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BJP members in Standing Committee flag rising fuel prices
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India takes on New Zealand in WTC final from today
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NEARBY



Ration scheme: CM's fresh bid to get L-G nod

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday resent the file of the home delivery scheme of ration to L-G Anil Baijal for approval. He also responded to the objections raised saying that the scheme was in accordance with the law.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

COMPLETE GEOGRAPHY Module by Amit Garg Ex- Faculty Vajiram & Ravi FEE During Covid 399/- After Covid 999/- Starting on 1st July 2021 (5 Seats Left) IASSETU.COM 9218400100

Operationalise vaccine units: Stalin

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

In his first meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi after assuming office, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Thursday urged him to operationalise the vaccine units in Chengalpattu and Coonoor.

He also sought the scrapping of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, the three farm laws and the proposed Chennai-Salem Greenfield Expressway.

Mr. Stalin handed over a memorandum containing 25 major demands, including

NEARBY



T.N. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

exemption of Tamil Nadu from the NEET-based admission to medical courses and scrapping of the entrance tests for admission to other professional courses.

Timetable Ready

The CBSE has set deadlines for schools to complete the assessment process

By June 23, 2021

- Formation of result committee by school
- To note subject-wise maximum marks of subjects offered by the school
- Identification of students who changed subject(s) in Class 12 with CBSE approval



- Checking of marks of Classes 10 & 11 if student passed from boards other than CBSE
- By June 30: Finalisation of roadmap and schedule by the committee
- By July 15: Finalisation of result after moderation and checking by schools
- Uploading of marks on Board's link

▪ CBSE will declare results by July 31

SOURCE: CBSE AFFIDAVIT IN THE SUPREME COURT

theory component of the final exam taken in Class 11. Finally, 40% weightage would be given for marks obtained in one or more unit tests, mid-term exams and pre-board exams in Class 12.

So, if the total marks for

theory is 80, the 30% weightage of Classes 10 and 11 would come to 24 marks each and the 40% weightage derived from performances in tests conducted in Class 12 would translate to the remaining 32 marks.

On the practical side, calculation would be on the "actual basis" of the marks uploaded by the schools on the CBSE's portal.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

RELATED REPORTS ▶ PAGE 8

Scheme evokes mixed response

SHINJINI GHOSH
JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ
NEW DELHI

There were mixed reactions to the CBSE's assessment scheme for the Class 12 exams. Some said it was not an accurate evaluation process, while others welcomed it. Devansh Saraf, who was to take his exam, said any assessment done would not be accurate to what a student could have been able to achieve in an offline exam. He, however, felt the CBSE criteria was fair as it could get.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Students freed as court rejects police's stand

Police wanted time to verify addresses



Victory stand: Natasha Narwal, Asif Iqbal Tanha and Devangana Kalita outside Tihar Jail in Delhi after their release on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

till the time such reports are filed," the judge said.

"The accused is directed to be released forthwith as per orders of the Delhi High Court," the court said, taking into account the undertaking given by counsel of the accused that their clients would not leave the jurisdiction of the Capital.

In the morning, the High Court directed the trial court to "proceed with promptitude and expedition" on the pleas filed by the three activists for immediate release. "The orders enlarging the applicants on bail have already been rendered by us. It needs to be implemented," the HC said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGES 2 & 9

I have written to PM thrice to withdraw Governor: Mamata

She denies allegations of post-poll violence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday that she had written thrice to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to withdraw Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar from the State.

She was responding to questions on Mr. Dhankhar's

visit to Delhi. She described the Governor as "Centre's own person" and denied allegations of post-poll violence.

"A child can be calmed into silence... In this case, speech is silver and silence is golden," the Chief Minister said, responding to the Governor's allegations of post-poll violence in the State.

On speculation that the Governor might be changed, Ms. Banerjee said she had

not been informed about any such development. "How am I supposed to know? When a Governor is appointed, the State government is usually consulted. That was not done in this case," she said.

This is the first time the Chief Minister has gone on record that she had written to the PM on withdrawing the Governor.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Mammoth support



Rescue mission: An injured tusker, 'Silver Monstra', being helped towards a waiting truck (not in picture) by other elephants at the Theppakadu elephant camp in Tamil Nadu's Mudumalai Tiger Reserve. ■ SATHYAMOORTHY M

Paras elected as new LJP president

No opposing nomination filed; democratic process was followed, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA

The rebel group of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) on Thursday elected Pashupati Kumar Paras unopposed as the new party president. After his election, Mr. Paras, who days before had staged a coup in the party, told mediapersons, "I was elected according to the party's constitution and democratic process. The party has thrust a big responsibility on me and I'll take forward the party."

The LJP's national executive committee meeting was held at the residence of senior party leader Suraj Bhan Singh in Patna.

Mr. Singh later announced that no other nomination had been filed against Mr. Paras.

After the coup in the party, the rebel LJP group had elected Mr. Singh, a party



Big responsibility: Pashupati Kumar Paras after being elected national president of the LJP in Patna on Thursday. ■ PTI

leader and former MP from Munger, as its working president.

His nephew becomes an autocrat, what can an uncle do?"

"I've been elected under the party's constitution, which says that every three years, election for the party president will take place. No one can be party president for life in a democratic setup," said the MP from Hajipur.

Earlier, Mr. Paswan was removed from the post of LJP president after an emergency meeting of the party's national working committee.

Out of a total of six LJP MPs, five rebelled against Mr. Paswan.

Mr. Paswan, however, on Wednesday nominated party leader and former MLA Raju Tiwari as the LJP State president.

A 'deal' prompted by one couple's need, another's desire

Payment dispute led parents who sold their baby to file kidnapping complaint, landing all in police net

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

A couple's need for money and another's desire for a male child led them to strike a deal on a six-day-old infant and subsequently land in police net.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Thakur said the accused have been identified as Vidyanand Yadav, 50, his wife Rambai Yadav, 45, Raman Kumar Yadav, 32, Haripal Singh, 50, Govind Kumar, 30, and his 24-year-old wife Pooja.

The police said on Tuesday they received a call at Fatehpur Beri police station from Mr. Govind, who said his six-day-old baby boy had been kidnapped. When the police reached the spot in Aya Nagar, he said his wife, Ms. Pooja, had delivered the baby on



The six accused in police custody. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

June 8. One of their friends, Haripal Singh, invited the couple to live with him because there wasn't enough space at their rented accommodation. On June 12, the couple reached the friend's residence in Aya Nagar where Mr. Haripal locked them from outside and fled with the child, alleged Mr. Govind. The police registered a kidnapping case based on his statement.

A team led by Station House Officer Kuldeep Singh launched the investigation and traced Mr. Haripal, who allegedly told them that the couple had, in fact, given the child willingly to the relatives of his friend, Mr. Raman, who lives in the Moti Bagh jhuggis. When the police reached

Mr. Raman's house, he told them that the couple had sold the baby to his relatives, Mr. Vidyanand and Ms. Rambai for ₹3.6 lakh, and the duo had already left for Kanpur. The police sought the details of the train they had boarded and nabbed the couple from Kanpur railway station. They were then brought to Delhi.

Financial crisis Further investigation revealed that Mr. Govind and Ms. Pooja were extremely poor and needed money for which they agreed to sell their baby for ₹3.6 lakh to Mr. Vidyanand and Ms. Rambai through Mr. Haripal and Mr. Raman. "When Vidyanand and Rambai were questioned, they said they were married for 25 years but couldn't bear a child because

of which their relatives in their village in Bihar would demean them and use derogatory words. Vidyanand, in fact, sold his land to be able to buy the baby. He told Raman that he will only take the child if it's a boy," said a senior police officer. A written agreement was signed between the two parties and pictures were also taken.

Police said Mr. Govind decided to inform them because they got only ₹2 lakh cash and four cheques of ₹40,000 each dated June 18. Mr. Govind wanted to encash the cheques on June 14 and leave for his village immediately. When he tried to reach Mr. Haripal and Mr. Raman on phone, they blocked him. He also couldn't reach them physically. Feeling cheated, he decided to call the police.

'Continue demolition of illegal buildings in Aravali forest land'

SC had refused to give encroachers any quarter on June 7

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday refused to halt the demolition of about 10,000 unauthorised residential constructions encroaching into the ecologically fragile Aravali forest land near Lakkarpur Khori village in Haryana.

A Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari had refused to give encroachers any quarter on June 7 while ordering the demolition. The court had categorically said that "land-grabbers cannot take the refuge of the rule of law" and demand fairness.

However, fresh petitions were filed urging the court to revisit its order and provide

for rehabilitation of the residents, including children. The petitioners, mostly residents whose properties face the axe, said they were not given time to submit documents to the local authorities to prove their claim.

But the court refused to budge on Thursday.

Onus on State The Bench said the residents had enough time to prove their claims in accordance with a notification issued by Haryana in 2020. The court said the onus was on the State to rehabilitate the residents in compliance with a 2003 scheme. The demolition would continue.

"Petitioners were obligat-

ed to provide documents to come under the rehabilitation scheme, which they have failed to do. We have recorded the submission that clearance of unlawful encroachment on forest land will be carried out as per due process of law," the court said.

The Haryana government said officials and personnel were pelted with stones at the site of demolition. However, the court declined to pass any orders while merely telling the authorities, "You know what to do then."

The court had in its June 7 order made it clear that the encroachers should be evicted by the land even by force.

The next hearing is scheduled on July 27.

CM YK

AN-NDE

'Vindication of Constitution's libertarian promise'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court order regarding the release of student-activists – Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asif Tanha – is a resounding vindication of the Constitution of India's libertarian promise, said former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar on Thursday.

He said the subsequent steps by the government to delay their release "mock the conscience of the Constitution and the memory of our Freedom Fighters".

"Protagonists of a muscular State seem to have forgotten the inescapable lesson of history that the cry for freedom is irrepressible. The State ill serves its purpose by oppressing its constituents...," he said, adding that the attempt to label dissenters as "anti-nationals" must be fought.

Friends, family shed tears of joy as they welcome JNU students

Crowd gathered outside Tihar jail ahead of Devangana and Natasha's release

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

"I can't wait to hold her and feed her favourite food when she gets home," said JNU student Devangana Kalita's husband Andre Ling, who welcomed her at Tihar Prison Complex on Thursday evening after completing court formalities.

Wearing a blue *mehkela chador* – a traditional attire of Assamese women, gifted by mother – Devangana stepped out of Tihar Prison gate number 3 along with Natasha Narwal a little after 7 p.m. on Thursday evening and hugged her husband with a wide smile "It's been a long and difficult year of waiting with so many twists and turns. I am finally relieved," he said.

Around 6 p.m., JNU students started gathering out-



JNU students wait for the release of their friends outside Tihar jail on Thursday. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

side Tihar for the three to be released by 7 p.m. The crowd grew bigger with their close friends and family joining.

Praise for judiciary

Ms. Narwal's paternal uncle Virender Singh Malik, criticised Delhi Police for the two-day delay and praised the judiciary. "This order has raised hopes among other

dissidents on such charges. Justice delayed, though not denied but in one sense, it was denied as Dr. Narwala (Natasha's father) is not with us. He just kept waiting for her release," he said.

Shortly after 7 p.m., a friend peeped through the hole in the gate and started raising slogans, bringing cheer among the crowd. The

pitch of the slogans increased and minutes later, Devangana and Natasha stepped out amid the roaring. "Saare pinjre todenge.. itihas ki dhara modenge" the two joined the crowd. A friend's eyes welled up with tears of joy.

Asif's friends welcomed him outside gate number 4 without the crowd. Though his family was away, his friends made sure his mother saw him speak outside the jail through a video call from Jharkhand. "I am very proud of him," she said, teary-eyed.

Standing at a distance, Devangana laughed and said: "I can't quite believe I am out of jail. I think I'll continue to feel that someone will come and arrest me from home tomorrow". The trio then came together for a picture with their fists held high.

Man 'burnt to death' near Tikri border; one arrested

SKM says it is an attempt to defame farmers' movement

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A man was burnt to death allegedly by a group of farmers protesting against the farm laws near Tikri border in Haryana's Bahadurgarh on Wednesday. One of the accused, Krishan, has been arrested.

Deputy Superintendent of Police (Bahadurgarh) Pawan Kumar said two accused, including Krishan, were identified. Both belonged to Jind and were part of the ongoing farmers' protest. The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) said that it was an attempt to defame the farmers' movement.

According to the FIR, the incident took place around 5 p.m. when Mukesh, a resident of Kasar village, went for a stroll and reached the farmers' agitation site. A little later, Mukesh's brother Madan Lal received a call on his phone saying that the farmers at the

protest site had doused Mukesh with an inflammable liquid and set him afire with an intention to kill him, said the FIR registered at Sector-6 Bahadurgarh Police Station.

Madan Lal, the complainant, said he informed village sarpanch who took Mukesh to Civil Hospital for treatment. Mukesh identified one of the assailants as Krishan, according to the FIR. Mukesh was later referred to Post Graduate Institute of

Medical Sciences in Rohtak where he died during treatment.

Krishan and his fellow accomplices were having drinks with Mukesh when an altercation broke out between them and they set him afire, said Inspector Jai Bhagwan, Sation House Office, Sector 6 Bahadurgarh police station.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, in a press statement, claimed that as per the facts known to it, the man doused himself with petrol to end life due to conflict in his family, and the Kisan Morcha volunteers rushed in to douse the fire and save his life. The SKM said an "unfortunate case of suicide" was being used by the Bharatiya Janta Party and Janayak Janata Party government, its political agents and their troll army to somehow implicate the farmers' movement".

DMRC to build 'halt platform' to link two corridors

Move aimed at improving interconnectivity between Green and Pink Lines

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

In a bid to improve interconnectivity between Green and Pink Lines, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) on Thursday said a special "halt platform" was being constructed at Punjabi Bagh West metro station to connect the two corridors.

The DMRC said: "There will not be any ticketing facility on the interchange platforms but boarding and deboarding facilities will be available."

230m-long FOB

Officials said the platforms will be connected by a 230-m-long foot overbridge (FOB), which will connect the platforms with the Punjabi Bagh West metro station of the Pink Line.

Bridging the gap

First and last train services on Green Line

S.N. SECTION	WEEKDAYS (MON-SAT)		SUNDAY	
	FIRST TRAIN	LAST TRAIN	FIRST TRAIN	LAST TRAIN
1	Brig. Hoshiar Singh-Inderlok	7 a.m.	9 p.m.	8 a.m.
2	Brig. Hoshiar Singh-Kirti Nagar	7.18 a.m.	9.10 p.m.	8.18 a.m.
3	Inderlok - Brig. Hoshiar Singh	7.25 a.m.	9.30 p.m.	8.25 a.m.
4	Kirti Nagar - Brig. Hoshiar Singh	7.25 a.m.	9.30 p.m.	8.25 a.m.

*Timings are till September 30

While the Pink Line connects Majlis Park and Shiv Vihar, the Green Line runs between Inderlok and Bahadurgarh.

"The platforms will be 155m in length and shall be connected with the FOB by two extra-large lifts [each

officials explained.

Currently, there is no interconnectivity between the two corridors.

"This facility will be of great benefit to passengers traveling to and from the satellite city of Bahadurgarh and other outer Delhi areas such as Mundka and Nangloi," DMRC officials said.

Due to the construction work, services on the Green Line are set to be regulated from late night on Friday to September 30, the DMRC said.

"We cannot think that normal conditions will prevail anytime soon. To avoid another situation next year where we have to rush and take decisions with regard to administering board exams, we should already start developing a plan taking into account online exams and the modalities to conduct assessments and projects if schools have to open partially," Mr. Sisodia said.

To undertake the construction of this halt platform, the first and last train services between Brigadier Hoshiar Singh [Bahadurgarh] to Inderlok/Kirti Nagar will be regulated from the intervening night of June 18 and 19 to September 30," the DMRC added.

Complaint against actor, Twitter MD in Loni case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police received a complaint against Swara Bhaskar, Manish Maheshwari, Twitter MD and others in connection with Loni incident where a man from a minority community was attacked, officials said on Thursday.

"We have received a

complaint against Swara Bhaskar, Manish Maheshwari, Twitter MD and others at Tilak Marg police station. It is under inquiry," a senior officer said.

In a video on social media, an elderly Muslim man had accused four men of beating him up, chopping his beard and asking him to chant "Jai

Shri Ram" in Ghaziabad's Loni.

Meanwhile, a police team, which is probing the 'Covid Toolkit' matter, was sent to Bengaluru where they questioned Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari.

The police, however, did not divulge further details of the questioning.

Amount spent on land purchase for Ram temple shows graft: AAP MP

Information not provided to I-T department on purchases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP MP Sanjay Singh on Thursday alleged that for Ram temple 12,080 square meter of land was bought for ₹8.50 crore, while 10,370 square meter of land next to it was bought for only ₹8 crore, which clearly shows that there has been corruption.

"Even if the rate of 10,370 square meter of land for ₹8 crore is considered correct, then about 26,000 square meter of land could be bought for ₹18.50 crore, whereas only 12,080 square meter of land was bought for ₹8.50 crore," he said.

IT information

He said that in Uttar Pradesh, if any purchase of more than ₹50 lakh is done in the registry department, information is given to the Income Tax Department. "In such a situation why was the information not given in this case of purchase of land

Why was the information not given in this case of purchase of land worth ₹18.50 crore, ₹8 crore and ₹2 crore

SANJAY SINGH
AAP MP

worth ₹18.50 crore, ₹8 crore and ₹2 crore?" he asked.

The AAP leader claimed

that Ram temple is not being built because "scam and corruption" are being done. "The people of BJP and Ram Janmabhoomi Trust have eaten the money of Prabhu Shri Ram Mandir. The poor had back on their expenses and donated for the temple of Lord Shri Ram, every rupee of that donation money should be put to good use," Mr. Singh said.

On Tuesday, the police recovered over ₹6 lakh from duo

Man and his mother held for staging robbery

Police recover over ₹6 lakh from duo

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man and his mother have been arrested for allegedly staging a robbery and flee with ₹6 lakh in north Delhi, the police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Chetan Saini and his 52-year-old mother Madhu Saini – both residents of Kanhya Nagar, Ganganagar, they said.

The case came to the fore when complainant Kamal Gupta, proprietor of Kamal Auto Industries in Anand Parbat Industrial Area, approached the police on

Tuesday. He told them that he had given ₹6.33 lakh to his employee Chetan to deposit in the bank but could not contact him, a senior officer said. His phone was switched off, Mr. Gupta said.

The police then found Chetan admitted to a hospital with a hand injury. He told the police that when he was going to deposit the mo-

ney, he was robbed of the cash, one scooter, one bill, cheque, his mobile phone and purse.

"During investigation, the police found Chetan's statements to be suspicious. He was interrogated at a length when he said he had staged the robbery along with his mother and cousin brother," said DCP (North) Anto Alphonse.

On Wednesday, the police raided his house and recovered the money. The scooter was also recovered on his instance, the DCP said.

Chetan has been working in Kamal Auto Industries for the last 14 months. He used to take cash from the factory for delivery purposes and bank depositions. This time, he told the police that it was a large sum of money and he decided to siphon it off, the police said.

On Tuesday, Chetan staged a robbery near Shastri Nagar. Madhu assisted him in the commission of the crime, an officer said.

The police recovered over ₹6 lakh from duo

Member of gang involved in looting mobile shops nabbed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A member of an inter-State gang, which is allegedly involved in burglaries in over 50 mobile showrooms in Delhi, has been arrested, the police said on Thursday.

On May 17 night, a man complained to the police that someone broke into his JIO mobile showroom near Delhi Cantt police stations and fled off with all the mobile phones. An FIR was lodged. During probe, the police received inputs that members of Mewati Gang are involved

in such cases. A tip-off was received by the police that on June 15, a member of Mewati gang, Tarif, would come on a stolen two-wheeler in Vasant Vihar to recces a mobile showroom.

"A trap was laid and the accused, Tarif from Haryana was held. We recovered one countrymade pistol along with two live cartridges from him," said the officer.

DCP (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said they have identified other members of the gang as well and arrests will soon be made.

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
3RD FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY ROAD, RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND.

CORRIGENDUM - 3

Name of Project: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Mahagama, Barharwa, Hariharganj, Barkashariya, Domchanch, Bachra&Dhanwar in Jharkhand, NIT No.JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-7 ULBs/2021-381 , Tender ID.2021_UDD_49641_1 P.R No.:246399

This is for information of all the bidders that following Corrigendum are being made in RFP documents (Ref. JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-7 ULBs/2021-381 for "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Mahagama, Barharwa, Hariharganj, Barkashariya, Domchanch, Bachra&Dhanwar in Jharkhand". The bidders are advised to take into account the following Corrigendum before submission of their bids against this tender. If any bidder has already submitted his/her bid, then he/she should resubmit his/her bid taking into account following amendments/Pre-bid Response/Corrigendum.

Sr.no.	Bid Document Ref.	As per Corrigendum 1	As per Corrigendum 3
1	Last Date/ Time of Bid Submission	17.06.2021 17:00 Hrs	24.06.2021 17:00 Hrs
2	Last Date/ Time of Submission of Tender Fee & EMD	18.06.2021, 17:00 Hrs	25.06.2021, 17:00 Hrs
3	Date of Bid Opening	18.06.2021, 17:30 Hrs	25.06.2021, 17:30 Hrs

SD/-
Project Director (Technical)

JHARKHAND URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
3RD FLOOR, PRAGATI SADAN, KUTCHERY ROAD, RANCHI 834 001, JHARKHAND.

CORRIGENDUM - 3

Name of Project: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and providing Project Management Consultancy (PMC) services for Fecal Sludge Management Scheme of Hussainabad, Bishnupur, Lohardaga, Garhwa, Chatarpur, Khunti, Chatra and Latehar, NIT No.JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-8 ULBs/2021-380 , Tender ID.2021_UDD_49640_1 P.R No.:246532

This is for information of all the bidders that following Corrigendum are being made in RFP documents (Ref. JUIDCO Ltd/RFP/FSMS-8 ULBs/2021-380 for "Request for Proposal (RFP) for Selection of Consultant for preparation of Detailed Project Report

Timings

DELHI

FRIDAY, JUN. 18

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 12:28 SET 00:32

SATURDAY, JUN. 19

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 13:30 SET 01:06

SUNDAY, JUN. 20

RISE 05:24 SET 19:22

RISE 14:33 SET 01:41

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 35 26
Safdarjung 35 26
Palam 36 26

Delhi Pilm Today
36°C Dry and very warm weather likely. Light winds and occasional partly cloudy sky would prevail.

Delhi Pilm Tomorrow
37°C A hot day with moderate winds likely. Thunder clouds may develop at few areas with partly cloudy sky.

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IN BRIEF

Fortis hospitals to start Sputnik V inoculation

NEW DELHI
Fortis Healthcare on Thursday said that they will start vaccination using Sputnik V vaccine at two of its hospitals from Saturday. "The two-dose vaccine will be available at two hospitals – Fortis Memorial Research Institute, Gurugram, and Fortis Hospital, Mohali. In the coming days, the vaccine will be available at more Fortis hospitals across 11 cities as part of the phase-wise pilot project," the hospital said.

'Raise production capacity of Dwarka water plant'

NEW DELHI
Delhi Water Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday directed officials to increase the production capacity of the Dwarka water treatment plant (WTP) from 50 million gallons per day to 70 million gallons per day. The Minister said a lake would be built inside the Dwarka WTP across an area of 10 acres to increase groundwater levels. PTI

Delhi govt's expenditure increased in April, May'

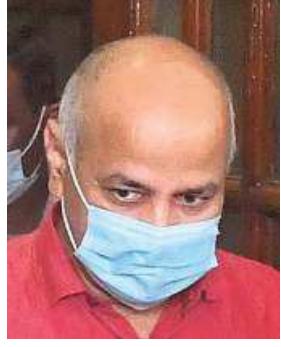
Order issued to curb non-essential expenditure, says Sisodia

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday said that a memorandum has been released to rationalise the Delhi government's expenditure during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Sisodia said that the expenditure of the Delhi government has increased around 80% during the first two months of the current financial year compared to the corresponding period during the previous financial year.

He stated that revenue receipts of Delhi have been ₹5,273.26 crore during the first two months of the current financial year, while its expenditure has reached



Manish Sisodia

₹8,511.09 crore.

"Delhi has incurred ₹3,237.83 crore more than its receipts which were met from last year's savings. Historically, during the first two months, the expenditure used to be ₹4,705.14 crore in FY-2019-20 and

₹4,965.58 crore in FY-2020-21. However, due to unprecedented COVID surge, the expenditure during the first two months has jumped to ₹8,511.09 crore in current financial year," he said.

Tax collection declines
Mr. Sisodia said that the tax collection has declined due to second wave of COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown.

"The order has been issued to curtail the expenditure of the government, beyond the expenditure for essential and day-to-day functions. Further, the various welfare schemes being run for the Delhi residents will remain unchanged," an official statement said.

Adequate vaccine stock available in Capital, says AAP leader Atishi

158 new infections reported as cases continue to dip in city

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Stock of 2.34 lakh vaccines available for 18-44 and 7.44 lakh vaccines for 45+ age group

ATISHI
AAP leader

large numbers by registering on the CoWIN app. We hope that people of 45 years and above, who have not got themselves vaccinated yet, will also come forward and get inoculated soon," she added.

Meanwhile, the downward trend in COVID-19 cases continued with 158 new cases being reported in the

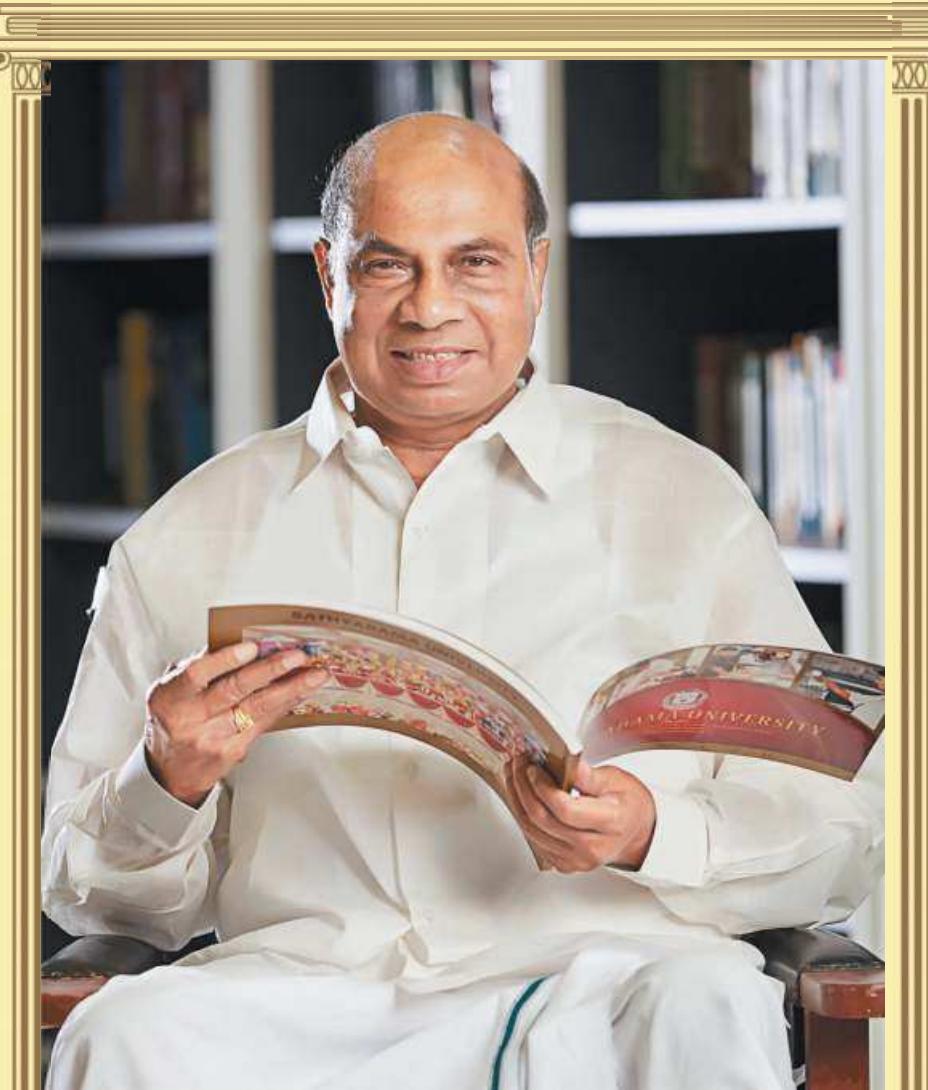
past 24 hours, taking the total cases to 14,31,868, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday.

Also, 10 deaths were reported and the total number of deaths stood at 24,886. A total of 77,542 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said. Of the total cases, 14,04,428 people have recovered and there are 2,554 active cases.

The test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.20%, which means that about one person out of 500 people taking COVID-19 tests are now positive for the virus.

COLONEL DR. JEPPIAAR

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Ration scheme: CM's fresh bid to get L-G nod

Kejriwal responds to objections raised, says scheme in accordance with the law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Thursday resent the file of the home delivery scheme of ration to the Lieutenant-Governor for approval. He also responded to the objections raised saying that the scheme was in accordance with the law and was being implemented to follow the orders of the Central government.



A woman collects free ration at a government school in Vishwas Nagar in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

'Wrong to halt scheme'
Mr. Kejriwal said that it is wrong to halt this scheme during the COVID-19 pandemic as with its implementation, crowding at ration shops could be avoided and added that the L-G was informed about the Cabinet's decision regarding the doorstep delivery scheme of ra-

tion four times in the last three years. However, he never opposed it. He questioned why the scheme was suddenly being stopped when the plan had already been approved.

Mr. Kejriwal said that the request of the L-G to send

ment. In addition, the Delhi government has been, from time to time, informing and seeking assistance from the Centre regarding the implementation of the doorstep delivery scheme through several letters," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that the only objection received from the Central government was to remove the name of 'Chief Minister' from this scheme which the Delhi government immediately accepted.

In reference to a petition filed in the Delhi High Court by an association of ration shopkeepers seeking a stay on the scheme, the Chief Minister said that the matter has already been heard five times and the High Court has refused to grant a stay on the same.

COVID-19 third wave unlikely to affect children: study

'SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among kids high compared to adult population'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

It is unlikely that a possible third wave of COVID-19, due to the prevailing variant of the virus, would disproportionately affect children, according to the interim result of a multicentre study by researchers at AIIMS, Delhi and other hospitals.

The study is yet to be peer reviewed and has appeared in pre-print on an online platform.

"SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among children was high and were comparable to the adult population. Hence, it is unlikely that any future third wave by the prevailing COVID-19 variant

"The data collection period was from March 15, 2021 to June 10, 2021. Total available data was of 4,509 participants of which <18 years were 700 and ≥18 years was 3,809. The seroprevalence was 55.7% in the <18 years age group and 63.5% in the ≥18 year age group," the report said.

THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF



Naidu condemns killing of two TDP activists

VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday condemned the killing of two party activists in Kurnool district. Mr. Naidu said he suspected the role of YSRCP MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy in the incident.

Ganja, liquor worth ₹52 lakh seized, 10 held

CHITTOOR

The Chittoor police seized huge quantities of ganja, and Karnataka-made liquor and banned chewing tobacco products, all worth about ₹52 lakh, and arrested 10 people during raids in three different locations in Tavanampalle mandal of Andhra Pradesh. Three vans, an autorickshaw and two motorcycles were also confiscated.

21-year-old killed 'for rejecting proposal'

Her 13-year-old sister was injured

STAFF REPORTER

MALAPPURAM

A 21-year-old man stabbed a woman to death and injured her sister in an apparent reprisal for rejecting his romantic advances at Elamkulam, near Perinthalmanna, on Thursday morning, the police said.

Vineesh Vinod entered the 21-year-old woman's house and allegedly attacked her in her room on the second floor.

Her younger sister, 13, was also injured in the attack.

Police arrested Vineesh within hours of the incident.

Plea against development rules dismissed

Kerala HC says examination of legality of Lakshadweep draft regulation is completely premature

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Thursday dismissed a writ petition challenging the draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation, 2021, which proposes to develop towns on inhabited Lakshadweep islands.

The petition was filed by K.P. Noushad Ali, secretary of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee. According to him, the draft regulation grants the Administrator the power to "declare any area to be a planning area" for the purpose of development.

Petitioner's contention
The petitioner contended that the draft Bill gave sweeping powers to the administration and all its bodies to directly interfere with an islander's right to possess and retain property. The draft regulation was widely



Up in arms: Activists of the CITU gathering for a protest outside the Lakshadweep administration office in Kochi. • AP

opposed as it vested the Administrator with powers to remove or usurp smallholdings of property owned by islanders.

The petitioner also challenged the procedure to be followed for auctioning livestock on the islands and the decision to discontinue the

service of the temporary staff engaged by the administration in certain sectors.

Dismissing the petition, the Bench comprising Justices S.V. Bhatti and Murali Pu-

rushothaman observed that examination of the legality of the draft regulation, which was under the active consid-

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Thursday granted interim anticipatory bail to Aisha Sultana, a filmmaker, in a sedition case registered against her.

Justice Ashok Menon ordered that she be granted interim anticipatory bail if she is arrested when she appears before the Kavaratti police on June 20 for interrogation in connection with the sedition case.

She has been charged with offences under Sections 124 A and 153 B of the IPC for her alleged

remark on a TV channel that the Union government had used a bio-weapon against the islanders.

Justice Ashok Menon ordered that she be granted interim anticipatory bail if she is arrested when she appears before the Kavaratti police on June 20 for interrogation in connection with the sedition case.

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Reverse migration

Political mobilisation based on opportunistic defection can only offer limited purchase

Leaders switching parties and parties recruiting turncoats are not unheard of in Indian politics. A shrinking party would lose leaders while an expanding party would gain them. The talent acquisition strategy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) goes far beyond such familiar opportunism. In the recent years of its growth, it has built entire electoral strategies around leaders who crossed over from other parties. In Assam, its two consecutive Chief Ministers were in other parties not long ago; the current incumbent, Himanta Biswa Sarma, was not just any other Congress leader but a decision maker in the 15-year-long tenure of the party until 2016. Perhaps encouraged by the success in Assam, the party launched a similar strategy in West Bengal. It recruited dozens of leaders from other parties, particularly the Trinamool Congress (TMC). Not surprisingly, a good number of the leaders who crossed over to the BJP due to its lure or fear of the central agencies investigating scams and irregularities, are now flocking back to the TMC. Even as it continued to induct defectors from the Congress and the Telangana Rashtra Samithi this week, Mukul Roy left the BJP to return to the comfort of his old party, the TMC. Several others may follow suit. The TMC itself is a haven of defectors – dozens of leaders from the Congress and the Left Front have joined it since it won power in 2011. The political flux is unlikely to end soon.

The BJP has achieved significant growth in West Bengal in a short span of time. Had it relied more on leaders who had organically grown with it, the BJP would not have been in such an embarrassing position. Its hurry to be in power even in places where it has not established itself as a viable party is harming it. It is also coarsening the political debate and harming democracy itself, simultaneously. If the reverse migration of TMC leaders is rattling the BJP in West Bengal, in Kerala, another State where it tried to punch far above its weight, it is caught in a vortex of corruption allegations. Allegations range from bringing money from Karnataka for the campaign in Kerala through *hawala* routes and bribing an ally. The leaders that the BJP recruited from other parties in Kerala have added up to nothing. All this should point the BJP towards the virtue of patience, which is not unfamiliar to it. Replacing grassroots activism with large-scale defections from other parties can only win short-term rewards, if at all. In the long run, such trends undermine the parties, the persons involved and the democratic processes. The BJP must learn to be more modest in victory and gracious in defeat. Tactics too focused on the short term can only harm the larger interest over the longer term.

Old and slow

India and New Zealand are vying for the latest ICC trophy in the game's original format

Ever since Australia and England played the first ever Test at Melbourne in March 1877, cricket's longest format has constantly evolved. Timeless Tests were dispensed with and rest days within a game were discarded while faster siblings One Day Internationals and Twenty20s emerged. As the abridged variants attracted fans and commerce, Tests of recent vintage also embraced the day-and-night spectacle. Through these changes, nations have tested themselves in bilateral series with the Ashes and India-Pakistan clashes having stronger brand equity. Yet, there was a demand for context, a yearning that these languid affairs with breaks for lunch and tea over five days coalesce into something more significant. Limited-overs' cricket had World Cups but in Tests, it was all about annual rankings. The International Cricket Council (ICC) stepped in to plug this gap with the World Test Championship (WTC) and the inaugural final will feature India and New Zealand, the leading two teams based on points garnered since 2019. The summit clash commencing at Southampton's Ageas Bowl on Friday, presents an opportunity for both India and New Zealand to gain some ICC silverware that is missing in their trophy cabinets. The respective countries have suffered a title drought with New Zealand winning the ICC Knockout tournament, as the Champions Trophy was known then, back in 2000 while India claimed the ICC Champions Trophy in 2013.

Previously, Virat Kohli's and Kane Williamson's men had riveting jousts though it was the New Zealanders who mostly emerged on top. India lost the 2019 World Cup semi-final at Manchester and last year in New Zealand, won the T20Is and then succumbed in the ODIs and Tests. A neutral venue can negate home-advantage but New Zealand may feel more comfortable while taking into account the playing surface and the prevailing weather. However, India has the confidence gleaned from winning in Australia while also getting the better of England when Joe Root's men came visiting. Meanwhile, true to its giant-slayer tag, New Zealand edged past England with a 1-0 verdict in the two-Test series over the last fortnight. Williamson and company have been in cricket's birthplace for a longer time with additional matches under their belt while India has the solace of intra-squad warm-up games. The simplistic trope would be Indian batting against opposition bowling but times have changed and Kohli has an incisive pace arsenal led by Jasprit Bumrah besides solid back-up in spin. The teams seem equal and the provision for an extra sixth day should come in handy as rains are forecast. If there is a draw or a tie, the championship will be shared which is ideal as in their unique ways, India and New Zealand have repeatedly proved their mettle.

A judicial pushback to a draconian legal regime

The Delhi court ruling is a way forward in finding a balance between civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terror laws



GAUTAM BHATIA

The judgment of the Delhi High Court granting bail to activists Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal, and Asif Iqbal Tanha – they have been in jail for over a year (without trial) for their alleged role in the 2020 Delhi riots – is significant for many reasons. Most importantly, it brings to a close many months of jail time for three people who are yet to be proven guilty of any crime, something that should be anathema to any civilised justice system. What is also significant, however, is that the judgment represents an important judicial pushback to the authoritarian legal regime under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act ("UAPA").

The root of the issue

Ostensibly designed to check and address terrorism, the UAPA is perhaps one of the most abused laws in India today. The root of the problem lies in Section 43(D)(5) of this Act, which prevents the release of any accused person on bail if, on a perusal of the case diary, or the report made under Section 173 of the Code Of Criminal Procedure, the court is of the opinion that "there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is *prima facie* true".

It is important to break this down. Broadly speaking, India follows the adversarial system of criminal justice, where two sides to a dispute attempt to persuade the court that their version of events is

true. At the heart of the adversarial system of justice is the testing of evidence through cross-examination. Each side is afforded the opportunity to scrutinise, challenge, and question the evidence produced by its opponent; and the best way for a judge to unearth the truth – or the closest approximation of it – is to consider which side's evidence is left standing, and appears more persuasive, after the rigours of cross-examination.

Production of evidence, and cross-examination, involves witnesses, recoveries of incriminating objects, tests of handwriting or voice samples, and many other elements. It constitutes the bulk of a criminal trial. In India, with our overburdened courts and creaking justice system, criminal trials take years. In high-profile cases such as the Delhi riots case, where the record is bulky, and the witnesses number in their hundreds, trials can take many years – even a decade or more.

Importance of bail

For this reason, bail becomes of utmost importance. If an individual is not able to secure bail from the courts, they will languish as under-trials in prison, for the duration of the case, no matter how many years it takes (in recent memory, there are cases of people being found innocent in terrorism cases after 14 and even 23 years in prison). Bail, thus, becomes the only safeguard and guarantee of the constitutional right to liberty.

In ordinary circumstances, when considering the question of bail, a court is meant to take into account a range of factors. These include whether the accused is a flight risk, whether he or she might tamper with the evidence or attempt to influence witnesses,



and the gravity of the offence. But it is here that Section 43(D)(5) of the UAPA plays such a damaging role. As we have just seen, under the classical vision of criminal justice, truth – about innocence or guilt – can only be determined after the evidence of both the prosecution and the defence has been subjected to the rigours of cross-examination. However, as lawyers and scholars such as Abhinav Sekhri and Anjana Prakash have also pointed out, Section 43(D)(5) short-circuits that core assumption. For the grant of bail, it only looks at the plausibility of one side's evidence – that is, the Prosecution's. It binds the court to look at only the case diary or the police report, which has not been challenged by cross-examination, and requires that bail be denied as long as the unchallenged prosecution case appears to be *prima facie* true.

One-sided

The perversity of Section 43(D)(5), thus, is that it forces the court to make an effective determination of guilt or innocence based on one side's unchallenged story, and on that basis to deprive individuals of their freedom for years on end. In a democratic polity, which is committed to the rule of law, this is a deeply troubling state of affairs.

The effect of Section 43(D)(5), as one can see, is that once the police elect to charge sheet an individual under the UAPA, it becomes

extremely difficult for bail to be granted. Even outlandish or trumped-up cases can sound convincing until people have a chance to interrogate and challenge them. In short, unless the police prepare an extremely shoddy case – that is riddled with internal contradictions, for example – a case diary or a report will invariably make out a *prima facie* case against an individual.

Finer points of the judgment

It is here that the Delhi High Court's judgment becomes important. The Bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani correctly note that even though Section 43(D)(5) departs from many basic principles of criminal justice, there are other fundamental principles that remain of cardinal significance. These include, for example, that the initial burden of demonstrating guilt must always lie upon the prosecution; and also, that criminal offences must be specific in their terms, and read narrowly, to avoid bringing the innocent within their net. On this basis, the court's judgment notes that as the UAPA is meant to deal with terrorist offences, its application must be limited to acts that can reasonably fall within a plausible understanding of "terrorism". "Terrorism" is a term of art, and not a word that can be thrown around loosely. Thus, to attract the provisions of the UAPA – the judgment holds – the charge sheet must reveal factual, individualised, and particular allegations linking the accused to a terrorist act.

The judgment then finds that even if the police's claims are taken to be true, no such allegations exist. At the highest, the accusations against the activists involve calls for protests and *chakka jams*

(road blockages). There is no act, overt or covert, attributed to the activists that could constitute a terrorist offence. And, importantly, inferences or hypotheticals drawn by the police do not count at the stage of granting bail. Coupled with the significance of the right to protest and to dissent under our constitutional scheme, the judgment therefore holds that even *prima facie*, a case under the UAPA has not been made out, and therefore, there is no question of the application of Section 43(D)(5).

The Delhi High Court's judgment indicates a pathway forward in the quest for finding a balance between citizens' civil rights and the imperatives of anti-terrorism legislation such as the UAPA. A position under which citizens can be jailed for years on end just on the basis of police reports and case diaries, with courts precluded from granting them bail, is completely inconsistent with democracy, and redolent of authoritarian or tyrannical states. However, the court's analysis shows how even within – and consistent with – the terms of the UAPA, there is an important role for a conscientious judiciary to play. By scrutinising the police case on its own terms, and according a strict interpretation to draconian legislation such as the UAPA, courts can ensure that civil rights are not left entirely at the mercy of the state.

At the time of writing, the High Court's judgment has been appealed by the Delhi Police to the Supreme Court of India. It now remains to be seen whether the highest court will also endorse this crucial ruling, which restates the responsibility of an independent judiciary in checking executive impunity.

Gautam Bhaitia is a Delhi-based lawyer

A place for disruptive technology in India's health sector

Artificial intelligence, autonomous systems and data analytics have a defining role to play in shaping the medical sector

SURJITH KARTHIKEYAN & GOWTHAM DAAS RAJENDRAN

As frontline warriors fighting COVID-19, the medical community has been selfless, but also losing a number of staff in the process. Nurses and attendants, on full-time duty, donning mainly masks and gloves as the only protective gear have been exposed to great risk. It is in such a situation that the relevance of disruptive technology and its applications comes into focus, potentially helping to reduce the chances of hospital staff contracting the infection.

There are reports in the global media of established innovative field hospitals using robots to care for COVID-19 affected patients.

There are hospitals, in China, that use 5G-powered temperature measurement devices at the entrance to flag patients who have fever/fever-like symptoms. Other robots measure heart rates and blood oxygen levels through smart bracelets and rings that patients wear; they even sanitise wards. Last year, in India, the Sawai Man Singh government hospital in Jaipur held trials with a humanoid robot to deliver medicines and food to COVID-19 patients admitted there (<https://bit.ly/3wLxtSQ>).

The critical aspect is how new technologies can improve the wel-

fare of societies and reduce the impact of communicable diseases, spotlighting the importance of technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), autonomous systems, blockchain, cloud and quantum computing, data analytics, 5G. Blockchain technology can help in addressing the interoperability challenges that health information and technology systems face. The health blockchain would contain a complete indexed history of all medical data, including formal medical records and health data from mobile applications and wearable sensors. This can also be stored in a secure network and authenticated, besides helping in seamless medical attention.

Big data analytics can help improve patient-based services tremendously such as early disease detection. Even hospital healthcare facilities can be improved to a great extent. AI and the Internet of Medical Things, or IoMT (which is defined as a connected infrastructure of medical devices, software applications, and health systems and services) are shaping healthcare applications.

Medical autonomous systems can also improve health delivery to a great extent and their applications are focused on supporting medical care delivery in dispersed and complex environments with the help of futuristic technologies.

This system may also include autonomous critical care system, autonomous intubation, autonomous cricothyrotomy and other autonomous interventional procedures. Cloud computing is another application facilitating collaboration and data exchanges between doctors, departments, and even institutions and medical providers to enable best treatment.

Furthering UHC

According to the World Health Organization (<https://bit.ly/3gtHBT>), "Universal health coverage (UHC) is the single most powerful concept that public health has to offer. It is a powerful social equalizer and the ultimate expression of fairness."

The question is about how UHC can be achieved through the application of digital technologies, led by a robust strategy integrating human, financial, organisational and technological resources.

Studies by WHO show that weakly-coordinated steps may lead to stand-

alone information and communication technology solutions, leading to a fragmentation of information and resulting in poor delivery of care. India needs to own its digital health strategy that works and leads towards universal health coverage and person-centred care. Such a strategy should emphasise the ethical appropriateness of digital technologies, cross the digital divide, and ensure inclusion across the economy. 'Ayushman Bharat' and tools such as Information and Communication Technology could be fine-tuned with this strategy to promote ways to protect populations. Online consultation through video conferencing should be a key part of such a strategy, especially in times when there is transmission of communicable diseases.

Using local knowledge

In addition to effective national policies and robust health systems, an effective national response must also draw upon local knowledge. Community nurses, doctors, and health workers in developing countries do act as frontline sentinels. An example is the Ebola virus outbreak in Africa, where communities proactively helped curtail the spread much before government health teams arrived. Another example is from

Indonesia, where the experience of backyard poultry farmers was used to tackle bird flu. Primary health centres in India could examine local/traditional knowledge and experience and then use it along with modern technology.

Possible challenges
In the developing world, and this includes India, initial efforts in this direction should involve synchronisation and integration, developing a template for sharing data, and reengineering many of the institutional and structural arrangements in the medical sector. Big data applications in the health sector should help hospitals provide the best facilities and at less cost, provide a level playing field for all sectors, and foster competition. The possible constraints in this effort are a standardisation of health data, organisational silos, data security and data privacy, and also high investments. However, there is no doubt that disruptive technology can play an important role in improving the health sector in general.

Surjith Karthikeyan is an Indian Economic Service Officer, serving as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. Gowtham Daas Rajendran is a post graduate in public policy from the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

The undercut

The recent spurt of data reconciliation in connection with COVID-19 deaths in a number of States confirms long-held suspicions of inaccurate mortality being reported previously. These revisions will represent a truer estimate of fatality, in turn leading to better epidemiological data needed to track the intensity of the outbreaks.

Dr. THOMAS PALOCAREN,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

Surge in FDI inflows

In the article, "What explains the surge in FDI inflows" (*The Hindu*, OpEd page, June 2, 2020), which analysed data released by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on May 24, 2021 and the May 2021 bulletin of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) regarding Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows in India, the RBI data appear to have been

misinterpreted. The analysis of the reasons behind the buoyancy in FDI inflows is erroneous. The writer seems to suggest that the FDI inflows of US\$81.72 billion include amounts attributable to 'repatriation/disinvestment' and 'FII investments' with the surge in FDI inflows to US\$81.72 bn in 2020-21 being attributable to an increase in 'repatriation/disinvestment' and 'FII investments'. FII investments are different from FDI. FII investment amounts have not been included to calculate FDI inflows. FII investments of US\$38 billion in 2020-21 have been categorised separately by the RBI and do not form part of the FDI inflow figure of US\$81.72 bn. If the writer's intention was to demonstrate the staggering increase in aggregate foreign exchange inflows under the FDI and FII routes, US\$119.8 billion

should have been quoted. Aggregate foreign exchange inflows under these routes witnessed an increase of 59.88% over the figure of US\$74.94 billion in 2019-20. The writer appears to attribute the amounts in respect of 'repatriation/disinvestment' to investments from private equity funds and also seems to suggest that the 'repatriation/disinvestment' amount has been taken into account to calculate the FDI inflow figure of US\$81.72 bn. However, 'repatriation/disinvestment' of US\$27 billion in 2020-21 has been categorised separately by the RBI and does not form part of the FDI inflow figure. India attracted the highest ever FDI inflows of US\$81.72 bn in 2020-21, higher by 10% over 2019-20. FDI inflows remained buoyant despite challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and the national lockdown. The

Government of India has put in place a stable, predictable and transparent policy environment and continues to take measures to develop infrastructure, improve the business environment and liberalise the FDI policy regime. Their effects will continue to deliver results.

YOGESH BAWJEA,
ADG (MEDIA & COMMUNICATION),
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

SUKHCHAIN SINGH,
ASST. DIRECTOR (M&C),
PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU,
NATIONAL MEDIA CENTRE,
New Delhi

R. Nagaraj responds:
As stated in the article, 'total FDI inflow' of US\$81.72 bn in 2020-21, as in the Commerce Ministry's press release (May 24, 2021), is identical to 'Gross inflows/gross investment' in the RBI Bulletin (RBIB) (Foreign Investment Inflows; Table 34, row no. 1.1.1.).

Likewise, the FII investment of \$38 bn mentioned in the Ministry's response is similar to the figure reported in the RBIB table, row no. 1.2.2. Similarly, 'repatriation/disinvestment' of \$27.056 bn is also recorded in the same table, row no. 1.1.1.2. In the RBIB tabulation, a few arithmetical identities define these financial flows. For instance, gross inflows (1.1.1) are related to 'Direct Investment to India' (1.1.1) and repatriation/disinvestment (1.1.1.2). 'Foreign Investment Inflows' (1) is the sum of 'Net Foreign Direct Investment' (1.1) and 'Net Portfolio Investment' (1.2). 'FIIs' (1.2.2) is a sub-set of net portfolio investment (1.2). By rearranging the rows in Table 34, we get the following identities:

Identity 1: Gross inflow (1.1.1) = Foreign investment inflow (1) + Repatriation (1.1.1.2) + FDI by India (1.2) - Net portfolio investment and repatriations is not tenable.

portfolio investment (1.2); Identity 2: FIIs (1.2.2) = Net portfolio investment (1.2) - GDRs/ADRs (1.2.1) - Offshore funds and others (1.2.3) + portfolio investment by India (1.2.4). Plugging in the values from the table for 2020-21 against each variable (in billion dollars), we get the following arithmetical identities: Identity 1: US\$1.721 = \$80.209 + \$27.056 + \$11.299 - \$3

Should India accept Islamic State returnees?

PARLEY

Respecting international law, India should bring them back and try them in court as Indian citizens

In 2016-18, four women from Kerala accompanied their husbands to join the Islamic State (IS) in Afghanistan's Khorasan Province. Their husbands were killed in different attacks, and the women are now lodged in an Afghanistan prison. Authorities in Afghanistan want to return the women to India, but the Indian government has not indicated what it proposes to do in this matter. Sources say security agencies have advised against taking them back. What do international laws say about foreign fighters returning to their countries? K.P. Fabian and Kabir Taneja discuss the question in a conversation moderated by Suhasini Haider. Edited excerpts:



K.P. Fabian
is a former diplomat, author and Professor at the Indian Society of International Law



Kabir Taneja
is Fellow with the Strategic Studies Programme at the Observer Research Foundation and author of 'The ISIS Peril'



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

Recovery takes more than reforms

In any serious attempt at economic recovery, the focus must be on food supply and not money supply

PULAPRA BALAKRISHNAN

The most recent growth estimates of the National Statistical Office show that after a steep contraction in the first quarter of last year, growth accelerated steadily afterwards. This would have assured a recovery had we not experienced the second wave of the pandemic that came with the current financial year. Overlapping State-level lockdowns that started in April have now lasted for almost as long as the nationwide lockdown of 2020, and there is no gainsaying their impact on the economy. Output may well have contracted in the beginning of this year. So, though recovery will eventually come, it could be W-shaped rather than V-shaped.

Meaning of reforms

When the issue of economic recovery was raised in public, a minister asserted that the economy will recover due to the reforms planned or already implemented by the government. We do not know what the government has in mind but we should be sceptical of the claim that reforms can make a difference at this stage. Since 1991, the term 'reforms' has been used to mean both policy changes that remove restrictions on private sector activity in certain areas and those that increase profits in existing lines of production. Recent examples of these are allowing greater private sector participation in defence as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan launched in 2020 and the significant lowering of corporate tax in 2019, respectively. However, more reforms may be ineffective in spurring recovery. Presently for the private sector, entry into a new area or undertaking investment in an existing activity may not appear profitable given their expectation of the state of the economy in the near future, upon which their revenue will depend.

We may assume that the private sector is fully aware of the following history. In February, believing that the peak of the epidemic had been crossed, the government reverted to its principal macroeconomic pre-occupation, namely fiscal consolidation or the paring down of the fiscal defi-

cit. Accordingly, it raised its budgeted expenditure by less than 1% in the last Budget. The onset of the second wave of COVID-19 in April has thrown the economic policy calculations of the government out of gear. Back in February it was already known that the economy had contracted in 2020-21. To keep public expenditure virtually unchanged under such circumstances had been heroic enough then, but now, with a possible further contraction of the economy, to continue with the frigid fiscal stance would be disastrous. Though we do not know how output has fared so far this financial year, data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy show that unemployment has risen in May, indicating slack demand for output. With this knowledge, the private sector is unlikely to respond with alacrity to liberalising reforms.

Public spending is the key

Right now, raising public spending is the only game in town left to the policymaker serious about bringing on a recovery. If we are to have it, though, we should accept a higher than budgeted deficit. A debate involving economists and central bankers has been set off on whether the government should now 'print money'. This is the wrong way to approach the problem. It puts the cart before the horse. It is also alarmist. The objective is to revive the economy, public spending is the instrument and the funding must be found. It need not involve money creation. India's public debt is low by comparison with the OECD countries, and debt financing remains an option. Even if money financing is adopted, it need not cause accelerating inflation as some predict. Experience in India suggests otherwise. However, studies do show that any economic expansion would be inflationary if the production of food does not respond adequately. How the expansion is financed is less relevant for inflation at least in the near term. In any serious attempt at economic recovery, the focus must be on the food supply and not the money supply.

Pulapra Balakrishnan teaches economics at Ashoka University, Sonipat, Haryana

when Afghanistan has asked for it.

The question some are asking is that if these women left India of their own volition and joined what they believed was an Islamic Caliphate, and pledged allegiance to this separate Caliphate, don't they lose their right to an Indian citizenship by acquiring this other notional citizenship?

KPF: No, there are international treaties which say that you cannot strip anyone's citizenship if it makes that person stateless. Let me draw your attention to Shamima Begum, a U.K. citizen who left the U.K. at the age of 15 to join the IS. After the IS fell, the U.K. government said she cannot return and stripped her of citizenship. The Court of Appeal in the U.K. said the government was in the wrong. The government then went to the Supreme Court and said there are national security reasons for the decision not to let her in. The Supreme Court said she can contest the decision taken to strip her of citizenship, but when she is in a position to do so.

The Indian passport enables you to go out. You also need a visa or an agreement that there is no need for visa. The same passport permits you to come back without a visa.

Kabir Taneja: I believe that they should be allowed to come back and be tried as Indian citizens by an Indian court because if they have joined an organisation such as the IS, which is banned in India, they can be tried in court. Arif Majeed (an IS recruit who returned from Iraq in 2014) went through the trial and is now out on bail because the court said it's very difficult for the prosecution to come up with concrete evidence as all the acts committed were outside India's geography. So, after serving six to seven years as an undertrial, he was given bail. Now, you can argue whether that case was a successful case of trying someone who had joined a banned organisation or whether it fell apart.

Due to the fact that India does not have a cohesive policy towards foreign fighters, and also because it



does not have that many such cases, it's easy for the state to approach them on an ad hoc basis and tell these women in Afghanistan, 'you did it by choice and we are not responsible for you anymore.'

Is there a national security risk from bringing back people who have been radicalised and have been associated with a terror group, possibly involved in terror attacks in other countries? Should there be a different standard in their treatment?

KT: The problem here is how do you estimate a person's radicalisation? We've seen this argument play out not just in India; Europe, the U.S., Canada and others are experiencing this phenomenon of IS foreign fighters. Many states are saying it was these people's choice to join a terror organisation and they are not the state's responsibility anymore.

As far as the national security question is concerned, there is no easy answer to it. It ultimately comes down to what a state's policy towards foreign fighters in general is. And if it is ad hoc, if it is on a case-by-case basis, it gives a lot of leverage to the state to decide what kind of action it would like to take towards that particular case. In the case of Arif Majeed, the government allowed him to return, but in the case of these women in Afghanistan, the government is not doing so.

KPF: Even if these particular young women were brainwashed and radicalised, and remain radicalised, we as a state have a duty to get them back and de-radicalise them. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights says everyone has the right to leave any country, including his

C Even if these young women were radicalised, and remain radicalised, we as a state have a duty to get them back and de-radicalise them.

K.P. FABIAN

own, and to return to his country, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights says no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of the right to enter his own country.

The pictures that we saw coming out of the IS shook the world. People were being drowned alive and burnt alive, there was sexual slavery of Yazidi women, people were killed indiscriminately in Raqqa. When it comes to a threat like the one that the IS poses at the height of its brutality, is there a case for a different approach to returnees?

KPF: No, this must be decided according to legality and morality. I do not accept the argument that India cannot handle the threat posed by these four women. And what happens to that four-year-old girl, especially in Afghanistan, where there is every likelihood of the Taliban coming back? The state has a responsibility to its citizens and it can't wash its hands of that responsibility.

KT: In reality, states have had very different approaches to IS returnees than in the past, for example, when foreign fighters joined the Mujahideen to fight the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1990s. In the case of the IS, a lot of European IS returnees have been kept in the al-Hol camp in northern Syria. Apart from

the legal questions, there is also the political push back against allowing these fighters to come back to their original countries. In addition, when foreign fighters would sign up for the IS, they would destroy their own passports and have no papers to prove their claims. Now, the camp poses a different kind of problem – if these fighters are not moved out, IS ideology will fester in these camps and pose a fresh threat. So, there is a need for a broad-based global agreement on what to do with them.

India has seen far smaller numbers joining the IS. According to estimates, the total number of people influenced by the IS is only between 100 and 300. Does that imply de-radicalisation programmes may be more successful here if these recruits are able to return?

KT: It is hard to tell, and different States in India have different blueprints for de-radicalisation. In the U.K., we have seen people come out of these programmes and still commit acts of terror. With these returnees from Afghanistan, we are still not sure how they were radicalised. Who helped them go to Afghanistan? Until these questions are answered, it may not be possible for the state to be comfortable about allowing them to return.

KPF: Regardless of what India's experience is, all countries must respect international law. It is absolutely clear that Afghanistan has every right under international law to deport these recruits. Now, if Afghanistan has the right to deport them, where does it deport them to? These people have Indian passports. So, if you respect Afghanistan's right to deport them, it follows that you have to say that India has an obligation to accept them.

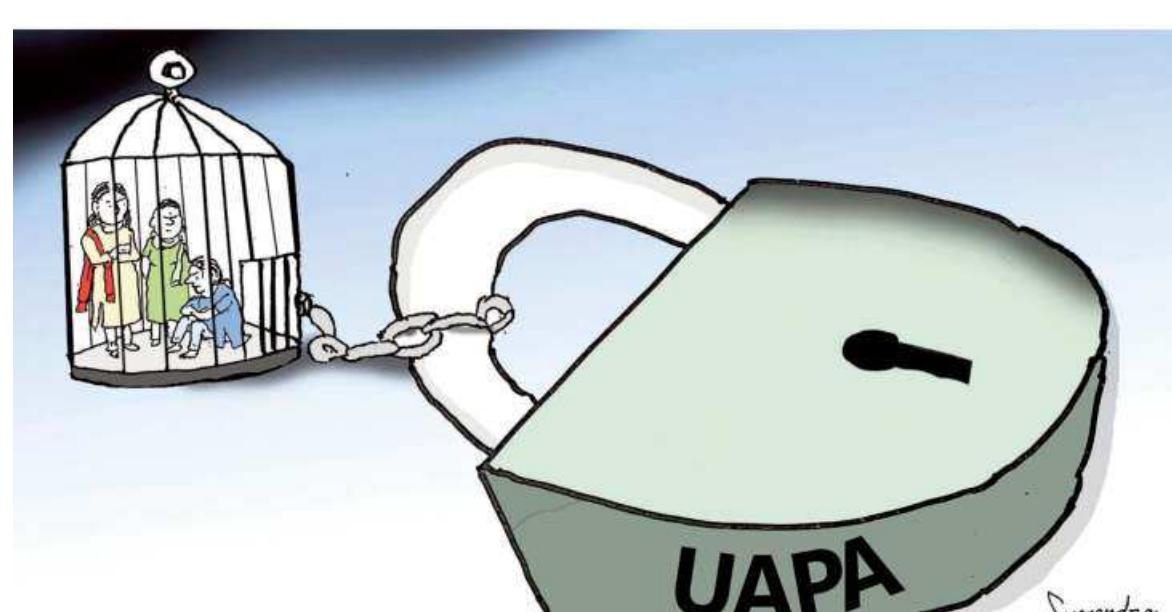
Eventually then, is this a question of which laws could apply: international laws on the right to repatriate citizens or national security laws in India? And would the nature of the crimes be a factor in differentiating between one returnee and the other?

KPF: In the case of Shamima Be-

rum, it is my view that such a decision would not have been made if she were not originally from Bangladesh or another country of that nature. If she were born to [Caucasian British] parents, for example, it would not have happened. Second, even under British law, you cannot strip a person of their citizenship if, as a consequence of that action, that person becomes stateless. The U.K. tried to maintain that she could have Bangladeshi citizenship, but Bangladesh declared that there is no question of her getting Bangladeshi citizenship because she was born in the U.K. I think it is necessary to look at these matters not only in terms of the law, which is always evolving, but also in terms of humanity. If we cannot look at young people who made a big mistake, and if we want to condemn them forever, well, I do not think we are behaving humanely.

KT: I think there should be differentiation on the basis of the crime committed. And of course, there should be differentiation on where the crime was committed. When it comes to foreign fighters, it's not just about the law that comes into play. Security concerns come into play, the legality comes into play, and politics comes into play, both foreign policy and domestic politics.

Thousands of people like Shamima Begum are still stuck in various camps across West Asia. The problem is formulations on what states should do were not made earlier, despite the problem seen with the Mujahideen in Afghanistan-Pakistan and then with al-Qaeda. This was also the first time where there was such an influx, specifically from Europe, into the IS. And there has been such chaos and confusion – from the security point of view, political point of view and legal point of view – about how these countries should treat people, who would want to come back and say they made a mistake. I think the answers will take time. The problem is the people who are currently stuck in this rut are facing the brunt of both the legal point of view and security point of view. I still believe that a lot of these recruits who have made the decision of joining these kinds of groups are going to face a lot of pushback from the various states that they originally came from.



NOTEBOOK

Court-hopping at the click of a mouse

COVID-19 has changed the way reporters cover the Supreme Court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

A few years ago, an elderly reporter of inexhaustible zest and curiosity began his daily work of covering the Supreme Court from his usual spot – right under the judges' noses.

One of the judges, noticing the physical proximity of the man to the dais, turned to him frowning. "Who are you?" he asked as the reporter continued to jot down the court's observations, including this question, oblivious that the entire courtroom was now focused on him.

The veteran scribe collected his nerves admirably, bowed to the Bench, ever respectfully, and introduced himself and his employer. The judge asked him to keep his distance from the podium, probably move to the rear end of the courtroom. The reporter bowed and dutifully retreated, only to doggedly move forward within the

next few minutes to catch a juicy remark falling from the Bench during the hearing.

COVID-19 changed it all last year. Reporters stopped being physically present at Supreme Court hearings. The first few days were a jumble. The court experimented with allowing only three reporters entry into a courtroom. The rest had to wait outside or try to sneak in. This reporter, of rather bulky proportions, could not tiptoe past the ever-vigilant Delhi Police personnel stationed outside the courtroom.

Over the next few days, the virus flexed its muscles. The Supreme Court shed its physical operations and turned to virtual mode.

While judges and lawyers functioned from homes, reporters were invited to watch the proceedings online on desktop monitors arranged at a nearby annex building. On the bright side, we could gawk

at the lovely homes of senior lawyers displayed on the screens and overhear their chit-chat. We spotted a couple of shirtless male lawyers too. Though we missed the hurly-burly of the court and scampering from one courtroom to another, changing courtrooms on the screen with a click of a mouse saved sweat and time.

At times, though, poor connectivity irked the judges. Echoes, the background noise of dogs barking, vendors and, once, even a mother scolding a child to finish his breakfast encroached into the hearings.

Things changed again before the second wave hit. The court opened a new press lounge inside the complex. Here, reporters could watch the proceedings on personal laptops instead of a common monitor. But by then the virus had caught up with us in earnest. Some of us fell sick along the world

around us. The court went through a harrowing time. Many lost their colleagues and close friends.

Then a new Chief Justice was sworn in. A former journalist himself, Chief Justice N.V. Ramana understood that, like judges and lawyers, reporters need to be safe while doing their job. In early May, the court, steered by its e-Committee headed by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, launched a software that allowed reporters to stay at home and watch Supreme Court proceedings on their mobile phones. Technology had brought the apex court's hearings into our homes.

But I still think about the elderly reporter. It has been quite a long time since I heard his breathless voice over the phone in the evenings after a 'physical' day in court, asking "Hey, what happened in *** case? I was in the other courtroom and couldn't make it here in time."

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1971

U.S. not willing to put pressure on Pak.

Washington, June 17: The External Affairs Minister, Mr. Swaran Singh, had a 45-minute meeting with President Nixon here yesterday, during which the former is understood to have pointed out that only a political approach could restore normalcy in East Bengal and that the U.S. and the international community should do their utmost to see that the real representatives of the people there were restored to power. Mr. Swaran Singh stressed that the refugees were only a mere symptom – at the root of it lay the political problem which could not be solved either by the Pakistani Army or a civilian junta handpicked by the military overlords of Pakistan. Earlier in the day, the External Affairs Minister had a working lunch and a meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mr. William Rogers, when he made the same points. At both meetings Mr. Swaran Singh emphasised that the refugee relief work for which the U.S. and other countries had made some contributions, was only a palliative and not a cure for the underlying problem. At any rate he had not undertaken his present tour of world capitals to raise donations for this purpose.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 18, 1911

Education in India

(From an Editorial)

At a time when many of the Western countries are engaged in solving the problem of educational reform it was naturally expected that the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India would discuss, in his report, the several educational questions in India and convey to the public what was intended to be done by the Government to secure satisfactory solutions for them. In the absence of any such illumination, his report on Indian Education for the year 1919-20 is rendered a vapid record of facts and figures relating to the educational activities in the country during the period under review. It takes a bird's-eye view of the educational progress in the country and does not attempt to do more than give a brief summary of important events recorded by the Directors of Public Instruction in several provinces and one looks into it in vain to find out what the future educational policy of the Government is and what lines of action are to be taken to make education in the country free from the charge of being merely literary.

FROM PAGE ONE

SC approves CBSE assessment formula

According to the scheme, the total marks awarded should be in consonance with the past performance of the school in Class 12 exams. A result committee under the principal would be formed in each school. It has been given the liberty to prepare the result by following the policy. The CBSE said it would declare the results by July 31, 2021.

In case any candidate is not satisfied with the assessment done, based on the policy, he or she would be given an opportunity to take the examinations to be conducted by the Board when the situation is more "conducive".

"Most of the candidates will be happy with this scheme... When there is a

manageable number you can consider holding a physical exam later," a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari addressed Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, appearing for the Union of India, which is the CBSE's controlling authority.

CISCE formula

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (CISCE) assessment formula would include taking into consideration the students' Class 10 ICSE Board exams, project and practical work in subjects, best marks obtained in school exams in Classes 11 and 12 and the best performance of the school itself in the past six years.

CBSE scheme evokes mixed reactions

"Online examinations conducted in the past year are not a true representation of a student's capability and potential but considering Class 10 and 11 marks do even out things and help provide a result that a student could have achieved in an offline examination," Mr. Saraf observed.

Some students felt that the education system was such that it put so much emphasis on Board exam results that taking into account marks from previous results and assessments was not quite fair. They said there was scope for bias as grading was not being done by external examiners.

"Although Class 10 and 12 exams are standardised, there is a lot of scope for internal bias while considering Class 11 marks," said Aurora Urban, whose exams got cancelled. "Children are told that only Class 12 boards and clearing the JEE and NEET matter, so most of them never actually study till the final external board exam," she said.

Principals of schools welcomed the assessment scheme. Jyoti Arora, principal of the Mount Abu School, said the CBSE's submission of the criteria was a result of extensive consultations. "The CBSE consulted Sahodiyas across the country. Again, unusual decisions for unusual times. Considering all three classes is a balanced approach," she said.

Tania Joshi, principal of The Indian School, said the announcement had come as a much-needed relief to students. "Usually students perform well in the Class X boards so now the results combined with the other classes, will get balanced out. So it is a win-win situation," Ms. Joshi added.

Delhi University (DU) officials said they would take a call on the admission procedure at a later stage.

Rajeev Gupta, Chairperson of DU admissions, said, "We have to wait for sometime to understand the repercussions of the decision."

Court rejects police stand; students freed

The Delhi Police argued that it also needed to verify the Aadhaar cards of the people who have been nominated as sureties by the three accused. For this, the trial court can pass an order directly to the authority concerned, they said.

"Do you follow this procedure in other cases as well?" the High Court asked the Delhi police. Both Ms. Kalita and Ms. Narwal, who were arrested in connection with the northeast Delhi riots last year, were granted bail by the Delhi High Court on Tuesday. Following this, they had moved the local court for securing immediate release order.

The Delhi Police have

moved the Supreme Court challenging the High Court verdict granting regular bail to the three students who were booked under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). The case is likely to come up for hearing on Friday.

While granting bail, the High Court gave the Delhi police a dressing down for 'casually' invoking provisions of anti-terror laws against the three who had protested against the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA).

The High Court also ruled that no offence under the UAPA was made out against any of the three students.

'Wrote to PM thrice to withdraw Governor'

Earlier, the Trinamool Congress leadership, including several MPs, had written to President Ram Nath Kovind demanding the Governor's recall.

Ms. Banerjee described the Union government's attempts to "control Twitter" as unfortunate. "They cannot control Twitter, that is why they want to bulldoze my government and my party," she said.

Speaking on allegations of post poll violence, the Chief Minister said there were a few incidents, and she had asked the police to take strong action in such cases.

"There are no incidents

now. At the time when the State was under the Election Commission, there were some sporadic incidents. But all incidents were not political. In some cases, personal enmity was there. As the matter is sub judice, I won't speak. But I do not support any violence and whenever there is an incident, I have asked police to take strong action," Ms. Banerjee said.

The Chief Minister said the BJP was trying to create an atmosphere of violence. "There is no political violence, it is BJP gimmick violence," she said.

On Thursday, Mr. Dhankhar called on the President.

The Governor also called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the evening.

CBSE to record Class 10, 12 marks throughout the year

Long-term plan to ensure year-round assessment emphasised for all classes'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is considering a system of continuous assessment for 2021-22, whereby all student scores – from unit tests, midterms, project work and pre-Board examinations – would be regularly recorded with the Board throughout the year, so that it would be possible to compute and declare final results even if COVID-19 prevents a final Board examination again, Controller of Examinations Sanyam Bhardwaj told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

"We are preparing a scheme, which will be implemented for the 2022 examination for Class 10 and Class 12. In case the pandemic persists, even then we will be



New methods: The CBSE was considering asking for each assessment to be submitted to it. ■ BIBEK CHETTRI

able to declare the result without such special schemes. We have started working on it, and discussions are going on," he said.

"We are trying to ensure that at regular intervals, we should note down the performance of the students and that should be with the CBSE only. The school will

be doing each and every thing and that will be with us, and if there is any problem, we should be able to declare the result, without having to ask the schools to apply this kind of formula to declare the result," he added, noting that the CBSE was considering the option of asking for each assess-

ment through the year to be submitted to the Board. This may lead to further standardisation of continuous assessment formats as well.

Dr. Bhardwaj was speaking soon after he notified the CBSE Tabulation Policy for the 2020-21 Class 12 results, which gives a lot of discretion to schools themselves and their results committees, to assign and revise marks in order to ensure they aligned with the school's historical performance.

"We are trying for a system to be brought into place, looking into the New Education Policy, in which we will see that year-round development should be recorded," he said, adding that this would not be for Class 12 alone, but for all students.

SC to look into Class 11 State exams in Kerala

'Will examine why it was not cancelled'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday decided to examine why Kerala has still not cancelled the Class 11 examinations conducted by its State Board.

"Counsel for the petitioners shall serve a copy of the petition on the standing counsel for the State of Kerala, as we are informed that it has not cancelled the 11th standard examination conducted by the State Board," a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari ordered.

The Bench was hearing a petition filed by child rights activist Anubha Shrivastava Sahai to cancel the State Board examinations due to the pandemic. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) cancelled the Class 12 examinations due to concerns over exposing children to infection. The CBSE and the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations Boards on Thursday came up with an alternative assessment procedure to compute marks.

States, six had conducted the examinations and 18 cancelled them. "But four States [Assam, Punjab, Tripura and Andhra Pradesh] have not cancelled the examination as of now. Counsel for the petitioners shall serve the standing counsel for the above mentioned four States via email/on-line," the court directed.

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Ex-encounter specialist, two others sent to NIA custody

Held in connection with Antilla bomb scare, murder case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Former encounter specialist and Shiv Sena leader Pradeep Sharma and two others, arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the Antilla bomb scare and Mansukh Hiran murder case, have been sent to NIA custody till June 28.

Early on Thursday morning, NIA officials conducted searches at Mr. Sharma's residence at Andheri and questioned him till noon, after which he was placed under arrest. Later, the NIA arrested Satish Mothukuri and Manish Soni from Malad.

Mr. Sharma has been arrested for his alleged role in the conspiracy and destruction of evidence in the case.

The NIA had arrested Santosh Shelar and Anand Jadhav, both residents of Kurar village in Malad, and they, NIA sources said, named Mr. Sharma and arrested and dismissed police inspector



Caught in a web: Pradeep Sharma arriving at the NIA office in Mumbai earlier this year. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

Sunil Mane in the case.

Through the investigation, they found that dismissed police officer Sachin Vaze and Mr. Mane handed over Hiran to Mr. Satish, Mr. Manish, Mr. Santosh and Mr. Anand on March 4, 2020, a day before Hiran's body was found in Mumra creek, NIA officials said.

"Later the accused made calls to Mr. Vaze and Mr. Sharma. We also recovered some cash from the suspects, which we believe was paid to them by the officers," they added. Mr. Sharma's

role in Hiran's murder was being probed as well.

However, Mr. Sharma contested the NIA's claim before the court and stated that he had no relations with Mr. Vaze. He asserted that he did not know anyone arrested in the case. He stated that he had appeared before the NIA whenever he was called.

He claimed that he was being framed because of two groups in the police force. He added that he had no role in this case, and that he would not have been home if he was involved in the case.

Minor reshuffle in Central bureaucracy

Kumar now Minority Affairs Secretary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

In a minor reshuffle in the top bureaucracy in the Central administration, the Narendra Modi government on Thursday appointed senior bureaucrats Renuka Kumar and Sanjay Kumar Singh as Secretaries for Minority Affairs and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances respectively.

Mr. Singh, a 1987-batch IAS officer of the Madhya Pradesh cadre, succeeds Indevar Pandey, who has been appointed as Women and Child Development Secretary. Mr. Pandey, a 1988-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre, had been appointed as Secretary, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARP), in April.

Mr. Singh, now Special Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research & Education & Secretary, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, will also be the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has also approved the appointment of Manoj Kumar Parida as Chairman, National Authority Chemical Weapons Convention, in the rank and pay of Secretary to the Government of India. Mr. Parida is a 1986-batch IAS officer of the Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Mizoram and Union Territory (AGMUT) cadre. B. Anand, Secretary, National Commission for Minorities, will be Secretary, Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare in the Ministry of Defence. He will succeed Ravi Kant, who retires this month.



Stan Swamy will remain in hospital, says HC

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday said Father Stan Swamy, a Bhima Koregaon case accused, will remain at the Holy Family hospital till July 5, as he has critical medical issues and requires intensive care. Senior advocate Mihir Desai, representing him, told a Division Bench that Fr. Swamy was in the ICU.

Rajasthan waives mandi duty on forest produce

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has waived mandi duty and farmers' welfare cess for the forest produce sold outside the Krishi Upaj Mandi premises to extend relief to tribal population and the traders dealing with tendu leaves and timber and non-wood products. The decision has led to abolition of the duty regime which was in force for the last 40 years.

'Will give befitting reply to external aggression'

GUWAHATI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday said India had never invaded any country, but would give a befitting reply to any external aggression. He avoided mentioning China while naming the "five countries" bordering the northeast at a programme to dedicate 12 strategic Border Roads Organisation (BRO) projects to the country.

Job outcomes will be improved: Gangwar

NEW DELHI

Union Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar said on Thursday that India was committed to improving employment outcomes for the youth, a Ministry statement said. He said this after the signing of a statement of intent between the Labour Ministry and UNICEF here, it added.

OFB corporatisation an anti-national step: CPI

NEW DELHI

A day after the Union Cabinet approved the corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), the Communist Party of India (CPI) on Thursday accused the Centre of taking the decision during the pandemic. CPI general secretary D. Raja cited it as "anti-national step".

Arsenal Consultancy can't give opinion on Sen's plea

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) told the Bombay High Court on Thursday that Arsenal Consultancy, a digital forensic analyst that said false evidence was planted against retired Professor Shoma Sen who is an accused in the Bhima Koregaon caste violence case,

has no *locus standi* to give opinion without the court's permission.

The Bench adjourned the matter to July 13.

Pragya Thakur to host yoga session for MPs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

BJP MP from Bhopal Pragya Singh Thakur will host one of the four segments being organised as part of the International Yoga Day celebration on June 21 by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, members were informed on Thursday.

Ms. Thakur, 51, had won the 2019 election from Bhopal. She is also one of the key accused in the 2008 Maoist bombings.

According to the bulletin issued by the Lok Sabha Secretariat, Ms. Thakur will host a talk at noon on 'Yoga: A Way of Life'. The event is being held online.

At present, there are over 900 TV channels that are required to comply with the Programme and Advertising Code laid down by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting under the Cable Television Networks (Amendment) Rules, 2021, provides for a three-level grievance redressal mechanism – self-regulation by broadcasters, self-regulation by the self-regulating bodies set up by TV channels, which should deal with the case in 60 days.

If the complainant is not satisfied with the decision of the self-regulating body, he may, within 15 days of such a decision, prefer an appeal to the Central government for its consideration under the Oversight Mechanism," it said.

Such appeals would be dealt with by the Inter-Departmental Committee set up under the Oversight Mechanism. The Committee would be headed by the Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and have members from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Defence, and representatives of other Ministries and organisations, including experts, as the Centre may decide.

This third tier was not only kept aside to hear the appeals, it could take up complaints that come directly to the Centre.

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Centre opens 14 disability early intervention centres

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Thursday launched 14 cross disability early intervention centres across the country to provide support to infants and young children at risk of or with disabilities.

Research studies suggest that early childhood [0-6 years] is a time of remarkable brain development...

INTERVIEW | SRINATH REDDY

'We must use the available vaccines to protect the most vulnerable'

More data is needed on the ideal interval between two doses of Covishield but there should be no hesitancy, says president of the Public Health Foundation of India

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN

With the ideal interval between Covishield's first and second doses coming under debate, Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI) president Srinath Reddy said data on the Indian experience on the issue was still being gathered. He said there were reassuring reports of good protection being provided to healthcare workers. However, it was not yet clear how effective one dose of the vaccine is against the delta variant, which is the dominant variant now in many parts of the country. He said more information was needed on that aspect, especially for high-risk, older age groups.

The time gap between Covishield's first and second dose has come under the scanner in India yet again. Should we be reverting to a shorter time gap?

■ The time gap issue initially surfaced due to the way the AstraZeneca trials were conducted internationally. The British-led international trial accidentally created two strands among the trial participants – a larger group which received the vaccine shots at a four-week interval (as per trial protocol) and a smaller group which received the second shot after 12 weeks. Interestingly, the second group showed higher

efficacy (81%). So, Britain decided to adopt a three-month dosing interval. A later large U.S. trial of the same vaccine, with 32,000 participants, also showed a high efficacy (76%). The WHO recommended an eight-12 week spacing.

Those trials were conducted when the ancestral wild virus was in circulation. Then came the variants, against which most vaccines showed lower efficacy. Even then, the first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine offered adequate protection against the alpha variant. Against the delta variant, however, the first dose provided only 30% efficacy against sympto-

matic infection, according to data from Public Health England. Against serious illness and death, the vaccine seems to provide reasonable protection with one dose. A second dose demonstrably increases efficacy against both mild and severe infections. Hence, the U.K. switched to an eight-week interval.

Concerns have been raised about inadequate protection of a single dose against the Delta variant, in a French study. Two doses do provide better protection. Hence, the suggestion from international experts that the people at risk of severe disease must be provided that level of protection earlier.

[Data on] the Indian experience is still being gathered. There are reassuring reports of good protection being provided to healthcare workers. However, it is not yet clear how effective one dose is against the delta variant, which is the dominant variant now in many parts of the country. We still need that



Safe behaviour and vaccines will together protect us. We can't run fast on one leg

data, especially for high-risk, older age groups and persons with co-morbidities – not just in relatively younger and healthier healthcare workers.

I would like to close this by pointing out the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI) has stated that it will review recent evidence.

Let us leave it to that expert body, to review all available national and international evidence. In the

meanwhile, people need to be assured that vaccines are protective even against the delta variant. They should get both shots, whenever scheduled.

If there is a limited supply till July, let us use the available vaccines to provide maximum protection to the most vulnerable. There is no reason for vaccine hesitancy.

Has India vaccinated enough of its population? Is the pace of vaccination steady enough to allow opening of the country?

■ We have not vaccinated enough numbers as yet. There are many susceptible individuals still. I believe the pace of vaccination will pick up from July, with increasing domestic production and international procurement.

I think we do need to open the country, but carefully. Vaccines protect against disease, once the virus infects.

For protection against viral transmission, we need to adhere to public health advisories, with discipline in our

behaviour for several months more. We must wear masks, avoid ill-ventilated and crowded places as much as possible and not allow super-spreader gatherings. Safe behaviour and vaccines will together protect us. We can't run fast on one leg.

Is there enough data to start children's vaccination?

■ International trials are available for some mRNA vaccines, to provide evidence of efficacy and safety. Trials in younger children, some including even infants aged six months, are now in progress. Some trials of child vaccination are now on in India too.

We should wait for these international and domestic trials to be completed. If a nasal or orally administered mucosal vaccine proves safe and efficacious, that will be a boon for child vaccination.

Is the mutating virus a cause of worry? Is there data showing that virus could escape vaccination cover?

■ The worry is misplaced at present. Available vaccines are offering enough protection, at the right dose. Even if neutralising antibody levels fall with time, T cell immunity is likely to remain. In fact, that cell-mediated component of our immune system is capable of fighting the virus which has entered our cells, whereas antibodies can only attack the surface spike protein as it circulates in the blood. Memory T and B cells also store the image of the antigen and can readily reactivate our defence when the virus enters our body.

Newer vaccines are also being prepared and some are under testing. Current mRNA vaccines are being tweaked to attack the spike protein mutations in the variants. Inactivated whole virus vaccines are being prepared, similar to Covaxin. Beyond that, multi-antigen vaccines are being tested, which combine the spike protein, the nucleocapsid (which wraps the genetic material of the virus) and ORF 3a (which helps the viral re-

plicates to exit the infected cells). Such vaccines will present a larger platter of our antigens to our immune system.

Even if spike protein mutations evade the neutralising antibodies, other antigens in the vaccine will still evoke an effective response. These internal antigens of the virus are also much slower in mutating than the surface spike protein. So, science can still provide us solutions.

What is the way ahead?

■ We need to combine four components of response as we move ahead. They are protect ourselves from exposure to the virus and its entry into the body; prevent free passage of the virus by avoiding crowded places, non-essential travel and super-spreader gatherings; vaccinate as fast and as many as possible; and develop, evaluate and introduce new vaccines which can effectively protect against current and emerging variants.

Number of COVID-19 tests declines rapidly

19.31 lakh samples were analysed on Wednesday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

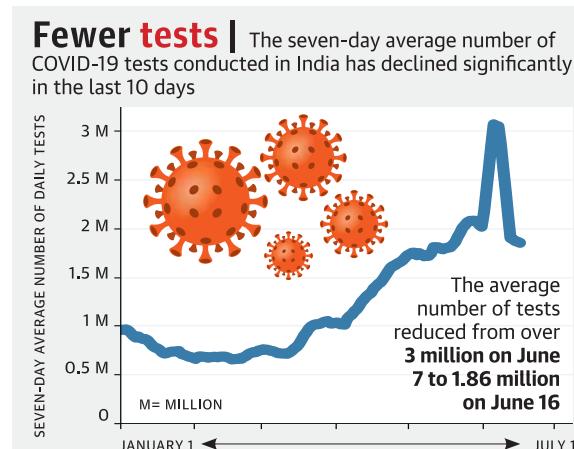
India recorded 57,837 new COVID-19 cases and 1,536 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Thursday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,97,57,425 cases and 3,83,467 deaths.

Kerala reported 12,469 new infections, followed by Maharashtra (9,830) and Tamil Nadu (9,118). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Around 19.31 lakh samples were tested in the country on Wednesday (the results for which were released on Thursday). The number of samples tested has come down drastically in the last ten days. The average number of tests conducted declined from over 30 lakh on June 7 to 18.6 lakh on June 16.

About 34.63 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Thursday, which is 6.6 lakh doses more than what was recorded in



the previous 24 hours. It is also 84,700 doses more than what was recorded during the same period a week ago. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.26 lakh on June 16, which is more than the 26.69 lakh recorded a week before (June 9).

About 23.1% of adults in India, 43.3% of those aged above 45, and 46.8% of people aged above 60, have been administered at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Thursday. While 15.9% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 3.6% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

India continued to record the highest number of 7-day

(With PTI inputs)

Boost facilities for children, say guidelines

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Going by sero-surveillance reports, COVID-19 infection in children above 10 years occurs in similar frequency as that of adults, notes the "Guidelines on operationalisation of COVID care services for children and adolescents" released by the Health Ministry earlier this week.

While children have less severe disease than adults, intermittent surges in the number of cases are anticipated and so it is desirable to augment the existing facilities to provide care to children with acute COVID, it says.

The guidelines state that the majority of infections is asymptomatic or mildly symptomatic among children and it is uncommon to have moderate to severe COVID-19 in healthy children. Children with comorbid conditions have more severe manifestations and poorer outcomes; they should be a priority group for vaccination, once vaccines are approved for children.

"A combined effort from private and public sector is needed to handle any surge in future after the withdrawal of the lockdown, school reopening or as third wave strikes over next three of four months," said the guidelines, calling for paediatric-specific plans to be put in place.

Birth, death registrations up in 2019

14 States/Union Territories achieved 100% level of birth registrations: report

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The level of registration of births and deaths in the country improved in 2019, according to the "Vital Statistics of India Based on The Civil Registration System" report.

Some States and Union Territories were, however, lagging behind.

The report states that the level of birth registration increased from 87.8% in 2018 to 92.7% in 2019; and death registrations went up from 84.6% to 92% during the period.

While 14 States/Union Territories achieved 100% level of birth registrations, 19 States/Union Territories achieved the same level in cases of death.

Sex ratio at birth

Based on the information received from 32 States/Union Territories, the share of institutional births in the total registered births was 81.2%. The number of registered births increased to 2.48 crore in 2019 from 2.33 crore in 2018. The share of male and female was 52.1% and 47.9%.

In the case of registration of births within the prescribed period of 21 days, 15 States/Union Territories achieved more than 90% registration of deaths within the prescribed period of 21 days.

The highest sex ratio at birth (SRB) based on registered events was reported by Arunachal Pradesh (1,024),

Counting the dead

of every 100 estimated deaths in India, around 92 were registered in 2019. In 2018, only 84.6 of every 100 estimated deaths were recorded

■ Level of death registration declined in Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Daman and Diu

■ Telangana recorded the highest increase in the share of registered deaths from 58.5% to 97.2%

■ Bihar too recorded a significant jump from 31.2% to 51.6%

■ At least 18 States and U.T.s records all the deaths

In the north-east, Arunachal Pradesh reported 100% registration of births, but only 38.6% of deaths. Nagaland also registered 100% births, but just 30% deaths, while Manipur recorded 67.7% births and only 21.4% deaths. In Sikkim, there was 100% registration of deaths, but 61.2% registration of births.

Full registration

However, Mizoram and Tripura received 100% registration of both births and deaths. Meghalaya had 100% registration of births and 97.6% registration of deaths, while Assam reported 100% registration of births and 74% registration of deaths.

In Bihar and Jharkhand, the levels of registration of births were 89.3% and 84.3% and the levels of registration of deaths were 51.6% and 58.8%. In Daman & Diu, the figures were 50.7% and 61%.

Listing the limitations, the

report said the level of registration of States/Union Territories and India level presented in the report was arrived at using the mid-year projected population of the respective States/Union Territories of 2011-2019 based on 2011 census (Report of the Technical Group on Population Projections, July 2020, National Commission on Population, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare) and, therefore, was not comparable with rates presented in previous reports.

Incomplete data

The level of registration was arrived at using Sample Registration System Rates for 2018 as the survey for 2019, which was scheduled for 2020, could not be completed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Bihar and Jharkhand, the levels of registration of births were 89.3% and 84.3% and the levels of registration of deaths were 51.6% and 58.8%. In Daman & Diu, the figures were 50.7% and 61%.

Listing the limitations, the

SUDOKU

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9	5	8	4					
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13276

A	B	D	I	C	T	E	U	G	L	I	E	R
F	E	R	O	A	R	N	H					
F	A	R	S	W	E	N	D	S	A			
E	R	M	B	D	A	I	T					
C	H	I	T	N	O	S	T	E	E			
T	N	I	A	U	W	M						
A	G	H	A	S	T	P	A	H	L	A	V	I
S	E	L					I	N	C			

MARKET WATCH

	17-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,323	-0.34
US Dollar	74.08	-1.04
Gold	46,863	-1.99
Brent oil	72.67	-2.96

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	646.90	+59.80
Asian Paints	3060.30	+41.60
Axis Bank	738.60	+11.20
Bajaj Auto	4053.90	+56.55
Bajaj Finserv	11818.55	+37.60
Bajaj Finance	61050.25	+31.35
Bharti Airtel	528.65	+8.10
BPCL	476.90	+4.35
Britannia Ind	3658.15	+18.70
Cipla	950.95	+5.80
Coal India	152.15	+3.40
Divis Lab	4302.35	+1.65
Dr Reddy's Lab	5286.50	+119.60
Eicher Motors	2673.75	+67.30
Grasim Ind	1458.20	+11.00
HCL Tech.	986.40	+7.00
HDFC	2487.30	+34.15
HDFC Bank	1466.10	+18.50
HDFC Life	700.30	+8.15
Hero MotoCorp	2914.10	+61.30
Hindalco	369.25	+11.00
Hind Unilever	2417.70	+9.80
ICICI Bank	633.00	+7.10
IndusInd Bank	984.05	+29.65
Infosys	1495.30	+14.70
Indian Oil Corp	114.60	+1.30
ITC	205.65	+2.20
JSW Steel	696.35	+9.05
Kotak Bank	1766.05	+5.45
L&T	1487.55	+3.35
M&M	805.70	+0.45
Maruti Suzuki	6969.35	+144.90
Nestle India Ltd.	1805.05	+93.85
NTPC	117.40	+2.40
ONGC	125.10	+1.60
PowerGrid Corp	239.85	+2.30
Reliance Ind	2215.65	+4.05
SBI Life	983.30	+8.50
State Bank	420.25	+5.70
Shree Cement	28368.10	+143.35
Sun Pharma	665.05	+3.50
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	745.00	+9.10
Tata Motors	345.65	+3.70
Tata Steel	1103.75	+38.40
TCS	3317.75	+43.40
Tech Mahindra	1080.25	+11.10
Titan	1711.40	+3.55
UltraTech Cement	6704.05	+117.45
UPL	835.05	+3.15
Wipro	558.70	+3.45

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.88	74.20
Euro	88.14	88.52
British Pound	103.05	103.50
Japanese Yen (100)	66.71	67.03
Chinese Yuan	11.48	11.53
Swiss Franc	80.73	81.08
Singapore Dollar	55.11	55.36
Canadian Dollar	59.89	60.15
Malaysian Ringgit	17.84	17.93

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



TVS Motor unveils iQube e-scooter in Chennai

CHENNAI
TVS Motor Company unveiled its electric scooter 'TVS iQube' here. The EV is already available in New Delhi and Bengaluru. TVS iQube is an urban scooter powered by an advanced electric drivetrain and next-generation SmartXonnect platform. Priced at ₹1,15,218, it is available for online booking and contactless delivery, the company said.

Natco Pharma net drops 43% as revenue declines

HYDERABAD
Natco Pharma reported a 43% decline in consolidated net profit for Q4 to ₹53 crore on the back of lower revenue in the base business. Total income dropped 25% to ₹359.7 crore. For FY21, the net profit slid 3.4% to ₹442.4 crore. Natco Pharma said it was able to sustain revenue during the year despite significant negative impact of the pandemic on the base business.

Mills have produced 306.65 lakh tonnes between October last year and June 15 this year. This is 35.54 lakh tonnes higher than last season's production for the corresponding period.

According to the sugar mills and ISMA's estimates, total sugar sales by mills in May stood at 22.35 lakh tonnes against the domestic sales quota of 22 lakh

tonnes. "Sugar sales by mills in March stood at 22.34 lakh tonnes, 23.13 lakh tonnes in April and 22.35 lakh tonnes in May," ISMA said.

The total sugar sales during the current year (October 2020-September 2021) may cross the estimate of 260 lakh tonnes, which will be 8-10 lakh tonnes higher than last season. Further, sugar exports this year are likely to be about 70 lakh tonnes, the association said.

The closing balance of sugar stocks in the country during the current season ending September is expected to be 20-25 lakh tonnes lesser than the previous season, according to the Indian Sugar Mills Association (ISMA).

The closing stock last season (October 2019-September 2020) stood at 107 lakh tonnes, ISMA said.

The total sugar sales during the current year (October 2020-September 2021) may cross the estimate of 260 lakh tonnes, which will be 8-10 lakh tonnes higher than last season. Further, sugar exports this year are likely to be about 70 lakh tonnes, the association said.

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History beckons as India and New Zealand battle for supremacy

In a contest for the ages, Kohli and Williamson eye a global triumph as evenly matched sides try to outwit each other in seaming and swinging conditions

WTC FINAL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SOUTHAMPTON

Virat Kohli carries the expectations of a billion while cricket romantics will pin their hopes on Kane Williamson when India and New Zealand engage in a battle to create a lasting legacy in pristine whites in the inaugural World Test Championship final starting here on Friday.

For the connoisseurs of the glorious game, Test cricket is the ultimate format and despite its aura, the 144-year-old history needed a facelift along with a context which the World Test Championship provided despite various bottlenecks, including the COVID-19 pandemic.

For Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, a trophy-less cabinet doesn't do justice to the champion performer that he has been for a decade. He needs a global triumph. Every captain needs it but perhaps the Indian captain wants it more.

Williamson stands in his way with a bunch of fine cricketers in international cricket.

If Williamson happens to stand with the ICC Test Mace on the Hampshire Bowl balcony, one might just smile and think that perhaps "Nice guys don't always finish last".

But, after two years and half a dozen series later, a battle-hardened Indian team will give its all in a match,

from which the winning team will also walk away with a \$1.6 million windfall.

Chepteshwar Pujara would be ready to take more bruises on his body if Neil Wagner starts bowling short. Ajinkya Rahane has grown in stature.

R. Ashwin wouldn't mind one bit if he can fool Williamson, Ross Taylor or the dogged Henry Nicholls with a carrom ball or a slider.

Ishant Sharma has grown 14 years older since that epic WACA spell to Ricky Ponting and India's senior-most player deserves to win a World Championship as much as anyone else.

Man to man, there is very little to choose between the two teams even though playing New Zealand in conditions that aid seam and swing isn't easy.

The teams:

India (final XI): Virat Kohli (Capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant, Ravindra Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami.

New Zealand (from): Kane Williamson (Capt.), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner, B.J. Watling and Will Young.

Umpires: Richard Illingworth and Michael Gough; **Match referee:** Chris Broad.

Match starts at 3 p.m. IST.

THE ULTIMATE Test

As Kohli's India and Williamson's New Zealand gear up for the summit clash of the World Test Championship (WTC), a look at their journeys and how the teams have fared against each other

HOW THE TEAMS REACHED ROSE BOWL

INDIA

bt West Indies **2-0** (away), 2019
bt South Africa **3-0** (home), 2019
bt Bangladesh **2-0** (home), 2019
lost to New Zealand **0-2** (away), 2020
bt Australia **2-1** (away), 2020-21
bt England **3-1** (home), 2021

NEW ZEALAND

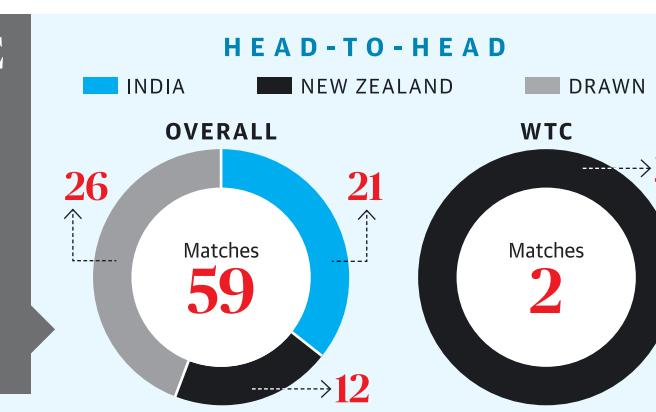
drew with Sri Lanka **1-1** (away), 2019
lost to Australia **0-3** (away), 2019-20
bt India **2-0** (home), 2020
bt West Indies **2-0** (home), 2020
bt Pakistan **2-0** (home), 2020-21

INDIA

Played **17** Won **12** Lost **4** Drawn **1**

NEW ZEALAND

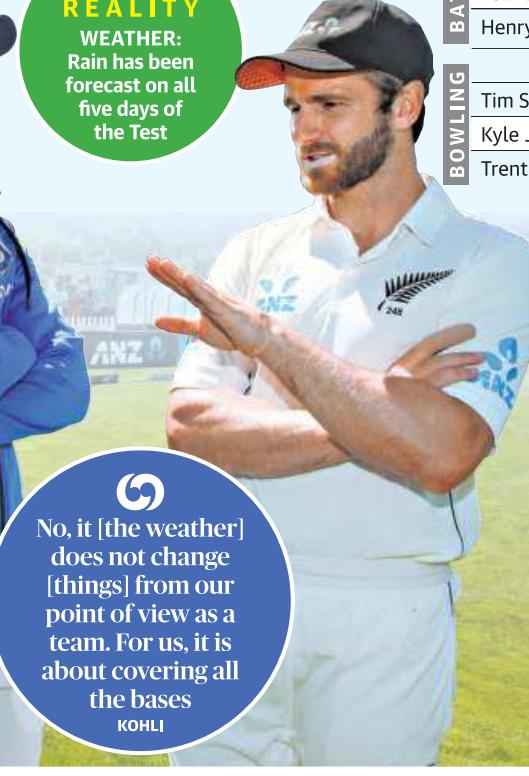
Played **11** Won **7** Lost **4** Drawn **0**



GROUND REALITY

WEATHER:
Rain has been forecast on all five days of the Test

No, it [the weather] does not change [things] from our point of view as a team. For us, it is about covering all the bases KOHLI



THE ARCHITECTS

INDIA

	M	Inns	N.O.	Runs	HS	Avg.	50s/100s
Ajinkya Rahane	17	28	3	1095	115	43.80	6/3
Rohit Sharma	11	17	1	1030	212	64.37	2/4
Virat Kohli	14	22	2	877	254 n.o.	43.85	5/2
WTC	2						
R. Ashwin	13	24	67	7/145	20.88	46.9	4/0
Mohammed Shami	10	18	36	5/35	19.77	39.9	1/0
Ishant Sharma	11	20	36	5/22	17.36	36.3	3/0

BATTING

BOWLING

NEW ZEALAND

	M	Inns	N.O.	Runs	HS	Avg.	50s/100s
Kane Williamson	9	14	0	817	251	58.35	1/3
Tom Latham	11	18	1	680	154	40.00	5/1
Henry Nicholls	10	15	1	585	174	41.78	1/2
WTC	2						
Tim Southee	10	20	51	5/32	20.66	45.9	3/0
Kyle Jamieson	6	12	36	6/48	13.27	33.3	4/1
Trent Boult	9	18	34	4/28	29.29	59.0	0/0

BATTING

BOWLING

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Trent Boult	9	18	34	4/28	29.29	59.0	0/0

THE BATTLES

India vs New Zealand in Tests with Kohli and Williamson at the helm

2016

India won by 197 runs,

Kanpur

2016

India won by 321 runs,

Indore

2020

New Zealand won by 10 wickets,

Wellington

2020

New Zealand won by seven wickets,

Christchurch

THE BATTLEFIELD

India in Tests at Southampton

2014

Played 2

Won 0

Lost 2

2018

lost to England by 266 runs

2018

lost to England by 60 runs

New Zealand is yet to play a Test at the venue

FORM GUIDE

(last five matches, latest game first)

INDIA W | W | W | L | W

NEW ZEALAND W | D | W | W | W

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN & G. PRASAD

GRAPHIC: A. GANESHAN

SOURCE: ICC & ESPNCRICINFO

'We've been waiting for this'

Situation we faced made us more hungry, says Kohli

ASHWIN ACHAL

ting at home and the rules change suddenly, you get confused. We didn't choose to miss any matches in this WTC cycle. In our minds, we had already qualified way before things got complicated. Looking back, whatever happened was for the best. If we had qualified earlier, maybe we would have relaxed a little bit. The situation we faced made us more hungry and determined. We used it as fuel and motivation to move forward," Kohli said on the eve of the WTC final starting against New Zealand.

Kohli is not keen on the "nice guy" tag earned by the Kiwis. "I don't understand this term ('nice guys'). I don't think any other team has bad guys in it. For us, New Zealand is a team with quality players. It's serious business on the field," Kohli said. "The New Zealand team will fancy its chances in the seamer-friendly environment."

The challenge is strong against this Indian side'

We have similar strengths: Williamson



In familiar zone: The New Zealand team will fancy its chances in the seamer-friendly environment. ■REUTERS

S. DIPAK RAGAV

After missing the second Test against England due to an elbow niggle, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson confirmed he has since improved ahead of the WTC final that starts on Friday.

"My elbow has improved with the help of an injection a few days back. I am still managing but it has shown signs of improvement," said Williamson on the eve of the match.

When asked if it will be a case of India's batting against the New Zealand bowlers, Williamson said, "I think there are a number of areas of competition. We know how strong the Indian seam bowling attack is, the

quality of their spin and clearly their batting is world-class, so they are a very good side and we are aware of that. For us there are some similar strengths as well," he added.

To a query about whether his side goes into the contest as favourites considering they are the No. 1-ranked side, the 30-year-old said, "We are much more concerned with the cricket that we want to play and also very realistic that India are an incredibly strong side all around the world, and rightly so recognised as the best team. You have these rankings, they take slightly different shapes everyday. But, we know that the challenge is very very strong against this Indian side."

Eventually with the International Cricket Council (ICC) conceptualising the World Test Championship, its endeavour will find fruition when India and New Zealand walk out at the Ageas Bowl for that one 'final' Test commencing on Friday.

England's whimsical summer also lures in the rains and it is anybody's guess about who will have the last laugh – Virat Kohli's men, Kane Williamson's dog

TV PICKS

WTC 2021 final: India vs New Zealand; Star Sports 1 (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

England Women vs India Women: Only Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

Euro 2020: Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Golf: US Open championship: Eurosport (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.

Copa America 2021: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Saturday); Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF

Gujrathi returns to Champions Tour

NEW DELHI
The return of Vedit Gujrathi will see four Indian Grandmasters in the 16-player \$100,000 Goldmoney Asian Rapid online chess championship, which is part of the Champions Tour, beginning on June 26.

The players: Magnus Carlsen (Nor), Ding Liren (Chn), Levon Aronian (Arm), Anish Giri (Ned), Wesley So (USA), Alireza Firouzja (FIDE), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol), Vedit Gujrathi, Daniil Dubov (Rus), Peter Svidler (Rus), Vladislav Artemiev (Rus), Salem Saleh (UAE), B. Adhiban, Hou Yifan (Chn), D. Gukesh, and Arjun Erigais.

Milkha Singh 'stable and improving'

CHANDIGARH
Legendary Indian athlete Milkha Singh is "stable and improving" under the constant supervision of a medical team, after having recovered from COVID-19, PGIMER officials said here on Thursday. The 91-year-old was on Wednesday shifted out of COVID ICU to another section of the PGIMER hospital. PTI

COPA AMERICA

TODAY'S SCHEDULE

GROUP A

Chile vs Bolivia
2.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Argentina vs Uruguay
5.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Live on Sony Ten 2 and
Sony 6 (SD & HD)

India names tried-and-tested squad

The Rani Rampal-led team for Tokyo Olympics has mix of youth and experience

HOCKEY

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

The Indian women's hockey team for the Tokyo Olympics was announced on Thursday with coach Sjoerd Marijne sticking to a largely tried-and-tested mix of youth and experience.

The 16-member Rani Rampal-led side has a core group that has been together for more than three years now. While eight of the players were part of India's previous outing in 2016 at Rio Olympics, 12 of them participated at the 2018 World Cup, where India reached the last-eight and the Asian Games, finishing runner-up.

Besides Rani, others from the Rio squad include Savita Punia, Deep Grace Ekka, Sushila Chanu Pukhrambam, Monika, Nikki Pradhan, Navjot Kaur and Vandana Katariya, with a total of 1,492 caps between them.



Carrying India's hopes: The Indian women's hockey team for the Games. ■ TWITTER/THEHOCKEYINDIA

"This team has worked very hard over the last few years and has made progress consistently. There's a good mix of experienced players and new talent, which is excellent," chief coach Manjre said.

"We look forward to tak-

ing on the best in the world in Tokyo. This is a team with a lot of potential and drive which we hope to channelise to our best performance yet," he added.

This will only be the ninth-ranked team's third Olympic appearance and se-

IOA signs MPL as principal sponsor for Olympics

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Olympic Association on Thursday announced an ₹8 crore sponsorship deal with MPL Sports Foundation till the end of 2022 and covering major events in the period.

The deal will see MPL coming on board as the principal sponsor for the Indian contingents at the Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Asian Games & Commonwealth Games.

In addition, it will also supply the official sports kit for the contingents at the Asian and Commonwealth Games, the IOA said in a statement. Interestingly, it does not include the Olympics kits which will remain unbranded.

Meanwhile, Amul has signed a ₹1 crore deal till December 31 this year specifically covering the Tokyo Olympics.

Vijayakrishna passes away

SPORTS REPORTER
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka all-rounder B. Vijayakrishna passed away here on Thursday following a cardiac arrest, the Karnataka State Cricket Association stated. He was 71.

A left-arm spinner and southpaw batsman, Vijayakrishna played 80 First Class and two List-A matches. In First Class cricket he scored 2,297 runs (average 25.8) and took 194 wickets.

Vijayakrishna was part of the Karnataka team that won three Ranji Trophy titles – 1973-74, 1977-78 and 1982-83.

Vijayakrishna represented Karnataka with distinction in a 15-year domestic career. Despite his considerable talent, Vijayakrishna could not break into the Indian team.



B. Vijayakrishna.

Bopanna and Divij lose

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU
HALLE

Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan were beaten 6-3, 7-6 (3) by Sander Gille and Joran Vliegen of Belgium in the quarterfinals of the €1,455,925 Halle Open on Thursday. The Indian pair collected 90 ATP points and €14,340.

In the ITF men's event in Tunisia, Siddhant Banthia and USA's Alexander Kotzen

made the doubles semifinals.

Other results: €1,455,925 Halle Open: Doubles (quarter-finals): Sander Gille & Joran Vliegen (Bel) bt Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan 6-3, 7-6(3).

€132,280 Challenger, Nottingham: Pre-quarterfinals: Kamil Majchrzak (Pol) bt Ramkumar Ramanathan 6-4, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Doubles (quarter-finals): Alexander Kotzen (USA) & Siddhant Banthia bt Nicolas Bruna (Chi) & Imanol Lopez Morillo (Esp) 7-6(5), 6-4.

Berrettini stops Murray

AGENCIES

Andy Murray's grasscourt return was cut short in brutal fashion at Queen's Club as Italian top seed Matteo Berrettini dished out a 6-3, 6-3 defeat to the five-time winner on Thursday.

With 22 players following the leaders at six points, and four rounds to go, the title-race is wide open.

After Ilamprthy and Akkarakan drew their seventh-round game on the top board, Nagare defeated Alekhya Mukhopadhyay to emerge as the only winner from the first seven boards.

reer win over Murray. "I did not play very well," said Murray, adding that just being back on court was not a barometer of success for him.

In another match, second seed Denis Shapovalov beat defending champion Feliciano Lopez 6-2, 6-3.

Third seed Alexander Zverev was bounced out by France's Ugo Humbert 7-6 (4), 3-6, 6-3 in the Halle Open pre-quarterfinals.

Manish found cheating, stripped of Natl. u-18 title

Aronyak Ghosh elevated as the winner

CHESS

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Five days after the completion of the National under-18 online rapid chess championship, the All India Chess Federation (AICF) on Thursday took away the title from Odisha's Manish Kumar and named Bengal's Aronyak Ghosh champion.

The development followed the ruling of the Fairplay panel that found conclusive evidence against Manish of using unfair means on his way to the third place in the National

under-16 event on Tuesday.

"The members of the Fairplay panel had doubts over Manish's play even in the under-18, but there was no conclusive evidence. But during the under-16 championship, Manish was found cheating. The committee unanimously decided to nullify all his results," confirmed AICF secretary Bharti Singh Chauhan.

As a result, Aronyak and Ayush Sharma, who tied with Manish for the title, were elevated as winner and runner-up respectively. Sanjay Gupta took the third spot.

Harika in last eight

D. Harika beat former World champion Alexandra Kosteniuk of Russia to move into the quarterfinals of the Women's Speed Chess championship on Wednesday night. In a closely fought encounter that went into the four-game tie-breakers, the Indian won 14.5-12.5.

Harika's fine victory came after India's campaign got off to a disappointing start with Koneru Humpy going down to Kazakhstan's Bibisara Assaubayeva on the opening day last Saturday. The other Indian in the fray, R. Vaishali will meet China's Lei Tingjie on Saturday.

Hawks, Clippers post wins

NBA PLAYOFFS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

Top-seeded Philadelphia 76ers and Utah Jazz were on the brink of elimination from the NBA playoffs on Wednesday after Atlanta Hawks and Los Angeles Clipper-

pers notched up against-the-odds victories on the road.

The results: EC: Philadelphia 76ers 106 lost to Atlanta Hawks 10 (Hawks lead series 3-2).

WC: Utah Jazz 111 lost to LA Clippers 119 (Clippers lead series 3-2).

Three share lead; title-race wide open

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A.R. Ilamprthy (Tamil Nadu), Sandip Nagare (Maharashtra) and Venky Akkarakan (Kerala) shared the lead with 6.5 points after seven rounds of the National under-14 online rapid chess tournament on Thursday.

With 22 players following the leaders at six points, and four rounds to go, the title-race is wide open.

After Ilamprthy and Akkarakan drew their seventh-round game on the top board, Nagare defeated Alekhya Mukhopadhyay to emerge as the only winner from the first seven boards.

MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA

The New 2021

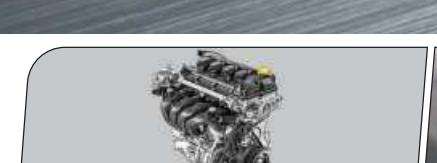
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