exhibited at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana Stadium late on Saturday night. When the Copa America final that pitted eternal rivals Argentina and Brazil wound to a close, it primarily offered redemption to Lionel Messi, of the phlegmatic smile and magical feet fame. One of the greatest ever footballers and fit to join a pantheon headlined by Pelé and Diego Maradona, until now Messi had one missing link – a cup triumph for Argentina. After his 34 summers, that aberration was finally erased once his team defeated Brazil 1-0 in a scrappy contest with the odd streaks of brilliance. Messi, miracle-dispenser with FC Barcelona, was seen by his countrymen as the prodigal son, who never delived, and they embalmed for posterity their affection towards the late Maradona. Messi and his fellow Argentines constituted a dysfunctional family of unspoken hurts. All that anguish could dissipate thanks to the latest victory which came after a 28-year title drought for the Albiceleste. Their 15th Copa America trophy put them on a par with toppers Uruguay, well ahead of Brazil with nine. Incidentally, Copa America with its 1916 inception even predates the FIFA World Cup, which commenced in 1930.

Argentina and Brazil have embellished the championship's storied history and in South America with its seize-the-day spirit, novels infused with magical realism and samba dance, football is seen as an extension of aesthetic joy. The final though did not live up to that esoteric aim. There were sparks marred by some rough tackles. Messi was not in his elements, marked tightly and weighed down by expectations, he even missed scoring his team's second goal in the closing minutes. But having drawn the Brazilian defenders towards him all through the game, Messi created spaces that his team-mates could exploit. Even in that missed goal-scoring opportunity, Messi seemed keen on doing an assist rather than performing the deed and this is the mark of a man desperate for affection from his squad and country. The match was by then firmly in Argentina's grip thanks to the 22nd minute goal slotted by Angel Di Maria, who capitalised on a long-pass from Rodriguez De Paul. A stung Brazil, especially Neymar, mounted rapid sorties on either side of half-time. Two attempts were adroitly foisted by Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez and when the Selecao seemingly breached the citadel, it was deemed off-side. Argentina and Messi were destined for their shot at glory in a 10-team intra-continent tournament, which despite other simultaneous global attractions like the Euro and Wimbledon, had its own effervescent charms.

## A Kerala model for an anti-discrimination law

If enacted this law will be the largest expansion of civil rights in the State, and can be emulated by the rest of India



SHASHI THAROOR &  
ARVIND KURIAN ABRAHAM

**A** couple turned down for a home they wish to rent, because they are Muslim. A qualified professional rejected for a job because he uses a wheelchair. A pair of students denied facilities on campus because of their caste or ethnicity. An air hostess dismissed for being above the weight deemed desirable, even though male stewards/purser of that weight continue in their jobs.

### Forms of discrimination

Such incidents are all too common in our society. "Silent segregation" on the grounds of marital status, gender, sexual orientation or eating preferences are followed in several housing societies and residents' associations. The Housing Discrimination Project (<https://bit.ly/3wvGQFC>) at Jindal Global Law School has shown how extensive housing discrimination is across the country. The recent Pew Research Center Report (<https://pewrsr.ch/2TOZf9v>) has confirmed that a substantial number of Indians prefer not to have a person from a different religious community as their neighbour. The absence of a proper legal recourse for those who suffer from housing discrimination only makes matters worse.

Even though Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was read down by the Supreme Court of India to exclude consensual relations between adults of the same sex, social prejudice against members of the LGBTQIA+ community in the country remains strong. Article 15 (I) of the Constitution of India pro-

hibits the state from discriminating against individuals on basis of certain protected characteristics such as religion, race, caste, sex and place of birth. But it does not bar private individuals or institutions from doing what the state is not permitted to. Nor does it expressly list ethnicity, linguistic identity, nationality, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance and other personal characteristics as prohibited grounds of discrimination.

The understanding of discrimination has also evolved over the years. It does not operate along a single axis; it can take the form of combined discrimination which is a combination of discrimination on two or more grounds. Last April, the Supreme Court, in *Patan Jamal Vali vs State of Andhra Pradesh*, recognised intersectional discrimination – discrimination on the basis of the intersection of personal characteristics, such as that faced by Dalit women as Dalits, as women and in the unique category of Dalit women. Discriminatory practices may also be indirect in nature, whereby policies that seem neutral and not expressly targeted at a particular group, still cause a disproportional adverse impact on disadvantaged sections of society.

### Legal remedies are needed

Since discrimination thus operates on a wide variety of grounds, legal remedies are needed for its victims, whether direct, indirect or intersectional. A comprehensive anti-discrimination legal framework is required to fill the existing legal lacunae. India is one of the few liberal democracies without such a framework. The Sachar Committee, in 2006, recognised the need for an anti-discrimination law. This was further reiterated by the Expert Group on Equal Opportunity Commission headed by Prof. N.R. Madhava Menon.



Though the proposal for an anti-discrimination law was approved by the United Progressive Alliance Cabinet, it was put on the backburner after the government changed in 2014.

### When a Bill lapsed

One of us (Tharoor) tried to revive the idea by introducing the Anti-Discrimination and Equality Bill, 2016 (<https://bit.ly/3k5KoMf>) in the Lok Sabha. Perhaps predictably, the Treasury Benches were not interested to take it forward and the Bill lapsed in 2019 with the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. It seems clear to us that the only way progressive legislation of this nature can be passed in the present climate would be if the States lead the way, by enacting anti-discrimination laws in their respective jurisdictions. States have a vital role in strengthening our right to equality. A central Bill cannot, at any rate, cover subjects that are under the exclusive jurisdiction of State governments. And if States take the initiative, the demand for a national anti-discrimination law to cover services and institutions under the domain of the Union government will be reignited.

Kerala is one the best placed States to take this proposal forward, especially since both the major political fronts in the State have previously committed themselves to such legislation. The CPI

(M) in its 2019 manifesto (<https://bit.ly/3hVjEet>) and the United Democratic Front (UDF) in its 2021 State Assembly manifesto (<https://bit.ly/2UGXfjn>) have both promised to enact an anti-discrimination law which covers the private and the public sectors. The State legislature can use its powers under Entry 8 of List III in the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution to enact an anti-discrimination law that attracts civil penalties for those who engage in discriminatory practices.

### Crafted for Kerala

With the invaluable assistance of Professor Tarunabh Khaitan of Oxford University, we have drafted an anti-discrimination Bill for the Kerala government to consider introducing in the State Legislative Assembly. The Bill prohibits employers, landlords, traders, service providers, private persons performing public functions, and public authorities, from discriminating on grounds of caste, race, ethnicity, descent, sex, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, sexual orientation, religious identity, tribe, disability, linguistic identity, HIV-status, nationality, marital status, dietary preference, skin tone, physical appearance, place of residence, place of birth, age or analogous characteristics which are beyond the control of an individual or those that constitute a fundamental choice.

At the same time, the Bill balances the anti-discrimination mandate with other rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The anti-discrimination mandate can be restricted in pursuance of a legitimate objective: for instance, a drama company putting up a production of the Ramayana can insist on only male applicants for the role of Ram. That would not be discrimination in the terms covered by the law.

The Bill also introduces affirmative-action provisions whereby public authorities are obliged to progressively realise diversification of their workforces by recruiting members of disadvantaged sections excluded from society, such as transgender persons or persons with disabilities. Given the backlog in our judicial system, the Bill establishes a 'Kerala Equality Commission' to adjudicate complaints and to provide policy recommendations to the State government. Given that the proliferation of post-retirement public offices for judges does not augur well for judicial independence, the proposed commission does not follow the tried and tested model of former judges presiding over statutory bodies. Rather, appointments to the Commission are left to the political process, with substantial weightage given to the largest parties in the State, both in the Treasury and Opposition benches, to ensure bipartisan buy-in to the process.

The Bill has been forwarded both to the Law Minister of Kerala and the Leader of the Opposition with the suggestion that it should be subjected to a pre-legislative consultation process, so that democratic participation in enacting this historic law is encouraged (<https://bit.ly/3reY74Z>). If this Bill is enacted, it will be the largest expansion of civil rights in the State since the commencement of the Constitution, and it can be a model for other States to follow. We recognise that an anti-discrimination law is not a panacea for the problems of inequality and social prejudice that are deeply rooted in our society. Nevertheless, it is a necessary step – an idea whose time has come.

Shashi Tharoor is Member of Parliament for Thiruvananthapuram and an author. Arvind Kurian Abraham is a fellow at the University of Oxford

## Shaping a trilateral as Rome looks to the Indo-Pacific

In the pushback against China, strategic cooperation between India, Italy and Japan can ensure a free Indo-Pacific



HARSH V. PANT &  
MAURO BONAVITA

GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

**O**ne of the signs of India's growing centrality in the Indo-Pacific strategic architecture is its burgeoning engagement with key western nations. Even countries which have been lackadaisical in their regional outreach so far have begun to approach the Indo-Pacific with a new seriousness and have been reaching out to New Delhi.

The growth of India's weight in Indo-Pacific affairs comes at a time when it is becoming clearer that complex regional geopolitical problems cannot be addressed adequately by rigid and structured traditional alliance frameworks. This aspect is even more evident in the context of the Indo-Pacific, where the geographical vastness of the area and the criticality of the challenges posed by China's assertive initiatives clash with a region lacking multilateral organisations capable of solving problems effectively.

But as a new pushback against China takes shape and as Indian foreign policy becomes strategically clearer, there is a new momentum to initiatives such as the

Quad. Countries that share similar values and face similar challenges are coming together to create purpose-oriented partnerships. In doing so, they are making it possible for participating nations to address specific common challenges, from maritime security to a coordinated pandemic response, including consolidating and further developing strong reciprocal trade relationships, without compromising the political autonomy of each participant.

### Italy's outreach

Recently, Italy has also begun to signal its intention to enter the Indo-Pacific geography. It has done so by seeking to join India and Japan in a trilateral partnership. This initiative comes after years of Rome's relative absence from the geopolitical affairs of the region as it sought to concentrate more on the Atlantic and European dimensions while maintaining good, albeit well below potential, bilateral relations with India.

The Italian government headed by Prime Minister Mario Draghi has started to pay attention outside its immediate neighbourhood again. At the same time, Italy has become more vocal on the risks emanating from China's strategic competitive initiatives. Recently, Mr. Draghi described Chinese competitive practices as "unfair" and invited the European Union (EU) to be franker and more courageous in confronting Beijing on

its violations of human rights, reiterating that with respect to China "the reciprocal visions of the world are very different".

On the Indian side, there is great interest in forging new partnerships with like-minded countries interested in preserving peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific. During a recent India-Italy-Japan trilateral, organised by the Italian embassies in India and Japan, Riva Ganguly Das, Secretary (East) of the Ministry of External Affairs, reiterated that the responsibility of keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open, and working for the welfare of its inhabitants falls on like-minded countries within and beyond the region.

### Need for a clear strategy

With the expression of interest on the Italian side, the first step towards this trilateral has been taken, yet it needs to evolve into something more significant. The Italian government must formulate a clear Indo-Pacific strategy that must indicate its objectives and, above all, the means and ini-

tiatives it is willing to implement on its own and in cooperation with its partners. Italy's tendency to privilege diplomatic action through the mechanisms of the EU can be a resource for consolidating the EU-India strategic relationship. But Rome must go beyond that in defining and implementing, at the margins of the EU's common initiatives, its own policy with respect to the Indo-Pacific.

### Trilateral cooperation is key

The India, Italy and Japan trilateral initiative can, and should, be a forum to foster and consolidate a strategic relationship between these three countries, and specifically expand India-Italy bilateral relations. As it stands, relations between Rome and Tokyo are historically strong, and those between New Delhi and Tokyo are a strategic pillar of the free and open Indo-Pacific. A trilateral cooperation can be the right forum for India and Italy to learn more from each other's practices and interests and consolidate a strategic dialogue that should include the economic, the security and the political dimensions. The next G20 leaders' summit in Rome, in October, before the presidency handover to India in 2023, should be the right opportunity for further trilateral coordination on economic and political issues at an institutional level. To consolidate the trilateral cooperation in this field, the three countries need

A strategic trilateral between India, Italy and Japan has, in the medium to long term, a lot of potential. Their compatible economic systems can create a virtuous and mutually beneficial contribution to the reorganisation of the global supply chains that is now being reviewed by many players as a natural result of the Chinese mismanagement of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the security level, the well-defined India-Japan Indo-Pacific partnership can easily be complemented by Italy, already present in the western Indian Ocean where it is engaged in anti-piracy operations off the coast of Somalia. At the multilateral level, the three countries share the same values and the same rules-based world view. Despite these fundamental convergences, the risk inherent in missing this opportunity also exists. For this reason, a clear political will is needed from all sides, and Italy, in particular, should recognise its interests in playing a larger role towards the maintenance of a free and open Indo-Pacific. Robust India-Italy strategic ties can be the first step towards the realisation of this goal.

Harsh V. Pant is Director of Research at The Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi and Professor of International Relations at King's College London. Mauro Bonavita is a PhD candidate at King's College London



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### Sri Lankan politics

The consolidation of power by the Rajapaksa clan ('Profiles' page, July 1) is cause for concern as far as India is concerned. Mahinda Rajapaksa paid no heed to India's entreaties after the civil war ended, to devolve more powers to the Tamil areas. The brothers are even less likely to pay attention now. Beijing's vice-like grip on Sri Lankan politics will only get stronger now. The brothers are sharply aware of India's own majoritarian turn as well as its troubles with China at the border and in the region. That the Rajapaksas will continue using Beijing as a counter-weight to Delhi is a reality.

S.S. PAUL,  
Chakdaha, Nadia, West Bengal

### Exit from Kerala

It is true that many industrialists, real estate companies and corporate sectors face harassment from politicians and government agencies for various reasons. As the Kitex group has also entered the political arena in Kerala ('Profiles' page, 'Kitex Group - Business and politics', July 1), and with quite a few successes, established political heavyweights must have sensed a threat. It is indeed unfortunate that politics could have resulted in Kerala losing a huge investment opportunity. There is no harm in corporate entities getting into politics. We have some examples in Parliament.

J.P. REDDY,  
Nalgonda, Telangana

### Professional conduct

As a commoner, with no formal education or sufficient knowledge of our Constitution, acts, laws and rules, I feel prompted to raise some innocent questions in connection with the article, "The bar on criticism that muzzles the advocate" (Editorial page, July 10). Is it advisable to leave unnoticed 'disparaging statements' by any advocate about courts, judges, Bar Councils and members of Bar Councils, or, for that matter, by any citizen about any other citizen? Are not disciplinary proceedings a form of remedy to the situation? Does not the subject come under professional conduct and etiquette? Is not the Bar Council of India the proper agency to issue

amendments to rules in respect of advocates? If the mandatory approval of the Chief Justice of India for such amendments is not obtained, the Council looks to be at fault, which surely needs rectification. The now-in-abeyance rules have already exempted 'healthy and bona fide' criticism, made in 'good faith' from the purview of the new rules. The writer of the article should be confident that the report of the Review Committee, and its scrutiny by the CJI, should solve the issue amicably.

P.R.V. RAJA.  
Pandalam, Kerala

### On recusal

For the past couple of years, we have been seeing brazen attempts by vested interests to cast aspersions

on judges in an attempt to influence verdicts in high profile cases (Inside pages, "Judge recuses from Mamata's election case", July 8). The Supreme Court should adopt a policy of zero tolerance towards covert attempts to intimidate judges into withdrawing from cases assigned to them. Supreme Court judge Kaushik Chanda did not score any moral victory by recusing himself from the Mamata Banerjee election case, notwithstanding his indignant assertions about his professional integrity. It is a victory for his malignants because he has unwittingly created a moral hazard of emboldening powerful interests to interfere in the administration of justice.

### To read more letters online, scan the QR code



The fine of ₹5 lakh imposed on Ms Banerjee is a pyrrhic victory for judicial independence.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN,  
Thiruvananthapuram

### At Wimbledon

The Wimbledon women's final ('Sport' page, July 11) stood embellished by Karolina Pliskova. While Ashleigh Barty came through as an archetypal serve and volley tennis mannequin, Pliskova was the confident, pesky nymph of the court. Barty laboured over her game with resolve while Pliskova enjoyed hers. If one played more for the cup, the other strove to thrill the viewer.

R. NARAYANAN,  
Navi Mumbai

# Tapping on the potential of the youth

It is critical that we safeguard young people's well-being because India's welfare hinges on them



POONAM MUTTREJA & DIPA NAG CHOUDHURY

World Population Day is marked on July 11 every year to focus attention on the importance of population-related issues. It was first observed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1989 and aims to raise the discourse on sustainable ways to safeguard each life that adds up to a population.

As flagged by a UNDP report last year, and subsequently in a global study by *The Lancet*, India will stabilise its population 12 years earlier than expected. Therefore, the window India has to leverage its 'demographic dividend' is narrower than we had thought. Fears of a 'population explosion' are misplaced; instead, it is critical that we focus our attention on safeguarding young people's well-being because India's welfare hinges on them.

#### Impact of the pandemic

At 253 million, India's adolescent population is among the largest. Over 62% of India is aged between 15 and 59 years, and the median age of the population is less than 30 years. India's 'demographic dividend' represents the potential for economic growth based on the age structure of the population. However, transforming this potential into reality requires adolescents and the youth to be healthy and well-educated.

Even before COVID-19 caused country-wide school closures, India's underfunded education system was inadequately equipped to provide the skills young people need to take advantage of emerging employment opportunities. According to the World Bank, public expenditure on education constituted 4.4% of GDP in 2019 and only 3.4% of GDP in 2020. Another report revealed that India stands 62nd in terms of public expenditure per student, and fares badly in quality of education measures such as student-teacher ratios. Coupled with the impact of COVID-19, this paints a bleak picture of the state of education today.



MURALI KUMAR K.

In India, more than 32 crore students have been affected by the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19. Of these, about 15.8 crore are female. The number of schoolgirls who are impacted is 158 million and many of those who have dropped out are unlikely to go back to school. Schools have remained closed even in remote areas where the effect of the pandemic has been minimal. Studies show that school closures have a serious impact on the lives and mental well-being of children.

The impact of the pandemic on adolescents has been severe. A survey by the International Labour Organization reveals that 65% of adolescents worldwide reported having learnt less during the pandemic, and 51% felt that their learning would be further delayed. It also highlighted that adolescent mental well-being has taken a big blow, with 17% of young people likely to be suffering from anxiety and depression.

It is important, therefore, for policymakers to balance the risks of transmission through children with the harm of prolonged school closures. By prioritising the vaccination of teachers and school support staff and also allowing a decentralised approach where district-level officials may reopen schools based on local COVID-19 transmission rates, schools could be opened in a safe and phased manner. In Odisha, for example, community schools have re-opened in some areas. Students wear face masks and sit physically distanced from each other outdoors under sheds or tents. With some innovation and creativity, opening schools with a mix of online and offline options

could be an important step to addressing the learning needs and mental well-being of adolescents.

Increased poverty levels during the pandemic may well have led to a worrying spurt in early marriages of girls in India. As demographers like Shireen Jejeebhoy note, while child marriage as a strategy to address household poverty has been noted in India in general, it has registered an alarming rise during the pandemic.

This is linked with increases in gender-based violence. Adolescent girls are at high risk during times like these, given their vulnerability to abuse and trafficking, especially if primary caregivers fall ill or die.

Restricted mobility due to lockdowns puts girls at risk of violence at home at the hands of caregivers or partners.

The impact of the crisis on adolescents, especially girls, is of gigantic proportions, but the problem is not irredeemable, provided we dis-

play firm commitment to implementing quick and effective strategies to overcome the challenges.

#### The way forward

We are living through a global crisis and the road ahead is uncertain. This will have long-standing effects on adolescents and youth. Recognising that COVID-19 has affected all dimensions of the lives of youth, collaborative actions by key ministries, government agencies, and civil society will be central to developing a holistic and meaningful solution. It is imperative that we have in place mechanisms for better inter-sectoral collaboration as we move to safeguard the futures of our adolescents.

School mid-day meals, for example,

exemplify how improved nutrition benefits learning. Not only do they provide an incentive for parents to send their children to school on the assurance of one nutritious meal; they also provide the calorie intake required to stay alert in the classroom. Studies have established strong links between nutrition and cognitive scores among teenagers. Coordination across departments can enable better solutions and greater efficiencies in tackling the crisis that our adolescents face.

Much could be gained if the Ministry of Education took steps to ensure that adolescents, especially girls, continue their education during the pandemic. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare must collaborate with the Education Ministry to disseminate key information to help adolescents safeguard their health and ability to learn.

Given that school closures have impacted access to schemes such as the delivery of menstrual hygiene products to adolescents, teachers can work as volunteers for collaborating with frontline health workers to distribute sanitary napkins to girls. To address the mental health of adolescents, the Health and Education Ministries should strengthen outreach via existing helplines and by enabling conversations on critical issues regarding their reproductive and sexual health.

There is enough academic research to demonstrate how the demographic dividend contributed to growth in other countries, especially during East Asia's economic miracle of 1965-1990. During that period, East Asia's working age population grew at a faster rate than its dependent population, thereby expanding the per capita productivity of these economies. This occurred because East Asian countries developed social, economic, and political institutions and policies that allowed them to realise the growth potential created by the transition.

Improving the lives of our adolescents in mission mode would lift their lives, but also generate a virtuous cycle with healthier and educated young adults contributing substantially to securing India's future.

Poonam Muttreja is Executive Director and Dipa Nag Choudhury is Director of Programmes, Population Foundation of India

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## Secrecy is a weapon

Journalists are forced to rely on sources and form an opinion based on conjectures



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

In 2014, when writer Perumal Murugan was forced to go silent for a period due to the excesses of a caste-based vigilante group with the backing of the district administration, there was justifiable outrage among writers and artists. There were protest meetings across Tamil Nadu. In one such meeting, a group of young artists came up with numerous posters that demanded that the freedom of expression be upheld. After the meeting, I was presented with a set of posters which were based on the poems by the modern Tamil poet, Atmanam. These posters adorn my office and constantly remind me not to take free speech for granted.

#### Right to free speech

In journalism, we talk about two forms of censorship: one imposed by external forces and the other imposed by us on ourselves due to fear. Though Mr. Murugan was granted relief by the High Court, legal scholar Gautam Bhatia, in his article "The fault in our speech" (July 7, 2016), pointed out the limitations in the court's approach. The judgment was based on three rather restrictive arguments: "First, that the book has won many prizes, and has gained critical acclaim; second, that Indian culture had always celebrated sexuality until the Victorian British suppressed it; and third, that read as a whole, the book is not intended to titillate or eroticise, but instead, to make a broader point about how social pressures can impact individual lives."

Mr. Bhatia rightly argued that "for speech to be truly free, the judiciary must stop asking literature to justify its aesthetic or its politics before the Bar, whether mediated by an awards jury or not". Throughout South Asia, writers, poets and journalists often invoke the legendary Faiz Ahmad Faiz to defend our right to express ourselves fully. His poetry 'Bol (Speak)' galvanised many for decades to fight for the fundamental right to free speech. He wrote: "Speak, for your lips are free; speak, for your tongue is still yours. Your upright body belongs to you; speak, for your soul still is yours".

What unites a legal mind like Mr. Bhatia and a cultural icon like Mr. Faiz is their un-

ending quest to secure rights for everyone. Mr. Faiz wrote the Report of the 1968 Standing Committee on Art and Culture, which was forgotten not only in Pakistan but across South Asia. It is important for courts and the governments to listen to Mr. Faiz. He wrote: "Culture is lived and evolved by the whole community... The arts are not a luxury. They are an important factor in a nation's mental and moral health and productive efficiency."

There is a body of literature about freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Such works talk about the excesses of governments and the legal recourse. But there are no clues in literature on how to deal with a government which makes its decisions in total secrecy. James Madison, author of the Bill of Rights in the U.S., once said that "a popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it is but a prologue to farce or a tragedy or perhaps both". In India, now there is very little credible popular information. Journalists are forced to rely on sources and form an opinion based on conjectures.

#### Official silence

On July 7, Prime Minister Narendra Modi effected a major reshuffle in his Cabinet. Beyond headline management by the government, citizens know very little about the factors that led to this change. The strap line that accompanied the reshuffle story on the front page of this newspaper read: "Move aimed at bringing in qualified professionals and balancing regional and community aspirations in the run-up to upcoming elections".

I was intrigued by two sentences in the story. One read: "Government sources termed it an effort by Mr. Modi to strike a balance between political messaging of including MPs from various regional centres as well as from marginalised communities and beefing up the skill set of the ministries with professionally and educationally qualified additions." And the other said: "Several ministries have been clubbed together, sources say, to increase synergy." Why should journalists rely on sources for such perfectly legitimate and democratically valid reasons? Why was there no official briefing? Journalists are forced to cite sources because of the official silence. How do we address this important democratic deficit? The government is aware that secrecy is a potent weapon. It is no longer a prologue to farce or tragedy. It is tragedy.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## A ride to safety

Uber and UNESCO are coming together to offer a 'Free rides for teachers' vaccination' campaign

ERIC FALT

The world is not yet out of the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to take a high toll on populations and economies. This unprecedented health crisis has also severely impacted the gains made in the education sector over the last few years. In India alone, 1.5 million schools shut down in 2020, affecting 320 million learners and impacting their education, protection and well-being.

Throughout this pandemic, the exceptional effort undertaken by teachers must be highlighted. Using the resources available to them, Indian teachers mobilised as one and have remained on the front-lines of education to ensure continuity of learning, often against formidable odds, even though the pandemic claimed the lives of many of them.

As the country steps up its efforts to tackle the devastating effects of the second wave of COVID-19, the national vaccination campaign has assumed greater importance than ever before, so that we can finally move to a 'new normal'. There is an urgent need to better recognise teachers as front-line workers and prioritise them in the vaccination campaign.

While this has already been done by many State governments, the model should be replicated nationwide. This will not only speed up the reopening of schools so that students can get back to 'in person' learning, but will also provide safety.

#### Barriers to vaccination

Mass vaccination campaigns do not solely depend on the availability of vaccines. Such efforts are always hindered by a lack of suitable transport facilities, and difficult or prolonged travel time to the vaccination sites.

Teachers, like anyone else, may be worried about travelling long distances to the vaccination centres for fear of contracting the virus on public transport and may not be able to access other means of conveyance.

Keeping these limitations in mind and to support the process of swift vaccination for teachers initiated by the government, the ride-sharing company Uber and UNESCO are coming together to offer a 'Free rides for teachers' vaccination' campaign

to provide teachers with the means to travel to the vaccination centres in a safe manner while offsetting the costs of traveling long distances.

The initiative offers 1,00,000 rides to 25,000 teachers to and from vaccination centres to get the two vaccine doses. The offer will be implemented in Chennai, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli in Tamil Nadu. The rides will be made available via a promotional code communicated to the teachers with a detailed pictorial brochure to help them download the application and use the code.

#### Global partnerships

The impact of the pandemic across the globe necessitates a coordinated response. Last year, UNESCO launched the Global Education Coalition (GEC), a platform for collaboration to protect the right to education during the pandemic and beyond.

The coalition brings together more than 175 members from the UN family, civil society, academia, and the private sector focusing on three key issues, namely connectivity, teachers, and gender to ensure continuous access to education for all.

As we now begin to re-imagine education in a post-COVID-19 world, we must remember that renewed cooperation between governments and the private sector can go a long way in combating this crisis. Through our partnership with Uber, we wish to acknowledge the continued commitment of teachers to their students and their critical role in contributing to the achievement of the 2030 targets under Sustainable Development Goal 4.

In this crisis, teachers have shown great leadership and innovation in ensuring that #LearningNeverStops, and that no learner is left behind. They have also helped in communicating measures that prevent the spread of the virus and providing assistance to ensure the mental well-being of all children. An accelerated vaccination process will enable them to stand fully ready when schools reopen.

Eric Falt is the Director and Representative of the UNESCO New Delhi Cluster Office covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka

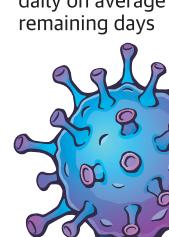
#### DATA POINT

## Vaccination rate slows down

The rate of daily COVID-19 vaccinations in India decreased in the first 10 days of July compared to the last 10 days of June when the new vaccination policy was introduced. However, the rate in July was still higher than the daily inoculation rate recorded before the new policy came into force. Between July 1 and 10, 4.03 million doses were administered on average daily in the country, which is significantly lower than the average of 5.57 million doses administered daily between June 21 and 30. The seven-day rolling average of shots administered per day fell to 3.54 million by July 10. The average number of daily inoculations fell in most major States in July, with Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat registering the highest drops. U.P., Punjab and Bihar recorded marginal increases. By The Hindu Data Team

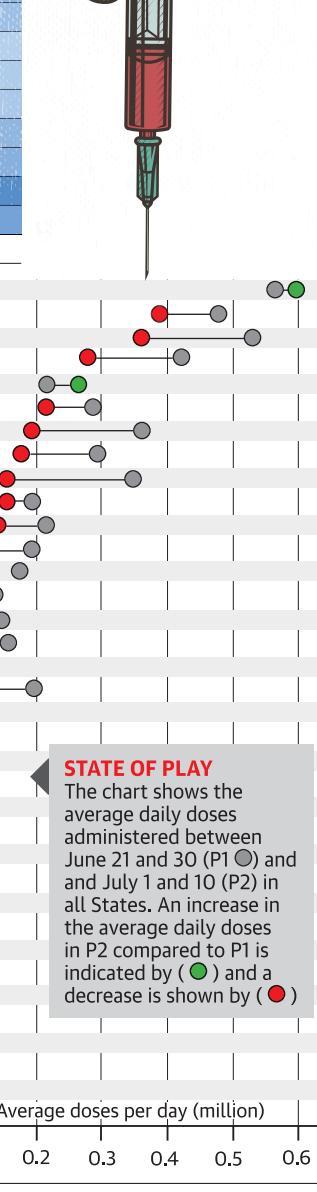
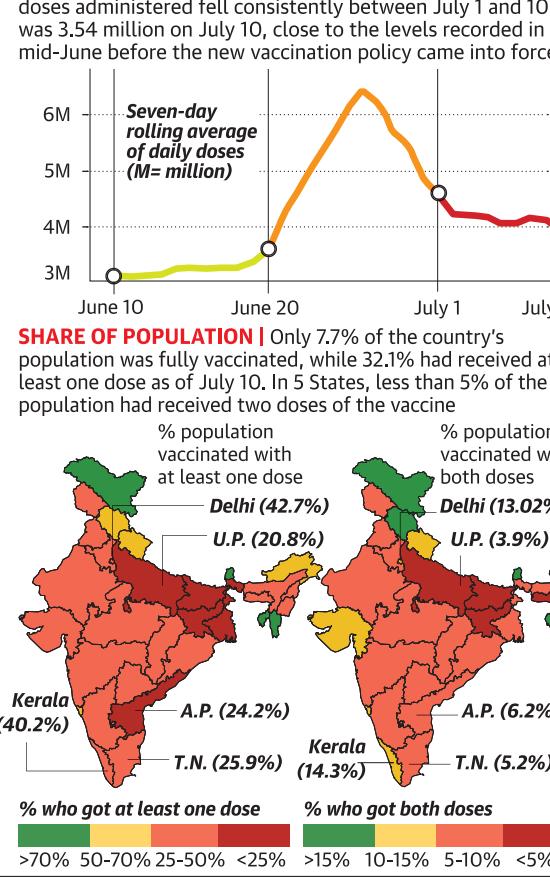
#### PACE DROPS

From July 1 to 10, 4.03 million doses were administered daily on average. To vaccinate all adults by December 31, 8.65 million doses need to be administered daily on average in the remaining days



Phases	Doses / day (mn)	Total doses by Dec. 31 (mn)
Phase 1 pace (Jan 16 - Feb 27)	0.34	119.18
Phase 2 pace (Mar 1 - Mar 10)	1.14	363.78
Phase 2 pace (Mar 11 - Mar 20)	1.89	587.57
Phase 2 pace (Mar 21 - Mar 30)	1.85	574.13
Phase 3 pace (Apr 1 - Apr 10)	<b>3.65</b>	<b>1,071.89</b>
Phase 3 pace (Apr 11 - Apr 20)	2.85	860.34
Phase 3 pace (Apr 21 - Apr 30)	2.49	766.80
Phase 4 pace (May 1 - May 10)	1.77	590.91
Phase 4 pace (May 11 - May 20)	1.92	625.11
Phase 4 pace (May 21 - May 30)	2.13	672.69
Phase 4 pace (June 1 - June 10)	3.00	861.89
Phase 4 pace (June 11 - June 20)	3.40	942.09
Phase 5 pace (June 21 - June 30)	<b>5.57</b>	<b>1,365.78</b>
Phase 5 pace (July 1 - July 10)	<b>4.03</b>	<b>1,081.28</b>
Target pace (July 11 - Dec 31)	<b>8.65</b>	<b>1,889.41</b>

**SUSTAINED FALL** | The seven-day rolling average of daily doses administered fell consistently between July 1 and 10. It was 3.54 million on July 10, close to the levels recorded in mid-June before the new vaccination policy came into force



## FROM PAGE ONE

## Chinese protest against Indian celebration

"We don't understand Mandarin. They had scribbled something on the banner. They stood there for about half an hour," Mr. Tsewang told *The Hindu*.

"The land where they stood and protested on the Dalai Lama's birthday is our land. It belongs to India," he stated.

Videos shared by Mr. Tsewang showed a group of men holding a long banner in red with words on it. They are also seen carrying the Chinese flag.

When contacted, Army authorities chose not to comment on the Chinese action. Mr. Tsewang stated that 10 days ago, the Chinese also protested when the locals were setting up a solar pump.

Last Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted the Dalai Lama in a phone call on the occasion of his 86th birthday.

This is the first time Mr. Modi has publicly confirmed speaking with the Dalai Lama since he took over.

er as PM in 2014.

The developments come against the backdrop of a continuing deadlock in the talks at various levels to resolve the ongoing military stand-off in eastern Ladakh.

While the first phase of disengagement at Pangong Tso was completed in February, efforts to work out an agreement for the second phase of disengagement at Gogra and Hot Springs have been held up. Other friction areas at Demchok and Depsang still remain.

## 2019 incident

A similar incident had occurred in the area in 2019 as well. In July 2019, as villagers held a local festival to celebrate the Dalai Lama's birthday, at least 11 Chinese men in civilian clothing came close to the LAC and raised banners from across the river bank which read, "Ban all activity to split Tibet".

The LAC in the area runs along the Indus river.

## Dhami holds off on Kanwar yatra decision

This is also the concern of the medical officers tasked with controlling the pandemic on the ground. "There was complete panic among the people during the second wave, with a shortage of oxygen, ventilators and ICU beds. We are taking steps to ensure all these facilities are there in the event of a third wave. But people must also follow the COVID protocols," said Ajay Kumar Nagarkar, additional chief medical officer for Haridwar, who initially handled oxygen management in the district's COVID control room before he himself tested positive near the end of April, along with his entire family.

Any decision regarding the Kanwar Yatra will be taken at the policy and administration level, he insisted.

He added that the COVID care centres and hospitals will have to set up booths to cater to the three crore plus pilgrims expected, apart from the local population.

"Staffing such booths is a challenge with our manpower. Increased testing will be needed, but our testing capacity is limited," he said, noting that about 3,000 people are currently tested on a random sampling basis at the district's border points.

Uttarakhand is also facing a shortage of vaccines.

## 'High command will decide on CM change'

Mr. Baghel, who played a key role in overseeing the Congress' campaign in the recent Assam Assembly, is likely to be given major responsibility for the U.P. elections as well. Congress treasurer Pawan Kumar Bansal and senior leader from U.P., Rajeev Shukla, were also part of the hour-long meeting at 10 Janpath on Sunday.

In April, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister's parliamentary advisor, Rajesh Tiwari, who played a key role in

## First report on compliance from Twitter

These persons have to be residents in India.

Twitter has already appointed an interim chief compliance officer and is expected to appoint a nodal officer soon.

In its compliance report, titled "India Transparency Report", Twitter has provided data on the different categories of complaints from users and action taken on them as well as provided information on its proactive monitoring efforts. Between May 26, 2021 and June 25, 2021, Twitter received a total of 38 complaints, which resulted in action against

133 URLs. Of these, the largest number of complaints pertained to defamation (20), followed by abuse or harassment (6) and sensitive adult content (4).

Twitter also processed 56 grievances appealing for suspension of user accounts, of which seven were overturned and remaining suspended.

The social media giant has also said that proactive monitoring of user content led to suspension of 18,385 accounts for child sexual exploitation and 4,179 accounts for terrorism related activities globally.

## Shah launches projects in Gandhinagar

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Amit Shah, on a two-day visit to Gujarat and his parliamentary constituency Gandhinagar, launched several development works on Sunday and praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for "creating systems" for uninterrupted development in the State

and the country. He laid the foundation stone of projects worth ₹244 crore in Ahmedabad and surrounding areas, which are part of his constituency. The Minister is scheduled to attend the Gujarat Forensic Science University convocation, visit the Lord Jagannath temple during Rath Yatra apart from touring constituency.

## New IT rules are empowering and will protect users: Minister

They will ensure a safer and more responsible social media ecosystem in India'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Information Technology and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Sunday said the new information technology rules were empowering and protecting users.

The new IT rules will ensure a safer and more responsible social media ecosystem in India, the Minister said.

"Reviewed the implementation and compliance of Information Technology Rules, 2021 along with my colleague Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar ji. These guidelines are empowering and protecting users and will ensure a safer and responsible social media ecosystem in

India," Mr. Vaishnaw said in a post on the Koo platform, Twitter's Indian competitor.

The new rules, which came into effect from May 25, mandate social media companies to establish a grievance redress mechanism for resolving complaints from the users or victims. All significant social media companies with a user

dents of India.

However, Facebook-owned WhatsApp has challenged the new IT rules for social media intermediaries requiring the messaging app to trace chats and make provisions to identify the first originator of information, saying they violate the right to privacy and are unconstitutional.

WhatsApp further alleged the requirement of intermediaries enabling the identification of the first originator of information in India upon government or court order puts end-to-end encryption and its benefits "at risk".

Some of the media houses have also challenged the new IT rules and the matter is sub judice.

All of them should be resi-

## Naqvi slams critics of U.P.'s population policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LUCKNOW

Hitting out at those critical of the Yogi Adityanath government's steps aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh, Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Sunday said the people doing politics or giving communal colour to such efforts were "enemies" of the State and the country.

While addressing the newly elected representatives of panchayats on his two-day visit to Rampur, the BJP leader said population control is the need of the hour and it is heartening that the campaign for population control is being started from the local self-government, the draft says.

which is India's most populous State.

The policy comes at a time when the Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission has prepared the proposed draft Bill under which a two-child norm would be implemented and promoted.

A person who will have more than two children after the law comes into force would be debarred from several benefits such as government sponsored welfare schemes and from contesting elections to local authority or any body of the local self-government, the draft says.

Ration card units would be limited to four members of a family.

## On the draw



## HAL set to deliver first batch of 3 LCH

These are part of 15 Limited Series Production copters approved for Army, IAF

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is gearing up to deliver the first batch of three Light Combat Helicopters (LCH) to the Indian Air Force (IAF) once acceptance tests are completed. These are part of the 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) helicopters approved for the Army and the IAF.

"HAL has received Letter of Intent for five Air Force and five Army LCH for delivery pending contract finalisation of 15 Limited Series Production (LSP) LCH. HAL has produced and signalled out three LSP LCH for the IAF. Same will be subjected to customer acceptance and training shortly," a HAL source said.

On the remaining helicopters of the LSP series, the source added, "In the current year we are producing four LCH for Army and two for the Air Force. Remaining six LCH will be produced

next year." The deal for the 15 LCH was expected to have been signed in the first quarter of 2021 but has been delayed due to the second wave of the pandemic.

The IAF has put forward a requirement for 65 LCH and the Army for 114 helicopters. Of the 15 LSP helicopters, 10 are for the IAF and five for the Army. The LCH, the lightest attack helicopter in the world weighing 5.5 tonnes, has been designed and developed by the HAL to meet

the specific and unique requirements of the Indian armed forces and can operate at heights of 12,000 feet.

The Army Aviation operates smaller utility helicopters but does not have attack helicopters in its fleet and has for sometime pitched for attack helicopters of its own to operate with its strike Corps. The attack helicopter fleet is operated by the Air Force which provides close air support to the Army.

The IAF operates the older Mi-25 and Mi-35 Russian

attack helicopters which are in the process of being phased out and has inducted 22 AH-64E Apache attack helicopters from the U.S. The Army will also start receiving the Apache attack helicopters from early 2023 onwards, six of which have been contracted under an estimated \$800-mn deal from the U.S. in February 2020.

Presently, the Army has 90 Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and 75 Rudra, weaponised ALH, helicopters in service which are indigenously designed and developed by the HAL in addition to around 160 older Cheetah and Chetak utility helicopters which are in need of urgent replacement.

Last August, amid the ongoing standoff with China in Eastern Ladakh, two LCH were deployed for operations at high altitude in Leh at short notice to support IAF missions, validating their capability.

## Bihar's Kesaria Buddha stupa waterlogged

Floods reported in some parts of the district after rainfall in the catchment areas



Cause for concern: Buildings surrounded by flood water in East Champaran, Bihar. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

AMARNATH TEWARY  
PATNA

The world-famous Kesaria Buddha stupa in east Champaran district of Bihar was waterlogged following floods in some parts of the district after heavy rainfall in the catchment areas of river Gandak in neighbouring Nepal.

East and West Champaran districts share their borders with Nepal at many places.

**Issue of concern'**

"Since it is waterlogged from all sides, it is feared that it may suffer damage. But, even last year too the stupa was waterlogged," said an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) official in Patna over phone.

"It is indeed an issue of serious concern," he added

preferring anonymity.

The stupa, located about 110 km from the State capital Patna, has a circumference of almost 400 feet and stands at a height of about 104 feet. The first construc-

tion of the nationally protected stupa is dated to the 3rd century BCE.

It is regarded as the largest Buddhist stupa in the world and has been drawing tourists from across several

Buddhist countries.

The stupa's exploration had started in the early 19th century after its discovery by Colonel Mackenzie in 1814. Later, it was excavated by General Cunningham in 1861-62 and in 1998 an ASI team led by archaeologist K.K. Muhammad had excavated the site properly.

The original Kesaria stupa is said to date back to the time of emperor Ashoka (circa 250 BCE) as the remains of an Ashokan pillar was discovered there. The local people call the stupa "devayaya," meaning "house of gods".

The ASI has declared it a protected monument.

However, a larger part of the stupa is yet to be developed as it remains under thick vegetation.

## Psychoanalysis test done on blast accused

Police say two are telling 'partial truth'

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

Results of the psychoanalysis test of four students arrested from Ladakh in connection with a blast near the Israel Embassy in New Delhi in January found that two of them were telling "partial truth" regarding their role in the blast outside the Israel Embassy," the officer said.

"We are going through the test report to find out what's the 'partial truth' the accused are hiding from the police. If required, we will take the help of experts and question them again," the officer added.

The police said all four accused had been in Delhi on the day of the blast and their phones were found to have been switched off. Five mobile phones had been recovered from them.

After detailed investigation, they were taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences for a psychoanalysis test by a panel of expert doctors.

"The test result shared by doctors mentioned that two of them were telling 'partial truth' regarding their role in the blast outside the Israel Embassy," the officer said.

"We are going through the test report to find out what's the 'partial truth' the accused are hiding from the police. If required, we will take the help of experts and question them again," the officer added.

The police said all four accused had been in Delhi on the day of the blast and their phones were found to have been switched off. Five mobile phones had been recovered from them.

A minor IED (improvised explosive device) blast took place outside the embassy on January 29. There were no casualties.

## Two held for plotting attacks in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

The police on Sunday arrested two persons on suspicion that they were allegedly planning to carry out terror attacks in parts of eastern Uttar Pradesh and Lucknow ahead of Independence Day.

The Anti-Terror Squad, which made the arrests from two locations here, claimed to have recovered explosives from the two suspects. The police claimed the men were working for a local module of terror outfit Al-Qaeda.

The two were identified as Minhaaz Ahmad and Maseeruddin.

## Prisoners wait for SC's bail order to arrive by post

Convicts have spent 14-20 years in jail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GAZIABAD

It has been three days since the Supreme Court granted immediate interim bail to 13 convicts lodged in the Agra Central Jail but the inmates are yet to walk free as jail authorities are waiting to receive the order by post. The convicts have spent between 14 and 20 years in prison despite being juveniles at the time of committing the crime.

V.K. Singh, Senior Superintendent of Agra Central Jail, said they were waiting for the certified copy of the SC's order. "We will follow the due process. After the top court's order, they will surely be released but only after receiving the physical copy of the order," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*. "It has been dispatched and it should reach us any time." A source in the prison said the order was expected to reach them on Monday. "The SC took only a week to pass the order in favour of the petitioners but it seems it will take another week to get them released from a Central Jail in Uttar Pradesh," said lawyer Rishi Malhotra, who represented the convicts.

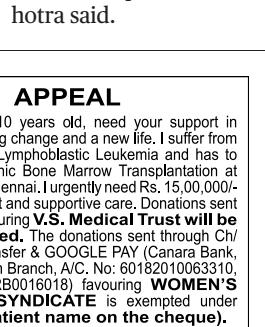
According to the Juvenile Justice Act 2000, the maximum sentence for juvenile offenders is three years in a juvenile correction home.

He said the convicts had spent a good part of their lives behind bars because of ignorance and a lack of good legal aid at the trial stage. "The 13 prisoners had not taken the defence of juvenility during the trial stage," he said.

In 2012, the Allahabad High Court directed the Juvenile Justice Board to determine the ages of prisoners, following which 13 were found to be juvenile offenders. "All of them were convicted for murder and were given life terms," said Mr. Malhotra.

According to the Juvenile Justice Act 2000, the maximum sentence for juvenile offenders is three years in a juvenile correction home.

"On one hand, jail authorities complain that the jails are overpopulated and on the other, they perpetuate red-tapism," Mr. Malhotra said.



APPEAL  
I Harinath, 10 years old, need your support in bringing a lasting change and a new life. I suffer from T Cell - Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and has to undergo Allogenic Bone Marrow Transplantation at V.S. Hospital and Research Institute, Bangalore. The cost of treatment and supportive care, Donations sent by Ch.D. Favouring V.S. Medical Trust will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch. D.D. NEFT Transfer and GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C. No: 60182010063310, IFSC No. CNRB0016018) favouring WOMEN'S WELFARE SY

'Stan Swamy's death cannot be justified'

STAFF REPORTER  
PUNE

Launching a broadside at the Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government over the death of Father Stan Swamy, Shiv Sena MP and party spokesperson Sanjay Raut on Sunday said that the "murder" of the octogenarian tribal rights activist in prison could not be justified, while comparing the Modi regime with that of the fascist governments of Benito Mussolini and Adolf Hitler.

In his column *Rokhthok* in the Sena's mouthpiece *Saamana*, Mr. Raut questioned whether India's foundations had become so weak that the Modi government feared its overthrow by an 84-year-old Jesuit priest and activist. Mr. Raut said the death of the "disabled and helpless Father Swamy" in prison could not be justified even if Maoists and Naxals were more dangerous than Kashmiri separatists.

'Both UPA, NDA misused probe agencies'

STAFF REPORTER  
PUNE

Both the erstwhile United Progressive Alliance and the current National Democratic Alliance government have misused the Central probe agencies to settle political scores, said Maharashtra Sena chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday, commenting on the recent spate of Enforcement Directorate actions against the leadership of the ruling 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' government.

"The ED is not some tool in the hands of the Central government that it can use to topple whosoever it did not like," he said.

The MNS president was responding to questions on the ED's questioning of NCP leader Eknath Khadse and the agency's arrest of his son-in-law in a money laundering case related to a dubious land deal in Pune's Bhosari area.

# Kandahar evacuation is temporary, says MEA

Consulate-General hasn't been closed, says Ministry

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI



Afghan security personnel on duty in Kandahar amid growing fighting.

*Hindu* reported that India has closed diplomatic operations at Kandahar temporarily. The Indian personnel were seen on Saturday leaving the premises of the mission in a cavalcade of official vehicles.

"The Consulate continues to operate through our local staff members. Arrangements are being made to ensure continued delivery of visa and consular services through our Embassy in Kabul," said Mr. Bagchi. The diplomatic mission in Kandahar

serves as an important coordinating centre for the large number of medical tourists who seek treatment in India and obstructions and delays in visa acquisition can create challenges for Afghan citizens intending to visit Indian hospitals.

The security situation in Kandahar continues to remain grim with fierce fighting going on in the suburbs and in nearby areas that have been taken over by the Taliban fighters. Taliban fighters on Friday attacked the jail in Kandahar that holds a large number of veterans of the Taliban movement.

Indian missions in Afghanistan were targeted by terrorists in the past and Saturday's evacuation is, therefore, being interpreted as a measure to ensure the safety and security of the people employed at the Indian Consulate-General.

# Pressure fuse points to Pakistani hand'

Sources say LeT may have got help from the ISI or the Army in fabricating IEDs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAMMU/NEW DELHI

The "pressure fuse" used in the bombs dropped on the Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Jammu through drones in a first-of-its-kind attack in India indicates that some elements of the Pakistan Army or the ISI helped terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba in fabricating the IEDs, according to security sources.

The improvised explosive device (IED) that pierced the rooftop of one of the IAF buildings at the Jammu airport carried less than 1 kg of RDX and a cocktail of other chemicals, whereas the one that was dropped on the ground contained a little over 1 kg of the deadly explosives along with some ball bearings, they said. The sources said the IED used in the June 27 attack "definitely" contained the technical expertise of the Pakistani military. The 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani Army.

A 'pressure fuse' is generally used in minefields, anti-



Security concerns: On June 27, bombs were dropped by drones at the IAF base in Jammu. ■ PTI

tank mines and those dropped by the air force in the fuselage between the explosive and main detonator of a shell or an IED. The explosive devices are activated by the pressure of either falling on the ground with force or some individual or vehicle passing over it.

However, in these sophisticated IEDs, the 'pressure fuse' had been deployed at the nose of the bombs so that they trigger with a force after falling on the ground, the sources said. Most of the artillery shells and mortar bombs have this type of fuse,

The second one was on the ground. Notably, of late, Pakistan has been procuring armed drones from China and Turkey.

The sources said drones could fly up to three hours and could be monitored and manoeuvred remotely through the Global Positioning System (GPS) technology. The aerial distance from the Jammu airport to the International Border is 14 km.

In September last year, five Lok Sabha members from the YSR Congress had asked whether the government had issued any guidelines in light of the possibility of drones being used as weapons of attack on high-security installations.

The then Minister of State for Home, G.K. Reddy, had

stated, "In order to counter the threat of drones in the country, necessary guidelines have been issued, which include measures to be taken by the Central and the State governments in consultation with the security agencies."

# NIA raids seven locations in Kashmir, seizes digital devices

Case pertains to alleged 'online radicalisation' by ISIS

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday raided multiple locations in the Kashmir valley, questioned locals and seized digital devices in a case regarding online radicalisation by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in India.



One of the locations raided by the NIA on Sunday in Kashmir. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

"The NIA conducted simultaneous searches in Srinagar and Anantnag at seven locations. During the searches, a large number of incriminating documents and digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, laptops, hard disks and T-Shirts having ISIS logo were recovered and seized," said an NIA spokesman.

A case was registered by the NIA on June 29, 2021, under the Indian Penal Code and the UAPA in connection with the alleged conspiracy

of ISIS to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth in India and wage violent jihad against India.

"An investigation in the case continues," the spokesman said.

According to the NIA, in order to execute the plan, a campaign has been launched over cyberspace, which is supplemented by on-ground terror financing activities.

"ISIS terrorists operating from various conflict zones along with ISIS cadres in India, by assuming pseudo-online identities, have created a network wherein ISIS-related propaganda material is disseminated for radicalising and recruiting members to the fold of ISIS," the NIA said.

## Back with a vengeance



Jam-packed: Heavy traffic at Patnitop, a hill station in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. The Health Ministry has warned that crowding at hill stations can lead to the spread of COVID-19. ■ PTI

## RSS assigns Arun Kumar to coordinate with the BJP

He replaces Krishna Gopal ahead of elections next year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

In an ongoing meeting of the full-time pracharakas of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) at Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh, a significant organisational change was introduced by replacing joint general secretary Krishna Gopal with Arun Kumar, another joint general secretary, as its coordinator on political issues and with the BJP.

The position is considered sensitive as it involves coordinating with the BJP-led government and the party on political issues, and assumes more importance by the fact that Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Uttarakhand are to go to Assembly elections next year. One joint general

secretary (organisation) is also likely to be seconded to the BJP, said sources.

RSS prachar pramukh Sunil Ambekar confirmed the change that Mr. Kumar, recently made joint general secretary in the RSS, was to hold the coordinator's position, but maintained that this was a routine organisational shuffle.

Mr. Kumar's taking charge of the post was considered imminent after he was elevated to the joint general secretary post. Earlier in the year, Dattatreya Hosabale was made second-in-command of the RSS or the general secretary.

The last time such a change had taken place, that is when Mr. Krishna Gopal was appointed coordinator,

was around 2014-15, when the Modi government had just taken over.

RSS sources said more changes in kshetra pracharakas, or areas in-charge, were also being firmed up at the three-day meet, including moving around personnel from West Bengal, where the BJP lost the Assembly polls, and in Rajasthan as well, say sources.

In an annual report released earlier in the day, the RSS said that 39,454 of its shakhas were operating across the country and that it will undertake a nationwide training of its workers to do aid work for the possible third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the aim was to reach 2.5 lakh spots with this aid work.

## Nadda chairs meet with BJP secretaries

Party prepares for upcoming elections

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

BJP president J.P. Nadda chaired a meeting with the party's national secretaries on Sunday, where he reviewed the organisational activities and the preparations for the upcoming Assembly elections in five States.

They later called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his official residence here and briefed him.

This was Mr. Nadda's first physical meeting with these BJP office-bearers following their appointment last year.

A party leader noted that the BJP general secretaries also called on Mr. Modi after their first physical meeting with Mr. Nadda.

At the secretaries' meeting with Mr. Nadda, the on-



J.P. Nadda

going organisational activities, including those related to promoting the COVID-19 vaccination drive, were discussed.

The Assembly elections in five States, due early next year, and several bypolls were also discussed, sources said. The meeting lasted for more than an hour.

Mr. Modi held similar meetings at his residence last month with the BJP general secretaries and the heads of the saffron party's different wings.

## Bulky Cabinet of no use if public spending is not higher: CPI(M)

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Sunday hit out at the Central government over reports of a steep fall in infrastructure expenditure and a dip in vaccination rates, saying that a "bulky Cabinet" is of no use if public investments are not higher.

In a series of tweets, CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said that the

government where the money was being spent.

Attaching a report showing that India is among the countries with the lowest share of people who have received at least one dose of vaccine, Mr. Yechury said a new Cabinet is of no use if vaccines are not provided.

"This is where India stands thanks to the complete mismanagement and hubris of this government," he said.

## TOURISM CORPORATION OF GUJARAT LIMITED (TCGL) (A Government of Gujarat Undertaking)

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### TENDER NOTICE

Bids are invited from the reputed and experienced parties for "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Creating and Operating Audio Guide for Adalaj ni Vav (Stepwell), Gandhinagar, Gujarat". The project requirements, technical specification, eligibility criteria, selection process, etc. are available in the Tender documents published on the website: [www.gujarattourism.com/tcgl/tender/latest-tender](http://www.gujarattourism.com/tcgl/tender/latest-tender) & <https://www.gujarattourism.com/tcgl/tender/>. The last date for submission of the Financial Bid is 09/08/2021 upto 3:00 p.m. and Technical Bid is 11/08/2021 upto 3:00 p.m. The Financial Bid shall be uploaded on n-procure website only.

Managing Director



## NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS IN MEDICAL SCIENCES

(Autonomous body of the M/o. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)  
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar,  
New Delhi – 110029

### DNB/DrNB FINAL THEORY EXAMINATION – JUNE 2021

#### NOTICE

National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) shall conduct the next DNB/DrNB Final Theory Examinations on 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBEMS website [www.natboard.edu.in](http://www.natboard.edu.in) for eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination and other details.

#### Important Dates

Availability of Information Bulletin	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2021 Onwards
Online Submission of the Application Form	12 <sup>th</sup> July to 31 <sup>st</sup> July 2021
Date of Examination	24 <sup>th</sup> , 25 <sup>th</sup> , 26 <sup>th</sup> and 27 <sup>th</sup> August 2021

Candidate Care Support: 011-45593000/ 022-61087595

Web Portal: <https://exam.natboard.edu.in/communication.php>



## ODISHA JOINT ENTRANCE EXAMINATION-2021 (OJEE-2021)

No: OJEE / 230

DATE : 09.07.2021

### NOTICE REGARDING EXTENSION OF LAST DATE OF APPLICATION

The revised dates of the Odisha Joint Entrance Examination (OJEE - 2021) will be notified, on assessment of the situation, in another two weeks. Meanwhile, the last date for submission of online application forms for all the courses (except B. Tech.) under OJEE 2021, which started with effect from 14.04.2021 and has been extended a number of times, is again extended up to 26.07.2021 (11.59 PM) and last date for fee payment up to 28.07.2021 (11.59 PM).

The interested candidates may kindly note that these dates are final and there will not be any more extension of these dates.

Sd/-

CHAIRMAN, OJEE,

Odisha

OJEE-2021/11/0005/2122

h-11:

# 'Current weather could add to virus symptoms'

Public must follow COVID-appropriate behaviour: doctors

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

The lingering second COVID-19 wave and the current weather – a combination of high heat and humidity prevailing across some parts of India – have prompted doctors to caution the general public to strictly follow COVID-appropriate behaviour to ensure that places with common air conditioning and poor ventilation do not prove to be superspreader zones.

The effect of worsened weather on an ongoing illness contributed in terms of aggravated symptoms, said Anurag Aggarwal, associate consultant, internal medicine, QRG Health City, Faridabad, who added that there was no proven research on how the virus responded to weather conditions.

Bhagwan Mantri, consultant, pulmonology, Moolchand Hospital, noted that lower relative humidity aided airborne transmission of water droplets and aerosols.



**Taking measures:** People waiting to take a test for COVID-19 in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

"When we cough, sneeze, talk or sing, water droplets and smaller water particles [aerosols] containing living viruses disperse into the air. Droplets and aerosols tend to stay afloat longer and travel farther in the air with lower relative humidity. Virus-containing aerosols, in particular, can penetrate more deeply into the lungs to increase the possibility of transmission," he said.

"When moisture levels are insufficient, viral particles have a greater 'docking' potential at airway receptor sites, which can lead to an increased risk of infection. Low relative humidity has a drying effect on the cells and mucous linings of our airways. These cells act as a defence against viral particles and other invading foreign substances. Drying out airway linings impairs their ability to function properly," Mr. Mantri added.

However, he said adherence to COVID-appropriate behaviour was the only way to reduce the transmission risk in any atmospheric condition.

Curfew has also been imposed in Puri from Sunday to Tuesday.

People have been advised to stock up on essential goods as all shops will remain closed till Tuesday.

To prevent any devotees from entering Grand Road, the police blocked every lane and bylane leading to the venue.

Tourists have also been asked to vacate guest houses and hotels in the town to ensure that no outsiders

reached the Rath Yatra venue.

The three chariots were constructed by traditional carpenters at a place called Ratha Khala where no outsiders were allowed. As a precautionary step, all of the carpenters were vaccinated and tested.

The servitors testing negative for COVID-19 will be allowed to pull chariots. Similarly, the sevayats, who

perform complex rituals inside the Jagannath Temple and carry massive wooden idols to the chariots, had already undergone RT-PCR tests.

Except Puri, nowhere else has the Rath Yatra been allowed. Though priests and other devotees had moved the Supreme Court to allow the celebration of the Rath Yatra in other areas, the court refused to entertain it.



**Muted celebrations:** Wooden chariots at the Shree Jagannath temple. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

## Scheme for widows in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government on Sunday launched a scheme entailing a one-time financial assistance of ₹2.5 lakh to women who lost their husbands to COVID-19 since March-April 2020.

The Chief Minister's COVID-19 Widows Support Scheme is for women from low-income families with a total annual income of up to ₹5 lakh.

"Our government, in its bid to provide a little support at this testing time, has decided to assuage the sufferings of the family members of the deceased with financial support," Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

He added that the scheme had been launched to help the beneficiaries lead a life of dignity.

Launching the scheme, he handed over a cheque of ₹2.5 lakh each to 176 beneficiaries belonging to eight districts. Officials said 883 women were eligible for the scheme so far. The cheques of the remaining beneficiaries would be handed over by the guardian Ministers, each in charge of a few districts.

"We have already launched the Sishu Seva Scheme to secure the academic future of the children who have lost both their parents to COVID-19," Dr. Sarma said.



**In preparation:** A worker preparing a train coach that was converted into a COVID-19 isolation ward. ■ PTI

current form of virus or in a mutated version. The problem of Delta Plus variant is already causing concern. The situation calls for immediate action."

### Vulnerable group

The most vulnerable group could be unvaccinated individuals, particularly those below the age of 18. While most of the Railway hospitals have been provided with sufficient facilities for oxygen supply by way of enhanced

number of cylinders, concentrators and Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) plants, the advisory asked senior medical officers to review the availability of adequate stock of medicines/consumables, besides sensitising doctors/para-medical staff on the future course of the pandemic.

General Managers of the Zonal Railways/production units were told to arrange vaccination for all beneficiaries, including porters, con-

tractors and others, by the end of July. Additional centres could be opened to meet the target and also give priority to those due for the second dose of the vaccine.

One of the serious impediments in achieving the target of vaccination was the willingness of the beneficiaries to come forward to take the shot. Besides deploying staff of the Personnel Department to persuade workers to volunteer for vaccination, the best practices of divisions/workshops should be showcased to motivate others lagging in achieving targets/reducing wastage of vaccines.

"It has also been decided to suitably reward divisions/zones who follow the best practice of achieving laid down targets of vaccination/reducing waste of vaccines. Similar reward schemes may also be initiated so that the staff remains motivated to face the challenges," the Railway Board said.

More than 20 such encounters had taken place, he added.

"Assam Chief Minister stated in a police conference that police should shoot at alleged criminals at legs which are permitted by law... Police are staging fake encounters with impunity," Mr. Jwadder said.

In 2020-21, Childline intervened for 758 children in Bhubaneswar alone.

In past three months since April, Childline has intervened for 196 children, and 51 children had to be rescued.

## Four minors rescued in Bhubaneswar

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

Four children, all below the age of 10, sitting helplessly and seeking food under a tree on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar in Odisha after being abandoned by their parents, were rescued on Saturday.

Childline, an NGO working with disadvantaged children, said their mother had left them to fend for themselves eight months ago. The father, a laterite stonecutter, used to get food for the three girls and a boy. However, three days ago, the father disappeared.

The rescued children were put up in childcare institutions after the Child Welfare Committee saw them through videoconferencing.

"With sources of income for people in the low-income groups drying up due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the vulnerability of children has been further exacerbated. Children are exposed to hunger and are becoming malnourished," said Benudhar Senapati, Director of the Childline facility, on Sunday.

In 2020-21, Childline intervened for 758 children in Bhubaneswar alone.

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## The Kerala connection to the Wimbledon semis

Yoga trainer helps German player

MINI MURINGATHERI  
THRISSUR

A yoga trainer from Kerala had something to cheer about when German tennis player Angelique Kerber reached the semi-final of the Wimbledon championship, on Sunday.

Ms. Kerber, former world number one and winner of three grand slam titles, had gone through a prolonged bad patch after winning the 2018 Wimbledon, defeating Serena Williams in the final. (Ms. Kerber had won the 2016 Australian Open and 2016 US Open championships. She was also the silver medallist at the 2016 Rio Olympics.)

She had faced many disappointing losses in the past three years. The 33-year-old had even considered retirement after her first-round exits in major tournaments. Her ranking had fallen to 28.

Ms. Kerber was struggling to regain her form when she met P.R. Binoy, a yoga trainer from Irinjalakuda, near Thrissur, who has been conducting yoga training sessions in Europe since 2014. Mr. Binoy was introduced to Ms. Kerber in Germany by her friends. Since then, yoga has become part of Ms. Kerber's fitness regime, he says.

**Down to earth**  
"She has been dedicatedly practising yoga since 2019. I plan to go again next month," he said.

## PM appeals for Padma award nominations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged the public to nominate individuals who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots for the Padma awards.

Mr. Modi said India had many talented individuals doing exceptional work at the grassroots, but they were often not known.

"India has many talented people who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots. Often, we don't see or hear much of them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PeoplesPadma. Nominations are open till 15th September. http://padmaawards.gov.in," the Prime Minister tweeted, sharing a link of the website.

The Padma awards – Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri – are amongst the highest civilian awards in the country.

These awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

## Railways focus on paediatric facilities

Ministry calls for preparedness to ensure testing, tracking and treating of patients

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI

The Ministry of Railways has called for full preparedness to ensure testing, tracking and treating of patients amid the gradual lifting of lockdown in many States and a strong apprehension on the future course of COVID-19.

Chief Medical Directors of the Zonal Railways have been told to ensure availability of adequate infrastructure, especially for paediatric patients, and act immediately upon any change in the demographic profile of the patients or increase in the number of new infections.

The Railways, which transports millions of passengers every day, will enforce COVID-appropriate behaviour and also vaccinate all employees/beneficiaries in its premises. In an advisory, the Railway Board said, "There is a strong apprehension of future course of the pandemic, which may be in the

current form of virus or in a mutated version. The problem of Delta Plus variant is already causing concern. The situation calls for immediate action."

### Vulnerable group

The most vulnerable group could be unvaccinated individuals, particularly those below the age of 18. While most of the Railway hospitals have been provided with sufficient facilities for oxygen supply by way of enhanced

number of cylinders, concentrators and Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) plants, the advisory asked senior medical officers to review the availability of adequate stock of medicines/consumables, besides sensitising doctors/para-medical staff on the future course of the pandemic.

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tractors and others, by the end of July. Additional centres could be opened to meet the target and also give priority to those due for the second dose of the vaccine.

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"It has also been decided to suitably reward divisions/zones who follow the best practice of achieving laid down targets of vaccination/reducing waste of vaccines. Similar reward schemes may also be initiated so that the staff remains motivated to face the challenges," the Railway Board said.

More than 20 such encounters had taken place, he added.

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In 2020-21, Childline intervened for 758 children in Bhubaneswar alone.

In past three months since April, Childline has intervened for 196 children, and 51 children had to be rescued.

## Assam Police on 'encounter spree', says complaint

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

A Delhi-based advocate from Assam has lodged a complaint with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) against the Assam Police, which he said was "on an encounter spree" since the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government took

charge two months ago. This followed a notice served by the Assam Human Rights Commission to (AHRC) the Principal Secretary of the State's Home and Political Department to probe the circumstances leading to the death and injuries of suspected militants and alleged criminals. The

AHRC has sought an action-taken report within a month from July 7.

In his complaint on July 10, Arif Jwadder said alleged small-time criminals were being shot and the reason cited for such "fake encounters" was that they tried to "flee from police custody snatching pistols".

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tractors and others, by the end of July. Additional centres could be opened to meet the target and also give priority to those due for the second dose of the vaccine.

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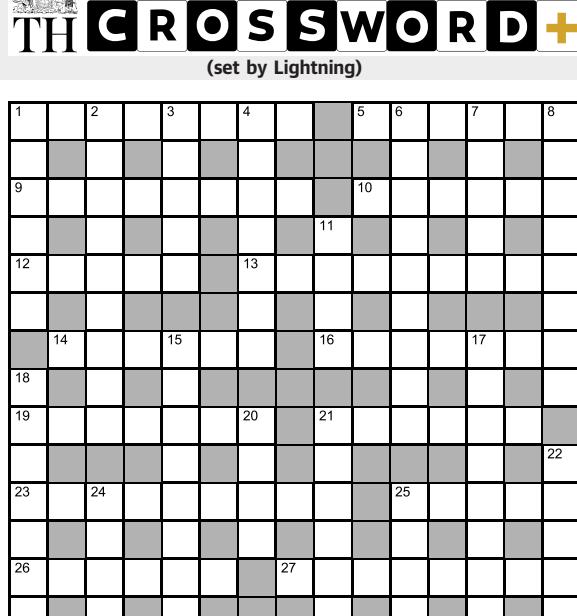
## TH CROSSWORD + 13297

(set by Lightning)

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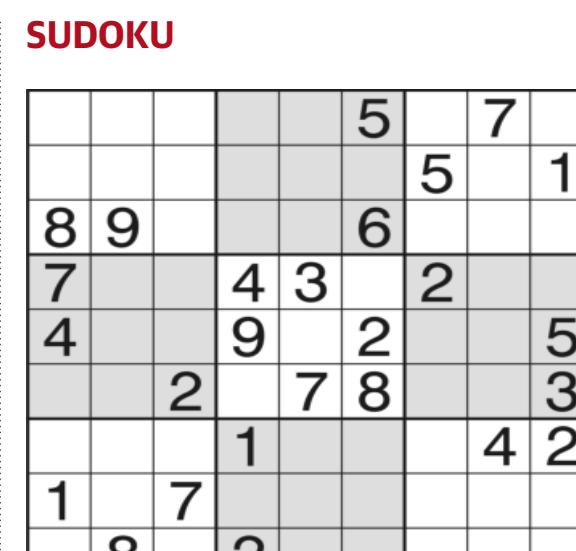
SCAN TO PLAY



- 16 Second client designing tool for drawing (7)  
19 Obese one oddly wasting gluten in exhaustion (7)  
21 Criticise a man cutting short hat (6)  
23 This type of radiation may not be a surfer's delight (9)  
25 Leader withheld approval for increase in salary (5)  
26 Strike down including a yearbook (6)  
27 Dance tip sort of formal (8)  
28 The Spanish indeed form a cricket side (6)  
29 Marked by European in hysterical rush (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Powerful warning – not right (6)  
2 Doctor gets a cop to frame a fall guy (9)  
3 Centre eventually sheltering chief magistrate (5)  
4 Setter joining saint (wise man) gets the point (7)  
6 Star with cover – one that protects against deadly rays (9)  
7 Defence provided by famous boxer breaking in at the start (5)  
8 Trap fish after net gets destroyed (8)  
11 Probability of dethroning Danish society's leaders (4)  
15 Deny one going back inside to discuss terms (9)  
17 Give small peg for panel (9)  
18 Cricket side on platform at place where audience cannot see (8)  
20 Way engineer is moving up is impressive (4)  
21 Excuse before written material (7)  
22 Free to nearly sleep at signal (6)  
24 Small quantity of fine powder lacking phosphorus (5)  
25 Genuine mark on kingdom (5)
- ACROSS
- 1 Pasta I'm cooking without recipe and cut beef (8)  
5 Release both ends of entertainer's cloak (6)  
9 Obstacle in short journey crossed regularly (8)  
10 Bitcoin sister held for demand (6)  
12 Relative's fine absorbing energy (5)  
13 Sailor with leader returning after opening – it's a crime (9)  
14 Forward movement outside ordinary sitting room (6)

*The Hindu Crossword 13296, published on July 10, was a repeat of Lightning's THC 1327, which was run on June 15. We apologise for the inadvertency, hope you enjoyed the second solve nonetheless, and assure you that Lightning will not strike twice again!*

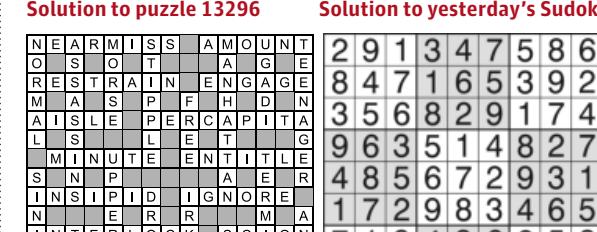
## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13296

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



# Kabul airport gets anti-missile system

Amid Taliban onslaught, NATO keen to secure vital exit route for foreign diplomats and aid workers

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL

Afghan authorities said on Sunday they have installed an anti-missile system at Kabul airport to counter incoming rockets, as the Taliban pressed on with a blistering offensive across the country.

Washington and its allies are due to end their military mission in Afghanistan at the end of August, even as the insurgents say they now control 85% of the country – a claim that could not be independently verified and is disputed by the government.

The Islamic fundamentalist group's rapid gains in recent weeks have raised fears about the security of the capital and its airport, with NATO keen to secure a vital exit route to the outside world for foreign diplomats and aid workers.

"The newly installed air defence system has been operational in Kabul since 2



Growing conflict: Armed Afghan militias patrolling the outskirts of Takhar province on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

a.m. on Sunday," the Interior Ministry said in a statement. "The system has proven useful in the world in repelling rocket and missile attacks."

Security forces spokesman Ajmal Omar Shinwari said the system was given by "our foreign friends".

"It has very complicated technology. For now our foreign friends are operating

while we are trying to build the capacity to use it," Mr. Shinwari said, adding that in the past week 1,177 Taliban fighters were killed in fighting with government forces.

#### Regular attacks

The Taliban have regularly launched rockets and mortars at government forces across the countryside, with

## Australia pulls out last troops

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SYDNEY

Australia's Defence Minister on Sunday confirmed the end of his country's involvement in the 20-year Afghanistan war, saying the troop withdrawal had taken place "in recent weeks".

Defence Minister Peter Dutton said the last 80 support personnel had left Afghanistan "in recent

weeks". "That doesn't mean we won't be a part of campaigns with the United States... where we deem that to be in our national interest or in the interest of our allies," he added.

Australia had deployed 39,000 troops over the past 20 years as part of U.S. and NATO-led operations against the Taliban and terrorist groups in Afghanistan.

cial and media reports said.

Turkey has promised to provide security for Kabul airport once the U.S. and NATO troops leave next month. Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday said Turkey and the United States had agreed on the "scope" of how the airport would be managed under the control of Turkish forces.

# U.S. alarmed as Saudi lawsuits threaten to expose secrets

Cases centre on graft allegations against a former spymaster

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RIYADH

Two lawsuits pitting Saudi Arabia's de facto ruler against a former intelligence czar threaten to expose highly sensitive U.S. government secrets, prompting Washington to consider a rare judicial intervention, documents show.

The cases in U.S. and Canadian courts centre on corruption allegations levelled by state-owned Saudi companies against Saad Aljabri, a former spymaster who long worked closely with American officials on covert

counterterrorism operations.

That marks the latest twist in a long-running feud between Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman (MBS) and Mr. Aljabri.

Mr. Aljabri's patron, Prince Mohammed bin Nayef (MBN), is currently in Saudi detention after being deposed as heir to the throne in a 2017 palace coup.

The legal drama sheds light on Shakespearean rivalries in the top echelons of the Saudi royal family, but Washington fears that a bit-

ter courtroom showdown risks exposing sensitive information related to its covert operations.

A rare U.S. Justice Department filing in a Massachusetts court in April noted Mr. Aljabri's intention to "describe information concerning alleged national security activities".

"The (U.S.) government is considering whether and how to participate in this action, including if necessary and applicable,

through an assertion of appropriate governmental privileges," the filing said, without elaborating.

## HK pro-democracy group downsizes over safety fears

I lets go of staff amid crackdown

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
HONG KONG

One of Hong Kong's most established pro-democracy civic organisations said it is letting go its paid staff and halving the size of its steering committee after Beijing stepped up its crackdown on opposition activity in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China is best known for organising an annual rally and candlelight vigil remembering those killed in the bloody 1989 crackdown on pro-democracy protests in Beijing.

ing's Tiananmen Square. The group said in a statement on Saturday that seven of its 14 remaining steering committee members had decided to step down in the face of "growing political and legal risks".

Of the seven members remaining, three are currently in jail for protest-related activities.

While the 32-year-old group said the changes would affect its operations, it vowed that "regardless of whatever difficulties or challenges we face, the alliance will continue to grit our teeth and move onwards one step at a time".

# Abiy Ahmed wins huge majority in Ethiopia poll

Victory comes amid Tigray conflict

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ADDIS ABABA

Ethiopia's ruling party won a landslide in a landmark parliamentary poll, results showed on Saturday, ensuring a new five-year term for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed despite a brutal war in the northern region of Tigray.

Mr. Abiy hailed the outcome of what he described as a "historic" election – the first time he faced voters since being appointed Prime Minister in 2018 following several years of anti-government protests.

The winner of the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize had hoped to frame victory at the ballot box as a mandate for political and economic reforms and military operations. But the poll was held in the midst of the grueling conflict in Tigray that has battered Mr. Abiy's global reputation and raised fears of widespread famine.



Abiy Ahmed

His Prosperity Party won 410 seats in the federal Parliament out of 436 where elections were held, according to results issued by the National Election Board of Ethiopia (NEBE), which said there would be a rerun in 10 constituencies.

June's vote, which had been postponed twice due to the COVID-19 pandemic and logistical issues, was largely peaceful but Opposition parties decried harassment and intimidation. No voting was held in the Tigray region.

## Woman infected with two variants at the same time

90-year-old died in Belgium hospital

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

A 90-year-old woman who died after falling ill with COVID-19 was infected with both the Alpha and Beta variants of the coronavirus at the same time, researchers in Belgium said on Sunday, adding that the rare phenomenon may be underestimated.

The unvaccinated woman was admitted to a hospital in the Belgian city of Aalst after a spate of falls in March and tested positive for COVID-19 the same day. While her oxygen levels were initially good, her condition deteriorated rapidly and she died five days later.

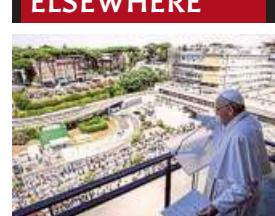
When medical staff tested for the presence of any variants of concern they found that she was carrying both strains. "Both these variants were circulating in Belgium at the time, so it is likely that the lady was co-infected

with different viruses from two different people," said molecular biologist Anne Vankeerberghen from the OLV Hospital who led the research.

Dr. Vankeerberghen said it was difficult to say whether the co-infection played a role in the fast deterioration of the patient. The research, which has not yet been submitted to a medical journal for publication, is being presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

Lawrence Young, a virologist and Professor of Molecular Oncology at the University of Warwick, said, "This study does highlight the need for more studies to determine whether infection with multiple variants of concern affects the clinical course of COVID-19 and whether this in any way compromises the efficacy of vaccination."

## ELSEWHERE



Pope Francis makes first appearance after surgery

ROME

Pope Francis, 84, on Sunday made his first public appearance since a major intestinal surgery last week, greeting well-wishers as he stood for 10 minutes on a hospital balcony, offering hearty thanks for the prayers for his recovery. "I am happy to be able to keep the Sunday appointment of the Angelus, even here from Gemelli Polyclinic," he said. "In these days of hospitalisation, I experienced yet again how important a good health service is, accessible to all, as it is in Italy and other countries," he said. "We mustn't lose this precious thing."

# Hospitalised wife of slain Haitian leader denounces enemies

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PORT-AU-PRINCE

The hospitalised wife of Haiti's assassinated President Jovenel Moïse has given her first public statement since being wounded in the attack that killed him, accusing enemies of wanting "to kill his dream, his vision, his ideology".

Martine Moïse issued the recorded statement in Creole from the Miami hospital where she was being treated for wounds suffered in the attack early on Wednesday, and also posted a version on her Twitter account.

"I'm alive, thanks to God," she said in the recording, which also played on local radio stations. "But I love my husband Jovenel. We fought

together for more than 25 years. During all these years, love radiated within the home. But suddenly, the mercenaries came and pelted my husband with bullets."

"You have to be a notorious criminal without guts to assassinate a President like Jovenel Moïse with impunity without giving him the chance to speak," she ad-



Martine Moïse

ded. "You knew who the President was fighting against. These people hired mercenaries to kill the President and his family because of the projects of roads, electricity, drinking water supply, organisation of the referendum and elections..."

"The mercenaries who assassinated the President are currently behind bars," she added, "but other mercenaries currently want to kill his dream, his vision, his ideology." The police say they have arrested more than a dozen people – most of them retired Colombian soldiers – and are searching for more, but it remained unclear who had hired the team that attacked the President's house, or why.

# Richard Branson takes off first in space tourism race

Bandla becomes third Indian-origin woman to fly into space

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES

Swashbuckling entrepreneur Richard Branson hurtled into space aboard his own winged rocket ship on Sunday in his boldest adventure yet, beating out fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos.

The nearly 71-year-old Mr. Branson and five crewmates from his Virgin Galactic space tourism company, including Indian-origin aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla, reached an altitude of about 88 kilometres over the New Mexico desert – enough to experience three to four minutes of weightlessness and see the curvature of the earth – and then safely glided back home to a runway landing.

Escaping gravity: Passenger rocket plane VSS Unity starts its ascent to the edge of space on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

age 77 in 1998.) With about 500 people watching, including Mr. Branson's family, a twin-fuselage aircraft with his space plane attached underneath took off in the first stage of the flight. The space plane then detached from the mother ship at an altitude of about 13 kilometres and fired its engine, reaching more than Mach 3, or three times the speed of sound, as it pierced the edge of space. The crowd cheered as it touched down on the runway.

**Bezos and Musk**  
The flamboyant, London-born founder of Virgin Atlantic Airways wasn't supposed to fly until later this summer. But he assigned himself to an earlier flight after Mr. Bezos announced plans to ride his own rocket into space from Texas from July 20, the 52nd anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Mr. Branson denied he was trying to outdo Mr. Bezos.

One of Mr. Branson's chief rivals in the space-tourism race among the world's richest men, SpaceX's Elon Musk, arrived in New Mexico to witness the flight, wishing Mr. Branson via Twitter, "Godspeed!"

Mr. Bezos likewise sent his wishes for a safe and successful flight, though he also took to Twitter to enumerate the ways in which he believes his company's rides will be better.

Mr. Branson insisted on a global livestream of the Sunday morning flight and invited celebrities and former space station astronauts to the company's Spaceport America base in New Mexico. R&B singer Khalid performed his new single "New Normal" – a nod to the dawning of space tourism – while CBS "Late Show" host Stephen Colbert served as the event's master of ceremonies.

Virgin Galactic already has more than 600 reservations from would-be space tourists, with tickets initially costing \$250,000 apiece. Blue Origin is waiting for Mr. Bezos' flight before announcing its ticket prices.



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## ASK US



VIDYA BALA

**Q.** I am 28 years old, working in the private sector, and want to start planning for my retirement. Assuming I want to retire at the age of 60, and want to have a corpus of ₹2 crore, what is the amount I should have after 32 years that will be equivalent to ₹2 crore considering all factors like inflation, etc. Besides that, I would also like to have a fixed monthly income equivalent to 1 lakh in value today. What are the best suited options/financial instruments I should start investing in to ensure this? Are NPS and PPF better since they come with sovereign guarantee? Also, which instrument is wise considering tax implications, both today as well as at the time of withdrawal.

KARAN SHARMA

**A.** It is not clear whether you want ₹1 lakh per month post retirement or right away. We will assume if it is post retirement. When you plan for your retirement, it is best you decide how much monthly income you want then, rather than fixing a lumpsum you wish to have, without knowing if that lumpsum will last. If ₹2 crore is the amount you want after 32 years, then ₹10,000 per month if it earns 9% on an average for the next 32 years, should comfortably take you there.

However, if you wish to have ₹1 lakh per month of income starting retirement (in today's value) then it will be ₹3.5 lakh per month 32 years hence, assuming inflation at just 4%. That means your corpus requirement will jump to ₹6.9 crore to be built in these 32 years. That also means you will need about ₹31,000 pf savings per month generating at least 9% per annum for the next 32 years. You can use a combination of NPS, PPF and equity index funds to invest for your retirement. You could consider using NS more for your debt allocation and use the equity index funds for equity exposure. Of course, NPS is not fully tax-free on retirement as the pension is taxable. You will seldom get options which are tax-free at all stages. So, instead of focusing on tax efficiency, please focus on what will lead you to your goal.

(*Vidya Bala is co-founder, primeinvestor.in*)

**Q.** Can you suggest some good mutual fund companies because these days it's hard to distinguish between the fake and genuine company. Please suggest the procedure for investing through mutual funds, the minimum investment, the average rate of return and the risks involved. I can search for these things on the Internet or YouTube, but I cannot trust everything I read or see there, that's why I am asking you.

IRFAN

**Aarati Krishnan replies:** It is good that you are keen to identify regulated investment options and to invest in them after seeking detailed information, instead of simply going by what you read online. All mutual funds are required to register with SEBI before launching products for investors. You can check the list of registered mutual funds at the SEBI website here: <https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmld=23>

There are four key routes for investing in mutual funds. You can invest through mutual fund distributors who are registered with the Association of Mutual Funds of India, who will facilitate your transaction. To check if the distributor is registered, you can ask for his or her ARN (AMFI registration number). You can invest through brokerages and platforms offered by banks and brokers, in the 'regular' plans of mutual funds. When you use these routes, you incur commission to compensate these intermediaries, which is included in your fund's costs. You can also invest in mutual funds through their 'direct' plans where you save on this commission. This can be done by either directly registering on each fund's website and investing online or through platforms offering direct investments such as Kuvera, Groww and Zerodha Coin. While you save on costs with direct investments, you will need to select your asset classes and funds on your own. You can also engage the services of a registered investment adviser who can advise you what funds to buy for a flat fee. Mutual funds allow minimum investments as low as ₹500. You usually get to choose between lumpsum investments (investing a sum at one go) and Systematic Investment Plans (SIPs), where you can set up auto-debits to invest a regular amount every month in chosen mutual funds. This allows you to build a sizeable corpus over time. Mutual funds are market-linked products and there are many types of mutual funds. There are mutual funds which invest in company shares, in company bonds, government bonds, money market instruments and even gold. There are also funds that combine one or two of these assets. So it is difficult to tell you what the average rate of return would be across all these types. Generally, you should choose a mutual fund category based on your investment horizon, your ability to handle risks (volatility in your capital value and returns) and your return expectations. It would be good to engage the services of a qualified investment adviser or financial planner who can help you map out your financial goals and start you on your investing journey. You can get a list of RIAs in your location here: <https://www.sebi.gov.in/sebiweb/other/OtherAction.do?doRecognisedFpi=yes&intmld=13>

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to [moneywise@thehindu.co.in](mailto:moneywise@thehindu.co.in). Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

# Understanding INVESTMENT RISKS

**Systematic and unsystematic risks are part and parcel of the system and there is no way an investor could avoid them**

GAURAV MASHRUWALA

Inflation, taxes, government policies, geo-political situations and economic cycles affect all investments. These risks exist in the system. There is no way we can avoid them. Inflation will reduce the real (actual) rate of return from all forms of investment, be it debt or equity or property.

Similarly, taxes eat into the final returns in the hands of an investor. We have touched upon the kinds of risks earlier in this space but here is a detailed look at the hard realities.

In a Communist economy, wealth creation is difficult, irrespective of the risk-taking abilities of an individual. Likewise, if a local currency is revalued, all forms of investments will get impacted. The risk that exists in the system is called 'systematic risk'.

There is absolutely no way to avoid systematic risk. However, by adopting time averaging (popularly known as systematic investment plans) one can re-

duce the impact of systematic risk. The impact of risk is averaged out by investing fixed amounts at fixed intervals.

Since more investment units will be bought at a lower cost and less investment units at a higher cost, over a prolonged period, averaging will start working in the investor's fa-

**Crashing of property prices in Mumbai due to an unfavourable court judgment on a development near the Arabian Sea is an example of unsystematic risk. This will only affect property prices in Mumbai, and no other form of investment in Mumbai or any other part of the world will be affected.**

Similarly, if the CEO of a company resigns, causing the stock price to tumble, then it is called an unsystematic risk.

Crashing of property prices in Mumbai due to an unfavourable court judgment on a development near the Arabian Sea is an example of unsystematic risk. This will only affect property prices in Mumbai, and no other form of investment in Mumbai or any other part of the world will be affected. Similarly, if the CEO of a company resigns, causing the stock price to tumble, then it is called an unsystematic risk.

This will have no impact on the prices of other stocks or any other investments. Another example could be of gold prices

however, due to its complexity, it is usually not only recommended. The recurring bank deposit is also an example of a systematic investment plan.

Another category of risk is 'unsystematic risk'. Risk which does not exist in the system as a whole but which is specific to a particular asset class or particular investment product is called unsystematic risk. Another name for unsystematic risk is 'specific risk'.

Crashing of property prices in Mumbai due to an unfavourable court judgment on a development near the Arabian Sea is an example of unsystematic risk. This will only affect property prices in Mumbai, and no other form of investment in Mumbai or any other part of the world will be affected. Similarly, if the CEO of a company resigns, causing the stock price to tumble, then it is called an unsystematic risk.

This will have no impact on the prices of other stocks or any other investments. Another example could be of gold prices

crashing due to government control.

Diversification is the best solution for controlling unsystematic risks. Diversification has different meanings to different investors. There are some who invest in six different floating rate schemes of mutual funds and feel that they have diversified their portfolio.

Others feel that by investing in different stocks, they have diversified their portfolio; so, for instance, they may own stocks of HLL, Marico Industries, Gillette India and P&G. A closer look will tell you that all these are FMCG stocks.

Yet, there are a few who diversify through different in-

vestment vehicles; they may have mutual fund schemes, which invest in equity.

Diversification means investing in asset classes which have a negative correlation to each other. To put it simply, when the performance of one asset class usually goes up while the performance of the other asset

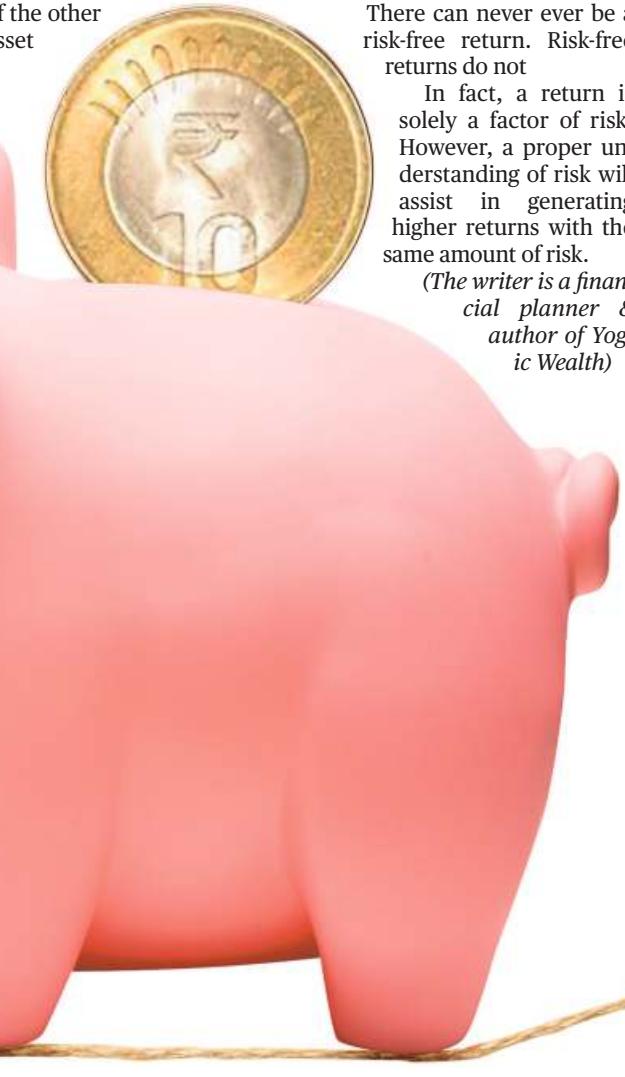
class falls, they are negatively correlated.

This will ensure that the overall portfolio returns remain stable. If the explanation has to be further diluted, we would say, "do not place all your eggs in one basket". By diversifying a portfolio, unsystematic risks are significantly reduced.

There can never ever be a risk-free return. Risk-free returns do not

In fact, a return is solely factor of risk. However, a proper understanding of risk will assist in generating higher returns with the same amount of risk.

(The writer is a financial planner & author of *Yogic Wealth*)



GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

## COVER NOTE: OWNERSHIP CHANGE

## Your car sale doesn't end with just handing over the keys, RC

A vehicle and its insurance papers should reflect the same name and address. If not, you could be held liable for any accident

K. NITYA KALYANI

Shopping is fun. Research, budgets, recommendations, comparisons and a little bit of dreaming about how happy we will be once we own it.

Selling can be interesting too. In addition to the age-old Indian tradition of bargaining, some aspects require extra care and involvement when you sell your old vehicle.

Praise it to the skies, haggle for the best price, and be sure you know what to do with its insurance policy as well.

Vehicle insurance, as you would have read in this column, is of two kinds – Third-party liability and Own Damage. When you sell a vehicle, you may be in the middle of your policy period. That is, the policy is still va-

lid and the renewal is a way off.

When you sell your car, you sign some Road Transport Authority (RTA) forms (Form 29 and 30) favouring the buyer. In addition, you have to give the buyer a letter addressed to your insurance company quoting your policy details and the buyer's details, stating that you have sold the vehicle to a specified person and that the policy may be transferred in his favour.

By the way, you should consider the cost of the unused portion of the policy that you are transferring to your buyer and build it into your selling price. For example, if you have just renewed your insurance, we are speaking of almost a year's insurance premium. Once sold, send a copy of the insurance no objection letter and photocopies of the dated, filled in and signed

RTA forms to your insurance company and ensure you get an acknowledgement. Another set should go to your RTA as well for prudence.

As for the buyer, he will present these forms and your letter to the insurance company and transfer the vehicle ownership so that the registration certificate (RC) would bear his name. Once this is done, he can approach your insurance company and, on the basis of your letter to your insurer, get the policy also transferred to his name.

Why the fuss? Aren't you done with this transaction once the money is in your bank and you have handed over the keys and RC?

Not quite. It is your legal responsibility to ensure that the insurance is transferred to the name of the buyer.

When you sell the vehicle, the TP liability cover is valid for an interim period of 15 days under the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, to tide over the time needed for the actual transfer. After this, the policy has to be formally transferred to the new owner for coverage to be valid.

A vehicle and its insurance papers should reflect the same

name and address. If not, you can be held liable for any accidents that the vehicle may be involved in since the insurance policy records show your name and that will be used for official communication in case of any legal proceedings.

Let us cycle back and look at the name transfer of the vehicle itself. If your buyer does not transfer the vehicle to his name and continues to use it, any liability will be squarely on your shoulders. One way to lock the buyer into transferring the vehicle to his name is to date the Forms 29 and 30 as their validity is only for 15 days from that date. In addition, you are going to send copies to the RTA and the insurance company, remember? I have known buyers and intermediaries who stiffly object to dating the RTA forms 'for convenience' and also cases of buyers who use the vehicle for a few years and sell it on further to others – still in the seller's name.

The chilling thing is liability can be related not only to accidents, but also to any nefarious use the vehicle is put to!

I know that takes some fun out of selling and getting money, but you would sleep better at night, right?

The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

## Don't let go of your no-claim bonus

K. NITYA KALYANI

When you transfer your vehicle insurance to the buyer, you get to keep the best part of it for yourself – your no-claim bonus (NCB). This is the accumulated reward for your claim-free record.

This can go up to 40% and you get to encash it at renewal as a discount on your Own Damage premium.

When you sell your car, the NCB stays with you as it is attached to you, and not the vehicle. But it is not automatic.

You have to make a request in writing and get a letter confirming it.

When you write to your insurance company stating you have sold your car and they may transfer your insurance policy to the buyer, write another letter asking that your NCB be retained with you.

They will write back confirming the percentage of your NCB.

When you buy another



GETTYIMAGES/ISTOCK

car, you can give this letter to the insurance company and request that the NCB discount be applied to the premium.

This works in practice only if your old and new insurer are the same.

The good news though is that it applies even if your NCB was earned on a smaller car and the new car is a pricey one, with a heftier premium!

## Life insurance term plan premium

Male: 30 Years, Sum Insured - ₹1 crore, Cover up to - 70 Years

Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover up to (Years)	Annual premium ₹
LIC OF INDIA	Tech Term^	80	14,122
Aditya Birla Capital	Life Shield Plan	85	12,998
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	85	10,911
Bharti AXA	Premier Protect Plan	75	11,092**
Canara HSBC OBC	iSelect Star Term Plan	99	11,605
HDFC Life	Click2Protect Plus	85	12,601
ICICI Prudential	iProtect Smart	99	15,628
India First Life	e-Term Plan	80	8,260
Kotak Life Insurance	Kotak e-Term Plan	75	9,558
Max Life Insurance	Smart Term Plan	85	11,800***
PNB Met Life	Mera Term Plan Plus	99	12,272
Reliance Nippon Life	Digi Term	80	11,012
SBI Life	eShield	80	15,070
TATA AIA Life	Maha Raksha Supreme	100	12,980

\*Maximum policy term is 40 years | \*\*Bharti AXA coverage upto 65 years for age 30 years

\*\*\*Max Life offers additional 5% discount for first year

## Health insurance premium

Data as on July 6, 2021 | Source: LIC of India, www.policybazaar.com

Insurer name	Key features	Plan names	Premium ₹
Care Health	Day Care Treatments Family Floater option Health Checkups Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage	NCB Super Premium with UAR	9,712
Max Bupa Health	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Family Floater option Alternate Medicine	Health ReAssure Health Pulse Enhanced Health Companion Go Active	9,590 10,696 9,862 11,747
Star Health	Family Floater option Restoration of cover Wellness Benefits	Medi Classic Star Comprehensive Young Star Gold Plan Young Star Silver Plan	9,66

# Argentina buries ghosts of the past

Beats Brazil to end a 28-year title drought; Di Maria strike proves the difference

## COPA AMERICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
RIO DE JANEIRO  
Two long droughts ended on Saturday at the Copa America final: Argentina won its first major title since 1993 after a 1-0 win against Brazil. And Lionel Messi finally lifted his first major trophy for the national team.

Argentina's winning goal at the Maracana Stadium came in the 22nd minute after Rodrigo de Paul made a long pass to Angel di Maria. The 33-year-old veteran striker counted on some sloppy defending from left-back Renan Lodi to take control and lob it past goalkeeper Ederson.

When the match ended, a tearful Messi knelt down and put his hands on his face. Then most of his teammates ran in his direction to celebrate and threw him into the air. Once criticised by Argentina fans for his quietness, he went to the few hundred guests chanting his name at the Maracana and chanted with them. Messi kissed the trophy before lifting it into the air during the presentations.

Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni made five changes from the starting lineup that beat Colombia on penalties in the semifinal, while Brazil did not make any.

**Neymar isolated**  
The teams were cautious early in the match, barely offering chances. When Argentina opened the scoring in a



**Man of the moment:** Angel di Maria makes the most of a defensive error to execute a delectable lob over Ederson and net the winner for Argentina against Brazil. ■ GETTY IMAGES

**C** Before the match I told him (Rodrigo de Paul) that the left-back (Renan Lodi) slept a little in the marking

ANGEL DI MARIA  
on his goal

rare Brazil defensive mistake and Di Maria's classy finish, the match became more physical and Argentina successfully stopped the ball from getting to Neymar.

He tried hard with dribbles and passes, but the Selecao barely threatened Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez in the first half. Argentina sat in the back, hoping for counter-attacks.

Brazil coach Tite tried to change the dynamic of the match by replacing defen-

## Match Stats

Argentina	Brazil
1	Goals 0
41%	Possession 59%
6	Shots 13
2	Shots on target 2
19	Fouls 22
1	Corners 4
5	Yellow cards 4

sive midfielder Fred for Roberto Firmino, and managed to do so for much of the second half.

Though the Selecao had more ball possession there were few real opportunities.

**The result:**  
Brazil 0 lost to Argentina 1 (Angel di Maria 22).

## Messi and Neymar picked as the best

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Argentina's Lionel Messi and Brazil's Neymar were picked as the best players of the Copa America just before they met in the final.

Messi dished up four goals and five assists in six matches.

Neymar delivered two goals and three assists in five games.

# Lionel Messi finally sheds tears of joy

Climbs his highest peak yet with a major title for his country

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BUENOS AIRES

Argentina finally made Lionel Messi cry with joy.

After losing four times in finals, early exits in major tournaments and even a decision to retire from the national team, the superstar celebrated a much-awaited title with Argentina on Saturday.

"I needed to remove from myself the thorn of achieving something with the national team," Messi said after celebrating with his teammates.

When Uruguayan referee Esteban Ostojich blew the final whistle, Messi knelt down on the pitch and covered his face with his hands.

After he lifted the Copa America trophy, Messi spoke to his family on the phone. He flicked the golden medal around his neck and shouted "I won, I won!"

The next challenge is to win the World Cup in Qatar next year, which would be the first since Maradona took the team to the title in 1986.

Until Saturday, Messi's titles with Argentina were only the U-20 World Cup title in 2005 and a gold medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

**Gap closed**  
On Saturday, Messi kissed the Copa America trophy and lifted it at age 34. The biggest gap in his decorated career is now closed.

His first public words after the title showed how thrilled and relieved he felt.

"What a beautiful mad-

ness!" Messi said in an Instagram post showing him shirtless holding the Copa America trophy at the Maracana's dressing room. "This is unbelievable! Thank you, God! We are the champions!"

Goalkeeper Emiliano Martínez, one of Argentina's key players in the tournament, said Messi "is the one who most deserved" to win the South American title.

Later at a news conference Messi said his happiness was "unexplainable."

"I was sad before, but I knew that at some point it was going to happen," he said. "I feel that God was saving this moment for me, against Brazil in a final and in their country."

## Leo has a major trophy, at last!

It was an emotional and unforgettable moment for Messi as he lifted an international trophy for the first time in his career

### Messi at major finals

2007 **Copa America:** Brazil bt Argentina 3-0

2014 **World Cup:** Germany bt Argentina 1-0

2015 **Copa America:** Chile bt Argentina 4-1 on penalties (O-O regulation time)

2016 **Copa America:** Chile bt Argentina 4-2 on penalties (O-O regulation time)

2021 **Copa America:** Argentina bt Brazil 1-0

### The Angel connection

August 23, 2008: Argentina beat Nigeria 1-0 to bag the gold at the Beijing Olympics (Goalscorer: Angel Di Maria)

July 10, 2021: Argentina beat Brazil 1-0 to win Copa America (Goalscorer: Angel Di Maria)

**1** The first time Neymar and Thiago Silva have lost a final with the Brazilian national team, having won both finals previously

**3** Di Maria has now scored three goals in winning causes at major finals (2008 Olympics, 2013-14 **Copa Del Rey**, 2021 **Copa America**)

**15** Argentina's 15th **Copa** title, pulling it level with Uruguay

### Copa 2021 individual awards

**Golden Boot (Top Scorer):** Lionel Messi (Argentina)

**Golden Glove (Best Goalkeeper):** Emiliano Martinez (Argentina)

**Golden Ball (Best Player):** Lionel Messi (Argentina)

**Player of the final:** Angel di Maria (Argentina)

COMPILED BY  
AYUSH SUDARSHAN



# Djokovic makes it 20-all, stands shoulder to shoulder with Federer and Nadal

The Serb surmounts Berrettini's challenge, ties his celebrated rivals in the tally for most Grand Slams after winning his sixth Wimbledon crown

## WIMBLEDON

AGENCIES  
LONDON

Novak Djokovic had the weight of tennis history on his shoulders and an Italian with dynamite on his racket strings to contend with, but emerged victorious to earn a sixth Wimbledon and a record-levering 20th Grand Slam title on Sunday.

Matteo Berrettini, playing inspired tennis in his first Major final, unleashed everything in his formidable arsenal. But it was not enough, as the Serb pulled through 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 on what might prove to be a momentous day in the raging argument about the greatest men's player of all time.

"That was more than a battle. He has a true hammer, an Italian hammer and I felt that today," Djokovic, 34, said.

Djokovic is now tied with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 singles Majors and the World No. 1 can become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to complete the calendar-year Grand Slam at the US Open.

"I have to pay a tribute to Rafa and Roger. They are the two most important players I've ever faced and the reason I am where I am today," Djokovic said.

On Sunday, Berrettini was bidding to become the first Italian to win the Wimbledon singles title.

When he went 2-5 down in the opening set, it looked as though the day might pass him by.

But after surviving an exhausting 11-minute service game, in which he saved a set point, the 25-year-old began to ratchet up the power, with booming serves and powerful forehands.

Djokovic failed to serve out the set at 5-3 as Berrettini chased a dropshot to break. In the tie-breaker, Berrettini was the aggressor and took the set after firing down a 138mph ace.

The effort of snatching a 71-minute first set took its toll on Berrettini. Djokovic stormed ahead 4-0 in the second, overcame a small blip and levelled the match.

Djokovic struck the early blow at 1-1 in the third, as a net-skimming backhand



**Enduring excellence:** Djokovic stayed on course for a calendar Grand Slam by winning his third straight Wimbledon. ■ REUTERS

from out wide forced a volley error from the Italian. But Berrettini threatened to break straight back, thumping a forehand winner to reach deuce.

Djokovic, though, steamed in time to take a 3-1

lead, survived another tough service game to move 4-2 ahead, and cupped his hand to his ear for the crowd to respond with football-style chanting. Even after Djokovic claimed the third set, Berrettini looked dangerous.

But when the Italian double-faulted on break point in the seventh game of the fourth, his hopes were over and it was time for Djokovic to chew on a blade of grass and soak in the acclaim of 15,000 fans.

**Congrats Novak on your 20th Major. I am proud to have the opportunity to play in a special era of tennis champions**

ROGER FEDERER

- 1 Djokovic is the first men's singles player after Rod Laver in 1969 to win the first three Majors of the calendar year
- 1 First French Open-Wimbledon double for Djokovic. He is now the fifth man in the Open Era to achieve the feat, after Laver, Borg, Nadal and Federer
- 1 First grass-court loss for Berrettini after winning the first set. He was 22-0 on the surface before this, out of 27 wins overall
- 7 Djokovic's seventh victory out of 14 Grand Slam finals in which he has lost the first set
- 8 Djokovic has won eight of the last 12 Major titles, with Nadal (3) and Thiem (1) accounting for the other four. It makes the Serb the Open Era leader for most Slams after turning 30. Nadal is next with six

### The Grand Slam leaderboard

	Aus Open	French Open	Wimbledon	US Open
Federer	6	1	8	5
Nadal	1	13	2	4
Djokovic	9	2	6	3

### THE RESULTS

**Finals:** Men: 1-Djokovic (Srb) bt 7-Berrettini (Ita) 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-3; Doubles: Mektic & Pavic (Cro) bt Granollers (Esp) & Zeballos (Arg) 6-4, 7-6(5), 2-6, 7-5.  
**Mixed doubles:** 7-Skupski (GBR) & Krawczyk (USA) bt Salisbury & Dart (GBR) 6-2, 7-6(1).

# Anand finishes runner-up

## CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR  
KOZHIKODE

Neither age nor lack of tournament play could stop Viswanathan Anand from finishing runner-up at the Croatia Grand Chess Tour at Zagreb on Sunday. Playing his first event in 16 months, the 51-year-old came up with a superb display to take the second spot in a strong field.

# Kuss wins Stage 15

## TOUR DE FRANCE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ANDORRA LA VELLA

Defending champion Tadej Pogacar survived a torrid day as the Tour de France hit the Pyrenees on Sunday, the Slovenian holding on to the overall lead despite constant pressure from a clique of Ineos riders.

The gruelling Stage 15 was won by American Sepp Kuss

of the Jumbo Vismara team, who broke on the last of four tough climbs to distance 41-year-old Alejandro Valverde, who was second at the finish line of the tax-haven principality of Andorra.

Kuss became the first American since Tyler Farrar back in 2011 to win a stage on the Tour de France, and his family was present to witness the feat.

Monday is a rest day.

# Spinners script incredible win for India

Poonam, Deepthi and Sneh hold their nerve as England loses its way

## INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HOVE

The Indian spinners worked wonders during the final overs as the visitors edged out England by eight runs in the second T20I to level the three-match series here on Sunday.

Batting first, India lost its way after a good start provided by opener Shafali Verma (48, 38b, 8x4, 1x6) and captain Harmanpreet Kaur's 31 (25b, 2x4, 2x6) to finish on 148 for four.

A flurry of boundaries from Shafali helped India race to 47 for no loss in four overs. The 17-year-old produced the kind of hitting she is known for as she slog swept left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone for a four and six before smashing paceman Katherine Brunt for five boundaries in a row.

The more experienced Smriti Mandhana (20 off 16)



was happy being a spectator at the other end.

Harmanpreet, who promoted herself to No. 3, finally found some form and chipped in along with Deepthi (

## IN BRIEF



## Matsuyama to miss British Open

LONDON Masters champion Hideki Matsuyama has withdrawn from the British Open golf championship, beginning on Thursday, following a positive COVID-19 test. The Japanese World No. 18 tested positive on July 2 and has been self-isolating since. He has been replaced by American Harold Varner III. AP

## Diksha takes team to Aramco title triumph

LONDON Diksha Dagar carded three birdies on the last four holes for a four-under 69 and combined with captain Olivia Cowan, Sarin Schmidt of Germany and amateur Andrew Kelsey to win the Aramco Team Series title here on Saturday. The team aggregated a 41-under 397 for a three-stroke victory. PTI

## Hokkaido to also ban spectators at venues

TOKYO Hokkaido joined Fukushima on Saturday in barring fans from attending Olympic events because of rising coronavirus infections. Earlier, fans had been barred from all venues in Tokyo and three neighbouring prefectures. AP

## Benfica chief Vieira under house arrest

LISBON Benfica president Luís Filipe Vieira was placed under house arrest late on Saturday until he pays bail of €3 million. Vieira and three others are being investigated for possible fraud, money laundering and tax evasion. Former star and a club vice-president Rui Costa has taken over its management. AP

## Managing the pressure of Olympics well: Neeraj Chopra



Making adjustments: Neeraj is working on his technique to get longer throws. ■ FILE PHOTO

## Italy-based Indians to leave for Tokyo on July 17

## BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Indian boxing contingent, which is preparing for the Olympics in Italy, will leave for Tokyo from its training base in Assisi on July 17. Nine pugilists, including four women, have qualified for the Games.

India's qualification performance in boxing this

time was markedly better than the 2016 Rio Games where only three made the tournament-proper, none of them women.

Though athletes travelling from India would be facing added restrictions after arriving in Tokyo, those who would be heading to the Japanese capital from foreign training bases like Europe will get some relaxations on the severity of the quarantine.

ky Olympics' Sport-Specific Regulations (SSR), jointly formed by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the international federations (IFs).

If a boxer tests positive for COVID-19 in the final of the boxing event in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics, then the opponent will receive the gold medal, and the COVID-19 participant will be facilitated with the silver medal.

This specification has been made clear in the To-

## Bangladesh crushes Zimbabwe by 220 runs

## CRICKET

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HARARE

Bangladesh beat Zimbabwe by 220 runs in their one-off Test on Sunday as the home team was all out for 256 in its second innings on the final day and well short of its target of 477 to win.

Bangladesh spinner Mehidy Hasan picked up four for 66 in the Zimbabwe se-

cond innings for nine wickets in the match.

Resuming on 140 for three, the Zimbabweans had to bat through the entire day with just seven wickets in hand to save the Test, but didn't come close.

**The scores:** Bangladesh 468 and 284/1 decl. bt Zimbabwe 276 and 256 in 94.4 overs (Brendan Taylor 92, Donald Tiripano 52, Mehidy Hasan 4/66, Taskin Ahmed 4/82). Bangladesh won by 220 runs.

team is not able to compete due to COVID-19, they will not be disqualified and will be marked as DNS. There will be no change to the format or groupings.

For the mixed team event, in case an athlete can no longer take part in the event, but the NOC has another athlete on-site, the NOC can replace an athlete team member.

In shooting, if an athlete/

opponent has started, as per the regulations. The opponent will progress to the next round.

Similarly, if a wrestler has reached the final but is unable to compete due to COVID-19, the grappler who lost against him/her in the semi-finals will fill the vacant place and compete in the final.

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