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RJD leader Tejashwi
Yadav blames Bihar
CM for split in LJP
page 9



China raising Tibetan
forces near Sikkim,
Ladakh, Bhutan borders
page 9



Former Sri Lankan PM
Ranil Wickremesinghe
returns to Parliament
page 11



New Zealand beats India,
wins inaugural World
Test Championship
page 13

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NEARBY



Independent MLAs in
Rajasthan back Gehlot

JAIPUR
Independent MLAs supporting the Congress government in Rajasthan on Wednesday expressed faith in the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot amid the demand for a share in power by former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot's camp.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

NGO files plea against former NRC Coordinator

GUWAHATI
The NGO whose July 2009 petition in the Supreme Court led to the exercise of updating the NRC in Assam has filed a complaint against former NRC State Coordinator Prateek Hajela. In its FIR, the Assam Public Works said Mr. Hajela manipulated the family tree verification during the NRC update exercise.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Sisodia hits out at Centre for 'rejecting' ration plan

NEW DELHI
Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said the Central government has sent a letter stating that it has "rejected" the proposal for doorstep delivery of ration in the city. "I want to ask the Prime Minister, why are you always in a mood to quarrel?" Mr. Sisodia said.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Banks get assets worth ₹8,441 crore from ED

Action follows probe into Mallya, Nirav-Mehul Choksi cases

DEVESHK. PANDEY
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has transferred assets worth ₹8,441.5 crore to public sector banks that suffered losses to the tune of ₹22,585.83 crore due to frauds committed allegedly by businessmen Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi. All three accused had fled overseas.

The agency said it recently transferred attached shares worth ₹6,600 crore to a State Bank of India-led consortium as per an order of the PMLA Special Court, Mumbai.

On Wednesday, the Debt Recovery Tribunal, on behalf of the consortium, sold the shares of United Breweries Limited for ₹5,824.5 crore. Further realisation of ₹800 crore by sale of shares is expected by June 25.

Owing to the help extended by the ED, the public sector banks earlier recovered ₹1,357 crore by selling the shares. "Thus, the banks shall be realising a total amount of ₹9,041.5 crore through sale of a part of the assets attached/seized by the ED..." said the agency.

As on date, of the total attachment worth ₹8,170.02 crore, assets valued ₹329.67 crore have been confiscated and properties worth

In the net | Assets worth ₹18,170.02 crore have been seized in the money laundering cases against businessmen Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi.

DETAILS OF SOME OF THE ASSETS

VIJAY MALLYA CASE

▪ Bank balance of ₹34 crore

▪ Two flats in Bengaluru and Mumbai

▪ 4.5 acre industrial plot in Chennai

▪ 28.75 acre coffee plantation in Coorg

▪ Properties in UB City and Kingfisher Tower in Bengaluru

▪ Property worth 1.6 million euro in Paris

NIRAV MODI-MEHLU CHOCSI CASE

▪ Art collection of NIRAV MODI

▪ Six residential flats, 10 office premises in Mumbai

▪ Solar power plant and 135 acres of land in Ahmednagar's Karjat

▪ One windmill in Jaisalmber

▪ Residential flats in the United Arab Emirates

▪ Artworks of Amrita Sher-Gil, M.F. Husain; luxury cars, watches and handbags

▪ Factory worth ₹13.14 crore in Thailand

▪ One property in London and two in New York

▪ Valuables worth about ₹255 crore in Hong Kong



₹9,041.5 crore – amounting to 40% of the total loss to the banks – have been handed over to them.

Based on the cases registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation, the ED had taken up a money laundering probe that helped unearth a complex web of domestic and international transactions and stashing of

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

assets abroad by the accused persons and their associates. They had used dummy entities controlled by them for rotation and siphoning of the funds provided by the banks. As part of the investigation, the ED took steps to attach or seize assets worth ₹8,170.02 crore.

Compared with the pre-

SOBHANA K NAIR
NEW DELHI

A meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on science and technology on Wednesday to discuss "vaccine development for COVID-19" and "genetic sequencing of coronavirus and its variants" saw high drama with the BJP members objecting to deliberations on these subjects, claiming that any investigation into it could demoralise the scientific community.

Sources said the BJP members staged a walkout

Modi to meet J&K leaders today

Talks seen as bid to settle 'political equilibrium'

NISTULA HEBBAR
PEERZADA ASHQI
NEW DELHI/SRINAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will head the talks on Thursday with representatives of mainstream political parties from Jammu and Kashmir, which will be an attempt, many in the government say, to settle a "political equilibrium" with regard to the Union Territory (UT).

This comes 22 months after the passage of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation



Looking ahead: PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti, NC leader Farooq Abdullah and CPI(M)'s M.Y. Tarigami. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Act, 2019, removing the special status of J&K and splitting the erstwhile State into two Union Territories.

Marg, with Home Minister Amit Shah in attendance. The government is clear that there is no going back on the removal of Article 370, and while statehood can be discussed, the main

agenda for the government will be seeking cooperation from the parties on the delimitation exercise under way for the Assembly seats.

Parties that make up the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), such as the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC), however, will stick to their position of seeking the restoration of Article 370, and the immediate restoration of statehood, with the Congress and the National Panthers Party pushing for restoration of full statehood.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Kerala capital bucks excess deaths trend

1,196 'excess deaths' were reported in 2021

SRINIVASAN RAMANI
S.R. PRAVEEN
CHENNAI/THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Unlike other cities in India which registered excess deaths during the first and second COVID-19 waves, Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram recorded a decrease in the number of overall deaths in 2020 and 1,196 "excess deaths" in 2021 (till May), according to the Civil Registration System data accessed by *The Hindu* through a Right to Information application.

Compared with the pre-

Fewer deaths than usual
Between April 2020 and May 2021, despite a cumulative COVID-19 death toll of 765 in the Thiruvananthapuram Municipal Corporation, the estimated decrease in overall deaths was 646

Excess deaths COVID-19 deaths Undercount factor

Thiruvananthapuram	-646	765	<0
Bengaluru	31,029	13,346	2.3
Chennai	29,910	7,091	4.2
Hyderabad	32,751	NA	NA

pandemic years (2015 to 2019) when the city corporation registered an average 16,652 deaths, in 2020, despite the pandemic, only 14,734 deaths occurred. If instead of averages, a year-by-year growth rate of deaths is

considered, the city's 14,734 registered deaths were fewer than the estimated 18,340 deaths in 2020.

This is in line with the 2020 figures for the entire State of Kerala, released earlier this year, which showed

that the absolute number of deaths in 2020 reduced by 11.1% compared with the 2019 figure. (This gap has closed to 7.9% now, according to the latest figures.)

A natural reduction in deaths due to fewer road accidents and respiratory illnesses, such as COPD, H1N1 and pneumonia, besides water and food-borne illnesses as people stayed indoors was one reason. But the lower COVID-19 mortality in Kerala was also due to an effective public health response that stood out in comparison with that of other States. This factor is evident in Thiruvananthapuram as well.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Blast near Hafiz Saeed's home, 3 killed

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LAHORE

Muslim cleric.
"Our assessment is that the most obvious target was the police and security forces," said provincial police chief Imam Ghani.

He said the blast site, in the affluent neighbourhood of Johar Town, was near the

home of Hafiz Saeed, the alleged mastermind of the 2008 Mumbai attacks. "The vehicle might have succeeded in reaching there had this police checkpoint not been present," said Mr. Ghani.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 11

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Centre using brute force against Alapan: Mamata

CM flays penalty proceedings move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday described the Centre's proposed move to start major penalty proceedings against the former State Chief Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay as highly irresponsible behaviour.

She said the Centre was victimising Mr. Bandyopadhyay and using brute force against a very competent and dedicated officer.

"If by using brute force someone wants to be a selfish giant, then the law will take its own course," the Chief Minister said.

Mr. Bandyopadhyay, she said, was free to take his own decisions, and the State government would fully support him. After the former Chief Secretary opted to retire on May 31, the State government appointed him Chief Adviser to the Chief Minister.

Ms. Banerjee said that the officer, who had lost three family members, including his brother, to COVID-19 in a span of a few weeks, was undergoing "mental agony".

CM YK

Governor interfering in my area of work: Speaker

JATIN KISHORE

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Over 87K prosecuted for COVID violations in 3 weeks: govt. data

On June 20, as many as 5,583 were fined, the highest tally after 'Unlock 3'

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

The gradual unlock process in the Capital has led to the prosecution of over 87,000 people for COVID-related violations from May 31 to June 20, according to Delhi government records.

As many as 4,153 people were prosecuted daily for not adhering to COVID-appropriate behaviour by Delhi government teams amounting to a total of 87,218 fines being issued for violations ranging from not wearing masks, wearing them improperly, to not following social distancing and spitting in public over 21 days.

According to government records, violations have gone up every week with more activities being opened up even as new cases of infection went down with as many as 6,507 new infections being recorded during the three-week period.

The highest number of people to be prosecuted – 5,583 – was on June 20.

A majority – 5,255 people or around 81% of those who



Officials issuing challan to a motorist for not wearing mask in the city. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

got infected during the three weeks of the unlock process during this interval – were aged between 14 and 60.

As more and more citizens step out, given the added number of activities allowed every week, more prosecutions are being made; but the higher prosecution is also due to more people being found not adhering to COVID norms.

even basis. A total of 29,343 people were prosecuted while the number of infections went down to 2,080.

Cases dip, violations soar
During Unlock 3, between June 14 and June 20, when the Delhi Metro continued to function and all shops and city markets were allowed to open, the number of violations soared to 36,909 even as infections reduced to 1,106.

The number of citizens falling in the 14- 60 age group – mostly engaged in the activities gradually allowed in the city – who got infected during Unlock 1 was 2,627 out of 3,321; during Unlock 2 this stood at 1,697 of 2,080 and Unlock 3 saw 931 infections among the age group out of 1,106.

The Capital went through a series of six-week-long lockdowns between mid-April and May during which prosecution figures remained relatively low compared to three recent weeks during which the city has been "unlocking" in phases.

In single-day drive, 2,400 Dasna inmates get vaccine

SAURABH TRivedi
GHAZIABAD

Surinder Kohli, convicted in the infamous 2006 Nithari serial murders, was among the 2,400 inmates who were vaccinated in the biggest single-day vaccination drive at Dasna jail in Ghaziabad on Wednesday.

Jail Superintendent of Dasna jail, Alok Singh, said: "We have vaccinated more than 2,400 inmates in the 18-45 age group during the mega vaccination camp. It has not been done by any other jails in the country. We are regularly organising awareness drive in prison to educate inmates to get vaccinated," said Mr. Singh.

Currently, around 4,800 inmates are lodged in Dasna jail and out of which 1,822 were vaccinated earlier that include 650 inmates of 45 years and above those who have got their second dose, said Mr. Singh.

Terror suspect Abdul Karim Tunda was also vaccinated around a month ago during the first phase. He added that there were very few COVID-19 cases in the prison and not a single death was reported due to the virus. The situation is under control.

The inmates who have recently admitted in jail will not be vaccinated because they don't know if the person was infected or not. So to be on the safer side, they will have to wait for three months for the vaccine.

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STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday said that the Central government in a letter said it has "rejected" a "proposal" for doorstep delivery of ration in the city and attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for it.

"Yesterday [Tuesday], there was a letter from the Union government to the Delhi government that proposal for doorstep delivery of ration has been rejected. We had not sent any proposal. It is the State government's right to decide how to distribute ration," Mr. Sisodia said.

The letter sent on June 22 by the Department of Food and Public Distribution of the Central government rejected the Delhi government's "proposal" for a doorstep delivery of ration and suggested that the scheme be started first as a pilot in selected areas of the city.

It "clarified that the proposal of GNCTD (Delhi government) doesn't meet the statutory and functional requirements of the National Food Security Act (NFS) and therefore, the proposal made by GNCTD can't be accepted."

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that there should not be a political fight over doorstep delivery of ration.

"Fighting with everyone all the time is not right. Twitter, Lakshadweep, Mamta didi, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Delhi government, farmers, traders, even the Chief Secretary of West Bengal. How will our nation develop if all our Central government does is to



People collecting ration from a centre in Adarsh Nagar. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

fight constantly? Doorstep delivery of ration is in the national interest. Don't fight over it," Mr. Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.

"We received a disparaging letter from the Central government citing senseless reasons to stop the doorstep delivery of ration to our people," Mr. Sisodia said.

Meanwhile, Delhi Food and Civil Supplies Minister Imran Hussain said that the Delhi government is firmly committed to provide free ration to both NFS beneficiaries and non-cardholders as long as the situation warrants. .

What Centre said

The letter said it was not clear on how Delhi government would maintain uninterrupted delivery in case beneficiaries change their address, or whether beneficiaries would be allowed to opt-out from doorstep delivery at any point during the year, and revert to picking up their ration at the fair price shops.

It also asked how the Delhi government would ensure that their delivery vehicles

would be able to access narrow streets or high rise apartments, how it would coordinate delivery timings if beneficiaries are not at home during the day, and how biometric authentication would be ensured at homes in areas without strong internet connectivity.

"The scheme may also face administrative and operational hurdles in terms of leakages, diversions, accountability issues, and assurance of timely availability of right quantity and quality of food-grains," said the letter, adding that without monitoring and an institutionalised oversight mechanism, there is likely to be a surge of grievances and complaints in the courts.

Questions were also raised about the accountability of delivery contractors, and the measures to prevent adulteration and diversion by delivery vehicle operators. The viability of fair price shops could also be impacted, it said.

The Centre also raised concerns about how doorstep delivery scheme could be integrated with the One Nation One Ration Card scheme to ensure that street dwellers, ragpickers, migrant workers, construction workers, rickshaw pullers and others who may not have a permanent address in Delhi will be able to receive their ration allocation.

"If the Kejriwal government wants to give free ration to poor, they can always buy it from the Food Corporation of India. The Central government distributes ration across the country through an electronic system but Delhi is the only State where it is not in force because of pressure from the ration mafia," Mr. Bihari alleged.

Apply 'One Nation One Ration Card' scheme: BJP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Wednesday demanded on the Delhi government to fully implement the Centre's 'One Nation, One Ration Card' scheme in the Capital. It accused the government of lying about its provisions to the people to score political brownie points.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bihari questioned why none of the Central government's welfare schemes had been implemented in Delhi, depriving citizens of their benefits.

'Betrayal of Delhites'

"The Kejriwal government has betrayed Delhites not only on the issue of ration but on vaccines, medicines and oxygen as well. It does not seem to be bothered even about court directives and continues to tell one lie after another," Mr. Bihari alleged.

North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari said there were 60 lakh people in Delhi without ration cards despite having applied for these a long time ago.

"If the Kejriwal government wants to give free ration to poor, they can always buy it from the Food Corporation of India. The Central government distributes ration across the country through an electronic system but Delhi is the only State where it is not in force because of pressure from the ration mafia," Mr. Bihari alleged.

Extreme heat, weak structure hinder probe

Firefighters couldn't collect DNA samples; shoe factory owner, father absconding



Firefighting operation under way at a shoe factory at Udyog Nagar in New Delhi. ■ FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

day as they still have not been able to enter the building because of the high temperature, police said.

The three-member team from FSL, Rohini, which visited the spot on Tuesday, could only carry out photography and videography of the building from outside.

The fire broke out on Monday at the shoe godown in Udyog Nagar, and 35 fire tenders and around 140 fire personnel were pressed into service to douse the blaze.

The six men reported to be missing have been identified as brother duo Sonu and Vikram, Shamshad, Abhishek, Ajay and Neeraj, said the police. Prima facie, electric short-circuit is suspected to be the reason but only a detailed examination will reveal exact cause of the fire, the senior police officer said.

The building also did not have any fire safety equipment in place and was heavily jammed with highly combustible materials due to which the fire spread fast, according to fire officials. The building has been declared dangerous by the area's civic body on Monday following the blaze, they said.

1,825 workers get ₹10K each as COVID relief

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has granted ₹10,000 each to 1,825 construction workers, authorities said. The government has already distributed ₹5,000 each to over two lakh workers.

"I urge all construction workers to get registered with the Delhi Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board to avail benefits of welfare schemes. Delhi government has already disbursed ₹5,000 each to 2,17,039 construction workers as COVID relief disbursement this year," said Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

BJP spokespersons quit WhatsApp group

Leaders disappointed with media wing'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Delhi-based issues due to the participation of national spokespersons on many occasions.

According to party sources, Delhi BJP spokespersons is playing out on the party's internal WhatsApp groups. Party insiders claim that old hands are mostly frustrated with the media department's handling of the party's affairs on a daily basis.

Media appearance

What is understood to have added to this is that spokespersons of the party's State unit are neither "allowed" to appear on national channels nor "allowed to speak" on

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E-TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

E-Tender Notice No. E-123-ST-P-NGP-CAF-Loop, Date : 18.06.2021 Name of Work : Complete design & drawing; Supply of critical materials, Excavation of trenches, Laying of Signaling, Quad Cable, OFC and Power cables, casting of foundation & erection of apparatus cases, junction boxes, signals, Installation of SSDAC, relays, track circuits, EKT and modification of IPS. Date longer including necessary modification of El WESTRACE SIEMENS (centralized type) for provision of additional loop line at Chanda Fort station with extension of existing bridge in Nagpur. Tender Value : ₹ 1,12,95,625/- (Rs. One crore twelve lakhs ninety nine thousand eight hundred twenty five only). Earnest Money: Nil. Closing of tender: Upto 15.00 hrs on 19/07/2021.

The above cancelled notice can be seen on IREPS website. The address if Indian Railways website is <https://www.ireps.gov.in>.

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- Three vaccines approved in India so far, several new vaccines in approval process



Get Vaccinated, Stay Safe

- Vaccines are safe, ignore rumours
- Visit www.cowin.gov.in to register and get full details on vaccination centres and vaccines
- Follow COVID-appropriate behaviour even after vaccination



“ Central Government is providing Free Vaccination under a special campaign to every Indian from now. The biggest beneficiary of this phase of India's vaccination drive shall be the poor, the middle class and the youth of the country. All of us should pledge to get ourselves vaccinated. Together we will defeat COVID-19.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi **”**

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OBITUARY &
REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



Mr. S Anil Radhakrishnan (54)
Chief of Bureau, The Hindu,
Thiruvananthapuram.
Passed away on 23-06-2021.
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e RE-Tender Reference No. RCD/DUMKA/939 Date-23.06.2021

1.	Name of the work	Reconstruction of Tharhimore to Tharhihat Road (Total length-4.775 Km) for the year 2021-22.
2(a)	Approximate value of Work (Rs. In Lacs)	Rs 1138.78925 Lacs (Rupees Eleven Crore thirty eight lac seventy eight thousand nine hundred twenty five only.)
(b)	Bid Security (Rs In Lacs)	Rs 11.39 Lacs
3.	Time of Completion	Nine Months
4.	Last date/Time for receipt of bids	26.07.2021 Up to 12.00 Noon.
5	Date of Publication of Tender on website	05.07.2021 AT 10.30 A.M
6.	Name & address of office Inviting tender	Executive Engineer Road Division, Dumka
7.	Contact no. of Procurement officer	6203257370
8.	Helpline number of e-Procurement cell	0651-2401010

Further details can be seen on website <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>

Executive Engineer
Road Construction Department
Road Division, Dumka, Pin-814101

PR.NO.248446 Road(21-22):D

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER ANANTNAG PWD(R&B) DIVISION KULGAM

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
TWO COVER SYSTEM

NT No. 14/2021-22/RnB/Kule/tendering/1633-53 dated 19-06-2021

Executive Engineer PWDR&B/Kulgam on behalf of Lt. Governor of J&K, invites percentage rate bids in electronic tendering system for the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with J&K UT Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State Governments.

1. The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q). Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:-

2. Tenders will be invited through electronic tendering system in the shape of Treasury Receipt/Challan in favour of Executive Engineer PWDR&B/Kulgam.

3. The Bidder shall submit his bid in the form of Treasury Receipt/Challan in favour of Executive Engineer PWDR&B/Kulgam.

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IN BRIEF



Guruvayur Sreekrishna temple to reopen today

THIRISSUR The Sreekrishna temple in Guruvayur, Kerala, which has been closed for two months due to the COVID-19 lockdown, will be reopened for devotees on Thursday. Only 15 persons will be allowed inside the temple at a time. A maximum of 600 devotees can have darshan on a day. Wedding ceremonies and offerings will also be resumed.

File affidavit in money heist case: HC tells ED

KOCHI The Kerala High Court on Wednesday asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to file an affidavit in response to a plea for a probe by the agency into the Kodakara black money heist case. Justice Ashok Menon passed the directive on a petition filed by Salim Madavar, president, Loktantrik Yuva Janata Dal.

Telangana Maoist leader dies after battling COVID

BHADRAGUDUM The CPI (Maoist) Telangana State committee secretary Haribushan alias Yapa Narayana, 50, died of a heart attack after battling COVID-19 for several days in Chhattisgarh on Monday, police said. Officials said they had received reliable information about the death of Haribushan.

Police investigate role of staff in ITDA case

BUTTAGUDUM The West Godavari district police in Andhra Pradesh, which arrested five persons on the charges of exploiting tribal girls by promising jobs in the K.R. Puram Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), are probing the role of the staff in the case. The police have registered a sexual harassment case.

HC suspends G.O. on hospital room rent

Order allowed private hospitals in Kerala to fix rent, court puts it on hold

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Slamming the State government, a Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday suspended for a week a new government order (G.O.) allowing private hospitals to fix the room rent for COVID-19 patients. The Bench comprising Justice Devan Ramachandran and Justice Kausar Edappagath observed that what had now been done by the government was to allow the private hospitals to fix any rate for the rooms and suites and that the order took away "the laudatory objectives of its first order" is-

Hospitals' plea

The court passed the order on a petition filed by the Kerala Private Hospitals Association seeking to review an ear-

sued on May 10.

It was clear from the earlier order that the rates fixed for the beds included all corollary charges like nursing, boarding, doctor's fee, etc., the court said. By allowing private hospitals to fix any rate for their rooms and suites, "they have become empowered to go back to the earlier situation in charges", albeit with a condition that such rates be displayed prominently.



Stepping in: A health worker conducting a COVID-19 test in Palakkad, Kerala. ■ MUSTAFAH K.K.

lier High Court directive to the State government to fix COVID-19 treatment charges in private hospitals. The earlier directive had come on a petition complaining that private hospitals were over-

charging patients for COVID-19 treatment.

The Bench also noted that there were some issues with respect to the treatment of pre-existing comorbidities. Counsel for the hospitals' as-

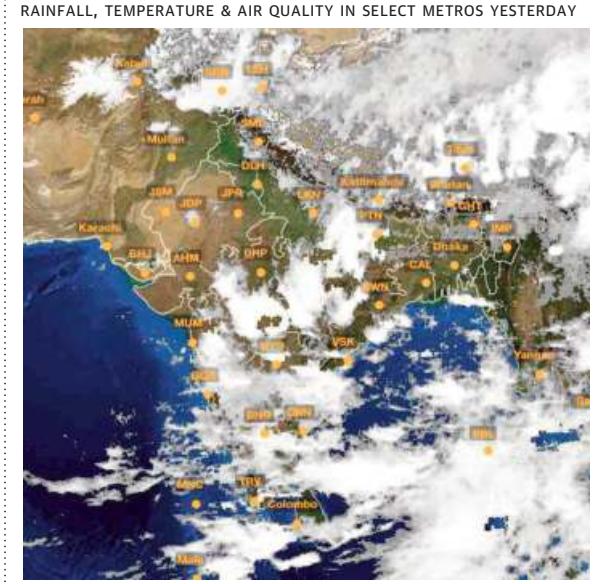
sociation submitted that the order did not offer a clear meaning on room rents. If a COVID-19 patient had pre-existing co-morbidities during hospitalisation, treatment for the same should be excluded from the charges fixed by the government.

Govt. response

The government pleader submitted that all the issues involved would be properly considered. The government counsel sought to respond appropriately to the court's observations in a week.

The court, in the meanwhile, ordered that the operation of the new order be suspended till the next date of hearing. The court posted the hearing on the review petition for June 30.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Thursday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, east Madhya Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Sikkim, Bihar, Jharkhand, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikudi, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 1...	35.0...	26.0	Kozhikode	... 32.2...	24.9	
Ahmedabad	29...	34.6...	26.3	Kurnool	... 35.8...	28.2	
Aizawl	2...	28.3...	23.2	Lucknow	... 35.6...	28.3	
Altahabud	... 33.1...	28.0		Madurai	6...	38.4...	25.5
Bengaluru	... 30.3...	21.2		Mangaluru	1...	31.0...	23.8
Bhopal	1...	34.0...	24.6	Mumbai	6...	32.9...	27.2
Bhubaneswar	7.6...	27.6...	22.9	Mysuru	... 30.8...	21.6	
Chandigarh	... 40.5...	28.1		New Delhi	... 40.5...	28.0	
Chennai	... 38.3...	28.2		Patna	... 35.0...	25.6	
Coimbatore	... 33.6...	24.1		Port Blair	28...	27.9...	23.6
Dehradoon	... 34.7...	24.6		Puducherry	... 34.1...	24.5	
Gangtok	76...	21.8...	18.4	Pune	... 31.4...	21.8	
Goa	5...	31.4...	26.2	Raipur	14.6...	27.6...	24.2
Guwahati	0.7...	35.1...	27.4	Ranchi	31...	29.6...	22.1
Hubballi	... 28.0...	22.0		Shillong	0.1...	24.7...	18.5
Hyderabad	... 30.6...	26.0		Shimla	... 29.8...	21.0	
Imphal	23...	31.4...	24.3	Srinagar	... 30.9...	13.3	
Jaipur	... 40.0...	29.4		Thiruvananthapuram	12...	32.0...	24.7
Kochi	2...	31.4...	24.3	Tiruchi	0.1...	38.5...	26.4
Kohima	6...	26.6...	18.6	Vijayawada	... 35.8...	28.4	
Kolkata	2...	33.7...	26.3	Visakhapatnam	92...	31.4...	27.2

TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN 18.00 HRS)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	.5	178	133	...
Bengaluru	.4	59	51	53	115	...
Chennai	14	12	17	43	103	...
Delhi	11	35	70	245	217	...
Hyderabad	43	28	23	70	126	...
Kolkata	10	25	58	62	...	Good
Lucknow	.6	63	83	133	110	...
Mumbai	3	22	.6	209	111	...
Pune	...	35	91	50	112	...
Visakhapatnam	.8	57	30	78	127	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhawali, Rajasthan recorded an overall quality index (AQI) score of 368 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 20

Yesterday

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

The Hindu Kerala Bureau chief Anil Radhakrishnan passes away

He was known for his passion for work, domain knowledge



Anil Radhakrishnan

ments. His vast sources in the areas he covered, high domain knowledge and an infallible work ethic kept Anil on the top of his expansive beat.

Recently, Anil had authored several breaking and nuanced articles on public finance and the Centre-State fiscal relationship.

Leaders cutting across political lines expressed their condolences to the bereaved family. Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan described Anil as a value-based journalist. Anil's unexpected parting was a loss to society and journalism, he said.

Anil is survived by his mother Sathi Devi, wife S.S. Sindhu (teacher, Government Higher Secondary School for Girls, Cotton Hill) and son S.A. Narayanan (Reliance Petroleum, Gujarat).

We will hold exams for Classes 11 & 12, says A.P.

No reliable alternative, it tells SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Andhra Pradesh government on Wednesday confirmed in the Supreme Court that it will go ahead and hold exams for Classes 11 and 12 students as there is no "reliable alternative".

The State said it was "conscious of the difficult situation, but conduct of examination shall be in the best interests of the students and shall be conducted safely".

The Supreme Court had given the State 24 hours to take a call on whether or not it would conduct the State Board exams amid the pandemic.

"Even if there is one student fatality, the State will be held responsible," Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari had warned the State government on Tuesday.

It said there was no "reliable alternative" to assess the performance of the students.

The court has scheduled a hearing on June 24.

NORTH & EAST

Now, Arunachal students' body files complaint against BRO

The union gives officers 10 days to apologise for map 'fiasco'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union has lodged a first information report against the officers of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for passing off the State's Kimitin as a town of Assam during Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's programme on June 17.

The FIR naming BRO Chief Engineer Pramod Kumar and other officers of the organisation based at Kimitin was lodged at the Itanagar police station on June 22.

Kimitin, about 75 km from Itanagar, is in Papum Pare district of Arunachal Pradesh. But the BRO had during the inauguration of 12 road projects by Mr. Singh, allegedly

tended," the union's president Hawa Bagang said.

The union has also set a 10-day deadline for the BRO to apologise to the people of the State for the "grave error, deliberate or otherwise".

The union said its members would gherao the camps of the General Reserve Engineer Force across the State if the BRO fails to apologise. They may also be asked to leave the State, it added. Union general secretary Tobiom Dai said the BRO "sabotaged" the territorial integrity of Arunachal Pradesh that has had boundary disputes with Assam.

These disputes are in court. "The BRO's act was intended to create dispute and also to disrupt the federal set up of the country," he said.

Probe demanded
"We have demanded an inquiry into what compelled BRO to hide the name of Kimitin and Arunachal Pradesh during the event of national importance that the Defence Minister at-

passed off the place as Bilgarh in Assam.

Twitter storm to save Unani medicine

AMU's Tibbia College seeks 'just treatment' for the system

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

Demanding just treatment for Unani system of medicine in the newly formed National Commission for Indian System of Medicine, a Twitter storm is being organised on Thursday by All India Unani Conference and Aligarh Muslim University's A.K. Tibbia College.

"Ayurveda and Unani systems of medicine are like brothers. But in the NCSIM Act, 2020, the Unani system is being meted out with stepmotherly treatment," said Dr. Khalid Siddiqui, former director-general, Central Council for Research of Unani Medicine (CCRUM). Urging for amendment in the Act, Dr. Siddiqui said, "Unani System that has considerable presence in the country

and abroad has been clubbed with regional systems of Siddha and Sowa Rigpa in the Commission."

Making an appeal for an independent board, fair distribution of resources and appropriate representation in the Commission, Dr. Siddiqui said they would approach the members of the Parliamentary Committee. He underlined the Unani system, which has around 60 colleges, 100 hospitals, and around 1,500 dispensaries across all States, has been subsumed with Siddha and Sowa Rigpa systems that have only a regional presence with a few colleges/ dispensaries.



Friends in need

An amalgam of disparate elements will not be a viable national alternative to the BJP

Talk of any political realignment is unseasonal, considering the fact that the next general election is due only in 2024 and the BJP is entrenched in the government. A gathering of political leaders, activists and scholars convened by Trinamool Congress leader Yashwant Sinha on Tuesday, however, was preceded by a lot of speculation about the emergence of a 'third' front, opposed to the BJP and sidelining the Congress. The Rashtra Manch is not intended to be a third front according to its organisers, but that does not mean the end of an exploratory politics ahead of 2024. In fact, most parties have reasons to think and act towards a new alternative to the BJP. For one, serial governance failures and missteps have made the current moment the most vulnerable for the BJP since 2014. The Congress does challenge the BJP at an ideational level, but the electoral victories over it in recent months were by regional parties such as the TMC, the DMK and the Left. While Rahul Gandhi has a principled position against the BJP, his vacillating role within the party and reluctance to play the power politics make the Congress an uninspiring leader for other anti-BJP parties. The role being played by Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar makes the current attempt for a new platform vigorous. He has the dexterity, heft and the network to lead it.

That said, there is not an easy path for this nascent platform, assuming that it has ambitions beyond being a debating society. At 80, age is not on Mr. Pawar's side. Without an active role for the Congress, no political formation can be viable against the BJP. That role, and the terms of engagement between the Congress and other smaller parties remain open questions. Even among the parties that participated in the meeting – SP, NCP, AAP, CPI(M), CPI, National Conference, Trinamool Congress – enthusiasm is muted, though they sent representatives. Mr. Pawar himself is conscious of the pitfalls. Several of these parties are adversaries of one another in States. All non-BJP parties are not opening up to the idea, at least for now. The TRS, YSRCP and BJD, in power in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha, respectively, have a guarded approach towards national politics. All these factors make the emergence of a robust opposition to the BJP onerous. Politics is often shaped by circumstances. The BJP's unchallenged power in the last seven years has built tensions that need to be resolved through democratic processes. The recent Assembly election outcomes were a reminder that parties staunchly opposed to the BJP remain popular in States. Harnessing a national politics from such disparate trends is a challenge before the opponents of the BJP.

Engage Iran

Blocking of Iran-linked websites does little for efforts to revive n-deal and reverse sanctions

The U.S.'s decision to block dozens of Iran-linked websites at a time when both countries are trying to revive the nuclear deal is unnecessary provocation. The U.S. has accused the sites, including Iran's state-owned Press TV, of spreading disinformation. In the past, the U.S. had cracked down on Chinese and Iranian media over similar allegations. The move comes days after Iran elected Ebrahim Raisi, a hardline cleric, as President. The election of Mr. Raisi, who has been sanctioned by the U.S. for his alleged role in the execution of political prisoners and other rights violations, has already escalated tensions between the two countries. Iran's sharp response to the move on the websites, has been that the U.S. was trying to "muzzle free speech". Even if one ignores Iran's rhetoric, the U.S.'s move hardly serves its declared purpose of fighting disinformation. When America seized the website of the semi-official Iranian news agency, Fars, in 2018, it switched to an Iranian domain and was back online. The U.S. should not act like despotic regimes that take knee-jerk actions towards media platforms with critical coverage. The way to fight disinformation campaigns is to promote information and strengthen independent journalism. Besides aiding the Iranian narrative that America remains hostile, the U.S. decision could also create hitches in the diplomatic process under way.

The Biden administration had hoped for reaching an agreement with Tehran on reviving the nuclear deal before the June 18 Iran presidential election. After multiple rounds of indirect talks in Vienna, along with other world powers, a final agreement has not been reached, but all parties have expressed faith in talks. The Biden administration had shown a willingness to reverse Donald Trump's maximum pressure policy and revive the deal that would cut off Iran's path towards the bomb in return for lifting sanctions. Iran, embattled by sanctions, economic woes and protests, has responded positively to the U.S.'s overtures. But there have been bottlenecks. One, when the Trump administration pulled the U.S. out of the nuclear deal and reimposed sanctions, Iran started rebuilding its nuclear programme with higher-level fuel enrichment and production of centrifuges. Now, the U.S. wants Iran to return to the terms of the original agreement, while the Iranians want the sanctions lifted first. Two, the Biden administration also wants to discuss Iran's ballistic missile programme and its regional activities. Mr. Raisi has rejected such demands outright. Known for his hardline domestic and foreign policy views, he would take over the presidency in early August. Mr. Biden's best chance to revive the nuclear deal is to do it before then. Both sides should focus on the diplomatic path, aimed at achieving a pragmatic agreement first that addresses the most critical issues – Iran's expanding nuclear programme and America's sprawling sanctions regime.

The Kashmir outreach and the Afghan storm

The Government's J&K moves may be part of a more complex regional game involving India's security interests



SUHASINI HAIDER

Two years after its dramatic decision to reorganise Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), the Government appears to be rethinking some of the objectives it announced then as Prime Minister Narendra Modi engages the erstwhile State's former leadership to discuss the future of the political process there. Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah had spoken of three specific objectives in the move to amend Article 370 on August 5, 2019, apart from ending terrorism and violence in J&K: flooding the region with development initiatives and investment from other parts of the country; reclaiming those parts of the territory now occupied by Pakistan and China (Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, or PoK, and Aksai Chin), and ending the rule of political "dynasties" in J&K – that they claimed had held the progress of the State hostage – in favour of a "Naya Kashmir" polity. Above all, the Government underlined, as External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar undertook a series of visits abroad to explain its nuances, the decision was purely an "internal" one, and did not affect India's ties with any other country.

Objectives and reality

While two years may not be long enough to truly judge the success of its intentions, particularly given the impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic, it is certainly fair to say the Government has failed to make headway with most of those

objectives. Incidents of terrorism and violence have no doubt decreased since 2019, but that has come at the cost of massive privations to the people in the name of security. More than 5,000 people were arrested, the longest Internet shutdown in any democracy was instituted for 213 days, and the deployment of troops still remains at peacetime highs. The plight of the ordinary Kashmiri, battling daily intimidations from security forces, the closure of schools and online education for their children, and diminishing sources of income, can only be imagined. Attempts to convince investors that this is a lasting peace have floundered thus far, and while the Government claims it has more than 400 memoranda of understanding from businesses nationwide promising to invest in the Union Territory, this can only be tested once the money actually comes in, given the state of the national economy, even prior to the pandemic.

Border situation

Mr. Shah's claim in Parliament that his government was willing to "sacrifice lives" to ensure the return of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and Aksai Chin, appears a much more difficult proposition in the face of the Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) since April 2020. Chinese actions, and the failure of military and diplomatic talks to ensure the restoration of *status quo ante* have been coupled with the growing threat perception, articulated by the Indian Army Chief, that any future conflict at the LAC would need to account for a two-front "situation" with Pakistan at the Line of Control as well, and vice versa. Even the United States is unlikely to countenance any military manoeuvre involving PoK now, given its



NISSAR AHMAD
proximity to the Afghanistan theatre, and the U.S.'s pullout and the increasing strength of the Taliban will add to the risk calculus in Delhi against such actions.

Finally, the outreach to 14 leaders from J&K, many of whom were arrested for months, indicates that the Government's plan for a "Naya Kashmir" polity is not drastically different from the previous polity – that the Home Minister referred to derisively as the "Gupkar Gang" – despite intervening attempts at building a new party (Apni Party), sidelining the main parties during consultations and even promoting "District Development Councils" as the new Kashmiri leadership during meetings with foreign diplomats.

Hardly an 'internal' issue

The Government's repeated assertion that its August 5 decision on J&K was an "internal one" has also been put to a rigorous test. Despite considerable exertions by the Ministry of External Affairs and its missions worldwide, J&K has now been discussed in more capitals, including the U.S. Congress, Parliaments in the United Kingdom, the European Union (EU) and the Nordic countries, than ever before, while several delegations of EU parliamentarians, Ambassadors and United Nations diplomats

have been escorted to the valley to elicit their approval for the situation there. It is ironic that countries which were openly supportive of the Modi government's military action in PoK in 2016 after the Uri attack, and of the Balakot strikes by the Indian Air Force in Pakistan after the Pulwama attack in 2019, have even so, chosen to be so critical of a political and internal move. In addition, the J&K dispute has been discussed at least three times at the UN Security Council, which had not touched the issue since 1971.

Dialogue with Pakistan

What is more galling is the notion that the decision to engage the previous leadership, to discuss the restart of a political process and the reversal of the August 5 decision to downgrade the State to a Union Territory, comes not from domestic considerations alone. In the past few months, it has been made clear that a backchannel dialogue between India and Pakistan is discussing assurances on J&K that would enable a broader bilateral dialogue. Pakistan too has climbed down considerably from its previous demands of plebiscite and UN resolutions, to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's more recent statements that he would be willing to talk if there was a reversal in some of the August 5 steps, or if the Modi government proffers a "roadmap" on J&K. Even Pakistan's insistence on the restoration of Article 370 was a turnaround from the days when it rejected the Article's validity. Both the downturn in Pakistan-backed violence in Jammu-Kashmir as well as the softening of rhetoric suggest a flexibility borne out of international pressure as well as the sustained threat of a (Pakistan) blacklisting by the Financial Ac-

tion Task Force.

Such compromises by hawkish establishments in Delhi and Islamabad (and Rawalpindi) do not come from an internal rethink by themselves, and it would seem obvious that external prompting from the U.S., keen to complete its Afghanistan pullout and its negotiations with the Taliban, as well as nudges from Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, of the kind publicly referred to by the UAE envoy as "mediation", have been at work as well. The recent disclosure by the Qatari special envoy that Indian officials have engaged the Taliban leadership in Doha is also part of that matrix. The Government's decision to shut down operations at two of its Afghanistan consulates, in Jalalabad and Herat, which was earlier described as a temporary move due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, is clearly linked to safety concerns in the phase after the U.S. pullout.

The U.S. factor

In the broader geopolitical context, as the drumbeats to a U.S.-China confrontation grow louder, India's global strategies will be further put to test. The U.S.'s expectations of cooperation from India to its East, on China and the Indo-Pacific, have clearly not been commensurate with New Delhi's expectations that America would reduce India's threats to its west, from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Instead, it would seem, the Government's attempts to sever the Gordian knot in Jammu and Kashmir with its moves two years ago, are being drawn into a more complex game of regional dominoes, where India's security interests are increasingly in play.

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The gender technology gap has to end

There needs to be a feminist approach to technology to solve the social impacts of the South Asian COVID-19 crisis



MOHAMMAD NACIRI &
ATSUKO OKUDA

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has swept South Asia in recent months, existing inequalities have come to light. One aspect stands out: access to technology has never been so crucial to ensuring public health and safety.

Around the world, information and access to health care have largely moved online, and those left behind face grave disadvantages.

Limited or no access

According to Global System for Mobile Communications (GSMA) estimates, over 390 million women in low- and middle-income countries do not have Internet access. South Asia has more than half of these women with only 65% owning a mobile phone.

In India, only 14.9% of women were reported to be using the Internet. This divide is deepened by earlier mandates to register online to get a vaccination appointment. Recent local data revealed that nearly 17% more men than women have been vaccinated. While improving awareness of how to access vaccination and help are crucial to protecting women, the mindset around digital technology

and device ownership must also change.

For example, when families share a digital device, it is more likely that the father or sons will be allowed to use it exclusively. In part, this is due to deeply held cultural beliefs: it is often believed that women's access to technology will motivate them to challenge patriarchal societies. There is also a belief that women need to be protected, and that online content can be dangerous for women/expose them to risks. As a consequence, girls and women who ask for phones face suspicion and opposition.

These gaps prevent women and LGBTQIA+ people from accessing critical services. In India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, for example, fewer women than men received the necessary information to survive COVID-19. Vaccine registration usually requires a smartphone or laptop. Men and boys are thus more likely to get timely information and register than women and girls.

The concept of feminism goes beyond the rights of women. It is about a way of life. In simple terms, it means being inclusive, democratic, transparent, egalitarian, and offering opportunities for all. We can call it equality through innovation.

Feminist technology (sometimes called "femtech") is an approach to technology and innovation that is inclusive, informed and responsive to the entire community with all its diversity.



Steps to an equitable future

At UN Women, we are encouraging companies to sign up and agree to principles that will lead to a more equitable future for all. As part of the Generation Equality Forum (<https://bit.ly/35MSxNa>), the goal is to double the number of women and girls working in technology and innovation. By 2026, the aim is to reduce the gender digital divide and ensure universal digital literacy, while investing in feminist technology and innovation to support women's leadership as innovators.

Through digital empowerment programmes and partnerships such as EQUALS (<https://bit.ly/2SQ78oj>) and International Girls in ICT Day celebration (<https://bit.ly/2SQ6WW7>) across the region led by UN Women and the International Telecommunication Union, we hope that more girls will choose STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) as their academic focus, enter digital technology careers, and aspire to be the next leaders in digital technology.

What would the world look like if technology were truly inclusive and reflected our society's needs? How would the world be different if feminist technology were embraced?

Hardly a neutral world
What we see today is that most technologies that are available to the layperson are created by men, for men, and do not necessarily meet everyone's requirements. The supposedly neutral world of technology is full of examples of this: from video games to virtual assistants to the increasingly large dimensions of "handheld" smartphones, technology is not always made with everyone in mind.

Policy cannot solve this on its own, but the private sector can. Companies should not look at gender-equal technology solely from an altruistic perspective, but from a pragmatic one.

According to GSMA, closing the gender gap in mobile Internet usage in low- and middle-income countries would increase GDP by US.\$700 billion over the next five years. Women and girls are the largest consumer groups left out of technology and could be major profit drivers.

In the App Store, there are about two million apps, most of which cater to young men. Why not design apps geared specifically towards mothers or apps for women to access telemedicine consultation? Or digital networks to connect women to informal job opportunities so they can still earn while balancing caring for their fa-

milies? Other than apps, built-in features on mobile phones such as an emergency button connecting women to law enforcement if they face unwanted street harassment should also be considered.

Women and girls do not have the same access to these technologies as men and boys, nor are they available at the same price. That is not acceptable.

There is no need to reinvent the wheel. In the 1950s, dishwashers and washing machines were promoted as a method of emancipating women. Household goods producers, for example, target most of their advertising at women because they often control the household budget. Digital technology could be approached similarly.

We now have the opportunity to shape our future in a way that is more equal, diverse, and sustainable in the world of technology in the aftermath of the medical and socioeconomic devastation in the past year.

Now is the time to act. The right thing to do is also the smart thing to do. Bringing an end to the gender technology gap will save lives and make livelihoods more secure. As a result, the next pandemic, once it arrives, may not be nearly as destructive. It can only lead to a better community and a better world for us all.

Mohammad Naciri is Regional Head of UN Women Asia and the Pacific.
Atsuko Okuda is Regional Director of the International Telecommunication Union Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Political alternative?

We do not need to read too much into the somewhat lukewarm response of many Opposition parties to the Rashtriya Manch meeting to explore the possibility of forging broad Opposition unity to take on the BJP (Page 1, June 23). Even though some parties skipped the meeting and some others sent their second rung leaders, they all have a stake in putting up a united political front against the ruling party. And, they seem to realise it. The Opposition parties should be sensible of the fact that they risk losing their relevance by splitting the secular and social justice vote. But the Opposition parties have a daunting task at hand; they have to convince the people that they will provide a

better government. The failure of the Modi government to carry through its promises of bringing about *Vikas* and '*Ache din aane waale hain'*, and its inept and callous handling of the COVID-19 pandemic have chipped away at the popularity of the top leader.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ It is not surprising that the grand meeting turned out to be damp squib. There are inherent reasons for this. Though an anti-BJP party has brought the anti-BJP parties together, just as in the past with such political experiments, it is egoistic clashes by the leaders of regional outfits that come in the way of projecting solutions to the wide array of

pressing contemporary issues. Until this factor is sorted out, such experiments are destined to fail miserably even as the image of the Narendra Modi-led government has taken a hit.

JAYASHREE THAMPI,
Thiruvananthapuram

Bank deposit returns
With bank deposit interest rates not covering even the inflation rate, this is eroding the savings of senior citizens and others who do not have any fixed income by way of governmental pension support. Gone are the days when such strata made both ends meet from interest income. The rosy pictures of increased deposits in the banking system are linked to five banks which enjoy the privilege of institutional deposits, mostly from government departments.

Though it is a global challenge for all economies to make a semblance in interest rates on deposits and advance to spur industrial growth and employment, the scales are tilted more in favour of borrowers than depositors. The recovery of NPAs has to be streamlined.

BRU BHUSHAN GOYAL,
Ludhiana, Punjab

Kenneth Kaunda
It is a shock that many media outlets in India did not have even a short note, let alone a detailed obituary, on the demise of Kenneth Kaunda, the first President of independent Zambia. Mr. Kaunda was a close friend of India and took great inspiration from India's freedom struggle to fight for his country's freedom from Britain. It is a sign of the drift in

media policies that a great African statesman and anti-colonialist was deemed not worthy of a mention on his passing.

SANJAY REDDY,
Bengaluru

■ As a reader of a number of dailies for over 40 years, I find it jarring that the Indian media has forgotten Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's founding President, who played a key role in supporting African nationalism. Controversy can be found in his rule, but by and large, he was an icon in Africa. If one can think of African statesmen, Kenneth

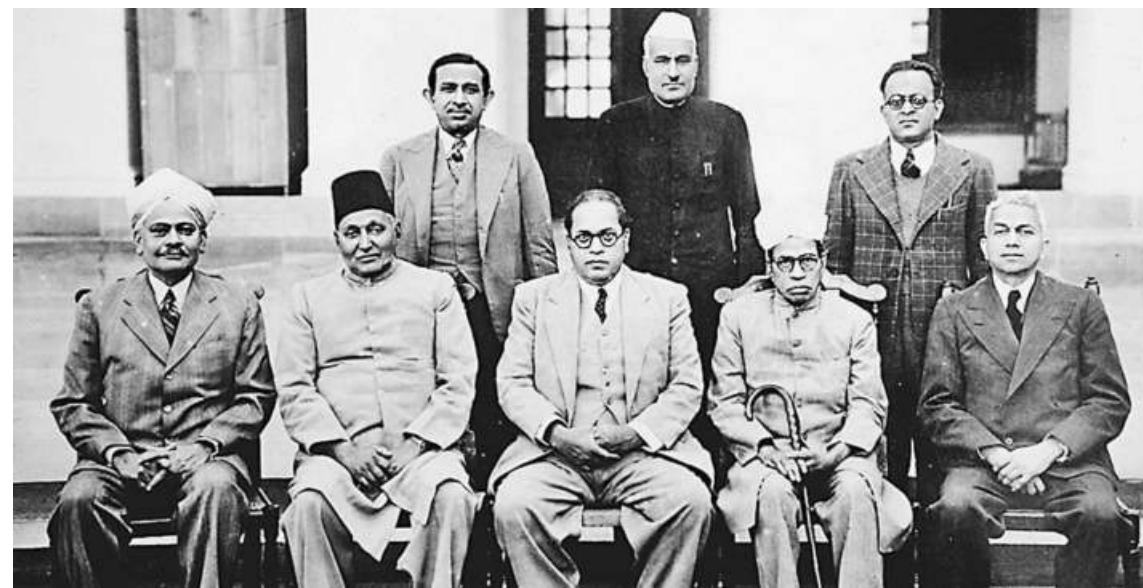
CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
An Editorial page article titled "The state of India's poor must be acknowledged" (June

The 'Union government' has a unifying effect

The term 'Centre' is absent in the Constitution as the Constituent Assembly did not want to centralise power



MUKUND P. UNNY



Members of the Constituent Assembly in February 1948. — THE HINDU ARCHIVES

The Tamil Nadu government's decision to shun the usage of the term 'Central government' in its official communications and replace it with 'Union government' is a major step towards regaining the consciousness of our Constitution. Seventy-one years since we adopted the Constitution, it is time we regained the original intent of our founding fathers beautifully etched in the parchment as Article I: "India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States". If a student of Indian polity attempts to trace the origin of the term 'Central government', the Constitution will disappoint him, for the Constituent Assembly did not use the term 'Centre' or 'Central government' in all of its 395 Articles in 22 Parts and eight Schedules in the original Constitution. What we have are the 'Union' and the 'States' with the executive powers of the Union wielded by the President acting on the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers headed by the Prime Minister. Then, why did the courts, the media and even the States refer to the Union government as the 'Centre'?

Even though we have no reference to the 'Central government' in the Constitution, the General Clauses Act, 1897 gives a definition for it. The 'Central government' for all practical purposes is the President after the commencement of the Constitution. Therefore, the real question is whether such definition for 'Central government' is constitutional as the Constitution itself does not approve of centralising power.

Intent of Constituent Assembly

On December 13, 1946, Jawaharlal Nehru introduced the aims and objects of the Assembly by resolving that India shall be a Union of territories willing to join the "Independent Sovereign Republic". The emphasis was on the consolidation and confluence of various provinces and territories to form a strong united country.

Many members of the Constituent

Assembly were of the opinion that the principles of the British Cabinet Mission Plan (1946) be adopted, which contemplated a Central government with very limited powers whereas the provinces had substantial autonomy. The Partition and the violence of 1947 in Kashmir forced the Constituent Assembly to revise its approach and it resolved in favour of a strong Centre. The possibility of the secession of States from the Union weighed on the minds of the drafters of the Constitution and ensured that the Indian Union is "indestructible". In the Constituent Assembly, B.R Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee, observed that the word 'Union' was advisedly used in order to negative the right of secession of States by emphasising, after all, that "India shall be a Union of States". Ambedkar justified the usage of 'Union of States' saying that the Drafting Committee wanted to make it clear that though India was to be a federation, it was not the result of an agreement and that therefore, no State has the right to secede from it. "The federation is a Union because it is indestructible," Ambedkar said.

The usage of 'Union of States' by Ambedkar was not approved by all and faced criticisms from Maulana Hasrat Mohani who argued that Ambedkar was changing the very nature of the Constitution. Mohani made a fiery speech in the Assembly on September 18, 1949 where he vehement-

ly contended that the usage of the words 'Union of States' would obscure the word 'Republic'. Mohani went to the extent of saying that Ambedkar wanted the 'Union' to be "something like the Union proposed by Prince Bismarck in Germany, and after him adopted by Kaiser William and after him by Adolf Hitler". Mohani continued, "He (Ambedkar) wants all the States to come under one rule and that is what we call Notification of the Constitution. I think Dr. Ambedkar is also of that view, and he wants to have that kind of Union. He wants to bring all the units, the provinces and the groups of States, everything under the thumb of the Centre." However, Ambedkar clarified that "the Union is not a league of States, united in a loose relationship; nor are the States the agencies of the Union, deriving powers from it. Both the Union and the States are created by the Constitution, both derive their respective authority from the Constitution. The one is not subordinate to the other in its own field... the authority of one is coordinate with that of the other".

The sharing of powers between the Union and the States is not restricted to the executive organ of the government. The judiciary is designed in the Constitution to ensure that the Supreme Court, the tallest court in the country, has no superintendence over the High Courts.

Though the Supreme Court has appellate jurisdiction – not only over

High Courts but also over other courts and tribunals – they are not declared to be subordinate to it. In fact, the High Courts have wider powers to issue prerogative writs despite having the power of superintendence over the district and subordinate courts. Parliament and Assemblies identify their boundaries and are circumspect to not cross their boundaries when it comes to the subject matter on which laws are made. However, the Union Parliament will prevail if there is a conflict.

Word play

The members of the Constituent Assembly were very cautious of not using the word 'Centre' or 'Central government' in the Constitution as they intended to keep away the tendency of centralising of powers in one unit. The 'Union government' or the 'Government of India' has a unifying effect as the message sought to be given is that the government is of all. Even though the federal nature of the Constitution is its basic feature and cannot be altered, what remains to be seen is whether the actors wielding power intend to protect the federal feature of our Constitution. As Nani Palkhivala famously said, "The only satisfactory and lasting solution of the vexed problem is to be found not in the statute-book but in the conscience of men in power".

Mukund P. Unny is an advocate practising in the Supreme Court of India

Blended learning won't work

Educators wish to embrace the UGC's new proposal but the ground reality is different

A. THOMAS & K.S. ANTONYSAMY

A recent circular by the University Grants Commission (UGC) proposes that all higher educational institutions (HEI) teach 40% of any course online and the rest 60% offline. The concept note circulated by the UGC argues that this "blended mode of teaching" and learning paves the way for increased student engagement in learning, enhanced student-teacher interactions, improved student learning outcomes and more flexible teaching and learning environments, among other things. The note also enlists a few other key benefits such as increased opportunity for institutional collaborations at a distance and enhanced self-learning accruing from blended learning (BL).

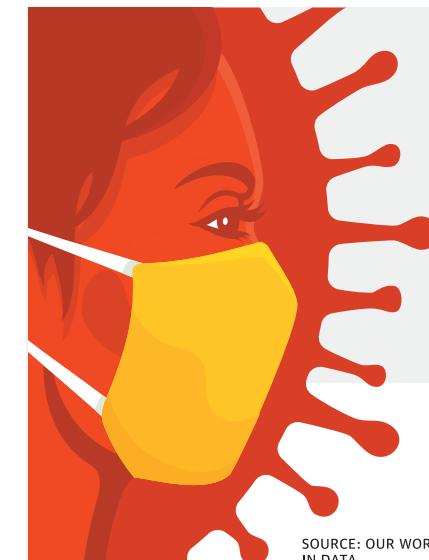
Another claim is that BL benefits the teachers as well. It shifts the role of the teacher from being a "knowledge provider to a coach and mentor". The note says this will enable teachers to have a greater influence and effect on students' learning. Further, as against traditional classroom instruction which is "teacher-directed, top-down, and one-size-fits-all", BL is "student-driven, bottom-up, and customized". The note adds that BL introduces flexibility in assessment and evaluation patterns as well. Educators wish to embrace the forward-looking proposal but the ground reality is different.

Recommendations
Given these challenges, it is worth considering a few recommendations. The government should ensure equity in access to technology and bandwidth for all HEIs across the country free of cost. Massive digital training programmes must be arranged for teachers. Even the teacher-student ratio needs to be readjusted to implement BL effectively. This may require the appointment of a greater number of teachers. The design of the curriculum should be decentralised and based on a bottom-up approach. More power in such education-related policymaking should be vested with the State governments. Switching over from a teacher-centric mode of learning at schools to the BL mode at the tertiary level will be difficult for learners. Hence, the government must think of overhauling the curriculum at the school level as well. Finally, periodical discussions, feedback mechanisms and support services at all levels would revitalise the implementation of the learning programme of the National Education Policy 2020, BL, and lead to the actualisation of the three cardinal principles of education policy: access, equity and quality.

Challenges
The latest All India Survey on Higher Education (2019-20) report shows that 60.56% of the 42,343 colleges in India are located in rural areas and 78.6% are privately managed. Can these colleges successfully implement BL? And what would be the cost of such education?

Only big corporates are better placed to invest in technology and provide such learning. Second, according to data report statistics, Internet penetration in India is only 45% as of January 2021. This policy will only exacerbate the existing geographical and digital divide resulting in the exclusion of a large number of rural students. Third, BL leaves little room for all-round formation of the student that includes the development of their intelligent quotient,

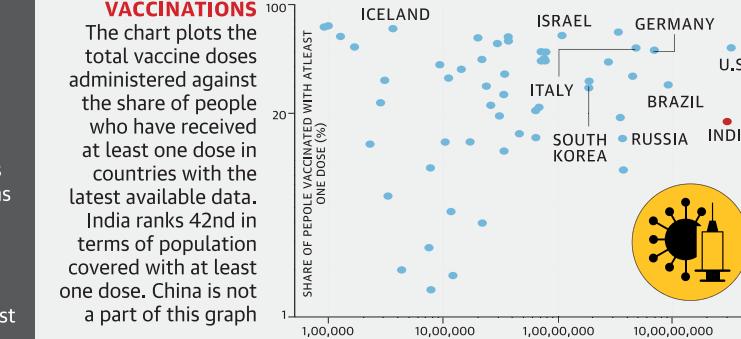
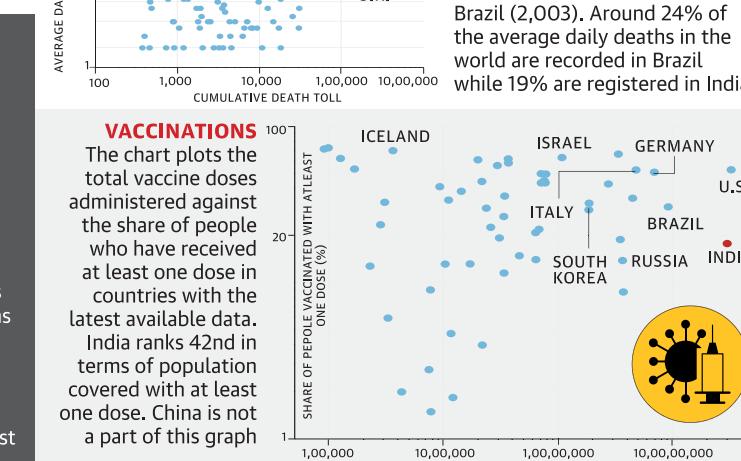
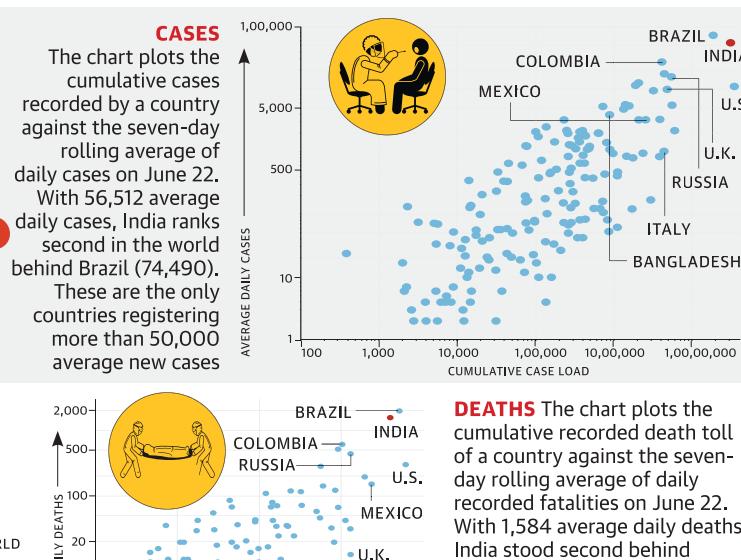
DATA POINT



COVID-19 status check | On

Tuesday, India crossed the 3-crore mark in cumulative COVID-19 cases. Only the U.S., with 3.35 crore cases, has registered a higher tally than India. The cumulative number of recorded deaths in India is nearing the 4-lakh mark. Only the U.S. (about 6 lakh deaths) and Brazil (about 5 lakh deaths) have recorded more fatalities than India. In terms of average daily deaths and cases, India is the second to Brazil. On the vaccination front, while India has administered the second-highest number of doses behind the U.S., only 17% of people in the country have received at least one dose. China is not a part of this graph.

A. Thomas is Principal, Loyola College, and K.S. Antonysamy is Associate Professor, Loyola College



A recovery path for airlines

The government and industry should collaborate to develop a sustainable restart strategy



USHA PADHEE & ADITYA TIWARI

cines will jointly play a key role in the industry's recovery. Vaccination can be a requirement to travel but should co-exist with testing regimes. It should be considered as a progressive step towards safe travel. Imposing compulsory vaccination as a pre-requisite for air travel will only further impact the sector. It is going to take some time to fully vaccinate everyone who wants to be vaccinated. In the meantime, until the population worldwide is significantly vaccinated, it is important to have robust and stable testing protocols, along with interoperable digital solutions. Implementing widespread COVID-19 antigen testing before departure is key to restarting air travel. The Indian Council of Medical Research approved self-testing COVID-19 kits called CoviSelf, which could come in handy.

Restarting operations

It is challenging for airlines to figure out how they are going to restart operations when customer demand returns to pre-COVID-19 levels. As the vaccination programme unfolds in different parts of the world, it is critical to restart air travel with an internationally reliable, acceptable and harmonious approach. The government and industry should collaborate to develop a sustainable 'restart strategy'. Such a strategy should use a science-based approach and specify how nations must deal with vaccinated and non-vaccinated passengers, how quarantine and testing measures will be adjusted, and how appropriate electronic capture of health data to facilitate international travel can be ensured. It is possible to have a flexible policy. Tools can be developed to continually monitor the risk profiles of different regions.

For India, the large domestic aviation market is a saviour. Collaboration among the States will be critical to ensure the effective restart of the aviation industry. Different testing and quarantine requirements have already created a lot of confusion. As done in natural calamity protocols, a framework establishing clear rules, processes and standards needs to be in place according to the situation. Local actions need to be taken whenever risks are identified, and a consistent policy should be followed. In recent times, micro-containment zones have been helpful over blanket lockdowns in containing infections.

It is time to focus on substituting blanket restrictions with testing, vaccination and limited quarantine measures. Tests and vac-

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Vaccine passports

Digital travel passes and vaccine passports may be another solution. But in order to work, these will require standardisation across borders. Internationally, there is concern that governments may not cooperate or establish shared principles for opening their borders. The concept of vaccine passports is illogical if the same vaccines are not recognised in all the countries. For example, the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines, which are generally recognised as examples of vaccines that will be used as a pre-requisite for vaccine passports, are only accessible in 72 and 74 countries, respectively.

Uneven travel restrictions and passenger demand are driving the need for flexibility and speed in decision-making processes. This is seen across multiple serviceable areas, including long-term fleet planning, network planning, and revenue management. In the present scenario, a network plan needs to be rethought and reworked, as there may be the possibility of different segments in different parts of the network opening and closing depending on the uncertainty of the pandemic and the demand.

The next few years will be challenging for the aviation industry. The actions taken by governments and industry will determine how long it takes for the industry to recover. If the aviation industry has to recover, governments need to come up with consistent policies based on evidence, and industry should do whatever it can to reinstate passenger confidence, embrace new ways of making revenue, and new operational demands. This is the call of the hour even if this means moving outside the comfort zone.

Usha Padhee is Joint Secretary and Aditya Tiwari is a former Young Professional in the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India. Views are personal

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FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 24, 1971

Taiwan leaflets in balloons

Patna, June 23: Pamphlets and leaflets in Chinese script airdropped in balloons in many North Bihar villages between June 14 and 18, deciphered subsequently, urge people living in Communist China to "respond to President Chiang Kai-Shek's call to attack Mao and carry out your determination to come back to Taiwan." Booklets, reported to be Chinese calendars used in Taiwan, say "how happy are people in Taiwan. They are united in their resolve to recapture the Chinese mainland held by Mao. Carry out your determination to come away to Taiwan." It is reported that on June 19, 1969 also balloons containing similar K.M.T. propaganda literature were dropped in Giridih, Palamau, Santhal Parganas, Monghyr, Shahabad, Saharsa, Purnea and Gaya districts of Bihar. This time balloons containing leaflets and other articles of daily use were dropped in villages of Ranchi, Palamau, Santhal Parganas, Bhagalpur, Monghyr, Hazaribagh and Purnea districts.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 24, 1921

Resurrection of the dead.

We were told the other day by some of the foreign papers that science has succeeded in discovering a way to restore the old to youth. The resurrection of the dead to life is the next logical advance in the triumphant march of science and even this is claimed to have been in a way achieved by the discoveries of a British physician, Dr. Cranston Walker. Writing in the *British Medical Journal*, on two of his most successful experiments in this direction, Dr. Walker claims to have found out the means of stimulating the heart to renewed action after it has once ceased to beat. The agent of revival which is called *Adrenalin* is an extract from the kidney glands of animals, which is said to act as a very powerful stimulant to the muscles of the heart. One of the experiments successfully performed with Adrenalin was in the case of a child which, according to the Doctor, had been "dead" for at least four minutes. The other case described is of a woman of 30 who dropped apparently dead. "The heart stopped beating, the jaw set and the eyes indicated that death had occurred. Adrenalin was injected, and in a few minutes the patient sat up and began to talk." Dr. Walker admits that the woman might possibly have revived under different treatment but says that every other method had failed when he injected the medicine.

+

FROM PAGE ONE

ED transfers ₹8,441 crore worth assets to banks

This included properties worth ₹969 crore located in foreign countries. "The quantum of the attached and seized assets represents 80.45% of total bank loss of ₹ 22,585.83 crore," said the agency.

A substantial part of the assets in question was held in the name of dummy entities, trusts, third persons or relatives of these accused and these entities were their proxies for holding the properties.

Prosecution complaints were filed against all the three accused after completion of the investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Extradition requests were sent for them to the United Kingdom (Mr.

Mallya and Mr. Modi) and Antigua and Barbuda (Mr. Choksi). The extradition of Mr. Mallya has been ordered by the Westminster Magistrates Court and confirmed by the U.K. High Court. As he has been denied permission to file an appeal in the U.K. Supreme Court, his extradition to India has become final. However, the matter is pending with the U.K.'s Home Department for quite some time now.

The Westminster Magistrates Court had also ordered the extradition of Mr. Modi to India. After his arrest in 2019, on a request from the Indian authorities, he has been in judicial custody in a London jail for the last over two years.

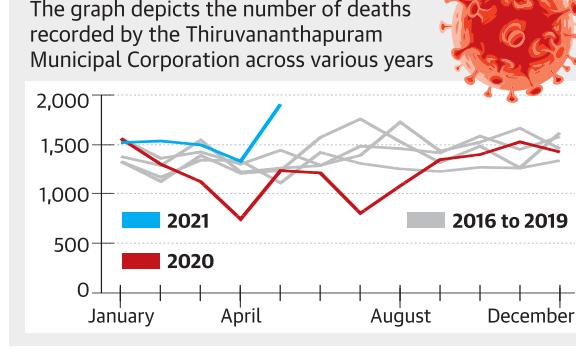
Modi to meet J&K leaders today

The passage of the Reorganisation Act was opposed tooth and nail by the mainstream Kashmir parties, with many leaders being immediately taken into custody and released months later in a staggered manner. Many of these parties, such as the PDP and the NC, as well as the CPI(M), formed the PAGD, which stood for talks with all stakeholders and refused to fight Assembly polls till their demands were met.

The government on its part remained adamant on the course it set for itself and managed to hold the District Development Coun-

Kerala capital bucks excess deaths trend

Excess deaths



Unlike 2020, however, the increased number of fatalities due to COVID-19 in the second wave, led to 1,196 and 707 excess deaths between January and May and April-May, respectively, in 2021. The COVID-19 death count for the city limits for January to May 2021 and April-May 2021 were 507 and 453, respectively, for undercount factors of 2.35 and 1.6, respectively. However, the Corporation also reported a COVID-19 death toll of 1,007 in June 2021 alone (till date), which includes reconciled figures from deaths in the second wave besides those of patients from nearby panchayats as well as Kollam district and Kanniyakumari who died at the Government Medical College in Thiruvananthapuram.

In the entire period of the pandemic from April 2020 to May 2021, despite a cumulative COVID-19 death toll of 765, the estimated decrease in overall deaths was 646.

This is unlike more populous cities such as Hyderabad and Kolkata with an estimated undercount factor of 17.5-30.5 and 4.5, respectively, in 2021, and Bengaluru and Chennai with 2.3 and 5.6, respectively, for the entire pandemic period (April 2020 to May 2021). Undercount is measured as the excess deaths divided by the official COVID-19 toll. Not all excess deaths are COVID-related but a bulk of them could be, during a pandemic.

A public health expert, who spoke to *The Hindu*, explained that there could be deaths due to other causes which might have occurred

outside hospitals and would be reported later in the system. Such 'home deaths' get reported much later when questions of property transfer or requirements of death certificates arise," he said, which could lower the gap between the expected death toll and the actual registered numbers.

Mohammed Asheel, Executive Director, Kerala Social Security Mission, who has been at the forefront of the State's COVID containment activities, said that while delay in reporting could be one factor, the one thing that could be inferred for sure from the said data was that the number of COVID-19 deaths missed, at least in the Thiruvananthapuram Corporation limits, was not high.

The difference in the estimated excess death toll and the actual COVID deaths is not very significant and unless we can get a split-up of the cause of deaths, we cannot draw any other conclusion. It just emphasises the strength of our surveillance and reporting system," Dr. Asheel said.

While the reduction in death figures for Thiruvananthapuram coincide with those for the State in 2020, the low undercount in the city limits in 2021 cannot be assumed for other districts in Kerala. A perusal of month-wise CRS data for other districts would have to be done to see if the trend holds true for the entire State and to correctly estimate the undercount factor for Kerala.

(With inputs from C. Maya in Thiruvananthapuram and Vignesh Radhakrishnan)

Independent MLAs back Gehlot

They denounce the 'pressure tactics' of the Pilot camp for political appointments

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

Independent MLAs supporting the Congress government in Rajasthan on Wednesday expressed faith in the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot amid the demand for a share in power raised by former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot's camp in the ruling party.

The independent legislators said the Cabinet expansion and reshuffle was solely Mr. Gehlot's prerogative.

Twelve of the 13 Independents, who met at the Circuit House here, adopted a resolution denouncing the "pressure tactics" of the Pilot camp for political appointments and getting berths in the State Cabinet. The MLAs, most of whom are of the Congress background, said they were not hankering after power and had no desire to become Ministers.

Sirohi MLA Sanyam Lodha told reporters after the



Ashok Gehlot. ■

meeting that the Independent legislators, who had extended support to the Gehlot government during the political crisis last year, were willing to make "all sacrifices" for giving a stable regime to the people in the State. "We wish to give a befitting reply to those who want to topple the State government." Mr. Lodha said.

'Undisputed leader'
Mr. Lodha, who had contested and won the 2018 Assembly election as a rebel after being denied the Congress ticket, said Mr. Pilot was a "fortunate leader", as

he had not faced any failure in his political career, except when he staged a rebellion last year. "Mr. Gehlot is the undisputed leader of Rajasthan. We have left all decisions to him for managing the present situation," he said.

Former Union Minister Mahadeo Singh Khandela, representing Sikar district's Khandela constituency, said Mr. Gehlot's effective COVID-19 management and his policies for the State's development had made him a political leader liked by all sections of society.

He said all Independents had reposed confidence in Mr. Gehlot's leadership in the interest of the State.

In the hour-long meeting, the MLAs also sought appointments to the vacant posts of revenue officials and regularisation of contract workers, while calling upon all non-BJP parties to launch an agitation against the spiralling petrol and diesel prices. The legisla-

tors congratulated the State government for successfully handling the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic.

Unconditional support

The independent MLAs' unconditional support gave a shot in the arm to Mr. Gehlot, who has been unwilling to accommodate Mr. Pilot and his loyalists in the government since last year's political turmoil.

With the Congress party's central leadership unable to persuade Mr. Gehlot for reaching a compromise, no Cabinet expansion is likely to take place in the near future under pressure from the Pilot camp.

Besides Mr. Lodha and Mr. Khandela, other Independents who attended the meeting were Ramkesh Meena, Ramila Khadiya, Suresh Tak, Khushveer Singh, Om Prakash Hudla, Ramkumar Gaur, Kanti Prasad, Laxman Meena, Alok Beniwal and Babulal Nagar.

HC declines Facebook, WhatsApp's fresh plea

Plea regarding new privacy policy

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

dated June 4, 2021, at this stage," it said.

The High Court, however, said "there is no doubt" that the issuance of June 4 notice by the CCI Director General was a step in furtherance of the investigation commenced pursuant to the order of the competition watchdog.

Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, for the CCI, had stated that it would take substantial time for the preparation of a report pursuant to the receipt of the information called for by way of the notice.

The report would not be completed at least before the next date of hearing before the regular Bench on July 9.

Facebook and WhatsApp's fresh application was made in a pending case filed by them challenging the CCI's March 24 direction ordering a probe into WhatsApp's controversial new privacy policy.

IN BRIEF



Model Tenancy Act is a model Act, says Puri

NEW DELHI
Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Wednesday addressed concerns about the Model Tenancy Act, reiterating that it was a "model Act" and that it would have to be passed by the States. Mr. Puri was responding to concerns in Maharashtra that the Act would lead to a spike in rent for those living in rent-controlled buildings.

The model Act, however, will be applicable to future agreements and not to existing ones.

ED attaches assets in Unitech Group case

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate has attached assets worth ₹81.10 crore, including a helicopter, in connection with the money laundering probe against the Unitech Group and others. The attached properties include 101 land parcels located in Santacruz in Mumbai owned by the Shivalik Group. The ED alleges that the Unitech Group diverted proceeds of the crime, to the tune of ₹574 crore, to the Shivalik Group and, in turn, the entities of the Shivalik Group bought the land parcels and the helicopter.

Assam CM for transfer of ONGC assets to OIL

GUWAHATI
Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to consider transferring all assets of the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation in the northeast to the Oil India Limited because of the latter's roots in the region.

The Chief Minister wrote to the PM on June 5. A copy of the letter was made available on June 23. Assam and Assam-Arakan Basin in the northeast are the most prolific sedimentary basins in India. Both the public sector OIL and ONGC are the major operators in the region.

Two bodies recovered from Ganga Canal

GAZIABAD
Two bodies were recovered from two cars during the desilting of the Ganga canal in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, police said. They were found in a decomposed state and were identified through documents found on them.

The desilting process began on Monday and the cars surfaced after the flow of water was stopped. The first body was identified as that of Dilshad Ansari, 32, a taxi driver. The second body was found in a car that was spotted around 55 km from the spot where Dilshad's body was found. The deceased was identified as former insurance company employee Harendra Dutt Atreya, 62.

IAF, Navy match skills with U.S. team

U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group is making transit through Indian Ocean Region

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

The Indian Navy and the Air Force began a two-day passage exercise on Wednesday with U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group (CSG) *Ronald Reagan* during its transit through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

"The Indian Naval warships along with aircraft from Navy and Indian Air Force (IAF) are engaged in joint multi-domain operations with the U.S. Carrier Strike Group...," the Navy said.

The exercise aims to strengthen the bilateral relationship and cooperation by demonstrating the ability to integrate and coordinate comprehensively in maritime operations.

"This is what maritime theatre operations would look like. A CSG with integral air power and warships supported by land-based marines



Passage exercise: The integrated exercise of the IAF and the Navy with the U.S. Navy Carrier Strike Group *Ronald Reagan* gets underway in the Indian Ocean Region. ■ PTI

time aircraft," a naval officer said.

The Navy's INS Kochi and Teg, along with P-8I long-range maritime patrol aircraft and MiG 29K fighters, Phalcon and Netra early warning aircraft and IL-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft, an IAF stated.

For the exercise, which is under the area of responsibility of the Southern Air

Command, the IAF forces are operating from bases under four operational commands and include Jaguar and Su-30 MKI fighters, Phalcon and Netra early warning aircraft and IL-78 air-to-air refuelling aircraft, an IAF stated.

Ronald Reagan, Arleigh Burke class guided missile destroyer USS Halsey and Ticonderoga class guided missile cruiser USS Shiloh.

It has fielded F-18 fighters and E-2C Hawkeye early warning aircraft in the exercise being carried out south of Thiruvananthapuram on the western seaboard.

ECI shows partiality to ruling party: plea

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A plea in the Supreme Court has said the Election Commission of India was showing "partiality" to the ruling party. A Kerala-based man recounted recent events to contend that the poll body was "not immune from meddling by the ruling party".

The High Court's direction came on a fresh appeal filed by Sushant's father challenging an HC's order refusing to stay the release of the movie or to restrain anyone from using his son's name in movies.

native of Kannur, represented by advocates Kaleswaram Raj, Thulasi K. Raj and Nishe Rajen Shonker, submitted.

Mr. Sathyan asked the court to allow him to intervene in a petition filed by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR), represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, to constitute an independent collegium to appoint Election Commissioners.

"On several occasions, the ECI has been accused of not responding adequately against the Model Code of Conduct violations by the ruling party," K. Sathyan, a

laxed by the ECI despite an apology, the plea said.

The ADR petition said government appointments to the poll body was a violation of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and created a dent on free and fair elections in a democracy. "The appointment of Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners is done solely by the Executive. Election Commission should be insulated from political and/or Executive interference," the petition said.

President to visit native village in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind will leave for his native village, Paraunkh, in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur Dehat, on June 25 by a special train from the Safdarjung railway station in Delhi.

"The train will make two stop-overs, at Jhunjhak and Rura of Kanpur Dehat, where the President will interact with his old acquaintances from his school days and from early days of his social service," said a Rashtrapati Bhavan release.

The stop-overs are close to the President's birthplace, Paraunkh, where two functions to felicitate him are scheduled on June 27. On June 28, the President will board the train at Kanpur Central railway station to reach Lucknow for his two-day visit there.

This is the first time the President is visiting his birthplace after taking over the post.

China raising new units near borders

They are to be used for high-altitude warfare, surveillance

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

China is raising new militia units comprising local Tibetan youth for high-altitude warfare near Eastern Ladakh, the site of the recent border tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), as well as near its borders with Sikkim and Bhutan, intelligence intercepts have revealed.

The Hindu has learnt that the new units named Mimang Cheton are presently undergoing training, and are to be deployed mostly in upper Himalayan ranges, both in the eastern and western sectors of the India-China border.

It is learnt that two batches of the Mimang Cheton have completed training and have been deployed along various locations in the Chumbi valley, including Ya-

dong, which borders Sikkim and Bhutan, Cheema, Rinchengang, PB Thang and Phari. A second batch is undergoing training at Phari, which is near Sikkim.

Available information indicates that the units are also being deployed at Rutog in Tibet, near the Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh.

Recent reports appearing in China's state media suggest the militia has been used to transport supplies to

PLA troops stationed at Rutog. The new units will be used for high-altitude warfare as well for surveillance and for ensuring supplies to PLA troops.

The units are being trained by the PLA, but personnel are yet to get uniforms or ranks. The new Mimang Cheton units mirrors India's elite and decades-old Special Frontier Force consisting of persons of Tibetan origin.

make headway following an agreement to disengage at Pangong Lake in February. Talks on continuing stand-offs have been slow-moving, with unresolved issues in Depsang, Demchok, Gogra and Hot Springs areas in Ladakh.

Asked about what role the Quad – the informal India, U.S., Australia, Japan grouping – grouping could play in India's response to the border situation, Mr. Jaishankar said, "I think when it comes to Quad and the India-China border issue, we're talking apples and oranges. I'm not quite sure I'd really see a

tight connection." While the Quad had "come together on a common agenda" that included maritime security, connectivity and even working on vaccines, the border issue, he said, "has pre-existed upon, in many ways, it's a challenge, a problem, which is quite independent of the Quad".

He said there were "two big issues". "One of course is that the close up deployments still continue, especially in Ladakh. The issue there is whether China will live up to the written commitments which are made about both countries not deploying a large armed force at the border. And the larger issue really, whether we can build this relationship on the basis of mutual sensitivity, mutual respect and mutual interest."

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S. JAISHANKAR External Affairs Minister



ploying a large armed force at the border. And the larger issue really, whether we can build this relationship on the basis of mutual sensitivity, mutual respect and mutual interest. So I do see why you're interested in both the issues, but I would urge you to look at them, somewhat independent of each other," he said.

In Beijing, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian told reporters, "China's military deployment along the western section of the China-India border is a normal defence arrangement." He said it was "aimed at preventing and responding to encroachment and threat on China's territory by relevant country".

"For a long time, the Indian side has been increasing its military deployment along the China-India border and encroaching on China's territory," he said, adding this was "the root cause of tension along the China-India border."

Nishad Party seeks larger power share

It is interested in Deputy CM's post

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Nishad Party, an Other Backward Class (OBC) based ally of the ruling BJP in Uttar Pradesh, has demanded a larger share in power ahead of 2022 Assembly poll, even showing interest in the Deputy Chief Minister post.

Party president Sanjay Nishad, a self-proclaimed 'political godfather of fishermen,' has said the BJP failed to fulfil the promises made by it in 2019, when his party dumped the SP-BSP alliance and switched over.

Interacting with reporters in Lucknow on Wednesday, Mr. Nishad issued a warning to the BJP saying that its ally would not be able to win again in U.P. if it hurt the Nishads. "If BJP gives us dukh, they will also get dukh [if the BJP causes us misery, it will also face misery]," he said. "If they want to come to power, they will have to please the Nishads," he stated. He claimed that the BJP had promised him that he would either get a Rajya Sabha berth or a high-profile ministerial berth in U.P.

"Our community aspires to have a CM. All other communities have had a CM. My people in their hearts want to see Dr. Sanjay [himself]



Sanjay Nishad

as a CM. I have given a message to the BJP government that if it makes Dr. Sanjay the new CM or present [me] as a deputy CM face, look how they form the government in 2022," Mr. Nishad told a television channel.

He later met Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya. Mr. Maurya described it as a courtesy call.

The Nishads, a riverine community, along with their connected sub-castes Mallah, Kewat, Dhevar, Bind, Kashyap and others, are an important segment of the non-Yadav backward vote in the State. Among their political icons are band-turned-politician Phoolan Devi. The Nishad Party emerged into the political scene ahead of the 2017 Assembly polls, projecting itself as the voice of the backward riverine castes.

"Our community aspires to have a CM. All other communities have had a CM. My people in their hearts want to see Dr. Sanjay [himself]

Bengal FinMin writes to Sitharaman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

West Bengal Finance Minister Amit Mitra on Wednesday wrote to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman alleging that there has been a steady breakdown of the spirit of cooperative federalism in GST Council meetings.

"What pains me the most is the fact that the GST Council Meetings have become acrimonious, vexing and almost toxic with erosion of mutual trust that held past between States and the Centre since inception," he said. He urged her to consider a "course correction" in the manner of functioning of the council. "We will respond in equal measure if you bring back consensual atmosphere that has defined GST Council since its inception."

Dr. Mitra stated that after hours of submission by Ministers, no conclusion and consensus was declared at the end of a meeting, as in the case of 42nd meeting of the council. The Minister has sent a note of dissent after the meeting. He alleged that his microphone was switched off at a crucial time.

Jairam Ramesh refuses to put off House panel meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid high drama, at a meeting of the parliamentary standing committee on science and technology on Wednesday to discuss "vaccine development for COVID-19" and "genetic sequencing of coronavirus and its variants," BJP members insisted that the question if it was appropriate for the panel to discuss the matter be referred to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu.

Sources said the BJP members staged a walkout when committee Chairman and senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh refused to postpone the meeting.

AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi, IUMS's E.T. Mohammad Basheer, CPI's Binoy Viswam and other Opposition members vehemently called for the meeting to continue.

BJP MP from Unnao, Sakshi Maharaj, demanded a vote to settle the dispute. Mr. Maharaj had written to Mr. Ramesh ahead of the meeting, protesting against the choice of the subject. A few other BJP members too, sources said, wrote to Mr. Ramesh on similar lines.

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India K. VijayRaghavan; Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology; and Director General of CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) Shekhar C. Mande; and other officials participated in the meeting. NITI Aayog member and Chairman of the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 V.K. Paul, who was also called as a witness, skipped the meeting.

There were 11 BJP MPs and seven opposition members. Mr. Ramesh, the sources said, refused to hold a vote. "He argued that the meetings of a parliamentary standing committee are always conducted through consensus. There would be no vote," he said, "even if this is the last meeting I chair," a member who attended the meeting said.

With the impasse continuing, Mr. Ramesh, the sources said, remained adamant that the meeting would not be postponed and he called for the witnesses who were waiting for nearly an hour. At this stage, the BJP MPs staged a walkout. A few of them returned to the meeting to hear the official.

Ms. Swarup did not answer the questions raised by the members on the issue.



Jairam Ramesh

During the last 90 minutes of the meeting, the members managed to ask a few questions, including why India's genome sequencing is at a miserable 0.13% as against the 5% target. So far, only genome sequencing of only 40,000 samples have been done. Now that technology transfer of Covaxin has been done to few other domestic manufacturers, questions were also asked on what will be the pricing for these new vaccines.

For further details visit our websites: www.elcot.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in, <https://intenders.gov.in>.

Jaishankar flags 'close up deployments'

They are to prevent encroachment of territory, says Beijing in a sharp reaction

ANANTH KRISHNAN

Continuing "close up deployments" and questions about whether China would "live up to its written commitments" on not deploying a large number of forces were two issues at the heart of the recent tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has said.

The Minister was speaking at the Qatar Economic Forum on Tuesday, where he was asked about the boundary situation. The Chinese Foreign Ministry on Wednesday reacted sharply to a question on his comments, telling reporters that China's deployments were "aimed at preventing and responding to encroachment and threat on China's territory by relevant country".

The comments from both sides underlined the continuing tensions, and stalemate, along the LAC, with military-level talks failing to

make headway following an agreement to disengage at Pangong Lake in February. Talks on continuing stand-offs have been slow-moving, with unresolved issues in Depsang, Demchok, Gogra and Hot Springs areas in Ladakh.

Asked about what role the Quad – the informal India, U.S., Australia, Japan grouping – grouping could play in India's response to the border situation, Mr. Jaishankar said, "I think when it comes to Quad and the India-China border issue, we're talking apples and oranges. I'm not quite sure I'd really see a

tight connection." While the Quad had "come together on a common agenda" that included maritime security, connectivity and even working on vaccines, the border issue, he said, "has pre-existed upon, in many ways, it's a challenge, a problem, which is quite independent of the Quad".

He said there were "two big issues". "One of course is that the close up deployments still continue, especially in Ladakh. The issue there is whether China will live up to the written

commitments which are made about both countries not deploying a large armed force at the border. And the larger issue really, whether we can build this relationship on the basis of mutual sensitivity, mutual respect and mutual interest."

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He said there were "two big issues". "One of course is that the close up deployments still continue, especially in Ladakh. The issue there is whether China will live up to the written

commitments which are made about both countries not deploying a large armed force at the border. And the larger issue really, whether we can build this relationship on the basis of mutual sensitivity, mutual respect and mutual interest."

make headway following an agreement to disengage at Pangong Lake in February. Talks on continuing stand-offs have been slow-moving, with unresolved issues in Depsang, Demchok, Gogra and Hot Springs areas in Ladakh.

Asked about what role the Quad – the informal India, U.S., Australia, Japan grouping – grouping could play in India's response to the border situation, Mr. Jaishankar said, "I think when it comes to Quad and the India-China border issue, we're talking apples and oranges. I'm not quite sure I'd really see a

tight connection." While the Quad had "come together on a common agenda" that included maritime security, connectivity and even working on vaccines, the border issue, he said, "has pre-existed upon, in many ways, it's a challenge, a problem, which is quite independent of the Quad".

He said there

IN BRIEF



Central Secretariat building bids put off

The Central Public Works Department extended the last date of submission of bids and opening of technical bids for the construction of the first three buildings of the proposed new Common Central Secretariat from Wednesday to July 14. The CPWD issued a corrigendum on Tuesday extending the deadlines citing "administrative reasons". This is the second time the deadlines have been pushed in a week, with the earlier extension being from June 16 to Wednesday.

Employee challenges IAF notice for not taking jab

AHMEDABAD The Gujarat High Court has issued notice to the Indian Air Force on a petition filed by one of its personnel posted in Jamnagar challenging the show-cause notice issued to him for termination of service after he expressed his unwillingness to get vaccinated against COVID-19. A Division Bench of Justices A.J. Desai and A.P. Thaker on Tuesday issued the notice to the IAF and the Central government and also directed the IAF not to take any coercive action against petitioner Yogender Kumar, an IAF corporal, till July 1. Mr. Kumar said he was using Ayurvedic medicine to boost immunity. PTI

Vets protest against Maneka Gandhi's remarks

NEW DELHI The Indian Veterinary Association (IVA) observed Black Day on Wednesday following the alleged use of slurs by BJP leader Maneka Gandhi against a registered veterinary practitioner. The association has released an audio tape where the leader can be heard speaking with a vet who had treated a dog that allegedly did not recover well after surgery. The leader can be heard threatening to cancel the vet's license. The association said that it had written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding action against Ms. Gandhi in this matter.

63.2 lakh people get vaccine shots

Wednesday marks third consecutive day when numbers crossed 50 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

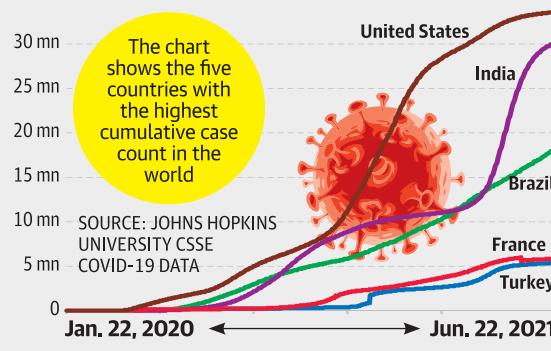
India administered over 63.2 lakh doses of COVID-19 vaccines until 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday. After registering a drop on Tuesday, the number of doses administered improved again on the third day since the government's revised vaccine policy came into action.

Madhya Pradesh recorded the highest number of vaccinations (11 lakh) followed by Uttar Pradesh (7.2 lakh) and Maharashtra (6 lakh).

While the pace of the vaccination drive has picked up significantly this week, India needs to administer 82 lakh doses daily on an average to fully inoculate its adult population by December 31, 2021.

The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 46.6 lakh on June 22, which is more than the 32.5 lakh recorded a week before (June 16). It was also significantly higher than the average daily doses re-

Infection count | On Tuesday, India became the second country in the world, after the U.S., to record more than 30 million COVID-19 cases



SOURCE: JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY CSSE COVID-19 DATA

The chart shows the five countries with the highest cumulative case count in the world

corded a month before (May 22) which was 18.2 lakh.

About 26.2% of adults in India, 45.5% of those aged above 45, and 48.5% of people aged above 60, were administered with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Wednesday. While 18% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 3.8% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

As many as 1,309 new deaths were also registered taking the tally to 3,92,000. In comparison, 11.64%

and 10.72% of people in Brazil and Russia are fully vaccinated, respectively. The figure for the U.K. and the U.S. stood at 46.39% and 44.98%, respectively.

53,186 new infections

India recorded 53,186 new COVID-19 cases until 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday, taking its cumulative caseload to 3,00,81,069.

In comparison, 11.64%

Additional foodgrain scheme to continue till November

Cabinet approves proposal for another five months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the allocation of additional foodgrains to beneficiaries of the National Food Security Act (NFS) for another five months – from July to November.

The Cabinet, at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal to continue allocating additional 5 kg of foodgrain a person every month under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana to the 81.35 crore beneficiaries, a government statement said. The additional foodgrain would entail a subsidy of ₹64,031 crore, it noted.

"As Government of India



Basic needs: The additional foodgrain would be distributed to 81.35 crore beneficiaries. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

is bearing the entire expenditure towards this scheme without any contribution by States/UTs, an additional expenditure of about ₹3,234.85 crore would be required to be met towards transportation and handling and FPS dealers' margins etc. by Go-

vernment of India. Thus, the total estimated expenditure to be borne by Government of India will be ₹67,266.44 crore," it stated.

The total amount of foodgrain to be distributed was estimated to be 204 lakh metric tonnes.

■ GOVERNMENT

Government of India

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■ GOVERNMENT

Senior living homes register a growth in occupancy as elderly residents rally through a challenging year by playing cards and building bonds

PRIYADESHINI S

Shridhar Nagalkar plays a game of pool on most evenings. On other days, the 76-year-old retired consultant general surgeon plays bridge with his new friends, all determined to beat the isolation and stress of the pandemic.

"We have to learn to live with the Coronavirus," he says, speaking from Athashri Senior Living homes in Baner, Pune. Positive thinking is the way forward in any adverse situation, he adds.

As soon as the lockdown was lifted in June 2020, he moved into the retirement commune along with his wife Swarupa, 72, "to a place where all amenities are provided for, including mobile ATM services," he says.

According to a 2018 study by CII-ASLI (Confederation of Indian Industry and Association of Senior Living India) Out of India's roughly 13-14 crore senior citizens, 30% live in urban cities and 70% in rural areas. Only 2% of its seniors live in retirement communities.

Though the global health crisis has affected people universally, it has pushed seniors into a more vulnerable position. Being more susceptible to the virus and prone to conditions like depression, this demographic faces specific challenges that the managements of retirement homes and communities were quick to respond to. They implemented total segregation from the outside world, and put in place the required health protocol. Most have begun tutoring seniors in the use of social media, as virtual interaction becomes the need of the hour.

The pandemic has resulted in two significant outcomes: a change in the perception of communes for the elderly and the spirited response by seniors towards the crisis.



Silver foxes find a silver lining (Clockwise from left) Yoga and carrom at Covai Old Age Homes around Tamil Nadu; games of pool at Athashri Senior Living in Pune; and a good dose of friendship all around have helped India's senior citizen homes become havens during lockdown ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Tackling a pandemic with bridge



Colonel A Sridharan (retired), founder and MD, CovaiCare Active Living Homes, which has centres across Tamil Nadu, says, "The demand for senior homes has increased significantly, by al-

most 25% - 30% in the last one year. At roughly ₹30,000 per month, a couple has a safe and comfortable life in such centres."

Except for the distressing fact that the children of the seniors have not been able to visit as regularly, residents of such communities have rallied strong

during the pandemic, to keep not only stress at bay, but also the virus itself.

Kuruvilla M George, secretary of Chacko Homes, Alwaye, Kochi, is pleased that so far, no one has taken ill. "Many of our residents are retired doctors and advised us on the safety protocols. Every month we hold talks, prayer meetings and general meetings so that everyone is in touch," he says.

Colonel Sridharan, who helped put in place a system of safety protocols and virtual entertainment programmes at CovaiCare, says, "We play badminton, table tennis, and pool with masks, and maintain social distancing."

At Athashri, every day, Savita Achyut Gokhale weaves garlands from the blossoms of the bakul trees. She keeps a few for herself and places the rest at the reception. "The other residents take the garlands for their hair or puja. This makes me

happy and keeps me busy," says the 70-year-old, adding that this has been her way to keep everybody's spirits high.

Savita, who lost her husband to COVID-19 two months ago, says about her outreach, "There are many here who are older than I am, and find it difficult to bend and collect the fallen flowers. I spread old dupattas under the trees, gather the flowers and weave them into garlands. Everyone likes to have one. It motivates them."

Meghali Khadtare, CEO of Athashri Homes that caters to nearly 1,900 seniors, backs Savita up by saying, "It was the psychological impact of the pandemic that posed a new challenge." She adds, "We made sure that the residents' every need – grocery, fruits, vegetables, ATM machines, medicines – was made available at their doorstep. To counter the isolation, we planned monthly virtual programmes designed for seniors."

Initially it was difficult to bring the older people together virtually, "as many seniors do not use the smart phones much," but resident managers taught them to use it and familiarised them with video calls, text messaging and using social media. "This was another engaging and learning activity for the seniors," Meghali adds.

At 92, Captain Kunjipal TA is the oldest resident of Chacko Homes in Kochi. Driving around the campus in his Honda City, the retired pilot chats with other residents and regales them with stories from his distinguished 37-year-long career in the Indian Airlines.

"There should be no complaining. The sun is up. Everything is looking good. The day should start like this," says the man who invested in a retirement home 23 years ago, and moved in seven years ago after his wife passed away.

Despite being bedridden after a stroke last year, Swarn Mongia, 92, remains the centre of affection at the Senior Living Home, Godhuli, New Delhi. One of the first residents of the commune nearly 20 years ago, others visit to "seek her blessings". Her daughter, Amita who lives in Maryland, USA, discloses that when her parents took the decision to move into a senior living commune, it was "social suicide. The act was frowned upon. My mother has been a very spirited woman, always an example to others at Godhuli. That's why they continue to come to her for inspiration, more so in these tough times."

Colonel Sridharan points to the fact that the seniors at the centres are highly qualified retired professionals and very resourceful. "They have devised interesting ways to negotiate the prevailing times."

Game on

He shares the example of 71-year-old Revathi Bhaskar, a former bank officer who quickly came up with a game of tambola for the residents.

"In every elderly person, there is a child. This is our second childhood," says Revathi, adding that she put the game together to prevent residents from falling into depression. Around 40 residents signed up immediately for the LockDown Tambola, as Revathi called it. She designed the tickets and preceded the game with a quiz, "as a warm up."

Though Revathi lost her husband during the pandemic, she says the tambola games are in his memory. She recalls him encouraging her by saying, "You spend one hour and bring joy to 50 people; so it is 50 hours of happiness. This is worth all the trouble."



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Pages from the past (From far left) Maharaja of Mysore Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV; Pratap Singh Bhosle, former Governor of Tamil Nadu Surjit Singh Barnala at the library; and the book cover ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13418

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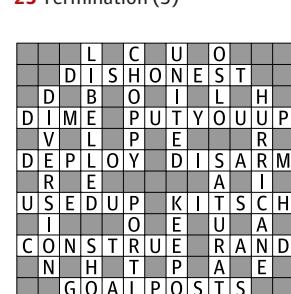
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- Across**
- 1 In a callous manner (4-9)
 - 8 Wanting something to eat (7)
 - 9 Two book of the Old Testament (5)
 - 10 Most important aspect (4)
 - 11 Where dishes are ordered separately, not from a set menu (1,2,5)
 - 13 Run through (6)
 - 14 Worn down (6)
 - 17 Drug producing numbness and stupor (8)
 - 19 Rope or wire used to support a mast (4)
 - 21 Exhausted (3,2)
 - 22 Glazed currant bun, often toasted (7)
 - 24 Dancer is timid (anag) – treated differently (13)
- Down**
- 1 Police officer (informal) (3)
 - 2 Lengthy reprimand (7)
 - 3 Next in line (4)
 - 4 For a short time (6)
 - 5 Be cautious (4,4)
 - 6 Railway carriage serving meals (5)
 - 7 1965 Beatles hit (9)
 - 10 Humbly asking (for a favour) (3,2,4)
 - 12 Sailing vessel – sherry glass (8)
 - 15 Diminish (7)
 - 16 Short statement of a general principle (6)
 - 18 Overturns – luxury car (5)
 - 20 First light (4)
 - 23 Termination (3)

Solution will appear in MetroPlus dated July 1, 2021.

Solution No. 13417

To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.



The cabinet of wonder

Pratap Singh Bhosle of the erstwhile royal family of Tanjore unearths uncommon pictures from the archives of the Saraswati Mahal Library for his latest book *Rare Prints*

graduate, but it is as the social media manager of the family museum and an author of three books, including *Contributions of Thanjavur Maratha Kings*, that he has come into his own.

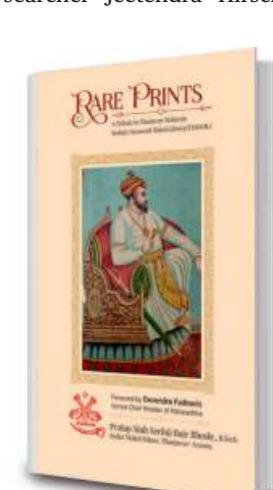
From the family album

"I am interested in old photographs – both as markers of history and for restoration. I have posted many related to Thanjavur on my blog and Facebook and Instagram pages," he says.

"While going through the digital photo albums of the library's programmes which my grandfather, Tulajendra Bhosle attended as a guest of honour, I recollect seeing pictures of dignitaries such as Indira Gandhi, Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, Sarojini Naidu, Sharad Pawar, PV Narasimha Rao, Rajendra Prasad and Kamaraj. I requested the librarian for these photos and a search through many almirahs

resulted in finding these albums that had been locked away for years," says Pratap Singh adding how he stumbled upon some of these pictures not published to date or not found on the Internet.

Edited by educator and researcher Jeetendra Hirschfeld,



Rare Prints is a tribute to the library. With forewords from political stalwarts and cultural aficionados, the first few pictures in the book are from an album of the 1900s.

The first is a tribute to the great Maratha warrior, Chatrapati Shivaji, who sits astride a horse in black and white splendour. Colour pictures with added pigments give a real feel to the book. Each is accompanied by a brief text describing the mood and the moment. Pictures of two unique manuscripts also feature.

Some of the pictures such as that of Venkoji, founder of the Bhosle dynasty of Tanjore, seated on a throne, jewelled scabbard by his side, and Sujan Bai Sahib, a queen, with bow grapsed in hand and a quiver full of arrows on her back, offer an exhaustive tour of the centuries.

Pictures published by the Chitrashala Press, Pune, have repro-

duced well, retaining the jewel-like tones. This is followed by digital prints of pictures from the early 20th Century, logo of the press established by Serfoji II, among the earliest to print the Devanagari script in South India, a case sheet of eye treatment given by Serfoji who is also credited with having performed cataract surgeries, paintings from the Aswa Sastra manuscript, sketches of the famed temples of Thanjavur by English landscape artists the Daniells, and visitors and celebrations at the museum.

The e-book is a light ride through the socio-cultural history of the kingdom and the city it now is, but mostly it is a journey through Saraswati Mahal Library, one that former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi describes in the visitor's book as "a brief moment in this house of treasures".

The e-book is available on bookganga.com.

DEEPA ALEXANDER

In Tamil Nadu's most famous delta town stands the Thanjavur Maharaja Serfoji's Saraswati Mahal Library (TMSSML), a building that holds in its enfilade of historical layers cabinets filled with literary treasures.

Considered among Asia's oldest libraries, it was founded by the Nayaks in the 16th Century and fortified as a cultural citadel by the Marathas who captured the town in 1675, giving rise to the Tanjore Bhosle dynasty and the unique Tanjore Marathi community.

Under the rule of Serfoji II a century later, the library became a treasure house of palm manuscripts and, today, holds nearly 40,000 volumes primarily in Tamil, Sanskrit, Marathi and Telugu. Art and rare photographs also reside in the bowels of the library, with only a minuscule collection, mostly digitised, on display.

With the COVID-19 pandemic barring entry to most physical museums, it has been left to curators and connoisseurs of art to keep alive interest in these places. Pratap Singh Serfoji Raj Bhosle, 27, tries to draw the visitor into the annals of Tanjore history with his fourth book *Rare Prints* that brings alive 129 uncommon pictures from the library.

"I was fascinated with the pictures of Indian kings, princes and British officials in bound albums from the 20th Century. These were stuck on rich handmade paper for reference, and the albums were made in Kot Radha Kishen (presently in Pakistan). I wanted to throw light on these pictures," says Pratap Singh, the sixth descendant of Serfoji II and grandson of Tulajendra Bhosle, who founded the Maharaja Serfoji II Memorial Hall, a museum in Sadar Mahal Palace, Thanjavur.

Pratap Singh is an Electronics and Communication Engineering

Raina reminisces...

The cricketer, in his recently released autobiography, *Believe*, talks about the people and moments he has cherished the most

Suresh Raina is an emotional cricketer. During a practice session seven years ago, Sachin Tendulkar told him, "You have to believe in yourself, you have to believe you can do miracles." The words from the great man meant so much to Raina that he tattooed the word 'Believe' on his right bicep the same day.

Believe (published by Penguin) also happens to be the title of his recently released autobiography. Through the book, Raina, with the help of sports writer Bharat Sundaresan, looks back at his life – 13 years of which he spent playing international cricket. He speaks to *MetroPlus* on the people and moments he cherishes the most in this journey.

MS Dhoni

Mahi *bhai* has played a very important role in my life. I will forever be grateful that I got a chance to play with him, under his guidance. I still remember back in 2005, when I first met him for the Duleep Trophy. Though I didn't get much of a chance to interact with him, I resonated in a lot of ways with him. He was from one of the small towns hoping to make it big in cricket, and so was I. When we started playing, we had the same bond on and off the field: We are both *desi* in style. He was always down to earth. He didn't change even when he got into the limelight. For me, he will always be a legendary captain and a fan-tastic leader.

World Cup 2011

Memories of World Cup 2011 still feel so fresh. I missed the World Cup 2007 because of my injury so I had to make sure that I gave my best for 2011, also it was being played in our own country. I was in my best shape during that time and kept working on my fitness. Though I was not the first choice, I didn't let it get to me. Finally I got a chance to play and contribute to the tournament. It is not a one-day effort that goes behind a tournament but a culmination of a lot of

Brotherhood
Suresh Raina and MS Dhoni
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



months and the team effort behind it. We were just like a family who wanted to win this trophy.

Chennai Super Kings

I was making a comeback after my injury when the IPL auctions happened in 2008. I was happy to know that I was with the Chennai Super Kings. All the more reason for my happiness was to know Mahi *bhai* was in the same team with other great players. I knew this would definitely strengthen our team. Mahi *bhai* and I bonded more in CSK since we used to explore Chennai in our own way. The people in Chennai started referring to me as 'Chinna Thala'. I also got an opportunity to captain for CSK when Mahi *bhai* got injured. Yellow is something I wear with a lot of pride and is very close to my heart.

Priyanka C Raina

Priyanka and I go a long way back. Our families had known each other before either of us were born. We hadn't been in touch since school, then in 2008, we met at Mumbai airport. From there our friendship rekindled. She was working overseas but still decided to come back to India for me. She has been an absolute pillar in my life. She has stood by me through all the highs and lows. I draw inspiration from her since she has established herself really well both in her personal and professional life. Marrying her was the best decision I made.

(As told to Praveen Suddevan)



From the vault Jean Schulz, wife of the late Charles Monroe Schulz who created *Peanuts* ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

wiggle of Snoopy's tail. She praises Nyong'o, "I wondered when I heard the voice 'who is this, she's perfect!' as I had no idea!"

The *Peanuts* characters, having not grown up for the past 50-plus years, are forever relatable – be it Charlie Brown's enduring determination (particularly when kicking a football), Linus' eccentricity, Peppermint Patty's go-get-'em attitude, Lucy's stubbornness or Snoopy's imagination. Jean is proud of each of these characters for their part in Charles' life and legacy. "Charles often said, 'all those characters have a little bit of me in it and I have a little of them in me', so through the documentary, you see his life and the characters blended in his world," she says fondly.

Sparky's mindful decisions

One of the most loved characters is an African-American boy named Franklin who was introduced to the *Peanuts* world in 1968 on the heels of the Civil Rights Movement in USA. This was considered daring at the time.

Jean reflects on this decision, "He thought long and hard about doing that because he wanted to be sure anything he wrote was authentic. If you look at the relationship between Franklin and Charlie, they meet at school nor on the baseball diamond, but on the beach. Charlie Brown doesn't go to the beach very often (*laughs*) but he did go there to meet Franklin, and I wish I had thought to ask Sparky why and how he came to that realisation."

It may seem a far cry from the USA and the rest of the world we see today, though Jean points out, "*Peanuts* discusses the human condition so that is not going to change, people may express it differently. Now I find I have to switch my brain and catch up with how people are expressing their angst and needs (especially with social media), but I think it's all the same. But it is not different – we have the same sorts of frustrations as there were 50 or 60 years ago. It is interesting that my husband captured something that still resonates today."

A love letter to Peanuts

Ahead of the release of documentary *Who Are You, Charlie Brown?*, Jean Schulz reminisces about the lasting legacy of *Peanuts* left behind by her late husband Charles Schulz

■ DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

As Jean Schulz navigates the hallways of the Charles M Schulz Museum in Santa Rosa, California, she frequently runs into enthusiastic *Peanuts* fans who are eager to share how the comic series or books affected their lives, or how a Snoopy plushie they held onto saw them from their childhood into their adult years.

"People have always found comfort in it," she says. Even over a video call, Jean, 82, has a sparkle in her eye, as she lovingly speaks of her late husband Charles Monroe 'Sparky' Schulz, the creator of *Peanuts*. On June 25, AppleTV+ is releasing a documentary *Who Are You, Charlie Brown?* detailing Charles' journey to creating *Peanuts*, of which the first strip debuted on October 2, 1950.

The film, narrated by Lupita



Nyong'o, follows two stories: one of Charles' life, and the other of everyone's favourite 'lovable loser' Charlie Brown tackling a school essay themed 'who are you?'.

Against a backdrop of the original music by Vince Guaraldi, audiences can look forward to archival clips of Charles' voice recordings and interviews with Jean herself, journalist-presenter Al Roker, actor-producer Drew Barrymore and

filmmaker Paul Feig.

Apple TV had already released several *Peanuts* originals such as *Snoopy in Space* and *The Snoopy Show* – but executive producers Craig Schulz (Charles' son), Ron Howard, Brian Grazer and director Michael Bonfiglio felt it was the right time to bring Charles' story forward. Jean is not just the steward of Charles' vast estate, she feels responsible for it all, right down to the

All eyes on the creator

Chennai entrepreneurs come up with Canvas, a tech tool that enables collaboration by streamlining an artiste's online presence across platforms



Tech that!
Vignesh Ramaswamy, Raghava KK and Madhan Karky
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SRINIVASA RAMAMUJAM

A few months ago, artist-storyteller Raghava KK sent a painting to his friend Madhan Karky. The Chennai-based lyricist was so inspired by it that he penned a few lines and sent it to a music composer, who wove it in a tune. This was then given to a visualiser, who, without knowing anything about the origin of this creative pursuit, created imagery. "Isn't it beautiful; the way energy flows from one form to another?" says Karky.

He is trying to recreate this through Canvas, a virtual tool that streamlines a content creator's online presence across platforms and helps create new avenues of income. Conceptualised by entrepreneurs Vignesh Ramaswamy, Raghava KK

and Madhan Karky, Canvas hopes to make life easier for creative people.

"Post the pandemic, people are looking at creators in a different light," explains Vignesh, who has established four start-ups. "The route was always creation, discovery and then monetisation, which is why creators are forced to think about numbers even before embarking on anything. We've shifted this model to creation, monetisation, distribution and then discovery," he says.

Apart from striving to be a safe space for creative pursuits such as art, photography, podcasting, writing,

music and filmmaking, it will also offer freedom to its users. For instance, an author can choose to keep his work free, or choose to monetise it partly.

"Imagine if a writer keeps most of his chapters for free and opts for a paid format for the last few portions or its climax; it opens exciting possibilities," says Karky, who adds that the tool brings together technological offerings that most creative people use (like WordPress, YouTube and Facebook) under one roof.

Canvas, set to roll out in July as an exclusive by-invitation tool, will be launched in India and the US, with Singapore being added later this year.

Beyond borders

DJ Snake on collaborating with singer Dhee for the remix version of the popular song 'Enjoy Enjaami'

■ PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

Popular French record producer DJ Snake has remixed the recent independent Tamil hit number, 'Enjoy Enjaami', sung by Dhee and Arivu.

The remix, which retains the Tamil lyrics, features Snake's signature electronic dance beats and was released on audio-streaming platform Spotify as part of its Spotify Singles programme.

'Enjoy Enjaami', released in March under Maaja, an independent platform launched by composer AR Rahman, has over 264 million views on YouTube.

A close friend of mine from India shared the song a while ago. I was like, 'Wow,

is not merely a dance number. Its lyrics talk about the Tamil labour migration to Ceylon during the Colonial era. Was Dhee, with Sri Lankan roots, cautious of not diluting the song's story in the remix version?

DJ Snake has done an amazing job in preserving the integrity of the song. He has made it more beautiful," she replied, "The song has a really heavy core. It has got history. But it is also fun. It is about bringing people together.

And, that is what [DJ Snake] tries to do with his



music all the time."

She added, "The success of 'Enjoy Enjaami' made me realise that human emotions and experiences are the same throughout the world. People seem to be connecting with the song regardless of where they are from or what language they speak."

Snake reiterated her point of music transcending language.

"I couldn't say anything in English eight years ago. But that didn't stop me from falling in love with the music of Bob Marley, Michael Jackson, and all these huge artists from around the world. It is about the music, the vibe, and the emotion."

Snake, who has a big following in India, added, "I can't wait for the pandemic to be over so I can come there. I would love to meet Dhee and work on something new."

Viral hit DJ Snake and Dhee
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A leopard on my page

Naturalists Surya Ramachandran and David Raju talk about their latest book that covers 2,000-odd species endemic to South India

RUTH DHANARAJ

When David Raju shadowed dragonflies as a child in his hometown in Kottayam, Kerala, little did anyone realise his fascination for insects would become his profession.

"A wildlife enthusiast spoke at my college and I realised I knew so many species by sight even though I didn't know their names. It piqued my interest and I began hanging around at Nature clubs to learn more," says David Raju, 35, discussing his foray into the world of wild animals.

David met Surya Ramachandran, 31, while working at Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh. An engineer, Surya visited the reserve and fell in love with the guiding experience. "I wanted to be one of them – taking people into the jungle, helping them connect with the wilderness and making a lasting impact."

He applied at Satpura for an internship in 2011, where he spent five years, followed by two at Kanha Tiger Reserve, Madhya Pradesh.

As colleagues, David and Surya would act as guides for those venturing into the wild. "We would carry about eight to 10 field guides apart from provisions for

guests, through difficult terrain," says Surya, adding, "A friend of ours brought back a comprehensive guide from a safari in South Africa; it was packed with engaging information and photographs."

"It was an amazing book and we wondered why there wasn't something similar in India. That was what got us started on our first book," says David. The result – *The Photographic Field Guide: Wildlife of Central India* – was published in 2016. "We put in useful information in simple words to serve as a basic guide. Even if someone was participating in a big cat safari, this book would have the required information on other life forms found in that area," says Surya.

The success of their first field guide spurred the duo to work on the wildlife of South India next. "Surya is from Chennai and I am from Kerala; between the two of us, we had covered quite a bit of the South and are well aware of its fauna. It pointed to our next practical step," says David.

For Surya, it was more than just collating their combined knowledge. He says, "At the time, we were also involved in a lot of field work for scientists. Though we already knew

quite a lot, there were still areas where the experts would have to explain things to us. It dawned on us that the biodiversity in South India is so vast, a guide was essential."

He adds that the realisation was further pronounced when they began collating matter – the book on Central India had around 860 species, while the one on South Indian wildlife covers 2,000-odd species.

As with their first book, the duo asked other naturalists to share photographs they had clicked during their own excursions into the jungle. Apart from their own contributions, *The Photographic Field Guide: Wildlife of South India* comprises over 2,000 photos submitted by around 200 wildlife enthusiasts, naturalists and photographers.

"We talk about the Western Ghats all the time, but the Eastern Ghats is no less; it's just less explored. This is the kind of ideology that brought us into writing – we eventually want to have five to six books that cover the whole country," says Surya. They are currently working on a book about Western Indian and Himalayan wildlife.

Though *The Photographic Field Guide: Wildlife of South India* is praised for being comprehensive, handy and informative, David says the best feedback he has ever received is that children find it hard to put down.



Republicans block voting rights legislation

The 'For the People Act' faced a filibuster in the Senate, necessitating at least 60 votes to progress

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON

A procedural vote to begin debate on a voting rights Bill backed by Democrats failed to pass the U.S. Senate on Monday after Senators voted 50-50 along party lines.

The 'For the People Act', which sought to make access to voting easier across the country, introduced in response to Republican-backed measures to tighten voting laws in several States, faced a filibuster from Senate Republicans, necessitating at least 60 of 100 votes to progress.

The Bill included provisions to increase early voting, absentee voting, limit gerrymandering (manipulating electoral constituency boundaries to favour a particular party), establish federal financing of campaigns and automatic voter registration. It also proposed additional campaign finance dis-



Fierce contest: Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell speaking about the Bill at the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday. • AFP

closures.

The Democrat-controlled House had passed its version of the legislation in March.

While the outcome of the vote was not unexpected, Democrats are using it to argue that Republicans are engaged in systemic voter suppression and a case in point for why the filibuster must be ended.

Senate Majority Leader (Democrat) Chuck Schumer said the GOP vote against the Bill was "further evidence that voter suppression has become part of the official platform of the republican party". The vote was the "starting gun" and not the "finish line", he said.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell accused

the Democrats of a "power grab" and said the legislation would permit them to "take a red pen to election laws in each of the 50 States neutering voting ID laws and ballot harvesting". House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer told reporters that the vote would be "dramatic evidence of why the filibuster needs to be modified", according to a Reuters report.

Ballot access

Two Democrats, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Kyrsten Sinema of Arizona, have repeatedly stated their opposition to getting rid of the filibuster. Mr. Manchin was also not on board with the legislation, citing a lack of bipartisanship, but joined his fellow Democrats at the eleventh hour, after some of his suggested modifications (on voter ID and gerrymandering) were accepted.

Democrats, including U.S. President Joe Biden, said they would persist in their efforts to expand ballot access.

"This fight is far from over – far from over. I've been engaged in this work my whole career, and we are going to be ramping up our efforts to overcome again, for the people, for our very democracy," Mr. Biden said in a statement.

We have several serious options for how to reconsider this issue and advance legislation to combat voter suppression. We are going to explore every last one of our options," Mr. Schumher said on the Senate floor, right after the vote. However, what legislative path they will take remains unclear, as Democrats are likely to encounter the filibuster again and will need the support of at least 60 Senators to pass future versions of the Bill.

The saboteurs failed to carry out their plan," the broadcaster added, without identifying the building or the nature of the attack that had been averted.

The news of the attack came a day after the U.S. Justice Department said it



Earlier, Iran had shut down its Bushehr nuclear power plant temporarily.

seized 33 Iranian government-controlled media websites, which it alleged were hosted on U.S.-owned domains in violation of sanctions.

Teheran warned on Wednesday that Washington's decision to block the sites was "not constructive" for ongoing talks aimed at bring-

ing the United States back to the landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Iran and world powers.

Wednesday's sabotage attack also comes two days after Iran said it temporarily shut down its only nuclear power plant at Bushehr on the country's Gulf coast for maintenance work.

The developments come days after ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi was elected Iran's next President in an election the U.S. denounced as neither free nor fair.

Mr. Raisi, seen as close to the country's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said on Monday he would not allow the nuclear negotiations to drag on. He is set to replace President Hassan Rouhani.

China prepares for CPC centenary events

Tiananmen Square closed to the public; activities held across the country

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING

Chinese authorities have closed Beijing's central Tiananmen Square to the public, eight days ahead of a major celebration being planned to mark the 100th anniversary of the founding of the ruling Communist Party of China (CPC).

The square, which normally attracts tourists from around the country, was barricaded on Wednesday and will remain closed until July 2. Rows of yellow seats and heavy machinery could be seen on the open plaza,



Paramilitary police in Beijing marching past a logo for the upcoming celebration.

which also houses the mausoleum of Mao Zedong, the founding leader of Communist China.

The party will showcase the country's rise from civil war and disastrous political campaigns in the early years

of Communist rule to market reforms that have created the world's second-largest economy, with a superpower status rivaled only by the United States.

However, arrangements for the July 1 anniversary remain shrouded in secrecy. Around Tiananmen Square, the Forbidden City former palace complex and other scenic sites are also closed. Flyovers by air force squadrions suggest an aerial review is in the planning, but authorities are yet to release details. Around Beijing and throughout the country,

signboards have been erected and commemorative activities held, accompanied by the deployment of additional police and paramilitary forces. The ruling party was established in secrecy in 1921, following the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912. Underscoring China's rise in technology, President Xi Jinping spoke on Wednesday with three astronauts aboard the country's newly launched space station, praising their mission as a "pioneering contribution to the peaceful use of space by mankind".

Hong Kong newspaper to shut down

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

HONG KONG

Hong Kong pro-democracy newspaper *Apple Daily* announced on Wednesday it will print its final edition after authorities froze its assets using a sweeping new national security law, silencing the city's most China-critical media outlet.

Journalists outside the paper's headquarters said they planned to print one million copies overnight – a staggering number given Hong Kong's 7.5 million population.

Khashoggi killers were trained in the U.S.: report

But it was protective in nature, says firm

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

Four members of the Saudi hit squad that killed U.S.-based journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018 had received paramilitary training in the United States that had been approved by the State Department, *The New York Times* reported on Tuesday.

Khashoggi, a Saudi-born U.S. resident, who wrote for *The Washington Post*, was an outspoken critic of the Saudi leadership, with which he had once been close. He was murdered on October 2, 2018, in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by a team of agents sent from Saudi Arabia.

In his written testimony, Louis Bremer confirmed that Tier 1 Group did provide training to the Saudi agents, but insisted that the training was "protective in nature" and "unrelated to their subsequent heinous acts".

Four of those operatives, *The New York Times* said, had received training from a private American security group, Tier 1 Group, a move first authorised by the administration of former Presi-

dent Barack Obama in 2014. That training continued at least until the start of Donald Trump's presidency, the newspaper said. It cited a document provided to the Trump administration by a top official from the parent company of Tier 1 Group, the private equity firm Cerberus Capital Management, who had applied for a senior post at the Pentagon.

In his written testimony, Louis Bremer confirmed that Tier 1 Group did provide training to the Saudi agents, but insisted that the training was "protective in nature" and "unrelated to their subsequent heinous acts".

The U.S. State Department, contacted by AFP, said it could not comment on this information but called for the "responsible use ... of American military equipment and training".

IN BRIEF



CAIRO

The owners and insurers of the container ship that blocked the Suez Canal for nearly a week earlier this year have reached an early agreement over their dispute with canal authorities, representatives from both sides said. The Suez Canal Authority said more details would be released later. AP

Talks with the U.S. would lead nowhere: N. Korea

SEOUL

North Korea's Foreign Minister ruled out any talks with the U.S., saying dialogue with Washington would "get us nowhere". His comments come after Sung Kim, the top U.S. envoy in charge of North Korea negotiations, visited South Korea this week in a bid to restart diplomacy with the nuclear-armed nation. AFP

Ranil Wickremesinghe returns to Parliament

Former Sri Lanka Prime Minister slams the Rajapaksa government's economic policy, militarisation

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe on Wednesday returned to Parliament, 10 months after his United National Party (UNP) suffered its biggest electoral defeat in history.

In the first intervention by his party in the current legislature, Mr. Wickremesinghe slammed the Rajapaksa government on its economic policy that, he said, lacked a plan amid a crisis, and growing militarisation of civil services.

Though the UNP didn't win a single seat in the 2020

general election, it had enough cumulative votes to nominate one member under its 'national list', a system in which a party can win seats proportionate to its share of total votes polled.

"I am happy to be able to come to Parliament and resume my parliamentary political life," said Mr. Wickremesinghe, who was first elected as an MP in 1977. He was in all Parliaments since, except after he lost the election last year, when the Rajapaksa rose to power with a thumping majority.

The Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB, or United People's Front), formed by those who



Ranil Wickremesinghe

broke away from the UNP, is Sri Lanka's main Opposition party, led by Sajith Premadasa.

Pointing to Sri Lanka's foreign reserves, Mr. Wickremesinghe said the balance

had fallen from \$7 billion, when his government was in power (2015-2019), to \$4 billion at present.

"By the end of this month,

Sri Lanka has a debt of \$1 billion to repay. We have to repay another loan of around \$2 billion this year. We have no plan on how to pay for these," he said, urging the government to sign up for an International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal.

Underscoring China's rise in technology, President Xi Jinping spoke on Wednesday with three astronauts aboard the country's newly launched space station, praising their mission as a "pioneering contribution to the peaceful use of space by mankind".

Highlighting the political authority vested in the Cabinet and Parliament, civil power or the bureaucracy, and military power, as the "three aspects" of a democratic government, the former PM said: "What is happening now is that civilian power is being handed to the military and the country is governed that way. That is wrong."

The military was roped in not only for pandemic response but also for economic activity, he added, as he sought a parliamentary debate to discuss the transfer of powers vested in Parliament to the Army.

Mr. Wickremesinghe accused the government of giving tax relief to "big people" while "starving small people".

Fired warning shots at U.K. ship: Russia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

Russia on Wednesday said it fired warning shots at a British navy destroyer in the Black Sea after it violated the country's territorial waters, but the UK denied the incident had occurred.

As per *Interfax*, the Russian Defence Ministry said, "The HMS Defender was given a preliminary warning that weapons would be used if the state borders of the Russian Federation were violated. It did not react to the warning." It said "a border patrol ship fired warning shots" and an aircraft dropped four bombs along the ship's path, following which it left Russian waters.

GOVT. OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,
NORTH EASTERN RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KEONJHAR

e Procurement Notice for Road Works

Identification No. Road Online NCB No.313

No.2689// Date : 22.06.2021

1. Name of the Work : Construction of Road works under DMF and Inter State-Inter District-Inter Block Scheme.

2. Total No. of Work : 02 (Two) Nos.

3. Estimated Cost : As per Annexure

4. Class of Contractor : As per Annexure

5. Period of Completion : As per Annexure

6. Other details :

Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of tender On-line for bidding From To Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Superintendent Engineer, North Eastern Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar NCB No. 313 Dt.29.06.21 at 11.00 A.M. Dt.13.07.21 up to 5.00 P.M. Dt.12.07.21 up to 5.00 P.M. Dt.14.07.21 up to 11.00 A.M. Will be intimated later

● Further details can be seen from the website: www.tendersorissa.gov.in

Sd/- P.K.Misra

Superintending Engineer, N.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.

OIPR-25048/11/014/2122

"Stop Corona; Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"

DELI JAL BOARD: GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (NORTH EAST)-I

2142 JANTA FLATS G.T.B. ENCLAVE DELHI0110093

PRESS NIT NO-11 (2021-22)

S. No.	Name of Work	Amount put to tender	Date of release of tender in E-Procurement solution	Last date / time of receipt of tender through E-Procurement solution
1	Improvement of water supply in Tail end areas of Shakti Garden By P/L/J 200/150/100 mm dia DI water line from D-Block East Gokulpar to Gali No 2 Shakti Garden in AC-68 NE-I	39,52,447.00	22-06-2021 2021_DJB_204716_2	06-07-2021 2:10 PM
2	Improvement of water supply in Pratap Nagar area by providing 300 mm dia DI water line from Bank colony Road to Sewa Dham Road Near Online Booster AC-68 NE-I	37,58,133.00	22-06-2021 2021_DJB_204716_3	06-07-2021 2:10 PM

Further details in this regards can be seen at https://delijalboard.govt.nic.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	52,306	-0.54
US Dollar	74.27	0.13
Gold	46,396	0.40
Brent oil	75.69	0.91

NIFTY 50

PRICE CHANGE

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	718.70	-24.20
Asian Paints	2987.35	-23.45
Axist Bank	732.35	-7.00
Bajaj Auto	4198.60	-23.00
Bajaj Finserv	12282.25	150.60
Bajaj Finance	6015.60	-1.20
Bharti Airtel	534.05	-2.35
BPCL	469.60	-4.05
Britannia Ind	3659.30	8.40
Cipla	957.75	1.90
Coal India	148.45	-0.25
Divis Lab	4224.60	-64.15
Dr Reddys Lab	5299.35	-9.00
Eicher Motors	2728.60	10.40
Grafix Ind	1498.75	2.45
HCL Tech.	972.90	-7.20
HDFC	2097.20	-25.70
HDFC Bank	1485.50	1.70
HDFC Life	717.75	1.00
Hero MotoCorp	2928.35	21.30
Hindustan	368.10	0.55
Hind Unilever	2480.50	-9.75
ICICI Bank	624.70	-6.15
IndusInd Bank	999.55	-0.55
Infosys	1503.15	-8.70
Indian Oil Corp	112.90	-0.95
ITC	203.95	-1.15
JSW Steel	665.50	-9.75
Kotak Bank	1736.70	-20.40
L&T	1479.25	-19.95
M&M	781.95	6.75
Maruti Suzuki	7432.70	167.30
Nestle India Ltd.	17414.80	-21.75
NTPC	117.25	-1.05
ONGC	213.35	1.30
PowerGrid Corp	232.25	-1.80
Reliance Ind	2205.35	-20.40
SBI Life	1000.55	-6.45
State Bank	418.85	0.20
Shree Cement	28867.20	-371.85
Sun Pharma	665.25	-1.55
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	575.85	1.15
Tata Motors	335.25	-2.65
Tata Steel	1110.10	-12.20
TCS	3261.40	-39.80
Tech Mahindra	1056.45	-0.75
Titan	1782.55	25.55
UltraTech Cement	6903.35	44.40
UPL	804.00	1.50
Wipro	540.15	-16.40

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 23

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.08	74.40
Euro	88.49	88.88
British Pound	103.42	103.91
Japanese Yen (100)	66.75	67.04
Chinese Yuan	11.44	11.49
Swiss Franc	80.70	81.05
Singapore Dollar	55.09	55.35
Canadian Dollar	60.29	60.56
Malaysian Ringgit	17.79	17.88

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Infosys's ₹9,200-crore buyback to start June 25

NEW DELHI

Infosys will commence its up to ₹9,200-crore buyback from June 25, wherein the IT major intends to buy back shares at a maximum price of ₹1,750 apiece. The board approval was granted on April 14 and shareholders' nod was received on June 19, at the company's 40th AGM. Kotak Mahindra Capital was appointed as the manager of the buyback, according to a regulatory filing. PTI

Housewives get post demonetisation I-T relief

NEW DELHI

Cash deposits of up to ₹2.5 lakh by housewives post demonetisation will not come under I-T scrutiny as the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT) has held that such deposits cannot be treated as income of the assessee. Ruling on an appeal filed by an individual, the Agra bench of the tribunal said the order would act as a precedent for all similar cases. PTI

Apollo Hospitals Q4 net shrinks 44% to ₹116 cr.

CHENNAI

Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Ltd. reported standalone net profit for Q4 FY21 shrunk 44% to ₹116 crore. Revenue contracted 6% to ₹2,410 crore. The board declared a final dividend of ₹3 per share. The government should consider giving additional incentives to the healthcare sector to allow it to recover from the COVID-19 impact, said Prathap C. Reddy, chairman.

Cipla gets U.S. FDA nod for inhalation product

NEW DELHI

Drug major Cipla said it had received final approval from the USFDA for Arformoterol Tartrate Inhalation Solution, used to treat conditions such as chronic bronchitis, in the U.S. market. The product is a generic version of Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Brovana. Quoting IQVIA (IMS Health) data, Cipla said Brovana had U.S. sales of about \$438 million for the 12-month period ended April 2021. PTI

'States not prudent in reopening as vaccination rates are still low'

Using test positivity as guiding factor may create challenges: Oxford Economics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

States' reopening strategy in the wake of a decline in COVID-19 cases is not "prudent" and might even result in a rise in infections as vaccine coverage remains low in many States, global forecasting firm Oxford Economics said on Wednesday.

In a report, it also said, "we remain cautious and maintain our 2021 growth forecast at 9.1%", pointing out that economic data did not support an upward revision at this point.

The rapid decline in COVID-19 cases and test positivity rates has prompted many States to relax restrictions that are in place to curb the



In a rush: The reopening has started at a faster pace than it had expected, says the forecasting firm. ■ MAHISHA

spread of coronavirus infections. Against this backdrop, Oxford Economics said vaccination rates were far below the levels deemed to be safe for easing social distancing measures substantially in

the more populous and economically important States.

While partial restrictions were likely to be extended into the third quarter of the calendar year 2021, the reopening had started at a faster

pace than it had expected, it noted. "We think this reopening strategy is not prudent and may result in a renewed rise in infections and retightening of restrictions in the future," Oxford Economics said.

The reopening had begun at a faster pace than it had anticipated as States had focused on declining test positivity rates as the guiding factor for easing measures rather than the share of population vaccinated.

"This strategy could create a challenge... if infections increase again, especially as we head towards the festive months, and vaccine coverage remains low in many States," it said.

HDFC Bank's key strategy is digital marketing: MD

Steps taken to fix credit-card glitches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

HDFC Bank is expanding its distribution footprint leveraging 'branch and virtual relationship channels' with digital marketing as the key channel, MD & CEO Sashidhar Jagdishan said in the bank's latest annual report.

"This will enable us to capture the growth potential in both India and Bharat and different consumer segments like the tech-savvy and millennials going forward," he said.

The bank, however, had been in the spotlight in the last 28 months "for the wrong reasons when it came to technology."

Mr. Jagdishan said the last



Sashidhar Jagdishan

technology downtime had led to the Reserve Bank of India banning the bank from issuing new credit cards as well as putting on hold new plans under its Digital 2.0 initiative.

"We have taken this as an opportunity to improve and redouble our efforts to fix the problem for good."

Mr. Jagdishan said the last

High raw material prices threaten survival of MSMEs

Industry group urges nil duty on import of steel materials

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

COIMBATORE

A steep increase in raw material prices in the last few months threatens the survival of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the manufacturing sector, the All India Council of Associations of MSMEs said.

The council, which has about 170 MSME associations from different States as its members, pointed out that copper prices had increased by 110% this month compared with April last year. Prices of aluminium alloy had risen 94%, mild steel plates by 82% and CRCA sheets by 96%.

The council, which has about 170 MSME associations from different States as its members, pointed out that copper prices had increased by 110% this month compared with April last year. Prices of aluminium alloy had risen 94%, mild steel plates by 82% and CRCA sheets by 96%.

The MSMEs faced working capital erosion because of the high cost of inputs. While the units supplying to public sector undertakings (PSUs) were unable to get a revision in prices of their products, the open market was unable to take the full impact of high raw material prices, the council said.

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To a question on passing on steel-price rise, Mr. Subbiah said they should be able to pass on majority of the price increase to customers though TIIL shall remain concerned about it as it will have other consequences.

Asked about the commonalities that exist between subsidiaries, he said that this year would be more of consolidation of the existing businesses. "So, in the first stage, our focus is just consolidating the existing business and then, in the second stage, we will move to integration between the two businesses," LIC said in a statement.

"The platform is designed to provide centralised collection and payment accounting with high level of bank integration to host connectivity and provide innovative features of seamless and integrated banking with automatic reconciliations," LIC said in a statement.

"The new system is capable of providing comprehensive, self-servicing capabilities [via] the customer portal where corporate customers will be able to view their data, initiate actionable processes, lodge and track claims," it added.

This is in contravention of Section 4(2)(a) of the

Centre further eases norms for voice-based BPOs

To help consolidate India's position globally, lower costs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

India on Wednesday said more norms governing Other Service Providers, or voice-based BPOs, were being relaxed, and that the distinction between domestic and international entities in particular had been removed.

This was aimed at helping consolidate the country's position in the sector globally, paring operating costs for the entities and aiding them to strike synergies among different firms.

Other relaxations include allowing Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange (EPABX) of the OSP to be located anywhere in the world. Apart from using EPABX services of telcos, the entities can locate the facility at third-party data centres



Ravi Shankar Prasad

ween all types of OSP centres was now permitted.

Other relaxations include allowing Electronic Private Automatic Branch Exchange (EPABX) of the OSP to be located anywhere in the world. Apart from using EPABX services of telcos, the entities can locate the facility at third-party data centres

in India. There will be no restriction for data interconnectivity between OSP centres of the same company or group firm or any unrelated firm.

Minister for Communications Ravi Shankar Prasad said the move was expected to provide a fillip to the BPO sector as well as create jobs. This was in continuation of the Department of Telecommunications' liberalisation of norms in November.

Nasscom said the Centre had issued clarifications on all points the association had raised, which would place the IT-BPM sector in a competitive space. "The new guidelines will add to India's attractiveness in ease of doing business," it added.

'Household savings fell to 8.2% of GDP in Q3, FY21'

Declined from 10.4% in Q2: RBI data



quarter from 7.7% in July-September. RBI further said household debt-to-GDP ratio, which is based on select financial instruments, has been increasing steadily since end-March 2019.

"The

Kiwis bury the ghosts of 2019, crowned first World Test champion

Two years after the heart-breaking loss to England in the 50-over World Cup final, Williamson's men scale the long-format summit with an eight-wkt. win over India



On top of the world: New Zealand won the inaugural World Test Championship with a commanding performance in the final against India. Williamson anchored the chase with an unbeaten half-century. ■ REUTERS & GETTY IMAGES



WTC FINAL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SOUTHAMPTON

New Zealand registered the biggest triumph in its cricket history as it beat India by eight wickets in the final of the inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) on Wednesday.

Two years after their agonising Super Over loss to England in the 50-over World Cup final at Lord's in 2019, Kane Williamson's men clinched a global title.

Set a target of just 139 in 53 overs, New Zealand finished on 140 for two with more

than seven overs left after the contest stretched into the reserve day after two days' play were washed out in the first five days.

India off-spinner R. Ashwin reduced the Kiwis to 44 for two, removing both openers.

However, skipper Williamson (52 not out) and Ross Taylor (47 not out), the team's two most-experienced batsmen, shared an unbroken stand of 96 to seal victory.

The real damage was done by New Zealand's all-pace attack as it dismissed India for 170 in its second innings on a rare sunny day which provided

the best batting conditions in the entire contest.

Tim Southee took four for 48 in 19 overs, but it was toying paceman Kyle Jamieson, who followed up his first-innings five for 31 by taking the prize wicket of India captain Virat Kohli for the second time in the match.

Kohli had added just five to his overnight score of eight when he edged a delivery that bounced and moved late to wicketkeeper BJ Watling, playing in the final match of his international career.

And 71 for three soon became 72 for four when Cheteshwar Pujara, who took 80

balls to score 15, edged a delivery from Jamieson that held its line to a diving Taylor at first slip.

Pujara's exit brought in the free-scoring Pant, a batsman capable of wresting the initiative from New Zealand.

But the wicketkeeper should have been out for five when he edged Jamieson, only for second-slip Southee, going across first slip, to drop a routine chance.

Pant, to the delight of India fans in the crowd, then whipped Southee past mid-on for four.

Ajinkya Rahane cut Trent Boult to the boundary only

C A very special feeling. The team showed great heart to get across the line

WILLIAMSON

C Credit to them for sticking to the process long enough to put us under pressure throughout the game. They thoroughly deserve it

KOHLI

for the cheers from supporters to turn to shocked silence next ball when he was caught behind down the leg-side.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA – 1ST INNINGS

217.

NEW ZEALAND

– 1ST INNINGS

249.

INDIA – 2ND INNINGS

Rohit Sharma lbw b Southee 30 (81b, 2x4), Shubman Gill lbw b Southee 8 (33b), Cheteshwar Pujara c Taylor b Jamieson 15 (80b, 2x4), Virat Kohli c Watling b Jamieson 13 (29b), Ajinkya Rahane c Watling b Boult 15 (40b, 1x4), Rishabh Pant c Nicholls b Boult 41 (88b, 4x4), Ravindra Jadeja c Watling b Wagner 16 (49b, 2x4), R. Ashwin c Taylor b Boult 7 (19b), Mohammed Shami c Latham b Southee 13

(10b, 3x4), Ishant Sharma (not out) 1 (6b), Jasprit Bumrah c Latham b Southee 0 (4b); Extras (b-1, lb-8, w-1, nb-1); Total (in 73 overs): 170.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-24 (Gill, 10.4 overs), 2-51 (Rohit, 26.5), 3-71 (Kohli, 35.5), 4-72 (Pujara, 37.3), 5-109 (Rahane, 49.6), 6-142 (Jadeja, 62.5), 7-156 (Pant, 69.2), 8-156 (Ashwin, 69.4), 9-170 (Shami, 72.2).

NEW ZEALAND BOWLING

Southee 19-4-48-4, Boult 15-2-39-3, Jamieson 24-10-30-2, Wagner 15-2-44-1.

NEW ZEALAND

– 2ND INNINGS

(Target: 139)

Tom Latham st. Pant b Ashwin 9 (41b), Devon Conway lbw b Ashwin 19 (47b, 4x4), Kane Williamson (not out) 52 (89b, 8x4), Ross Taylor (not out) 47 (100b, 6x4); Extras (lb-11, nb-2); 13; Total (for two wkts. in 45.5 overs): 140.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Latham, 13.3), 2-44 (Conway, 17.2).

INDIA BOWLING

Ishant 6.2-21-0, Shami 10.5-3-31-0, Bumrah 10.4-2-35-0, Ashwin 6.0-15-17-2, Jadeja 8-1-25-0.

Man-of-the-final: Jamieson.

New Zealand won by eight wickets to clinch the World Test Championship title.

+ Jadeja becomes No. 1 Test all-rounder

Ashwin ranked fourth in the list

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

DUBAI

India's Ravindra Jadeja on Wednesday dislodged West Indian Jason Holder as the world's top all-rounder in the latest ICC Test rankings.

Jadeja is two points ahead of Holder (384) while England all-rounder Ben Stokes is third on 377. R. Ashwin is at fourth with 353, followed by Shakib Al Hasan of Bangladesh (338).

Ashwin remains in the second spot in the bowlers' rankings on 850 points, below Pat Cummins (908) of Australia. Tim Southee (830) of New Zealand is third.

Among the batsmen, there was no change in top-five with Indian captain Virat Kohli static at fourth on 814. Steve Smith of Australia continues to be the top batsman on 891 points, followed by Kane Williamson (886) of New Zealand and Marnus Labuschagne (878) of Australia.



Ravindra Jadeja.
■ GETTY IMAGES

Spain steamrollers Slovakia to make the last-16 from Group E

Sweden tops group after beating back Poland's challenge; England and Croatia advance to the knock-outs

EURO 2020

AGENCIES

SEVILLE

Spain claimed the biggest win of the tournament with a 5-0 thrashing of Slovakia in their final European Championship Group E match on Wednesday to finish second in the group and set up a last-16 clash with Croatia in Copenhagen.

Goals from Aymeric Laporte, Pablo Sarabia, Ferran Torres and two own goals from Martin Dubravka and Juraj Kucka sealed Spain's progress to the knockout stages.

Dubravka saved an early penalty from Alvaro Morata but gifted Spain the opener when he attempted to punch a rebound off Sarabia's shot over the bar, only to palm it into his own net.

Aymeric Laporte doubled the lead before halftime. Sarabia was then rewarded with a goal when left back Jordi Alba swung a cross into the box and the Paris Saint-Germain winger found space to take a first-time shot that went in off the post.

Sarabia turned provider when he set up substitute Ferran Torres who scored within a minute of coming on, flicking a low cross past Dubravka for the fifth. Spain forced another own goal minutes later when Kucka failed to clear off the line.

Stoppage-time winner
Sweden topped Group E and sent Poland home from the championship with Viktor Claesson's stoppage time winner gave it a 3-2 verdict at St. Petersburg, in one of the tournament's most exciting



Masterclass: Luka Modric slots in with the outside of his foot for Croatia's second goal. ■ REUTERS

Dunkley in line for ODI debut against India



Dunkley. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Djokovic, Barty top seeds at SW19

Federer seventh as era without unique seeding formula begins

WIMBLEDON

SPORTS BUREAU



and 2019 runner-up, will be seeded seventh, behind the likes of Daniil Medvedev (second seed), Alexander Zverev (fifth) and Andrey Rublev (sixth), who have zero grass-court titles and not a single appearance beyond the fourth round at SW19. In 2019, Federer, then ranked No. 3 in the world, was elevated as the second seed in place of Rafael Nadal, the World No. 2.

The women's section

broadly follows the WTA rankings, but has been tweaked on occasion to produce a "balanced draw". In 2018, Serena Williams, despite being ranked 183, was given a seeding of 25. But there was no need to do so this time, with the seven-time singles champion qualifying as the seventh seed.

Simona Halep, the 2019 winner, is the second seed while two-time champion Petra Kvitova is 11th.

Ramkumar closer to main draw

Ankita Raina goes down in first round of qualifiers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON

Ramkumar Ramanathan stood just one win away from his maiden Grand Slam appearance after he progressed to the final round of the Wimbledon qualifiers with a straight-set win over Tomas Martin Etcheverry.

The Indian, ranked 211 in singles, got the better of the Argentine, who is seven places above him, 6-3, 6-4 in 59 minutes. Ramkumar had seven aces and a lone double fault in the match, which she failed to convert.



Ramkumar Ramanathan.
■ FILE PHOTO

Tweets 'taken out of context': Morgan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LONDON

Dismissing accusations of racism against him, England's World Cup-winning captain Eoin Morgan said the historical tweets, allegedly mocking Indians, were "taken out of context".

"If I call somebody 'sir' on social media, or anywhere around the world, it's a sign of admiration and respect. If that's taken out of context there's nothing I can control or do about it. So I haven't actually looked into it."



Morgan. ■ FILE PHOTO

The results:

First round: €609,065 ATP, Eastbourne, Britain: Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan bt Alastair Gray and Luke Johnson 7-5, 6-3.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Julian Cash & Mark Whitehouse (GBR) bt Rinky Hi-

jikata (Aus) & Siddhant Banthia 7-6(2), 1-6, [10-3].

Women: Tara Malie (USA) bt Humera Baharmus 6-4, 6-3.

Doubles: Sarah Lisa Aubertin (Tun) & Midori Castillo Meza (Mex) bt Arina Solomatina (Rus) & Humera Baharmus 6-2, 6-4.

TV PICKS

Golf: Women's PGA championship: Eurosport (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.
England vs Sri Lanka: 2nd T20I, Sony Six (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.
Copa America 2021: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. & 5.30 a.m. (Friday)
NBA: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m. (Friday)

IN BRIEF



New role for Darren Sammy
ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)
Two-time T20 World Cup-winning former West Indies captain Darren Sammy has been appointed as an independent non-member director of the CWI board. The decision was taken by the Cricket West Indies Board during a meeting held on June 17. Sammy is one of the three appointments of Independent Directors approved at last Thursday's meeting to serve for the next two-years. PTI

Para-shooter Pooja bags two silver medals

CHENNAI
Para-shooter Pooja Agarwal displayed a stunning performance at the World Shooting Para Sport World Cup held in Lima, Peru, as she added two silver medals to her long list of victories. She won the Team Silver Medal in P3 (25m pistol mixed SH1 & P4) and 50m free pistol mixed SH1. ANI

Kaymer, McDowell named Europe's vice-captains

VIRGINIA WATER (ENGLAND)
Martin Kaymer and Graeme McDowell, players who have holed decisive putts for Europe at Ryder Cups, were appointed Wednesday as vice captains for the team for the 2021 edition at Whistling Straits in September. They joined Luke Donald and Robert Karlsson as assistants to captain Padraig Harrington as Europe looks to retain the biggest prize in team golf. AP

Bangladesh set to tour Zimbabwe

DHAKA
The Bangladesh Cricket Board said on Wednesday its national team will leave for Zimbabwe on June 29 for a full series despite heavy coronavirus restrictions in the African country. The tour will feature a Test, three One-Day Internationals and three T20Is. AFP

India's official Olympic theme song launched

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI
India's "Official Olympic Theme Song" was launched on Wednesday ahead of the Summer Games in July-August.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju was the chief guest at the event which was organised by Indian Olympic Association (IOA).

Mohit Chauhan has composed and sung the song titled "Lakshya Tera Samne Hai".

Indian teams for World Championship

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has announced the list of players to compete in the over-50, 55 and 60 age groups in the Seniors tennis World Championship to be staged in Umag, Croatia, from August 29 to September 3.

The teams:
Over-50: Gurdarshan Singh Ramana (Capt.), Venkata Narayana Murthy Khyala, Tikan Singh Panwar and Tuleswar Singh Thongbam; **Over-55:** Chandra Bhushan Prasad (Capt.), Nagraj Revanasiddaiyah, Arun Aggarwal and Sanjay Kumar Aravindakshan; **Over-60:** Mayur Vasant Manek (Capt.), Pawan Jain, Ajeev Bhardwaj and Rakesh Kohli.

'Don't feel I've really earned qualification'

I know how far below my potential I've played this year, says Lahiri



Lucky break: Anirban Lahiri made the cut for the Olympics at the 60th spot, the last quota available. • AFP

Olympic doubt over Lemaitre

Vicaut, Bosse also miss French championships

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
PARIS

French sprinters Christophe Lemaitre and Jimmy Vicaut, and middle-distance runner Pierre-Ambroise Bosse, have all withdrawn from their country's national championships this weekend, casting a shadow over the former's presence at the Tokyo Olympics.

The trio's withdrawal from the championships comes a day after that of world hammer silver medallist Quentin Bigot and European 100m hurdles champion and world bronze medallist Pascal Martinot-Lagarde.

Vicaut, part of France's bronze medal-winning 4x100m relay team at the 2012 London Olympics and



Lemaitre... • FILE PHOTO

joint European 100m record holder with a best of 9.86 seconds set most re-

OLYMPIC GAMES

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CROMWELL

Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri says he wasn't expecting to qualify for the Olympics given his below par performance this year but now wants to make it count by returning with a medal from the Tokyo Games.

Lahiri on Tuesday made the cut for the Olympics at the 60th spot, the last quota available as per the International Golf Federation rankings.

"It was a big surprise, I wasn't expecting it," said Lahiri, who is preparing for this week's PGA TOUR stop at the Travelers Championship at TPC River Highlands, Connecticut.

"Even though I've earned it, I don't feel like I've really earned it as I know how far

below my potential I've played this year. It's a gift and an opportunity, so why would I throw it away?" India was eligible for one spot and Lahiri qualified being the highest-placed golfer from the country at the 340th position.

"I know what it is to be an Olympian as I've done it before (in Rio) and I don't want to just be another Olympian. I want to win a medal, I want to do something that makes a difference," said the 33-year-old.

"I know winning a PGA TOUR event will do that but winning a medal would even do more. I do have a certain responsibility towards the game and my country."

The former Asian No. 1 finished a lowly 57th in Rio while playing with an injury. But recently, there have been signs of some good form returning following a recent

T25 finish at the Palmetto Championship at Congaree.

That has made him optimistic of his chances at the Olympics to be held at the Kasumigaseki Country Club from July 29 to August 1.

"When I first found out, I called my wife and she asked what do I want to do now. I told her 'how can I not go? How can I not represent my country in the biggest sporting event in the world?'

"This is why I play the game... and to have the opportunity to represent your country, and not just the representation as I feel like I'm playing really well."

"I feel I'm close to playing my best golf right now and for a lot of reasons, it makes sense for me. It means everything for me to go," said Lahiri, whose last win came at home at the Hero Indian Open in 2015.

Statistical Bulletin released

GENERAL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The 41st edition of the V.K. Pahuja Statistical Bulletin edited by Dr. Meenakshi Pahuja was released by Dr. Sanjeev Patjoshi IPS, the Joint Secretary of Panchayati Raj on Wednesday.

In keeping with the high standard of accuracy and timing set by her father V.K. Pahuja, a pioneer statistician who brought out the annual bulletin for decades, Meenakshi, an assistant professor at Lady Shriram College, and the recipient of Nari Shakti Puraskar from the President, has been able to maintain the quality and variety in the 450-page bulletin.

It has been released on June 23 in all the 41 years. "It is a magnum opus for data, information on swimming," said Patjoshi. Appreciating

Meenakshi's effort in sustaining her dad's memory and legacy, Patjoshi said, "you have kept the flag flying high."

Pride of place has been given to the six Indian swimmers, Kushagra Rawat, Virdhawal Khade, Srihari Nataraj, Sajam Prakash, Advait Page and Arya Makhija who have attained the Olympic 'B' qualification timings, apart from Suyash Yadav, the lone Indian swimming entrant for Paralympics in Tokyo. "Des-

pite difficulties, our swimmers participated in Olympic qualifiers and achieved best Indian performances. They kept me busy," said Meenakshi.

The bulletin has been made more lively to read with the interviews of Dronacharya awardee Nihar Ameen, woman coach Smita Desai Divgikar and the fastest couple of Indian swimming, Virdhawal Khade and Rujuta Khade.

Tvesa to have long shot at Olympic berth

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEROUN (CZECH REPUBLIC)
Indian golfer Tvesa Malik, who has been having a good run on the Ladies European Tour, will get one final chance to qualify for Tokyo Olympics when she tees up at the Tipsport Czech Ladies Open this week.

Nothing less than a win will give her a chance to join Aditi Ashok in the Tokyo Olympics. Aditi is assured of a berth as she is 44th in the current list of qualifiers.

Tvesa, who has had two Top-10s in her last three starts, will also need some luck in the form of withdrawals from among the qualified players to get into the Top-60.

Harnessing Growth. Creating Milestones.

Extract of Audited Standalone & Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and year ended 31st March 2021

Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated			
	Quarter Ended		Year Ended		Quarter Ended		Year Ended	
	31-Mar-2021	31-Dec-2020	31-Mar-2020	31-Mar-2021	31-Mar-2020	31-Dec-2020	31-Mar-2020	31-Mar-2020
Audited	Un-Audited	Audited	Audited	Audited	Un-Audited	Audited	Audited	
Total Revenue from Operations	6,847.57	4,355.10	3,187.34	15,370.06	11,699.22	6,847.57	4,355.10	3,187.34
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items, discontinued operations)	4,266.43	2,811.27	1,579.05	8,901.10	6,219.92	4,264.39	2,810.41	1,574.99
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period before tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items, discontinued operations)	4,268.73	2,810.80	1,482.18	8,901.63	6,122.43	4,266.69	2,809.94	1,478.12
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period after tax (after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	2,837.58	2,108.91	351.21	6,253.05	3,610.12	2,835.54	2,108.05	347.00
Share of Loss of Associates/JVs	-	-	-	-	-	0.07	49.75	(31.18)
Non-Controlling Interest (Profit)/Loss	2,837.58	2,108.91	351.21	6,253.05	3,610.12	2,835.82	2,157.81	315.39
Net Profit/(Loss) after taxes, Non-Controlling Interest and share of profit/loss of Associates/JVs	2,837.79	2,090.14	274.64	6,196.96	3,535.08	2,838.50	2,114.44	300.61
Total Comprehensive income for the period (Comprising profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	293.07	306.19	306.19	293.07	306.19	293.07	306.19	293.07
Paid up Equity Share Capital (Face value Re.1/- each)	29,463.07	27,227.76	29,756.14	27,533.95	29,756.14	27,533.95	29,756.14	27,533.95
Net Worth	9.64	6.89	1.15	20.62	11.79	9.64	7.05	1.03
Earnings Per Share (of Re. 1/- each)	9.64	6.89	1.15	20.62	11.79	9.64	7.05	1.03
Basic (in Rs.)	9.64	6.89	1.15	20.62	11.79	9.64	7.05	1.03
Diluted (in Rs.)	(*)	6.89	1.15	(*)	11.79	(*)	7.05	1.03
Total Debt paid-up	523.80	22.63	103.40	90.28	-	-	-	-
Total Interest on Debt	523.80	22.63	103.40	90.28	-	-	-	-
Capital Redemption Reserve	0.02	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debentures Redemption Reserve	16.24	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Debt Equity Ratio	231.89	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interest Service Coverage Ratio	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

(*) Adjusted on account of buyback

Notes:
The above is an extract of the detailed formats of Quarterly Results filed with Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full formats of Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com) and Company's website www.nmdc.co.in. Previous periods figures have been reclassified wherever considered necessary.

For and on behalf of Board of Directors of NMDC Limited
Sd/-
Shri Amitava Mukherjee
Director (Finance)
Din No.: 08265207

Place : Hyderabad
Dated : 22-June-2021

Deepika Kumari in recurve semifinals

Verma, Jyothi best-ranked compound archers

SPORTS BUREAU
PARIS

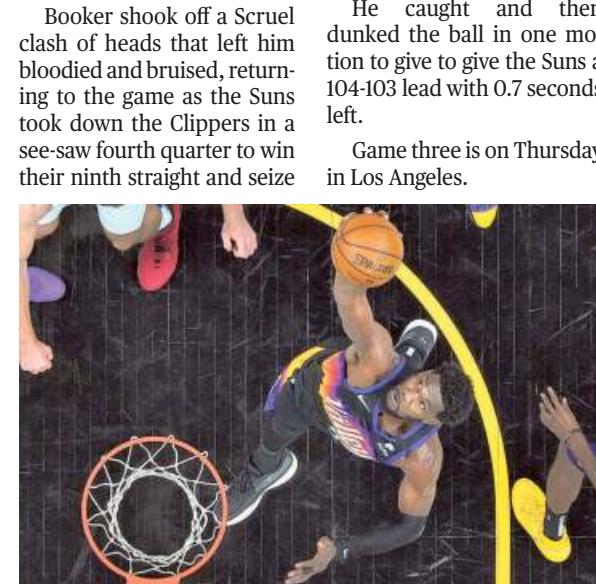
Deepika Kumari, who got two byes, defeated Elena Tonetta of Italy 6-0, Charline Schwarz of Germany 7-3 and Aida Roman of Mexico 6-0 to reach the recurve women's individual event semifinals in the archery World Cup Stage-3 here on Wednesday.

Ankita Bhakat lost in the fourth round, while Komalika Bari, who got past her compatriot Madhu Vedwan in the second round, exited in the third.

Jyothi shot 695 points for her 15th place. She was followed by Saanchi Dhalla (690 points, 22nd place), Akshita (681, 32nd) and Pragati (668, 43rd). The women's team was slotted sixth after gathering 2107 points.

Jyothi shot 695 points for her 15th place. She was followed by Saanchi Dhalla (690 points, 22nd place), Akshita (681, 32nd) and Pragati (668, 43rd). The women's team was slotted sixth after getting 2066 points.

The mixed compound team of India was ninth with 1401 points. The elimination phase of the compound division will be held from Thursday onwards.



In nick of time: Deandre Ayton delivered for Phoenix Suns with a superb basket in the dying moments. • AP



New role for Darren Sammy

ST. JOHN'S (ANTIGUA)
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Para-shooter Pooja bags two silver medals

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