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## NEARBY



DU admission portal may be launched by weekend

NEW DELHI Senior officials of Delhi University on Tuesday said the university is likely to launch its new admission process for postgraduate admissions begins on July 26.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Manipur activist's father seeks compensation

NEW DELHI The Supreme Court has given the Manipur government two weeks to respond to a plea for compensation by the father of activist Erendra Leichongbam, who was detained under the National Security Act for his Facebook posts.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

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THE HINDU

greets its readers on the occasion of ID-UL-AZHA

OPORTUNITIES ▶ BACK PAGE

## Pegasus spyware row rocks Parliament

Lok Sabha adjourned for the day amid repeated disruptions; Rajya Sabha discusses COVID-19 situation

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Pegasus snooping controversy led to multiple disruptions in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday before the House was adjourned for the day.

In what seemed to be a different strategy by the Opposition parties for the two Houses, proceedings in the Lower House got washed out while the Rajya Sabha discussed the COVID-19 situation after a couple of hours of disruptions in the morning.

Trinamool Congress leaders had given an adjournment notice after the name of the party's Lok Sabha member Abhishek Banerjee, who is also the nephew of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, figured in the list of potential targets for hacking.

As soon as the Lok Sabha proceedings started at 11 a.m., the Congress and the Trinamool started raising

the House and we will raise their voices inside the House," a senior Congress leader told *The Hindu*.

### Multiple notices

With multiple notices from Lok Sabha members, such as Manish Tewari, Manickam Tagore and Gaurav Gogoi, for the suspension of routine business to discuss the snooping controversy, the Opposition made its intentions clear on the second day of the monsoon session.

The government on its own had moved for a discussion on COVID-19 after it was discussed in the Business Advisory Committee (BAC). We didn't want to give them a chance to say the Opposition doesn't even want to discuss the pandemic. But the government will find itself cornered in the Lok Sabha. On July 22, farmers have planned some action outside



Demanding answers: Congress workers protesting outside the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

slogans and showed placards targeting the government. While some placards showed former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi being in the list of targets, another was about Mr. Banerjee. One of the placards read that while people were suffering from unemployment, the government was busy with *jasoosi* (spying).

The proceedings lasted

for five minutes before the House was adjourned until 2 p.m. When it reconvened, similar scenes were witnessed, prompting the Chair to adjourn it for an hour. After the House assembled at 3 p.m., the Opposition members again started raising slogans, and the Chair adjourned it for the day.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 9  
PROBE SOUGHT ▶ PAGE 9

## 5 Opposition parties skip PMO briefing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party, the RJD, the CPI and the CPI(M) on Tuesday skipped the briefing for floor leaders of Parliament by Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan, organised by the Prime Minister's Office, on the COVID-19 situation.

Opposition leaders met in the morning in the office of Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge to discuss the issue. The meeting was held to primarily organise a coordinated strategy.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
PROBE SOUGHT ▶ PAGE 9

## Snooping in Karnataka before regime change

Cong., JD(S) members possible targets



Former CM Siddaramaiah

terest to the Indian client of Israel's NSO Group.

Since the phones have not been forensically analysed, it is not conclusively proven that they were compromised with the Pegasus spyware, the report said.

The phone numbers of then Deputy Chief Minister G. Parameshwara, personal secretaries of then Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and a security personnel of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda were selected as possible targets, according to *The Wire*'s review of records of numbers that were of in-

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## SC raps Kerala govt. for 'sorry state of affairs'

### KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said the Kerala government's choice to buckle under pressure from traders to open up shops for Bakrid in high COVID-19 infection areas showed a sorry state of affairs and failure to pro-

tect the fundamental right to life and health.

"To give in to pressure groups so that the citizenry of India is laid bare to a nationwide pandemic discloses a sorry state of affairs," the court said.

ALARMING SITUATION ▶ PAGE 8

## Two-thirds of Indians have antibodies, shows ICMR survey

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Two-thirds of the population aged above six have antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, according to data released on Tuesday from a serosurvey conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in June and July.

Nearly 40 crore people,

or a third of the population, are still vulnerable to the COVID-19 infection, the study showed.

Presenting the results of the fourth national COVID-19 serosurvey, ICMR Director-General Balram Bharatava said though the survey offered a ray of hope, there was no room for complacency.

The survey covered 28,975 adults and children

aged 6-17 years, and 7,252 healthcare workers.

It was conducted in the 70 districts across 21 States where the three earlier rounds were done.

**Future waves possibility**  
"This national serosurvey is not a substitute for local (State/district) variations. State heterogeneity indi-

cates the possibility of future waves of infection. We strongly suggest that societal, public, religious and political congregations be avoided, non-essential travel be discouraged and travel should be undertaken only if fully vaccinated," the ICMR chief said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Car pool



**Push-start:** People trying to push out cars stuck on a waterlogged road after heavy rain in Patiala on Tuesday. ■ PTI

No CM-Sidhu meeting for now

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH

The infighting in Punjab Congress seems to be far from over as Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday hardened his stand, saying he will not meet newly appointed PCC president Navjot Singh Sidhu till he "publicly apologises for his derogatory social media attacks against him".

Reports of Mr. Sidhu seeking time to meet Mr. Singh have been dismissed by Chief Minister's media advisor Ravene Thukral. In a tweet he said, "Reports of @sherryontop seeking time to meet @capt\_amarinder are totally false."

DETALS ON ▶ PAGE 4

## Suvendu claims access to Abhishek's calls

West Bengal police file a case against him following his video on social media



Those who call you from nephew's office [Abhishek Banerjee's office], I have phone numbers, call records and everything. If you have State government, then we have Central government  
SUVEDU ADHIKARI BJP MLA



and since he said he had recordings with police personnel, charges had been brought against him under Section 5 of the Official Secrets Act.

**Remarks at public meet**  
In a video that surfaced on social media, Mr. Adhikari is seen making the remarks under sections of the Disaster Management Act for assembly during the pandemic

while addressing party supporters.  
"Those who call you from nephew's [Mamata Banerjee's] office, I have phone numbers, call records and everything. If you have State government, we have Central government," Mr. Adhikari is heard saying.  
The remarks were directed at police officers, officers in charge of police stations

and SPs. The BJP leader said once a CBI probe was ordered into the post-poll violence, the State government and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee would not be able to save the officers.

### Pegasus controversy

The remarks come at a time when there are reports of Mr. Banerjee's name figuring in the list of potential or actual targets for spying by Israeli company NSO's Pegasus spyware.

Trinamool Congress spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said the remarks by Mr. Adhikari make it clear that the BJP has a hand in snooping on the phone conversations of the leaders of the Opposition.

## Court acquits accused in first verdict in Delhi riots case

Prosecution miserably failed to prove its case

### STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

In the first judgment on the north-east Delhi riots, a local court on Tuesday acquitted a man accused of being part of unlawful assembly, dacoity and rioting, noting: "The prosecution has miserably failed to prove its case, forget about beyond reasonable doubts."

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat said the remarks by Mr. Adhikari make it clear that the BJP has a hand in snooping on the phone conversations of the leaders of the Opposition.

timony of the prosecution witnesses".

### Inconsistent testimonies

"All the major witnesses are at variance with each other on material terms impacting the prosecution version... There is no testimony worth its salt which connects the accused to the offence in question," the judge said while acquitting Suresh alias Bhatura in the case.

According to the police, Mr. Suresh, along with a huge crowd of rioters carrying iron rods and sticks, allegedly broke open the lock of a shop on the Main Babarpur Road and looted the premises on the evening of February 25 last year.

The FIR was lodged on a written complaint by Asif who stated that he saw 15 to 20 rioters breaking into his shop. The details of the items looted from the shop were also mentioned in the complaint. The shop is owned by Bhagat Singh and given on rent to Mr. Asif.

The court noted that there is no denial that an unlawful assembly gathered outside the shop, ransacked it and committed robbery.

"However, the crucial question is the identification of the accused (Mr. Suresh) and his role in the present offence of rioting by the unlawful assembly," the court said.

The court also pointed out that Mr. Asif "was not an eyewitness to the incident of rioting".

AN-NDE



## Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, JUL. 21
RISE 05:37 SET 19:19
RISE 16:52 SET 02:24
THURSDAY, JUL. 22
RISE 05:38 SET 19:18
RISE 17:58 SET 03:20
FRIDAY, JUL. 23
RISE 05:38 SET 19:18
RISE 18:59 SET 04:22

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	32	24
Safdarjung	32	24
Palam	32	24

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Warm and humid day. Rain and thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
36°C A spells of light rain or thunderstorm likely at some places with cloudy sky. Day would remain uneasy warm and humid.

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**THE HINDU**

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## IN BRIEF

### BSES discoms ink green power agreement

NEW DELHI

The BSES discoms on Tuesday said that it has inked a Power Sale Agreements with SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India) to procure 510 MW of solar and bundled hybrid power for Delhi. It said that it was committed to a green and sustainable future and was looking towards the sun and the wind for powering Delhi.

### DJB to issue tenders for 24x7 water supply

NEW DELHI

Water Minister Satyendar Jain on Tuesday said the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) will soon float several tenders with an aim to provide 24x7 water supply in the city. The Minister asked officials to maintain accountability at all levels so that the scheme goes through smoothly.

### Man gets shot at accidentally by friend

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man was injured when his friend accidentally fired a gun in Anand Vihar, the police said.

DCP (Shahdara) R. Sathiyasundaram said a gunshot injury was reported from Dr. Hedgewar Hospital at 1.30 a.m. on Tuesday. The victim was identified as Hariom from Maujpur. The victim said the incident happened when he was drinking with his friends – Paras, Sameer, Vipin, Neeraj and Gopal in a hotel. He told the police that Paras had a pistol in his possession and was playing with it. Suddenly, a bullet was fired from the pistol, and it hit the victim.

Probe is under way, the police added.

# Districts reserve 80% of Covishield stock

Vaccine in short supply, authorities setting aside jab for those who are scheduled to get second dose

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

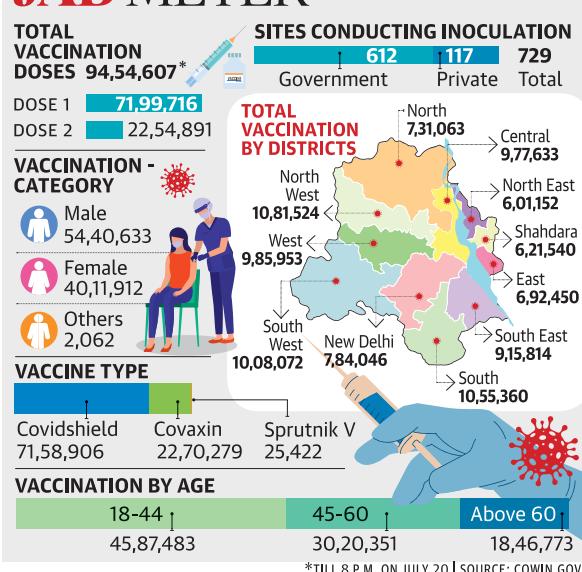
With the city facing shortage of Covishield vaccine, several districts in Delhi have reserved 80% of their Covishield stock for people who have to get the second dose, as per government sources.

The Delhi government is also considering reserving its Covishield stock only for those getting a second dose.

"Till now, the government had given flexibility to the districts to decide what percentage of Covishield should be kept for second dose. Many districts increased it to 80%", a Delhi government source said. "But now the government will make it more rigid for all districts and the government is thinking to reserve the complete Covishield stock or 80% of the stock only for second dose for all districts," the source said.

The government is considering the move as a large number of people above 18 years will soon eligible for the second dose.

## JAB METER



The development was confirmed by another source too, but the Delhi government is yet to officially announce anything on the issue. In June, the Delhi government had reserved Covaxin only for people in

the 18-44 age group getting their second dose, due to a shortage of the vaccine.

The COVID-19 vaccination drive was opened for people above 18 years of age on May 1 across the country and the second dose of thousands of

### 'Centre doing a cover-up on oxygen shortage'

NEW DELHI

Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said there was an "actual shortage of oxygen during the second wave's peak" and that the Centre has been "running a cover-up since the very start of the pandemic". It is because of their flawed policy that the country had to endure an oxygen crisis. The Delhi government wanted to set up 'Death Audit Committee' to assign responsibility, but the Centre did not let us."

people who took the first dose of Covishield in Delhi will be due this month.

Delhi has been facing a shortage of Covishield vaccine for about 10 days and the current stock of COVID-19 vaccines in the city will last for less than one day, as per a vaccination bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

The city faced a similar situation on most days of last

week and Health Minister Satyendar Jain had said on July 12 that 500 vaccination centres had to be closed due to vaccine shortage.

Now also many centres are shut due to the vaccine shortage, mainly of Covishield, as per officials.

### 25,986 doses

Only 25,986 doses of vaccines were administered in the city on Monday as per the bulletin, which is far less than the 1,29,054 doses administered on July 13.

The city continued to see a downward trend in new COVID-19 cases with only 44 fresh cases reported over 24 hours, taking the tally to 14,35,609, according to a health bulletin. There were five deaths in a single day, pushing the toll to 25,035.

Meanwhile, Kolhapur Road Market, which is a part of Kamla Nagar Market, was directed to close for two days for not following COVID-19 rules, according to an official order issued on Monday.

# Emotional well-being of students affected'

PTMs to resolve issues, says Sisodia

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said that the emotional well-being and education of students have been affected due to the absence of physical classes. The two-week long parent teacher meetings would find solutions to the problems related to online classes and the social-emotional and mental well-being of the students will be resolved, he asserted.

After meeting parents, Mr. Sisodia said the Delhi government is working on many levels to make children emotionally strong. "In order to keep children away from depression and stress during the COVID period, teachers are taking mindfulness practice sessions through online classes under the Happiness Curriculum. Along with this, members of the School Management Committee

### Helpline numbers for youth suffering stress

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi government has issued free helpline numbers – 180011688 and 10580 – for youth, especially students, to get help from professional counsellors to cope up with mental and academic stress during the pandemic, according to authorities. People can call the helpline numbers from 7.30 a.m. to 8.30 p.m. on all working days and the identity of the caller will be kept confidential, as per the government.

(SMC) are constantly connected with the parents of the children on phone and are working with the school to meet the educational needs of children," he said.

He added that at the PTMs, teachers are teaching parents new parenting tricks, which will help with online learning and mitigate their stress.

# Jamia holds condolence meeting for Siddiqui

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia (JMI) on Tuesday organised a condolence meeting for its alumnus Danish Siddiqui, who lost his life in the line of duty while reporting the clashes between the Afghan security forces and the Taliban on July 16. He was buried at the JMI graveyard on Sunday.

Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar described Siddiqui as a "real-life hero" and a "creator of iconic images" and said that the university must always remember him with a smile as tears must never be shed over martyrs.

She said that the university would organise an exhibition of his work and other activities so that students can take inspiration from it.

Shohini Ghosh, Officiating Director of A.J.K. Mass Communication Research Centre, JMI said that the alumni of MCRC, including many who had never met him, had written to express their grief, solidarity and acute sense of kinship and in Siddiqui, they saw the courage, passion and moral fibre that the founders of MCRC wanted their students to have."

# Delhi Congress for joint House panel probe into Pegasus row

Leaders demand Home Minister Amit Shah's resignation

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Tuesday organised a protest outside the BJP headquarters and demanded a joint parliamentary committee probe into the reported use of Pegasus spyware against journalists and politicians.

It also demanded the resignation of Home Minister Amit Shah and alleged that he was guilty of treason and compromised national security. The protesters were stopped by the Delhi police from reaching the BJP headquarters.

**Anti-democratic activity**  
Delhi Congress Chief Ch. Anil Kumar alleged that the BJP government had indulged in this illegal and anti-democratic activity due to their insecurity and authoritarianism as they feared that Rahul Gandhi's widening popularity and the erosion of people's faith in Prime Minister Narendra Modi would be dangerous for them.

He added that the fact that Pegasus spyware is only sold to governments and to no one else, points fingers at Mr. Modi and Mr. Shah about their collusion in using this spy software against political opponents, Union Minis-

ters, security forces, judiciary, journalists and other prominent persons, and it was an inexcusable breach of national security.

**Dejected Opposition**  
The BJP, meanwhile, alleged that a "dejected and desperate Opposition" was indulging in "fabricated allegations" regarding the Pegasus leak.

West Delhi BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh sought to dismiss the alleged snooping row as "rubbish, concocted and baseless".

"The matter of fact is that the Opposition cannot digest the rising popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the welfare policies his government has initiated for the overall development of the country," he alleged. The MP said as many as 17 pro-farmer, pro-youth, pro-backwards' and development related Bills were slated to be discussed and passed in the current monsoon session.

The Bills, he said, sought to benefit "practically all sections of society" and the Congress and other parties did not want this to happen.

"The Opposition did not allow the PM to introduce his new Ministers in the House shows they have scant regard for the upliftment of the poor, SCs, women and others who have been given due representation in the new Cabinet," he alleged.

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Fragile border situation, says Assam CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Tuesday said the situation along the Assam-Mizoram border was fragile with "eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation".

Three districts of southern Assam's Barak Valley share a 146.6 km border with Mizoram.

Dr. Sarma had on July 12 told the State Assembly that encroachers from Mizoram had taken over 1,777.58 hectares of land in the Barak Valley.

Mizoram contested this claim, saying the Mizo villages have existed on the disputed land for more than 100 years.

## No CM-Sidhu meeting for now

Apologise first for social media attacks against me, says Amarinder

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH



CM Amarinder Singh

The infighting in Punjab Congress seems to be far from over as Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday hardened his stand, saying that he was firm on his stance and will not meet the newly-appointed party president Navjot Singh Sidhu unless he publicly apologises.

Reports of Mr. Sidhu seeking time to meet the Chief Minister have also been dismissed by Chief Minister's media advisor Raveen Thukral. In a tweet the media advisor said "Reports of @sherryontop seeking time to meet @capt\_amarinder are totally false. No time has been sought whatsoever. No change in stance... CM won't

personal meeting with Mr. Sidhu till he resolves his issues with Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh.

Mr. Mohindra though welcomed the appointment of Mr. Sidhu as the Punjab Congress Committee president. In a statement issued here, he said the appointment had been done by the party high command and was welcome.

### Resolve issues'

"However, I will not meet him [Sidhu] till he meets the Chief Minister and resolves his issues with him", said Mr. Mohindra, adding that Capt. Amarinder Singh was the leader of the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) and he (Mohindra) was duty bound

to publicly apologise for his personally derogatory social media attacks against him."

### Minister rules out meet

Even as Mr. Sidhu continued to meet State party leaders in his political outreach attempt, senior Punjab Cabinet Minister Brahma Mahindra has also ruled out a

personal meeting with him.

Besides being the CLP leader, the Chief Minister also headed the Cabinet, of which he was a part, stated the Minister. "We have a collective responsibility and hence I would refrain from meeting the newly appointed president till issues between him and the Chief Minister are resolved", he asserted.

On July 18, Mr. Sidhu, a detractor of Capt. Amarinder Singh, was appointed as State party chief. But both the leaders have not met so far. Neither has Capt. Amarinder publicly congratulated Mr. Sidhu nor has Mr. Sidhu uttered any word on a possible meeting with the Chief Minister.

## Oppn. nod to join Nagaland govt.

NDPP says it would consult BJP before taking NPF on board

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI



CM Neiphiu Rio

The opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) has accepted Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio's offer to join his People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) government.

The Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) that Mr. Rio represents, on Tuesday adopted a resolution to first consult ruling partner Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) before bringing the NPF on board.

The 60-member Nagaland Assembly currently has 59 members after the death of an MLA. The PDA has 34 legislators (20 are from NDPP, 12 from BJP and two Independents) while the NPF has 25.

The consultation with the BJP is seen as a formality ahead of the "inevitable" - the NPF becoming a constituent of the PDA to leave the Nagaland Assembly without

any member in the opposition.

Mr. Rio is believed to have turned the tables on the BJP, which had reportedly been trying to rekindle its friendship with the NPF. The BJP and NPF are allies in the adjoining State of Manipur.

The two parties were allies in Nagaland but the BJP opted to stitch an alliance with NDPP ahead of the 2018 Assembly election. Mr. Rio had quit the NPF and joined the NDPP before the election that year.

the approach the High Court.

Mr. Beura moved the Orissa High Court again.

The division bench comprising Chief Justice Dr. S. Muralidhar and Justice S.K. Panigrahi said, "In view of the limited nature of relief sought for and without expressing any opinion whatsoever on the merits of the petition, or the Odisha Offices of Profit (Removal of Disqualifications) Amendment Act 2016, we direct that petitioner's two petitions shall be disposed of by the Governor of Odisha, after obtaining opinion from the Election Commission.

One Samrendra Beura had submitted a petition to the Governor seeking the disqualification in May 2019. In September, 2019, he again sought the disqualification of the MLAs under Article 192 (by obtaining the opinion of the Election Commission).

The Odisha Offices of Profit (Removal of Disqualification) Amendment Act, 2016 was enacted with retrospective effect from January 18, 2016 including certain categories of offices that would not attract such disqualification. Thereafter, the government appointed chairpersons to district planning committees, under the Odisha Offices of Profit Amendment Act, 2016.

The Odisha High Court has directed the Governor to dispose of two petitions seeking disqualification of MLAs, who were appointed as chairpersons to district planning committees, under the Odisha Offices of Profit Amendment Act, 2016.

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The Odisha Offices of Profit

(Removal of Disqualification)

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IN BRIEF



'Aisha is not cooperating with investigation'

KOCHI  
The Lakshadweep administration on Tuesday informed the Kerala High Court that Aisha Sultan, film-maker and an accused in a sedition case, had refused to give certain documents sought by the Kavaratti police and that she had deleted her mobile chats after the registration of the case. The submission was made in a statement filed by the administration in response to Ms. Sultan's petition seeking to quash the case against her.

Aquaculture farmers to sell produce on e-Santa

VIJAYAWADA  
Many aquaculture farmers in Andhra Pradesh are planning to update the details of their produce online and market their stocks through e-Santa, an electronic marketplace to export marine products. e-Santa is a platform to connect aqua farmers and buyers across the country, to avoid middlemen. Producers and exporters who registered with Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) can trade online on the platform.

New elephant to lead Bonalu procession

HYDERABAD  
After a year's break, a new elephant will lead the Bonalu procession in Hyderabad, Telangana. The elephant, Menaka, from Raichur, will lead the Bonalu celebrations at the Akkanna Madanna temple. But the event is likely to be a tame affair due to COVID-19 protocols. "The darshan will be with social distancing and only masked devotees will be allowed," said G. Niranjan from the Akkanna Madanna temple Bonalu celebrations committee.

# Lingayat seers rally behind Yediyurappa

They warn of holding a meet to decide action if he is removed from CM's post

KARNATAKA BUREAU  
BENGALURU/BELAGAVI

Amid intense speculation about a possible leadership change in Karnataka and a day after Veerashaiva Mahasabha heads expressed support for Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, Lingayat/Veerashaiva seers came out in the open to back the Chief Minister and warned that they would hold a meeting to decide their future course of action if he is removed from the top post.

While Shivamurthy Muruga Swami from the Muruga Mutt held a press conference along with about 20 seers from several other mutts in Chitradurga to express solidarity with Mr. Yediyurappa,

The Muruga Mutt seer said at Chitradurga, "We are worried about reports that



In solidarity: Over 20 seers met Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa at his official residence. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the BJP is planning to unseat Yediyurappa. We are here to express our moral support to the Chief Minister... If there are internal problems in the BJP, the party leadership should resolve them immediately."

He argued that while Mr. Yediyurappa may belong to

the Lingayat caste and religion, he was a leader for all. "He is a leader who treats everyone equally. He has worked for the development of all castes and religions equally," the seer said, at a press conference at his mutt.

Meanwhile, speculation about a change in leadership

Karnataka CM cancels BJP legislature party meeting

BENGALURU  
Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa is learnt to have cancelled the BJP legislature party meeting scheduled for July 26, which is the day that marks the second anniversary of his government. However, party legislators will still be meeting on July 25 for a dinner to be hosted by him in Bengaluru. "It is only a dinner and not a legislature party meeting," a BJP leader said.

has caused concern among Ministers who came from other parties to help the BJP form the government in the State in 2019.

It is learnt that these Ministers met in Bengaluru on Monday night. The Ministers are learnt to have decided to maintain a united front.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 hrs)

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few/isolated places over Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Konkan & Goa, Kerala, Mahe and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Assam, Tripura, Rayalseema, Yanam, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.8	31.6	26.0	Kozhikode	3...	31...	24.9
Ahmedabad	1.5	31.8	27.0	Kurnool	0.6	32...	25.0
Aizawl	—	—	21.0	Lucknow	16...	33...	26.2
Aligarh	—	34.3	27.2	Madurai	—	37.2	24.9
Bengaluru	7...	28.7	19.7	Mangaluru	15...	28.9	24.0
Bhopal	1...	31.6	25.0	Mumbai	38.4...	31.1...	25.6
Bhubaneswar	43.2...	34.2...	24.1	Mysuru	15...	28.2...	18.8
Chandigarh	55...	32.6	26.1	New Delhi	38...	31...	24.0
Chennai	19...	35.0...	24.4	Patna	—	30.8...	27.0
Coimbatore	—	33.6	23.4	Port Blair	83...	29.4...	22.9
Dehradoon	0.6...	29.2	23.3	Puducherry	—	35.7...	25.2
Gangtok	8...	21.6	17.6	Pune	14.8...	27.2	21.0
Goa	62...	27.2	23.5	Raipur	—	35.1...	27.0
Guwahati	4...	35.7	—	Ranchi	7...	29.2	23.7
Hubballi	—	24.0	21.0	Shillong	63...	25.0...	18.5
Hyderabad	0.4...	29.0...	22.1	Shimla	24...	22.6...	16.6
Imphal	15...	31.6	22.2	Srinagar	6.6...	37.5...	17.4
Jaipur	3...	33.2...	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	31.3...	24.9
Kochi	6...	26.0...	18.4	Tiruchi	—	36.3...	25.8
Kolkata	3...	30.3...	26.8	Vijayawada	—	33.2...	27.4
Kolkata	—	—	—	Visakhapatnam	10...	36.2...	24.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	.30	.48	.23	.72	.117	■■■
Bengaluru	7	17	31	.20	.104	■■■
Chennai	9	15	72	.29	.36	■■■
Delhi	9	18	63	.179	.113	■■■
Hyderabad	2	57	72	.12	.17	■■■
Kolkata	.10	24	.26	.58	.65	■■■
Lucknow	.14	38	.94	.48	.73	■■■
Mumbai	.43	10	—	.63	.103	■■■
Pune	.110	17	.47	.34	.87	■■■
Visakhapatnam	14	53	.41	.26	.45	■■■

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Mysuru, Karnataka recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 174 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 12

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** 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<sub>x</sub>:** 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<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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.

**Chandigarh Electricity Department Chandigarh Administration CORIGENDUM NOTICE**

Tender No. OP2/08/2022 – for the replacement of existing old/outlived/burnt ACSR with ACSR 103mm<sup>2</sup> in Ram Darbar, Phase-I & II for improvement of LD System under electricity 'op' SJ Divn, No-5, Indl. Area, Ph-4, U.T. Chandigarh.

The subject cited tender due to be opened on dated i.e. 19.07.2021 at 16.00 hrs. is hereby extended upto 26.07.2021 at 14.00 hrs. for uploading and opening date i.e. 26.07.2021 at 16.00 hrs. due to administrative reason.

All the other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

Executive Engineer, Electricity (OP) Division No. 2 Chandigarh, U.T.

New Power House, Indl. Area, Ph-4, U.T. Chandigarh. Contact No. 0172-2655531 (O), 2637880 (Fax) E-mail Add: elop-2-chd@nic.in

## NORTH & EAST

# 'Govt. will be forced to scrap farm laws'

People will change the dispensation that brought these legislations: O.P. Chautala



O.P. Chautala

Chautala said, "If farmers are happy, then the country is prosperous, if they are not happy, the nation cannot progress... It is because of wrong policies of the BJP government that lives of people in different sections of society, including farmers, have become difficult. This government wants to make pro-corporate policies."

He said the stir against the farm laws is going strong as it has countrywide support and the agitation will force the government to "scrap the farm laws". "This government which brought these legislations will also be changed by the people..." he said, adding that his party is standing in support of the farm laws at Palwal and Ghazipur for months.

Mr. Chautala said all his life, former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal struggled to know the details of the case

ensure that farmers, weaker sections and other common people get their due. "We want to realise the dreams of late Chaudhary Devi Lal. All his life he struggled for one thing – that hard working farmers and the common man should be happy," he said.

**BJP misrule'** The INLD president also attacked the BJP-led dispensations at the Centre and in Haryana, claiming that they had made tall promises at the time of elections, "but when they came to power they did just the opposite."

"In a democratic set up, people elect their government whose responsibility is to work towards the people's welfare. However, today various sections are fed up with their misrule," he claimed.

Mr. Chautala said his life, former Deputy Prime Minister Devi Lal struggled to know the details of the case

catchment development works under the Rajiv Gandhi Jal Sanchay Yojana on priority, while pointing out that the scheme was aimed at increasing the groundwater level and preparing water harvesting structures.

Despite the famine and drought situations arising several times in the past in Rajasthan, the water availability has increased in the areas with low rainfall following the construction of water harvesting structures, "Mr. Gehlot said.

The Chief Minister asked the officials to approve water

University of Calcutta exams rescheduled

BISHWANATH GHOSH  
KOLKATA

The University of Calcutta on Tuesday rescheduled the final semester exams for undergraduate students following protests by students, teachers and many principals.

As per the original schedule, the exams for the honours course were to be held on July 29 and 30 and for general course from July 29 to August 2, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and again from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.

According to a notice issued on Tuesday evening, the honours exams will now be spread across four days, from July 29 to August 1, with only one examination to be held per day.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING



**PRakash Chander**

General Public is hereby informed that one person **Namely: Prakash Chander, S/o: Pani Ram, R/o: D-2/165, Servant Quarter Kaka Nagar, New Delhi, Age: About 51 Years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Oval, Built: Thin, Wearing: Pink Shirt and Black Pant, Black Colour Sleeper in feet** has been missing since 08.05.2021 from his house. In this regard **DD No. 35A, Dated 22.05.2021** has been lodged at PS. Tuglak Road, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing person but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing person please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>

E-Mail ID: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)

Fax: 011-24368639

DP/295/NDD/2021

SHO

PS. Tuglak Road, New Delhi

Ph.: 011-23012100 & 8750870524



## Spy in hand

The Govt. must come clean on the issues raised by revelations of phone surveillance

At least a 1,000 Indian phone numbers are in a list of potential targets of surveillance using the Pegasus spyware sold by Israeli company the NSO Group to "vetted governments" with the approval of the Israeli government. Of these, 300 numbers have been verified; 22 phones were subjected to forensic analysis by Amnesty International and peer reviewed by University of Toronto's Citizen Lab. Of these, 10 were clearly established as being targeted by Pegasus; eight of the other 12 yielded inconclusive results. The evidence is strong, and the credibility of these revelations is extremely high. Indian citizens were indeed targets of a vicious, abominable and uncivil surveillance campaign by a government entity, Indian or foreign. The buck stops with the Government of India. Instead of coming clean and explaining what it intends to do to protect citizens, the GoI has fallen back on a disingenuous claim that no illegal surveillance is possible in India. There are legal provisions for intercepting communication and accessing digitally stored information in the interests of national security and public safety. The capture of a handheld machine by Pegasus turns that into a real-time spy on the target who can be watched over and followed every step. This surveillance is total, into their private and intimate lives, which have no bearing on any public interest.

The cohort of people who were potential targets – journalists, politicians, probably a Supreme Court judge and a former Election Commissioner – does not indicate that the surveillance was necessitated by national security or public safety concerns. It is safe to assume that no information regarding terrorism or Chinese intrusion can be obtained by spying on a woman who complained of sexual harassment by a former CJI. On the contrary, the composition suggests that private craving, turpitude and even voyeurism motivated the perpetrators. This violation is about privacy and much more. Information obtained illegally may have been used to compromise institutions, to steal elections, sabotage Opposition campaigns, and even dislodge an Opposition government. That the accused in the Bhima Koregaon case had their computers breached by unknown entities to plant evidence that the prosecution is now using against them is notable in this context. That state agencies can trample upon the lives of citizens in such manner while elected representatives plead ignorance is unsettling for a democracy. This is antithetical to the basic creed of democracy. The truth about these revelations must be unearthed through an investigation by a JPC or by the Supreme Court or any other credible mechanism. A starting point for the Government must be in clearing the air on the foremost question it is skirting around – has any Indian agency bought Pegasus?

## Sharing during scarcity

A.P. and Telangana must focus on water and energy efficiency rather than on new projects

The Union Ministry of Jal Shakti's gazette notification on the jurisdiction of the Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards over projects and assets in the fields of irrigation and hydropower, though delayed, is a welcome development. The two river boards can now administer, regulate, operate and maintain 36 projects in the Krishna Basin and 71 in the Godavari to ensure judicious water use in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. The arrangement is expected to leave the working of Water Resources or Irrigation Department in the States intact. The seven-year delay to get the notification only reflects the tense equations between the two States over river water sharing. The States have been locked in a battle of sorts over the utilisation of Krishna water, with Andhra Pradesh proposing a few projects, including a lift irrigation scheme for Rayalaseema, a region from where Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy hails, and, in turn, Telangana coming up with half-a-dozen projects of its own. Although the Union Minister of Jal Shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat – the chairperson of the apex council of the two river boards – had said that the Centre would go ahead with notifying the jurisdiction of the boards, it took nine months to see whether a reluctant Telangana would fall in line. The seven-year-old State had held the view that the notification should flow from finalisation by a tribunal on Krishna water sharing by the two States that would enlarge the scope of reference of the existing Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal (KWDT)-II. Telangana had even moved the Supreme Court but the Centre said it would consider Telangana's request only if it withdrew its petition which it did. In the process, Telangana wanted its complaint to be referred to the current Tribunal to avoid duplication of inquiry.

The Centre must now see to it that the empowered Boards function in a fair manner, as the Union government's decision will be final with regard to matters concerning jurisdiction of the two bodies. Both States have their own justification to pursue new water and power projects as several areas await economic development. Rayalaseema is a dry region and it was grievances over poor utilisation of the two rivers in their undivided Andhra Pradesh that was a factor that led to the bifurcation. At the same time, the two States should instead focus on water and energy conservation and improving the efficiency of irrigation schemes and hydel reservoirs. Given the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the finances of the Centre and in States, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh do need to consider these alternatives and low-cost options. After studying the experiences of the revamped Boards, the Centre should look at turning the much talked-about concept of river basin organisations into a reality.

# Pegasus is India's Watergate moment

Intelligence gathering needs to be professionalised, parliamentary oversight introduced, and liberties and law protected



PRANESH PRAKASH

**I**f this government ever became a tyranny, if a dictator ever took charge in this country, the technological capacity that the intelligence community has given the government could enable it to impose total tyranny, and there would be no way to fight back because the most careful effort to combine together in resistance to the government, no matter how privately it was done, is within the reach of the government to know. Such is the capability of this technology." Those words of Sen. Frank Church, who led one of two committees on intelligence and surveillance reform established in the aftermath of the Watergate scandal, are just as relevant in India today given the revelations of extensive surveillance – it is unclear by whom, but signs point to the Indian government – by the use of spyware on people's phones. While there is much to be said about the international regulation of the unaccountable sale of spyware by shadowy entities such as the NSO Group, it is equally, if not more important to ensure that surveillance in India is made accountable.

### Go easy on the salt

My former colleague, Sunil Abraham, often likens surveillance to salt. A small amount of surveillance is necessary for the health of the body politic, just as salt is for the body; in excess, both are dangerous. While one cannot enjoy the liberties provided under the Constitution without national security, we must equally remember that national security is not meaningful if it comes at the cost of the very liberties such security is supposed to allow us to enjoy.

Excessive and unaccountable surveillance imperils privacy, freedom of thought, of speech, and has a chilling effect on people's behaviour, while shattering the bedrock of the rule of law upon which a constitutional liberal democracy is built.

The government claims all its surveillance is authorised and justified. But then, the question arises: where are the prosecutions for terrorism, organised crime, espionage, etc., based on evidence from such surveillance? Who is ensuring that the surveillance is necessary and proportionate? Indeed, on the contrary, there are numerous examples of surveillance powers being misused for personal and political gain, and to harass opponents.

### Earlier examples

In 2012 in Himachal Pradesh, the new government raided police agencies and recovered over a lakh phone conversations of over a thousand people, mainly political members, and many senior police officials, including the Director General of Police (DGP), who is legally responsible for conducting phone taps in the State.

In 2013, India's current Home Minister was embroiled in a controversy dubbed "Snoopgate", with phone recordings alleged to be of him speaking to the head of an anti-terrorism unit to conduct covert surveillance on a young architect and her family members without any legal basis. The Gujarat government admitted the surveillance, including phone tapping, but claimed it was done on the basis of a request made to the Chief Minister by the woman's father. Yet, no order signed by the State's Home Secretary – a legal necessity for a phone tap – was ever produced, and the Gujarat High Court shut down an inquiry into "Snoopgate" upon the request of the architect and her father, on the shocking basis that it "did not involve public interest".

In 2009, the United Progressive



Alliance government swore in an affidavit in the Supreme Court that the CBDT had placed Niira Radia, a well-connected PR professional, under surveillance due to fears of her being a foreign spy. Yet, while they kept her under surveillance for 300 days, they did not prosecute her for espionage.

Non-state actors such as the Essar group, have also been shown to engage in illegal surveillance. K.K. Paul, then the Governor of Meghalaya, noted complaints by telecom operators that private individuals were misusing police contacts to tap phone calls of "opponents in trade or estranged spouses".

There are dozens of such examples of unlawful surveillance which seem to be for political and personal gain, and have nothing to do with national security or organised crime. Yet, there are few examples of people being held legally accountable for unlawful surveillance.

### The laws

Currently, the laws authorising interception and monitoring of communications are Section 92 of the CrPC (for call records, etc), Rule 41A of the Telegraph Rules, and the rules under Sections 69 and 69B of the IT Act. Indeed, it is unclear when the Telegraph Act applies and when the IT Act applies. A limited number of agencies are provided powers to intercept and monitor.

In 2014, the Ministry of Home Affairs told Parliament that nine central agencies and the DGP of all States and Delhi were empowered to conduct interception under the Indian Telegraph Act. In

2018, nine central agencies and one State agency were authorised to conduct intercepts under Section 69 of the IT Act. Yet, the Intelligence Organisations Act, which restricts the civil liberties of intelligence agency employees, only lists four agencies, while the RTI Act lists 22 agencies as "intelligence and security organisations established by the central government" that are exempt from the RTI Act. Thus, it is unclear which entities count as intelligence and security agencies.

Further, a surveillance alphabet soup exists, with programmes such as CMS, TCIS, NETRA, CCTNS, and so on, none of which has been authorised by any statute, and thus fall short of the 2017 K.S. Puttaswamy judgment, which made it clear that any invasion of privacy could only be justified if it satisfied three tests: first, the restriction must be by law; second, it must be necessary (only if other means are not available) and proportionate (only as much as needed); and third, it must promote a legitimate state interest (e.g., national security).

In 2010, then Vice-President Hamid Ansari called for a legislative basis for India's agencies, and the creation of a standing committee of Parliament on intelligence to ensure that they remain accountable and respectful of civil liberties. In 2011, the Cabinet Secretary in a note on surveillance held that the Central Board of Direct Taxes having interception powers was a continuing violation of a 1975 Supreme Court judgment on the Telegraph Act. That same year, parliamentarian Manish Tewari introduced a private member's Bill to bring intelligence agencies under a legislative framework. That Bill soon lapsed. In 2013, the Ministry of Defence-funded think-tank, the Institute for Defence and Strategic Analysis, published a report, "A Case for Intelligence Reforms in India", a core recommendation of which was: "the intelligence agencies in India must

be provided a legal framework for their existence and functioning; their functioning must be under Parliamentary oversight and scrutiny".

In 2018, the Srikrishna Committee on data protection noted that post the K.S. Puttaswamy judgment, most of India's intelligence agencies are "potentially unconstitutional", since they are not constituted under a statute passed by Parliament – the National Intelligence Agency being an exception. In its 2019 election manifesto, the Indian National Congress – in what to my knowledge was a first for a national political party – called for parliamentary oversight of intelligence agencies.

### Post-Watergate reforms

The legacy of the Church Committee can be seen in the fact that the Snowden revelations in 2013 did not uncover any spying on Opposition politicians, journalists, judges, and human rights defenders for partisan political ends. What was shocking about the Snowden revelations was the extent of NSA's surveillance, the overreach of the powers provided under the PATRIOT Act, as well as the lack of sufficient checks and balances provided by the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. The Snowden revelations led to meaningful reform of that court, and controversial domestic surveillance provisions of the PATRIOT Act expired in 2020.

We need such reforms in India, which are aimed at professionalising intelligence gathering, bringing intelligence agencies under parliamentary oversight, making them non-partisan, and ensuring that civil liberties and rule of law are protected. This is India's Watergate moment, and the Supreme Court and Parliament should seize it.

Pranesh Prakash was a co-founder of the Centre for Internet and Society, and is an affiliated fellow at Yale Law School's Information Society Project

## The thread to grasp in the Kitex story

The saga of the garment maker's investment relocation points to the bargain between capitalism and democracy



VARGHESE K. GEORGE

**W**hen garment manufacturer, the Kitex Group, recently announced that it was rethinking its plans to make fresh investments in its home State of Kerala, nine other States competed to win its favour. They offered financial incentives and other sops. The company chose Telangana; the State had not only offered it the "best deal" but also sent a plane for the company leaders to travel to Hyderabad and meet the Minister for Industries. Kerala's often toxic trade unionism has been the major factor in delaying the industrial ambitions of the State. But beyond the industrial climate of Kerala, the Kitex episode mirrors an ongoing global bargain between capitalism and democracy.

### Key questions

The foremost industrial societies are grappling with this question, and the G7 countries have taken the initiative to move towards a global minimum tax on corporations and to oblige companies to pay more taxes where they operate also as opposed to where they are headquartered. At the heart of the debate are two questions. First, how does a capitalist enterprise relate to the political and social organisation in its location? Second, how do different jurisdictions compete for investments, and at what social cost? Now, a recap of the Kitex story with reference to these questions.

Kitex is primarily export-oriented and counts American retail

giant Walmart among its global clients. Located in the Kizhakkambalam panchayat near Kochi, the company employs nearly 10,000 people, most of them from outside Kerala. In 2015, the corporate social responsibility activities of the company took a political form. Under the banner 'Twenty20' Kizhakkambalam, it fielded candidates in the local body elections, in a sensational move. It won 17 of the 19 seats and took control of the panchayat (<https://bit.ly/3zIVxgj>). In the 2020 local body elections, it captured power in three more panchayats. In the 2021 Kerala Assembly elections, Twenty20 fielded candidates in eight segments and performed well, though nobody won. Along the way, in 2020, the group had announced ₹3,500 crore of fresh investments in the State.

Things suddenly turned turtle after the May Assembly results; the company said that the 11 inspections it had at its sites in the month of June were nothing but harassment. The government said these inspections were in response to specific complaints regarding human and labour rights violations. The company chairman berated the investment climate in Kerala. At the end of it all, Kitex announced its decision to move to Telangana.

### Compact of social control

The regulations that cover labour relations, the environment, and natural resources and taxes make up the compact of social control over private enterprises.

The social compact between capitalism and democracy is negotiated through elected representatives and bureaucrats. This negotiation turns out in practice to be legal and illegal, and through formal and informal means. Rules are there, but bribes and political do-



nations are also a part of it. In places where democracy is dispersed and political action is multilevel, such negotiations become more complex. For instance, in Kerala, even the Chief Minister is unable to enforce everything that he thinks appropriate – a point that the Kitex chairman has repeatedly made. It is in places where the chief executive has untrammeled power that all decisions are at the 'single window'.

Based on all these considerations, the investor has to make his decisions at two levels – where to locate the capital, and how to deal with the social and political issues there. As American States began to compete with one another to attract investors, the phrase 'race-to-the-bottom' came into use in the early 20th century, denoting the competition to please capital, and overlook other factors such as the environment and labour. This race turned global towards the end of the century. Countries, and jurisdictions within countries, are encouraged to compete with one another. In 2015, India partnered with the World Bank to launch the Ease of Doing Business ranking of States, following the Global Index 2019-20. Jharkhand was 28, while Kerala gets 64.

powers, tax concessions are not a viable allure that they can offer any more. Jharkhand is ranked five in the Ease of Doing Business ranking; Kerala is at 28 (<https://bit.ly/3hQRTF5>). The previous government of Jharkhand would jail 3,000 Adivasis who claimed legally guaranteed rights under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) and the Forest Rights Act (FRA). The fight for their legal rights led Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy to imprisonment and death in custody at the age of 84, recently. In the poverty score card (out of 100) in the Sustainable Development Goals Index 2019-20, Jharkhand is 28, while Kerala gets 64.

### The American example

Before the rise of globalisation, the capitalist had to negotiate with the political system at its base. The influence of corporations in U.S. democracy remains a contentious topic. In 2010, the U.S. Supreme Court allowed unlimited election spending by corporations and billionaires. They promote or undermine particular causes and personalities. The Kitex group took this model to a step further and directly captured political power in four panchayats, even as complaints of pollution rose against it. Not stopping there, its chairman proposed that bigger companies should follow his model and take over political administration across the country. But controlling four panchayats did not amount to control over the overarching political system. Hence, relocation.

The story of globalisation is a story of capital's enhanced capacity to flee from the shackles of too much democracy to places that are well-controlled under a strong regime, where all clearances are available at a 'single window'. Investments moved to places where

environmental regulations are lax, wages are low, labour standards are weak, and dissent is answered with an iron fist. This was working perfectly until its ripple effects reached the shores of western democracies. Now the West is waking up to the challenge and the G7 move is an acknowledgment of the crisis. U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Janet L. Yellen now talks about the "working class". "That global minimum tax would end the race to the bottom in corporate taxation, and ensure fairness for the middle class and working people in the U.S. and around the world," she said recently. This would also be "encouraging countries to compete on positive bases, such as educating and training our work forces and investing in research and development and infrastructure."

### Need for a national standard

Rather than vilifying Kerala for its alleged hostility to investments and glorifying the opportunism of capital, the need of the hour is to discuss the requirement of a national standard for corporate governance, environment and labour, alongside the forceful implementation of the laws that guarantee the rights of indigenous communities in the development process.

It is ironic that India is encouraging competition among States as a route to development at a time when the most advanced industrial societies are realising the limits of competition and pushing for better global standards in labour, environment and taxation. Turning the development aspirations of States into a modern-day gladiator sport is hardly in line with the slogan that we are asked to repeat – One India.

varghese.g@thehindu.co.in

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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- Spyware unleashed** As more disturbing details emerge regarding the alleged misuse of an Israel-made spyware which seems to have been used to keep track of 'targets' from different walks of life, the point that emerges is that it is an assault on one's fundamental right to privacy. The Government has also not explicitly confirmed or even denied that it obtained the spy tool. The Government is unlikely to accede to a demand for a Joint Parliamentary Committee. Even otherwise, nothing comes out of such committees. It is a fit case for the Supreme Court to take *suo motu* cognisance of and order a Court-monitored, time-bound investigation. S.K. CHOURHURY, Bengaluru
- The NSO Group says the spyware is 'sold only to government agencies'. Going by conventional wisdom, no foreign intelligence or enforcement agency is likely to be very interested in snooping on Indian journalists, social activists and others. So, the needle of suspicion points to one or more of our own intelligence or enforcement agencies. Even if no government department is involved, it is the duty of the Government to inform us who is. G.G. MENON, Tripunithura, Kerala**
- Eavesdropping on friend and foe is as old as Chanakya's Arthashastra. It has only gained sophistication over time, with technology as a boon. Even the Telegraph Act, 1885 was amended to include powers for the government to selectively intercept conversations. The problem now is that data may not be on India-based servers and hence the control on information is with alien agencies, not subject to our laws or supervision. It is in the interest of political parties across the spectrum to go beyond scoring brownie points and look at the larger picture that involves far serious and long-term national interests.**

R. NARAYANAN,  
Navi Mumbai

# India's equity market bubble may burst soon

With all agencies downsizing growth projections, the equity market is vulnerable to a major correction



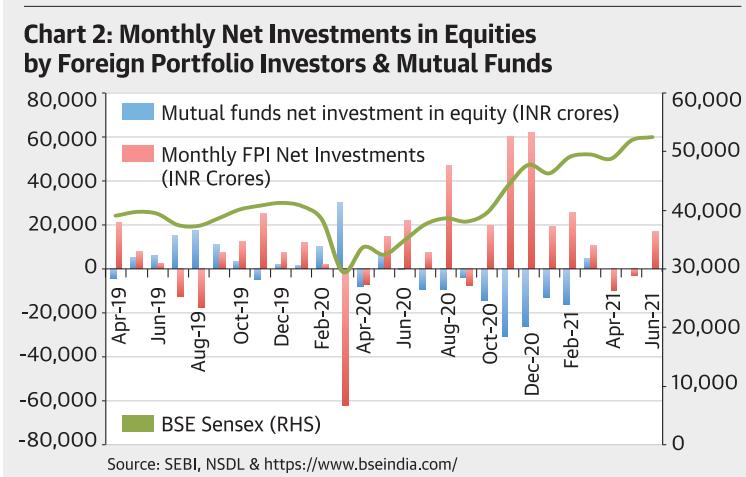
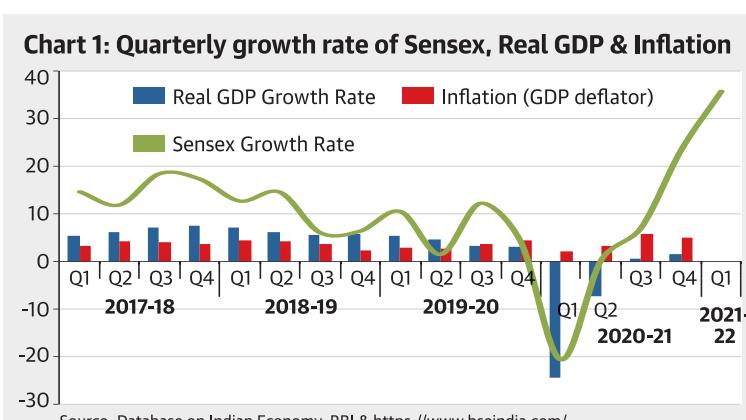
PRASENJIT BOSE & INDRANIL CHOWDHURY

Even as the real economy returns to the doldrums after being hit by the second wave of COVID-19 infections, the continuing bull run in India's equity market in the April-June quarter has baffled many observers. After breaching the 41,000-mark between December 2019 and February 2020, the benchmark BSE Sensex had nosedived to below 28,000 in March-April 2020, following the nationwide lockdown. Although India's stringent lockdown could not prevent the COVID-19 pandemic from doing considerable damage, the equity market posted a sharp V-shaped recovery in 2020-21. The Sensex surged beyond 50,000 in February 2021 and is currently closing on the 53,000 level.

**Why is there an equity bubble?** This equity market exuberance at a time of severe socio-economic distress has prodded the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s annual report (2020-21) to state: "This order of asset price inflation in the context of the estimated 8 per cent contraction in GDP in 2020-21 poses the risk of a bubble." An analysis in the same annual report though sees "a part of Sensex increase" as "rational", being supported by improved corporate earnings.

Whether bubbles can at all be "rational" remains a matter of academic debate. Empirical evidence across several centuries, however, bears out a home truth – sooner or later, bubbles burst. There was an 81%-plus growth in the Sensex between April 2020 and March 2021 in the backdrop of real GDP growth plummeting to -7.3% during the same period. While output contraction had reversed from the third quarter of 2020-21, the inflation rate also rose and remained way ahead of the real GDP growth rate in the last two quarters (Chart 1). It is difficult to find any rationality behind the skyrocketing BSE Sensex in the context of such stagflation in the real economy.

Just like the precipitous fall in the equity prices was driven by foreign portfolio investors (FPI) net selling



over ₹68,800 crore worth of equities in March-April 2020, the return of massive FPI inflows has driven the Indian equity bubble since then (Chart 2). Net FPI inflows clocked an unprecedented ₹2.74 lakh crore in 2020-21, the previous high being ₹1.4 lakh crore in 2012-13. While the mutual funds were net sellers during 2020-21 to the tune of ₹1.2 lakh crore, retail investors chased higher equity market returns, with the interest rates falling across the board. As reported by the RBI, 1.43 crore demat accounts were opened in 2020-21 as against around 50 lakh accounts opened in 2019-20.

The equity bubble in India has not evolved in isolation. The global liquidity glut, following the expansionary, easy money policies adopted by the fiscal and monetary authorities of the OECD and G20 countries, has led to equity price inflation in several markets driven by FPIs, especially in Asia. Following cues from the U.S. and the U.K., Asian equity markets in Singapore, India, Thailand, Malaysia and Hong Kong are currently witnessing price-earnings (P/E) ratios significantly above their historic means. The BSE Sensex's P/E ratio of 32 in end-June 2021 is way above its historic mean of around 20.

**Correction in the equity market**  
With COVID-19 vaccination and economic recovery proceeding apace in the U.S., the U.K. and Europe, fiscal and monetary policy stances will change soon. Once the U.S. Federal Reserve and other central banks start raising interest rates, the direction of FPI flows will invariably change bringing about corrections in equity markets across Asia.

India remains particularly vulnerable to a major correction in the equity market because of two reasons. First, the pace of COVID-19 vaccination in India, given the vast population, lags behind most large countries. India has so far fully vaccinated only 6.3% of its population. Within G20 countries, only Indonesia and South Africa are at similar levels, with 6.1% and 2.9% of their pop-

ulations fully vaccinated, respectively. Many other countries have ensured much higher rates of vaccination. The U.S., the U.K. and China have fully vaccinated half their populations. In contrast, insufficient budgetary allocation and mismanagement of vaccine procurement has created severe supply bottlenecks in India, which have brought down the pace of vaccination in July. In the absence of a substantial increase in the vaccination budget and procurement, large segments of the Indian population will remain vulnerable to a potential third wave of COVID-19, with its attendant deleterious impact on the real economy. Second, India's economic recovery from the recession will remain constrained by the weak fiscal stimulus that has been delivered by the Central government. Data from the IMF clearly show that while the total global stimulus consisted of additional public spending or revenue foregone measures amounting to 7.4% of global GDP, India's fiscal measures amounted to 3.3% of GDP only, less than half of the global average. Only three countries in the G20 had a smaller fiscal stimulus than India's (Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Mexico). The large doses of additional liquidity support, which in many of the G20 countries/ regions like the European Union, Japan, South Korea, India and Turkey exceeded the size of the fiscal measures, have contributed more to the equity bubbles than to spurring real economic activity.

The second COVID-19 wave had hit India at a time when the economy had just started showing signs of acceleration, reflected in a sharp rise in GST collections and gross tax revenues in April 2021. The consequent lockdowns once again disrupted economic activity and led to a deceleration in GST and gross tax revenues in May and June 2021. With all agencies, including the RBI, downsizing India's growth projections for 2021-22, it remains to be seen whether India's equity bubble lasts beyond end-August 2021, when the first quarter GDP results are due. If it does, it will only be for a while, before one or the other possible trigger causes speculative finance capital to change its course.

Prasenjit Bose is a Kolkata-based economist and activist; Indranil Chowdhury teaches economics at PGDAV College, Delhi University

## Biden's political pick

Eric Garcetti could provide momentum to the bilateral global strategic partnership

K.V. PRASAD

There is considerable excitement in Indian diplomatic circles on the nomination of the next U.S. Ambassador. Six months after President Joe Biden assumed office, the White House announced that Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti will be the next occupant at the Roosevelt House in New Delhi.

### Support from the President

Mr. Garcetti is a political pick of Mr. Biden and endorsed him during his run for the top political post. The nomination is also seen as support from the Biden camp to Mr. Garcetti after some high-profile controversy in the Mayor's office last year.

Mr. Biden is unhurried in making diplomatic appointments. The first set came in April. The latest announcement reflects the U.S.'s priorities as Washington prepares to host this September the first in-person summit meeting of the leaders of Quad.

While making public his acceptance of the nomination, the Ambassador-select promised to bring the same energy to the office that he demonstrated as an activist, teacher, a naval officer and a public servant. "And should I be confirmed, I'll bring this same energy, commitment, and love for this city to my new role and will forge partnerships and connections that will help Los Angeles," Mr. Garcetti tweeted.

People familiar with the workings of the administration in Washington suggest that Mr. Garcetti enjoys a strong backing from the Vice-President too. He served on the panel appointed by the Biden team to select the candidate for vice-presidency.

Considering the wide spectrum of interactions among the many sectors of New Delhi and Washington and the number of professionals engaged in conversations, his appointment should be looked at from the prism of both how things work inside the Beltway in Washington, D.C. and a reflection of politics of the West Coast, especially California.

As a number of Indian-Americans have been appointed in the Biden administration, a few aspirants with strong India connections will be disappointed. Reports say that a few with India Caucus on the House side

also threw their hat in the ring. On this count, Mr. Garcetti's dealing with India or previous interactions would appear thin. The choice of the new envoy to India, who has a sprinkling of Hindi vocabulary in his lexicon, should open up the conversation.

Since the announcement, a quick observation of posts by the denizens of Los Angeles on social media on Mr. Garcetti shows that they are unflattering, but then such is the nature of politics. Mr. Garcetti served in the city council for two decades including the last eight years as the Mayor.

Yet, from the standpoint of India, what is important is that Mr. Garcetti can pick up the phone and talk to the President and the Vice-President when required to move the pieces to provide momentum to the bilateral global strategic partnership.

### Process of selection

The formalisation of his appointment awaits confirmation by the Senate, a requirement under the U.S. Constitution that states the President "shall nominate, and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, shall appoint Ambassadors, other public Ministers...".

The confirmation process can take a few weeks after the President sends the list of names up the Capitol Hill. There is a growing practice to scrutinise names, with Committees examining the qualifications, policy preferences and independence of the nominees, and at times even seeking information on their health and financial assets.

The confirmation process has been debated over the years. Some political commentators hold a poor view of it while the legendary Senator, Robert C. Byrd, from West Virginia, defended it saying that if the Senate "rushes through a nomination without adequate investigation, it is accused of 'consent without advice, or being half-rubber, half-stamp'". Taking part in proceedings in 1987, he remarked that the Senate would do disservice to a president by rushing any nomination. The process as mandated continues uninterrupted.

K.V. Prasad is a senior journalist and a former American Political Science Association Fellow with the U.S. Congress

## DATA POINT

### BABY STEPS ARE BETTER

With Uttar Pradesh preparing a draft Bill on population control, there are wide discussions on whether coercive measures help control fertility rate. The move comes at a time when fertility levels are reducing across States. Data show that passive methods like better delivery of contraceptives and education of women bring down fertility levels. Moreover, in a country with a higher preference for a male child, the move could lead to more abortions. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan & Sumant Sen

■ In all the 20 States with relevant data, fertility levels have dropped significantly in the past decade

■ States with a higher share of women with 10 or more years of schooling also have lower fertility rates

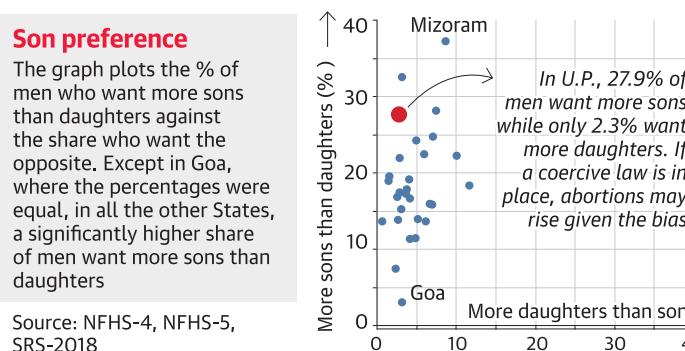
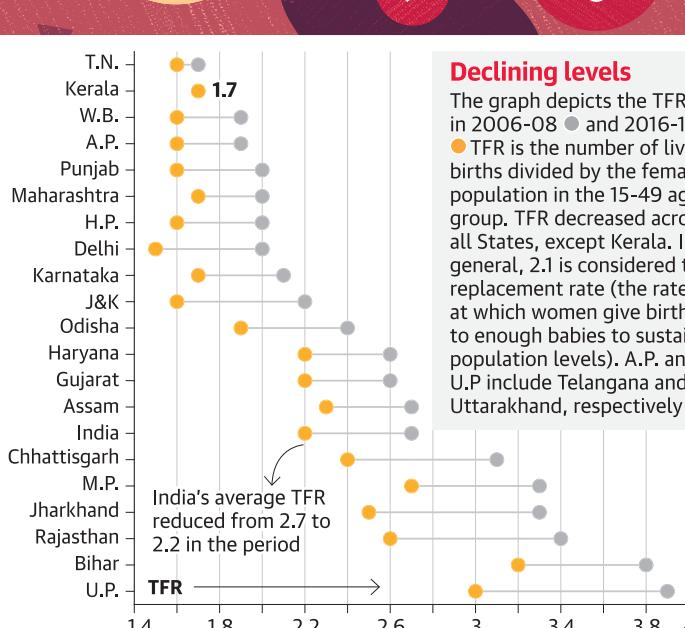
■ In 28 States/UTs, the share of men who want more sons than daughters is significantly high

23.1%

The percentage decrease in the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of Uttar Pradesh between 2006-08 and 2016-18. India's TFR came down by 18.5% in the same period

2.2

India's total fertility rate in 2018



Source: NFHS-4, NFHS-5, SRS-2018

## Accepting radical otherness

The erosion of our ability to accept the radical differences amongst communities has resulted in strife



SHASHIKALA SRINIVASAN

The U.S.-based Pew Research Center's survey has thrown up an interesting finding on religious tolerance in India: Indians of all faiths, paradoxically, support both religious tolerance and religious segregation. Most Indians (84%) surveyed said that respecting all religions is very important to them and all religious groups must be allowed to practise their faith freely. Yet, a considerable number of them also said they preferred to have religious groups segregated and live and marry within their own community.

This curious finding has resulted in a BBC Asia report stating that India is neither a melting pot (diverse cultures blending into one common national identity) nor a salad bowl (different cultures retaining their specific characteristics while assimilating into one national identity) but a thali (an Indian meal comprising separate dishes on a platter where they are combined in specific ways). The academic Pratap Bhawan Mehta concluded that the survey shows that though India is committed to religious diversity, it is "exclusionary and segmented in toleration".

**An 'unheroic form of tolerance'**  
Sociologist Ashis Nandy had developed a framework in the 2000s to understand these preferences. In a keynote address delivered in Australia (2010), Mr. Nandy observed that this form of living constituted a distinctly Asian cosmopolitanism. It had developed in regions which have to accommodate not just diversities but "radical diversities" that may prove to be dangerous if they are brought together in the same space. To accommodate these differences and peculiar

FROM PAGE ONE

## Five Oppn. parties skip PMO briefing on COVID

The attendees included NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, TMC leader Derek O'Brien, SP leader Ramgopal Yadav, RJD leader Manoj K. Jha and CPI leader Binoy Viswam, among others.

**Discussion in House**  
Many of the members argued that any discussion on COVID-19 must be on the floor of the House in the presence of all members. Selective briefing for just the floor leaders when Parliament was in session was not acceptable.

Within hours of the meeting, the government accepted the Opposition's position and allowed the debate on COVID-19 in the Rajya Sabha.

Following the discussion in the Rajya Sabha, many

parties changed their stance – including the TMC, the NCP and the SP. CPI(M) Parliamentary Party leader Elamaram Karneem had written to Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi opposing the selective briefing on Monday.

**AAP boycotts briefing**  
Though the AAP did not attend the Opposition meeting, it also decided to boycott the Health Secretary's briefing. In a tweet, the party's Rajya Sabha MP said the government needs to settle the issues raised by the farmers.

He said that when the whole country was suffering from COVID, the BJP was busy organising rallies, and it was now only doing lip service by organising this select briefing.

## Two-thirds of Indians have antibodies: ICMR

**COVID-19 prevalence** | More than half of the children (6-17 years) had SARS-CoV-2 antibodies in India, according to the fourth national serosurvey conducted between June and July 2021

Indicator	%
Age	
6-9	57.2
10-17	61.6
18-44	66.7
45-60	77.6
>60	76.7
Gender	
Male	65.8
Female	69.2
Region	
Rural	66.7
Urban	69.6

He added that the country had to work towards ensuring full vaccination of all healthcare workers while accelerating vaccination coverage among vulnerable population groups.

To a question on re-opening of schools, Dr.

Bhargava said it would be better if primary schools were opened first as children showed better tolerance against the virus. However, he added that it should be done only after ensuring that all the staff members were fully vaccinated.

## Snooping in Karnataka before regime change

Though the BJP has denied any role in engineering their resignations, all 17 disqualified legislators are today members of the saffron party, with 11 of them being members of the State Cabinet.

The Congress alleged that the spyware was used to topple the government, and demanded a Supreme Court-monitored probe into the matter. The party also targeted former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi's judgement that exempted 14 Congress MLAs and three JD(S) MLAs from following the whips of their respective parties. The leaders pointed out that the woman who had alleged sexual harassment by Justice Gogoi was also a target for hacking in April, as per *The Wire* report.

**Press meet in Delhi**  
Senior Congress leaders, including Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and party leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, held a press conference in Delhi to target the Central government over the latest revelations in the Pegasus snooping controversy.

Mr. Kharge said the party would raise the issue in the House as the Pegasus spyware is being used not just to target individuals but also institutions.

"They [Mr. Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah] came to power through democratic means but are trying to install dictatorial regime," he said.

JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy initially sought to play down the revelations as a "routine process" that

he was "not bothered with." However, taking to Twitter later, he said, "This is one of the means to bring down State governments and bring up new governments to protect the Union government."

Mr. Parameshwara, among those whose phones were targeted, tweeted, "Every time we believe the BJP-led Union government cannot go any lower, fresh proof arrives to show they can and will stoop to the lowest."

Sources said that Mr. Siddaramaiah, who does not hold a personal number, often used the number of his personal secretary Venkatesh which figures on the list. Mr. Venkatesh has been working with Mr. Siddaramaiah for over two decades.

Mr. Kumaraswamy's PS Satish's number and Mr. Devegowda's security personnel Manjunath Muddegowda's numbers also figure on the list.

### 2019 probe

Interestingly, the BJP-led State government had ordered a Central Bureau of Investigation probe into alleged illegal phone tapping of political leaders, especially defectors who brought down the coalition government and their associates during H.D. Kumaraswamy's tenure as Chief Minister. Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa had ordered the probe in August 2019, a month after coming to power.

Recalling this, Mr. Kumaraswamy said in a tweet, "The Union government which had put me under surveillance finally accused me of phone tapping and conducted a CBI inquiry."

The government said 'accelerated' formulation of guidelines would lead to

"undesirable results". The court had pulled up the NDMA, of which the Prime Minister is the ex officio chairperson, for failing in its duty to recommend the assistance.

"The National Authority [NDMA] failed to perform its statutory duty... Ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life is part of minimum standards of relief which has to be provided to persons affected by disaster – in the present case COVID-19 pandemic," the Supreme Court had observed in a 66-page judgment.

The government said a CBI inquiry would lead to

"undesirable results".

The Centre has approached the Supreme Court to allow the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) more time to frame uniform guidelines for payment of ex gratia assistance to families of persons who died of COVID-19. The government has asked for a month more. A June 30 judgment of the Supreme Court had given the NDMA six weeks to submit its guidelines.

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"undesirable results".

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The government said a CBI inquiry would lead to

"undesirable results".</p

TMC vows to stall Houses over snooping

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress on Tuesday said it would not let Parliament function till the government comes clean on the Pegasus snooping issue.

According to media reports published so far, the phone numbers of former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee and election strategist Prashant Kishor figure on the list of numbers alleged under surveillance by the spyware Pegasus.

"This (Pegasus) spyware is a serious issue and the TMC will not compromise on it. We will not let either House run till this government comes clean on the charges of snooping and surveillance. The government has spent millions to hack into phones at a time when the country is dealing with a pandemic," TMC's Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien said. The party held protests in both Houses of Parliament on the issue earlier in the day.

## Pegasus: Oppn. seeks independent probe

Parties seek inquiry into alleged use of software for spying on Ministers, politicians and journalists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties on Tuesday again sought an independent investigation into the alleged use of Pegasus software for spying on Ministers, politicians and journalists, and answers from the Central government.

The Congress tweeted, "We unequivocally demand the resignation of the Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah. Upholding our democratic & constitutional values & principles is paramount for the safety & security of all our citizens...we cannot stress this enough. A FOREIGN SPYWARE meant only for GOVERNMENTS has hacked into our CITIZENS' PHONES. There must be accountability."

Another tweet said, "If true, Modi govt's use of the 'Pegasus' spyware is nothing short of a total abdication of protecting 'national security'. Our national institutions have been infiltrated, the nation's safety has been jeopardised."

Yet another tweet said,



**Seeking accountability:** A Congress worker being detained by security personnel while taking part in a demonstration against the alleged surveillance operation using Pegasus spyware. • AFP

"Free & fair elections are the foundations of our vibrant democracy, and Modi govt has employed all means available to subvert them. Money power & muscle power, notwithstanding, BJP has resorted to the help of foreign entities to destroy our sovereignty." The Prime Minister should also be under

the purview of investigation, the Congress added.

### CPI(M)'s tweet

The CPI(M)'s Twitter handle said: "The Modi Govt is using Foreign Military grade spyware to hack into its own Journalists, Opposition Leaders and constitutional authorities. It is effectively wag-

ing a war on our Democracy and Constitution."

Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav said on Twitter that listening to people's personal talk by spying on the phone was a gross violation of the "right to privacy". If the Bharatiya Janata Party was getting it done, then it was punishable and if the

BJP government said that it was not aware of it, then it was its failure on the issue of national security.

### 'Serious matter'

Bahujan Samaj Party supreme leader Mayawati tweeted that the dirty game of espionage and blackmail was not a new thing but breaching the privacy using very expensive equipment, spying on ministers, Opposition leaders, officials and journalists, etc. was a very serious matter. The Centre's clarifications, refutations and arguments had failed to convince the people. In the interest of the nation and the government, an independent and impartial investigation should be conducted at the earliest so that responsibility could be fixed, she said.

The Press Club of India also expressed deep concern "over the latest 'Snoopgate' expose in which Pegasus spyware was reportedly used to 'snoop' on Indian journalists, activists, Ministers, Parliamentarians and members of judiciary".

In 2019, IT House panel unsuccessfully tried to discuss Pegasus breach

'121 people affected by spyware then'

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

In 2019, during a probe by the Standing Committee on Information Technology headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, officials of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), according to sources, told the panel that 121 people were affected by the Pegasus spyware.



Shashi Tharoor

der a common platform "Pegasus Targeted Persons". They included human rights activist Bela Bhaitia, Marxist Dalit author Anand Teltumbde, Jagdalpur Legal Aid group member Shalini Gera, Chhattisgarh base civil rights activist Alok Shukla and human rights activist Jagdish Meshram.

The panel did not submit any report on the consultations.

### Judicial investigation

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Tharoor refused to comment on the deliberations. "Only governments have Pegasus. If our government has used it, then it is certainly illegal, the exceptions of national security and terrorism does not apply to Rahul Gandhi or Prashant Kishor. And if it is not our government's work, then it is even more serious since it is a breach of our national security," he stated.

The discussion could begin only after the agenda was voted down upon. Only 25 of the panel's 31 members attended the meeting, of which 12 voted against initiating a meeting, while 12 voted in favour. The final deciding vote was cast by Mr. Tharoor.

There had to be a judicial investigation into it, he added.

In a tweet, he said, "If it turns out that it's our govt & it's authorised (to do it), GoI needs to give an explanation as the law only permits interception of communication for issues of national security, terrorism; otherwise, it's illegal. Essential for govt to cooperate in a probe."

## No snooping till I was CM, says Fadnavis

Denies allegations on use of spyware

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

Facing allegations that the Maharashtra government too may have used the spyware Pegasus to snoop on political opponents, former Chief Minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday said the government did not avail of the services of the Israeli firm NSO till he was in the office.

"Maharashtra government did not avail services of the NSO till I was the Chief Minister," he said, addressing a press conference. Mr. Fadnavis, however, ack-

Raj Kundra sent to police custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

A magistrate court in Mumbai on Tuesday sent Raj Kundra, businessman and actor Shilpa Shetty's husband, to police custody till July 23 for allegedly producing and circulating pornographic videos through social media. The Mumbai police said, "Through investigation it is clear that Mr. Kundra is involved in making nude and vulgar videos, uploads them on social media and earns money." He was arrested by the Property Cell of the Mumbai Crime Branch on July 19 in connection with the pornography racket busted in February.

When the police raided a bungalow at Madh village in Malad on February 4, 2021, some boys and girls were found filming and recording nude and vulgar videos and uploading them on various online platforms. Investigation revealed that these videos were going to be uploaded on a website and mobile app. Actor Umesh Kamat confessed that Mr. Kundra is involved in broadcasting such videos on apps and has also made WhatsApp groups to stay in contact with the app.

A Bench of Justices Rohinton Nariman and B.R. Gavai on Tuesday extensively heard the Election Commission of India (ECI) and *amicus curiae* and senior advocate K.V. Vishwanathan on how to "punish" the political parties that had not fully complied with the February 13, 2020, judgment. The court has reserved the contempt case, which arose from the Bihar Assembly election, for orders.

## U.S. condemns extrajudicial surveillance of journalists

to *The Hindu* in response to a question on what U.S. President Joe Biden's position on the issue was.

Only on Monday U.S. President Joe Biden had said that China and Russia were "protecting" and "even accommodating" cyber hackers and their hacking.

The news reports on Pegasus say that in addition to actually or potentially targeting journalists, leaders of the opposition in India, and others, a database of phone numbers that allegedly belonged to the NSO Group contained the numbers of two U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials in New Delhi and employees of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Tuesday's statement from the White House spokesperson stopped short of naming Israel – where NSO Group is based.

"Just as states have the duty to protect human rights, businesses have a responsibility to respect human rights, including by ensuring that their products or services are not being used by end-users to abuse fundamental freedoms," the spokesperson said.

## SC mulls over 'punishment' for parties facing contempt

Reserves contempt case that arose from Bihar poll for orders

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Political parties facing contempt for defying a Supreme Court judgment to declare or publicise the criminal antecedents of their candidates before elections may run the risk of derecognition or a time-bound forfeiture of their election symbols.

A Bench of Justices Rohinton Nariman and B.R. Gavai on Tuesday extensively heard the Election Commission of India (ECI) and *amicus curiae* and senior advocate K.V. Vishwanathan on how to "punish" the political parties that had not fully complied with the February 13, 2020, judgment.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, for the ECI, submitted that the NCP fielded 26 candidates with criminal antecedents and the CPI(M) fielded four candidates with criminal pasts.

Justice Nariman said, "We don't buy this 'sorry', our orders have to be followed"

We don't buy this 'sorry', our orders have to be followed

JUSTICE NARIMAN

which heads the LDF government in Kerala, and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), a constituent of the ruling Maharashtra coalition, "unconditionally apologised" to the Supreme Court for not complying with the judgment.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, for the ECI, submitted that the NCP fielded 26 candidates with criminal antecedents and the CPI(M) fielded four candidates with criminal pasts.

Justice Nariman said, "We don't buy this 'sorry', our orders have to be followed"

Mr. Singh submitted that the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) was the biggest default-

er, with 103 candidates having criminal antecedents. The JD(U), which heads the Bihar government, fronted 56 candidates involved in criminal cases. "Despite bringing out criminal antecedents in the public domain, criminalisation of politics has gone up," he pointed out.

Both Mr. Singh and Mr. Vishwanathan suggested the suspension of election symbols as a measure against parties propping up criminals as candidates.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, also for the ECI, said, "The change has to come from the heart of people. What we all want to see is that change should come to the system and it will come."

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for the NCP, requested the court to not invoke Rule 16A of the 1968 order.

### KOLKATA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION e-TENDER ABRIDGE NIT

C-ICMP (Supply), KMC invites tender online in two Bid systems for the following work:

NIT No.: KMC/C-ICMP(S)/19/A372/2021-2022

Name of the Work : Procurement of Raw materials for fabrication of 20 numbers of sprayer machines mounted on tri-cycle van. Estimated Cost: Rs. 9,02,000.00/-; Earnest Money: Rs. 18,040/-; Last date and time of submission of Bid: 31.07.2021 at 2:00 P.M.; The Tender will be opened on: 02.08.2021 at 2:00 P.M.; Tender documents will be available on and from 20.07.2021 from 1:00 P.M. from the website https://etender.wb.nic.in.

232/21-22

### ANNAMALAI UNIVERSITY

Accredited with 'A' Grade by NAAC

### TENDER NOTIFICATION

Sealed tender is invited from reputed & eligible firms under two cover system for Supply of Chemicals, Biochemicals, Glassware, Plastic ware and Lab ware on Annual Rate Contract basis during the academic year 2021-22.

Tender Reference	F1/AU/Chemical Tender/2021-22; Date: 19.07.2021
Scope of Work	Supply of Chemicals, Biochemicals, Glassware, Plastic ware and Lab ware on Annual Rate Contract basis during the academic year 2021-22
Last date and time for receipt of tender	12.08.2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Date, and time for opening of tender	13.08.2021 at 10:00 a.m.
Venue	Conference Hall, Golden Jubilee Building, Annamalai University, Annamalainagar - 606 002.

Tenders should be submitted along with Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of Rs.20,000/- per tender.

The tender forms, other terms and conditions for the above tenders are available on the Annamalai University Website: www.annamalaiuniversity.ac.in and www.tenders.tn.gov.in. Any change in the terms and conditions of the tender, time schedule, corrigendum, addendum etc. if any, will be published ONLY in the above websites. Tenderers should regularly visit the websites and keep themselves updated. University reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Registrar i/c  
Annamalai University

### NMDC Limited

(A Government of India Enterprise)

NMDC Iron & Steel Plant, Post - Nagarnar (Bastar) C.G. PIN 494001  
Email: srinivasapratap@nmdc.co.in; lalitdas@nmdc.co.in;  
rameshwariwani@nmdc.co.in; dgupta@nmdc.co.in  
CIN-L130101G19580J001674; GSTIN: 22AAACN7325A3Z3

### OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY

NMDC Iron & Steel Plant, Nagarnar, invites sealed tenders in two/three bid system for the following:

- Name of Work:** Installation of a High-Pressure Steam Pipeline from Coke Dry Cooling Plant to Power & Blowing Station **Tender No & Date:** NISP/Contracts/M&C/231/CDCP/2021/238 Dated: 20.07.2021 Last date: 04.08.2021
- Name of Work:** Supply, O & M of ready to use Mobile Medical Van (One Number) with complete fittings of requisite equipment's along with manpower **Tender No & Date:** NISP/Contracts/M&C/226/MMU/2021/239 Dt:19.07.2021 Last date: 11.08.2021
- Name of Work:** Conducting Environmental monitoring in & around at NMDC Iron & Steel Plant Nagarnar. **Tender No & Date:** NISP/Contracts/M&C/204/Envir Monitrg/2021/240 Dated: 19.07.2021 Last date: 11.08.2021
- Name of Work:** Supply of Installation Materials for HP Steam line Form CDPC to PBS for package - 20A **Tender No & Date:** NISP/MM-SP471/INSULATION/5460 Dated: 19.07.2021 Last date: 04.08.2021

Tender documents can be downloaded from websites www.nmdc.co.in or www.eprocure.gov.in in tender section.

GM (Materials & Contracts)

हर एक काम देश के नाम



भारतीय जैव पार्क - राष्ट्रीय योग्यता वाले विज्ञानीय संस्थान

ICAR - National Institute for Plant Biotechnology

नान बहादुर शास्त्री भवन, पुषा पार्क, नई दिल्ली - 110012 - Lal Bahadur Shastri Building, Pusa Campus, New Delhi - 110012

ONLINE/WALK-IN-INTERVIEW

Eligible candidates may apply for an Online/Walk-in-Interview for temporary positions of "JRF/SRF" in Project with **Inhouse** Funding supported by external grants". The details of positions, salary, application form, venue etc. can be downloaded from the website ([www.nrcp.res.in/www.nipb.icar.gov.in](http://www.nrcp.res.in/www.nipb.icar.gov.in)). Interview date shall be intimated on the website only in due course.

(Assistant Administrative Officer)



NIRDPR, Hyderabad proposes to empanel the retired officers to function as Inquiry Officers to conduct the departmental inquiries under Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal Rules, 1965 read with DoPT guidelines issued from time to time as per the eligibility criteria mentioned below:</

# Himachal Pradesh 'excess deaths' are twice the official toll

State registers the lowest undercount factor in north India

SRIVINAS RAMANI  
CHENNAI

The number of "excess deaths" registered by the Civil Registration System (CRS) in Himachal Pradesh ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit (from April 2020 to May 2021) was 6,081, which is 1.9 times the official reported figure of 3,127 COVID-19 deaths for the same period.

This multiple is among the lowest for States for which excess deaths have been calculated. Interestingly, while the number of registered deaths peaked in May 2021 (7,267), excess deaths for 2021 were only 1.6 times the official tally unlike the months of April to December 2020 (corresponding to the first wave) when they were 2.8 times the official tally. In 2021, there were an estimat-

ed 3,543 excess deaths compared with the official tally of 2,205 (till May 2021). Between April and December 2020, there were an estimated 2,538 excess deaths compared with the 922 deaths related to COVID-19.

The figures were arrived at from data on deaths registered month-wise in the online CRS from January 2018 to May 2021 in Himachal Pradesh and accessed by *The Hindu*. Not all excess deaths could be related to COVID-19, but a bulk of them will be, during the pandemic period.

The online data showed that 40,133 and 40,970 deaths were registered in 2018 and 2019 respectively in the State in the CRS, which are close to 96% and 94% of the deaths reported in 2021 could either be a reflection of a lag in registration of

## Low multiple

Himachal Pradesh's excess deaths - 6,081 during the pandemic period, calculated by comparing baseline mortality with pre-pandemic years (2018 and 2019) were 1.9 times more than the official COVID-19 tally recorded in the State till May 31, 2021



Period	Excess deaths	COVID-19 deaths	Multiple
Apr. '20 - Dec. '20	2,538	921	2.8
2021	3,543	2,205	1.6
Apr. '20 - May '21	<b>6,081</b>	<b>3,126</b>	<b>1.9</b>
Apr. '21 - May '21	4,879	2,092	2.3

tal Statistics based on CRS-2019 for these years.

The excess deaths were calculated as the difference between the registered deaths in the pandemic period and the average number of deaths registered in 2018 and 2019 for the same months. The excess deaths being a lower multiple in 2021 could either be a reflection of a lag in registration of

deaths or a more accurate count of the dead due to COVID-19 and related factors. But the CRS-2019 report mentions that 92.1% of the death registrations are completed within 21 days of the occurrence in Himachal Pradesh.

The report also estimates that around 86.4% of the total deaths in the State were registered. This suggests that

the excess death count and therefore the multiple could go up a bit more if all deaths are accounted for in later years compared with previous ones.

Nevertheless, even if it is a slight underestimate, the estimated undercount factor of 1.9 for the State is lower than that of Haryana (7.3) and Madhya Pradesh (23.8) in the north, Andhra Pradesh (17.9), Tamil Nadu (6.4 adjusted to 4.4 if CRS COVID-19 is considered) and Karnataka (4.3) in the south, and only higher than that of Kerala (0.42 based on reconciled COVID-19 tally) if the same baseline is considered (deaths registered in 2018 and 2019).

## 'Deaths at home'

When asked about the discrepancy between the CRS data and the official COVID-19 death toll, Janak Raj, senior medical superintendent at Indira Gandhi Medi-

cal College in Shimla, told *The Hindu* that the discrepancy based on excess deaths could be because of the 'non-hospital' deaths (deaths at home).

"People who died at homes could be the ones who denied that they had COVID-19, be it intentionally or unintentionally. Also, there was a negative publicity surrounding COVID-19 treatment at hospitals. Besides, social stigma associated with COVID-19 seems to be another reason that discouraged people to visit hospitals for treatment. There was a sense of fear that if one died of COVID-19, there would be a problem in cremation, besides people will not visit one's home. There could be instances that with such fear in mind, some people who fell critically ill at home and didn't visit hospitals for treatment and eventually died," Dr. Raj said.

"Majority of deaths had been within 24 hours of hospitalisation. Those patients, who managed to reach hospitals at an early stage, survived. It was mostly the critical patients who intentionally or unintentionally delayed visiting hospitals that succumbed to COVID-19," he added.

**District figures**  
A district-wise look at excess deaths in Himachal Pradesh showed that Kangra registered the highest estimated excess deaths of 2,647, which is 2.8 times the official COVID-19 tally of 933.

Shimla registered 971 excess deaths, 1.7 times the official tally of 558. The estimated undercount factor was the highest at 3.23 in Solan district.

(Data compiled and aggregated by Pratap Vardhan. With inputs from Vikas Vasudeva in Chandigarh and graphics support from Vignesh Radhakrishnan)

Congregational prayers for Id banned in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration announced a series of restrictions including barring congregational prayers at traditional venues, closing of gardens and suspension of intra-Kashmir train services on Id-ul-Zuhra, citing the risk of a third wave of infections. Further, only vaccinated individuals have been asked to carry out the ritual sacrifices.

Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, Pandurang K. Pole has called for "a decentralised way of prayers" on the occasion.

Officials in Bandipora, while barring large congregations, have decided to close down all parks and gardens on the occasion. The intra-Kashmir rail service will also remain suspended for two days.



## CBSE FAQs to help schools finalise results

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The CBSE offices will function on July 21, though it is a gazetted holiday for Id, to support schools to meet the deadline of finalising Class 12 results by July 22, according to a letter from Controller of Examinations Sanyam Bhardwaj. The CBSE has previously said the results will be declared by the end of the month.

Mr. Bhardwaj said the CBSE is also developing FAQs, which will be provided by noon on Wednesday, in response to queries from the schools.

In a letter sent to CBSE principals on Tuesday, Mr. Bhardwaj noted that the country would be celebrating Id on the following day. However, he also noted that the schools are busy preparing Class 10 and 12 results. As the board examinations were cancelled due to COVID this year, schools were asked to determine results via a formula using previous years' marks as well as internal and practical scores.

"For finalising the Class 12 result, the last date is 22.07.2021. It is informed that to meet the last date and to assist the schools, all the regional offices, CBSE and the Examination Department, CBSE HQ will be functioning from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.," said the letter.

## 4 new vaccines in human trials stage

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre is funding the development of four vaccines, which are currently in various stages of human trials. One more vaccine is in a pre-clinical stage, Science Minister Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

The government has also funded clinical trial sites, animal challenge facilities (where viruses are tested on animals) and immunoassay

laboratories, all of which were collectively allotted a budget of ₹900 crore for 12 months, the Minister said.

The four vaccines, funded under Mission Covid Suraksha, are the DNA-based vaccine candidate by Cadila Healthcare, Ahmedabad, Gujarat; the protein sub-unit vaccine by Biological E Ltd, Hyderabad, Telangana; adenovirus intra-nasal vaccine by Bharat Biotech Ltd, Hyderabad, Telangana; and an mRNA vaccine by Gennova

Financial support under the Mission was being pro-

vided to public funded research institutes; State and Central public sector enterprises; public and private hospitals; industries and organisations.

An amount of ₹100 crore has been committed till date to support these activities, the Minister said.

At present, three vaccines – Serum Institute of India's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Russian vaccine Sputnik V – are being administered in India.

Only 3,500 doses of Covaxin left with State, says CM Amarinder Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Citing a current demand of more than 2 lakh COVID vaccine doses for the second dose alone, Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday demanded 40 lakh more doses from the Centre on urgent basis to inoculate the State's eligible population.

A woman getting inoculated at a vaccination camp in Amritsar. ■ FILE PHOTO

**Review meeting**  
The State was expecting 2.46 lakhs vaccines to arrive on Tuesday but the Chief Minister, during a COVID review virtual meeting, noted that the vaccine remains in short supply. The State has run out of Covishield and is left with only 3,500 Covaxin doses as of July 19, he said.

Punjab has already vaccinated more than 90 lakh persons (nearly 37% of eligible population) and has been utilising the stock without any wastage, said the Chief Minister. While the first dose has been administered to 75 lakh people, 15

lakh had got the second dose too, he added.

The Centre needs to arrange for immediate delivery to the State to meet the shortfall and enable inoculation of all those needing the second dose, while continuing with the vaccination of other eligible persons, he said.

**Sero survey of children**  
The Punjab government on Tuesday said it will start a sero survey, especially focused on children in the age group of 6 to 17 ahead of a possible third wave. The survey will start this month.

Sero surveys or sero prevalence studies are based on analysis of antibodies collected through blood samples.

Capt. Amarinder said the outcome of the sentinel sero surveillance survey, aimed to assess the prevalence of the infection among those under 18, will be utilised to determine further localised restrictions as the State prepares for the third wave, according to a government statement.

GIS-based surveillance

and prevention tools will be used with an auto trigger mechanism for localised restrictions, he said.

Dr K.K. Talwar, head of State's expert committee on COVID-19, said in the first and second waves, 10% of those infected were under 18

and while there was no concrete data to support such a projection, the State was preparing to handle more cases of children in the third wave.

The CM also ordered estab-

lishment of a paediatric unit in each district and one centre of excellence in paediatrics for the State.

(With PTI inputs)

litioning the efforts taken by the Centre to boost oxygen supply during the second wave, the Minister said oxygen transportation capacity had been boosted to 10,000 metric tonnes.

"This is not a small feat. I admit there was still more to be done and we have to do a lot more in the coming days," he said, while appealing to everyone to work together.

On vaccinations, the Minister said there were many States that had 10-15 lakh vaccine doses lying unused, while their representatives in the House were asking the Centre to speed up the drive.

He said the Centre informs States 15 days in advance of

## Many States have unused vaccine doses: Mandaviya

Time given to plan inoculation drives, says Health Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Health and Family Welfare Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday told the Rajya Sabha that a lot more could have been done to handle the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and a lot more still needed to be done with regard to a potential third wave.

Replying to a discussion on the COVID-19 situation, Mr. Mandaviya countered allegations by some MPs that the Centre was hiding the true data of the number of deaths, saying that the States were responsible for registering deaths. The Centre only compiled the data given by States, he said.

Mr. Mandaviya was repre-

senting as Health Minister for the first time since the Cabinet reshuffle earlier this month which saw Harsh Vardhan dropped.

Listing the efforts taken by the Centre to boost oxy-

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He said the Centre informs

States 15 days in advance of

the vaccine availability, giving them time to plan their vaccination drives.

He said it wouldn't be appropriate to say that children would be more affected in the third wave. On the other hand, he said vaccine trials for children were ongoing.

In response to a question from Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien, Mr. Mandaviya did not clarify what percentage of the population would be fully vaccinated by December 31, saying instead that the government's effort would be to vaccinate every Indian as soon as possible.

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# Rockets target Kabul presidential palace

IS claims responsibility for the attack; President Ghani says Taliban have 'no intention for peace'

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KABUL

At least three rockets hit near the presidential palace on Tuesday shortly before Afghan President Ashraf Ghani was to give an address to mark the major Muslim holiday of Id al-Adha.

There were no injuries and the rockets landed outside the heavily fortified palace grounds, said Mirwais Stanikzai, spokesman for the interior minister.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack on its Amaq news channel.

Police quickly fanned out across the area. One car that was parked on a nearby street was completely destroyed; the police said that it had been used as a launching



**Charred remains:** Security personnel inspecting a damaged vehicle which fired the rockets in Kabul on Tuesday. • AP

pad for the rockets.

The palace is located in the middle of a so-called Green Zone that is fortified with giant cement blast walls and barbed wire, and streets near the palace have long been closed off.

The barrage came as the U.S. and NATO complete their final withdrawal from Afghanistan. Many Afghans are worried whether their war-ravaged country will fall

deeper into chaos and violence as foreign forces withdraw and the Taliban gain more territory on the ground, having captured several districts and key border crossings with neighboring countries over the past weeks.

The withdrawal is more than 95% complete and the final U.S. soldier will be gone by August 31, President Joe Biden said in an address earlier this month.

"This has been named after Afghan forces to honour their sacrifices and courage, especially in the last three months," Mr. Ghani said in his address to the nation following morning prayers.

"The Taliban have no intention and willingness for

peace" Mr. Ghani said. "We have proven that we have the intention, the willingness and have sacrificed for peace."

However, Afghan forces have complained about being left without reinforcements and supplies, often running low on food as the Taliban advanced. In many instances, Afghan troops surrendered rather than fight. Washington's watchdog monitoring U.S. spending in Afghanistan reported that troops are deeply demoralised and corruption is rampant. After their pullout, the U.S. and NATO are committed to spending \$4 billion annually on Afghan forces until 2024, the majority of that money coming from Washington.

# 'India is welcome to join China-South Asia grouping'

Bangladesh denies the group was meant to exclude India

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

India can join the China-led South Asian initiative for COVID-19 vaccines and poverty alleviation too if so desires, said Bangladesh Foreign Minister A.K. Abdul Momen, denying that a six-nation grouping launched earlier this month was meant to exclude India. The creation of the China-South Asian Countries Emergency Supplies Reserve, and a Poverty Alleviation and Cooperative Development Centre set up in China on July 8, the outcome of a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of China, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka in April, had raised eyebrows in New Delhi, as it appeared to leave out only India, Bhutan and the Maldives.



A.K. Abdul Momen

ken the first dose of the vaccine and had no access to the second.

Mr. Momen said that after Bangladesh requested vaccines from China, Foreign Minister Wang Yi decided to convene the six-nation China-South Asia meeting, where he suggested setting up a poverty alleviation centre to deal with economic issues arising in South Asia due to COVID, an e-commerce economic cooperation forum and an emergency storage facility for vaccines.

"We asked, how about India, and the Chinese [government] said this forum is open to India and India is welcome. In fact, even at the Foreign Minister's meeting which included Pakistan, they said India would be welcome to join," Mr. Momen said, stressing that the issues involved in the forum are common to all South Asian countries battling CO

VID and its impact on GDPs in the region.

## Aggression on LAC

The Ministry of External Affairs did not respond to a question on whether India had been invited to the forum or would consider joining the China-South Asia centre, now being established in the Southern Chinese city of Chongqing, in the future. However, given continuing tensions over Chinese aggression at the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, and New Delhi's firm stand that other bilateral relations cannot move ahead without a resolution of the boundary stand-off, it is understood that India would be unlikely to consider a new grouping involving China, especially one that could be seen to dilute its role in the SAARC region.

The absence of India from the grouping as well as from a series of consultations on COVID relief between the Chinese Vice Foreign Minister and different combinations of all SAARC member countries (other than India and Bhutan) led some experts to suggest this was meant to be a "Minus India" initiative. India is the only country of all eight SAARC nations that has not requested or accepted Chinese COVID vaccines.

## 'Best day ever': Jeff Bezos blasts into space on own rocket



**Mission successful:** Jeff Bezos giving a thumbs up after returning from space in Texas on Tuesday. • AP

### IN BRIEF



**Iraq reels as 36 killed in suicide blast on Id eve**

BAGHDAD  
Iraq was in mourning on Tuesday as at least 36 people were killed when a bomb ripped through a crowded Baghdad market in what the Islamic State group's jihadists claimed was a suicide attack. The blast on Monday evening, one of the deadliest in years, killed mostly women and children on the eve of Id al-Adha. It sparked revision and renewed fears about the reach of the IS, which lost its last territory in Iraq after a grueling campaign that ended in late 2017. AFP

### Mali leader unharmed in stabbing attempt

BAMAKO  
Mali's interim President Assimi Goita said he was unharmed after a man tried to stab him on Tuesday at the Grand Mosque in the capital amid celebrations for the Muslim holiday of sacrifice, Eid al-Adha. Mr. Goita's security team quickly took him away, and two men were arrested, witnesses said. Mr. Goita, a special forces Colonel who staged two coups within nine months, said, "It was an isolated incident that was brought under control." AP

## Pedro Castillo declared Peru's next President

He won by a margin of 44,000 votes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LIMA

Leftist school teacher Pedro Castillo was proclaimed Peru's President-elect Monday, six weeks after a polarising vote of which the results were delayed by claims of electoral fraud from his right-wing rival, Keiko Fujimori. The 51-year-old trade unionist's victory leaves Ms. Fujimori facing an imminent corruption trial.

"Dear compatriots, I bring here an open heart for each and every one of you," Mr. Castillo declared from the balcony after Jorge Luis Salas, head of the JNE elections jury, announced his



Pedro Castillo

victory in a virtual ceremony.

The JNE validated the vote count by the ONPE elections body, which had given Mr. Castillo 50.12% of the ballots cast, some 44,000 more than Ms. Fujimori – most of whose objections the jury dismissed.

## French President among potential spyware targets

Moroccan King's number also on the list

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS

Phone numbers used by French President Emmanuel Macron and top members of his government are among the potential targets for the Pegasus spyware supplied to several governments, the NGO that leaked the list of numbers said Tuesday.

"If this fact is established, it's obviously very serious," a spokesman for the President's office said.

Moroccan King Mohammed VI's phone is also on the list of numbers of people identified as potential targets by Morocco's intelligence services, French radio reported on Tuesday.

## 'Vaccination is top priority in north and east'

Sri Lankan government says it will provide livelihood support in the Tamil-majority areas

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government will give top priority to COVID-19 vaccination and livelihood support in the Tamil-majority North and East of the island nation, according to an official tasked with overseeing the efforts.

Nearly 60,000 people across the Northern Province – Jaffna, Kilinochchi, Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya – and about 74,000 people in the Eastern Province – Trincomalee, Batticaloa and Ampara – have received both doses of the vaccine, according to Geethanath Cassilingham, coordinating secretary to Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa.

"We should be able to fully vaccinate everyone over 30 years of age very soon," said Mr. Cassilingham, who is also the Resettlement Facilitator for the

North and East. Locals are hoping for wide vaccine coverage in the region so they can return to their jobs. There is some vaccine hesitancy in the community, according to Sureshkumar Ushanandini, president of a Kilinochchi-based organisation of women who are sole bread winners in their families. "We need credible information on the vaccines, like who should avoid them, and what symptoms to look for in case of a reaction. The government could use its network of midwives to take this message to the community effectively."

The vaccination drive, however, cannot by itself turn the tide of economic distress, unless the government redoubles its efforts towards resettlement and livelihood revival, residents said. Although the pandemic has severely impacted the national economy



A beneficiary of a housing programme in Jaffna district. • FILE PHOTO

and livelihoods across the country, families living in the North and East are worse off, as they were already struggling to put the devastating effects of a long civil war behind them. Studies have found that a quarter of those households are headed by women.

**Economic hardships**  
Survivors of the war have repeatedly blamed the former Mahinda Rajapaksa administration (2005-2015) for their persisting eco-

nomic hardships. While officials point to "an estimated \$1 billion" post-war investment on infrastructure in the area, people's lives hardly show a corresponding improvement.

In fact, most families in the northern and eastern districts resorted to predatory microfinance loans to survive during the last decade, getting entangled in a stifling web of debt.

If housing needs in the area have increased, retrieving land remains a challenge as owners return to their former plots, held by the military until recently. After successive governments' efforts, some 3,500 families who were internally displaced remain to be resettled, data shared by an official source showed.

"People's lands, including agricultural lands, in many areas have been gazetted as forest lands now. They should be re-gazetted and returned to the people, who are the rightful owners of those lands," he said.

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU  
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
BUILDINGS (C&M) CIRCLE, COIMBATORE -1.**

LUMP SUM CONTRACT - TWO COVER / ITEM RATE TENDER SYSTEM  
TENDER NOTICE NIT : 07/BC/C&MCB/E/2021-22, Dt : 19.07.2021

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamilnadu, Two cover system sealed Tenders viz., Pre Qualification Bid and Financial Bid in separate covers both inserted in single cover will be received upto 3.00 pm on 25.08.2021 from the PWD Registered Contractors by the Superintending Engineer, PWD, Buildings (Construction & Maintenance) Circle, Coimbatore- 641001 for "Construction of Integrated Labour Office Building with basic Infrastructure in Tirupur District." at his office and Pre Qualification Tender will be opened on the same day at 3.30 P.M.

All other details are available in the website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in) If any changes / corrections etc., to the tender, it will be published on the above website only.

Superintending Engineer, (i/c) P.W.D.,  
Buildings (C&M) Circle, Coimbatore.

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU  
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
Pennaiy Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603.  
FORM OF CONTRACT : LUMP SUM - ITEM RATE CONTRACT  
TENDER NOTICE (Two cover System)  
TENDER NOTICE NO. : 03/PBC / T-V,Mai/ 2021 - 2022 / F. 59 / JDO.4 / DATED : 20.07.2021**

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamilnadu, the Superintending Engineer, WRD., Pennaiy Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603, invites tender in Two cover system from eligible tenderers for the work of "Rehabilitation and Improvements to the Shenbagathora Reservoir Project in Polur Taluk of Tiruvannamalai District" (Value of work : Rs. 1,261.00 Lakh including GST) at his office upto 03.00 P.M. on 25.08.2021 in sealed cover. The tender will be opened at 03.30 P.M. at his chamber on the same day. Other information as details of Work, Value, EMD, Cost of Tender schedule, Qualification details etc., will be available in the Government website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in). Any Corrections or Modifications will be published on web site only.

Superintending Engineer, (i/c) WRD.,  
Pennaiy Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603.

**ENERGY MANAGEMENT CENTRE- KERALA**  
Department of Power, Govt. of Kerala  
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST  
Empanelment of Electric Vehicle Manufacturers / Authorized Dealers for the supply of Electric Cars  
Energy Management Centre - Kerala invites expression of interest from eligible Manufacturers /Dealers for supply of Electric Cars on outright purchase basis for Individual (Personally)/Commercial use in Kerala. For more details visit our website [www.keralaenergy.gov.in](http://www.keralaenergy.gov.in), Ph: 940068318. Sd/- Director

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**  
Office of the Chief Engineer (East), 7th Floor,  
Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bengaluru - 560009  
No. BWSSB/EIC/CE(E)/ACE(E)-1/DCE(M)-II/TA(M)-II/944/2021 Date: 19.07.2021  
**INVITATION FOR TENDER (2nd Call)**  
(Only Through e-Procurement Portal)

BWSSB invites Item rate tenders in two stage tender system from eligible contractors for the following works.

- Providing & laying of 300 mm dia RCC line and 230 mm dia SW line and construction of RCC manholes at various locations of Rajamahal Guttahalli (Ward No. 64 and Sadashivanagar Ward No. 35) of Malleshwaram Constituency coming under K.G. Tower Service Station of AEE (NE-2) Sub Division.
- Providing & laying of 300mm dia RCC line and construction of RCC manholes at various locations of Ward No.35 & 36 (part) of Malleshwaram Assembly Constituency coming under New BEL Road Service station of AEE (NE-3) Sub Division.

**Amount put to tender: Rs. 229.57 Lakhs. EMD: Rs. 3,45,000/-**

- Providing & laying of 300 mm dia RCC line and 230 mm dia SW line and construction of RCC manholes at various locations of Ward No.35 & 36 (part) of Malleshwaram Assembly Constituency coming under New BEL Road Service station of AEE (NE-3) Sub Division.
- Providing & laying of 300mm dia RCC line and construction of RCC manholes at various locations of Ward No.35 & 36 (part) of Malleshwaram Assembly Constituency coming under New BEL Road Service station of AEE (NE-3) Sub Division.

**Amount put to tender: Rs. 176.70 Lakhs. EMD: Rs. 2,81,100/-**

Last date and time for receipt of tenders will be on **03.08.2021** upto **16.00 hrs**. Date of opening of tenders is on **05.08.2021** after **16.00 hrs**. The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact the undersigned office during working hours.

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer (East)

**STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.**

**6 Feet**  
Wear Mask | Follow Physical Distancing | Maintain Hand Hygiene

**TAMILNADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED**  
Mondipatti, Manapparai Tk, Trichy Dist. - 621 306.  
Ph.: 04332 - 261600; Email: [purchaser.m@tnpl.co.in](mailto:purchaser.m@tnpl.co.in)

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Tender No.	Description	Due date
212223 000881	Caustic Soda Lye for TNPL Unit-II	02.08.2021
212223 000884	Enlistment / Filling of vendors for procurement of low Density Poly Ethylene granules for TNPL Unit-II for the period of One Year	02.08.2021
212223 000891	Sodium Bicarbonate (Food grade) for TNPL-Unit-II	04.08.2021

Detailed terms and conditions, Tender Fee, EMD, etc., are available in the tender document on our websites : [www.tnpl.com](http://www.tnpl.com) / [www.tnpl.gov.in](http://www.tnpl.gov.in)

DIPR/2167/Tender/2021 **TNPL - Maker of bagasse based eco-friendly Paper**

**KERALA WATER AUTHORITY - e-TENDER NOTICE**

Tender No: 122/2020-21/KWA/PHC/D2/TVM/RT1 KIIFB-WSS to Kottakkal and Athianoor panchayat-Construction of 15mld WTP(Lamella), recycling unit, 10LL OHSR, 9m dia well cum pump house, & 6LL clear water sump, supplying and laying raw water and clear water pumping main using DI pipes, construction of substation building and compound wall, supplying and installation of raw water pump set, clear water pump set, transformer and allied works including road restoration work EMD: ₹5,00,000/- Tender fee: ₹15000/- Last Date for submitting Tender: 11.08.2021, 03:00 pm. Phone: 0471-2322303.

Website: [www.kwa.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kwa.kerala.gov.in), [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)  
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram

Name of work	Description	Due date
Tender ID	2021_PCKNR_429602_1	
RFB No	DRIP/KRP/SE/KNR/10/2021/22/NS	
Date of Publishing	09.07.2021	
Bid Submission End Date	09.08.2021	
EMD	910000	
Tender Class	A-Class	
Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Dept., Project Circle, Kannur		

Executive Director, Telangana State Tourism Development Corporation Ltd (TSTD) Tourism House, Himayatnagar, Hyderabad - 500 029 India Ph: +91-99660 00393, edprojs@tstdc.in Sd

## MARKET WATCH

	20-07-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,198	-0.68
US Dollar	74.61	0.36
Gold	47100	0.28
Brent oil	69.29	-0.02

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	672.60	-1.10
Asian Paints	3159.05	177.10
Axia Bank	745.75	-9.45
Bajaj Auto	3905.40	22.55
Bajaj Finance	12597.15	-123.95
Bharti Airtel	5941.85	-73.55
BPCL	525.75	-12.70
Britannia Ind	3433.55	-16.60
Cipla	955.15	-18.85
Coal India	142.90	-1.55
Divis Lab	4787.85	-19.60
Dr Reddys Lab	5344.05	-19.30
Eicher Motors	2554.85	-24.90
Grasim Ind	1574.10	15.30
HCL Tech	977.20	-23.00
HDFC	2458.75	-22.90
HDFC Bank	1443.15	-27.85
HDFC Life	663.45	-15.25
Hero MotoCorp	2839.00	-48.10
Hindalco	383.00	-13.95
Hind Unilever	2434.90	26.25
ICICI Bank	641.90	-14.00
IndusInd Bank	981.55	-34.30
Infosys	1550.05	8.35
Indian Oil Corp	105.60	-0.35
ITC	206.80	-0.95
JSW Steel	682.00	-16.40
Kotak Bank	1702.65	-20.15
L&T	1590.35	-19.25
M&M	760.20	-15.60
Maruti Suzuki	7232.70	67.15
Nestle India Ltd.	17856.10	103.65
NTPC	118.45	-2.95
ONGC	112.60	-2.00
PowerGrid Corp	231.30	-1.85
Reliance Ind	2093.80	-5.15
SBI Life	1014.75	-23.10
State Bank	420.90	-7.00
Shree Cement	28082.90	86.05
Sun Pharma	676.45	-12.80
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	757.10	-8.45
Tata Motors	302.15	-6.70
Tata Steel	1233.35	-33.05
TCS	3205.80	21.20
Tech Mahindra	1087.20	-7.00
Titan	1671.40	-8.95
UltraTech Cement	7424.70	112.35
UPL	814.25	-19.00
Wipro	568.10	-5.70

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 20		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.42	74.74
Euro	87.66	88.03
British Pound	101.31	101.78
Japanese Yen (100)	68.01	68.30
Chinese Yuan	11.48	11.53
Swiss Franc	80.91	81.27
Singapore Dollar	54.38	54.62
Canadian Dollar	58.29	58.54
Malaysian Ringgit	17.61	17.69

Source: Indian Bank

## RML returns to black

CHENNAI  
Rane (Madras) Ltd. (RML) reported a standalone net profit of ₹3.7 crore for Q1 of FY22, compared with a loss of ₹21.9 crore a year earlier.

## ADB trims FY22 growth forecast to 10%

Asian multilateral lender cites second wave; sees much of India's population vaccinated by 2022-23



**Back to business:** Early indicators show activity resuming quickly after curbs were eased, says ADB. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

**VIKAS DHOTI**  
NEW DELHI

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has pared its forecast for India's growth this year to 10%, from 11% projected in April, citing the curbs imposed across States during the second wave.

The lender also said on Tuesday it expects most of the country's population to be vaccinated by 2022-23, suggesting global observers are doubtful that India can meet its target of vaccinating all adults by December 2021.

A faster-than-expected spurt in fuel and food prices also nudged the ADB to raise its average inflation projection for 2021-22 to 5.5%, from 5.2% anticipated earlier. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected retail inflation at 5.1% for this period.

Retail inflation, which remained elevated at around

6.3% over May and June, is also expected to stay above the RBI's preferred target level of 4% in 2022-23, at 4.8%.

India's average inflation in 2020-21 was 6.2%, so the ADB's projections suggest almost three successive years of inflation hovering closer to the RBI's upper tolerance limit of 6% than the mid-

average 6.2% through the COVID-affected 2020-21.

## South Asian impact

India is expected to record a growth of 7.5% in financial year 2022-23, the ADB said, an increase from the 7% it had projected earlier. The renewed outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic had hampered economic activity across South Asia due to fresh containment measures, it pointed out.

"South Asia's growth outlook for fiscal year 2021 [the ADB refers to the year that started in April 2021] is lowered to 8.9% from 9.5%. The forecast for India is downgraded by 1.0 percentage point to 10.0%. The inflation forecast for South Asia in 2021 is raised from 5.5% to 5.8%, mainly reflecting a higher forecast for India," the Bank's economists

averred in a supplement to the Asian Development Outlook (ADO) report for 2021.

While India's GDP growth recovered to 1.6% in the final quarter of 2020-21, the pandemic's second wave led many State governments to impose strict containment measures as new COVID-19 cases peaked at more than 4,00,000 a day in early May, before moderating to just above 40,000 in early July.

"Early indicators show economic activity resuming quickly after containment measures eased," the ADB said. "The growth projection for FY2021... reflects large base effects. The projection for FY2022 (2022-23), by which time much of India's population is expected to be vaccinated, is upgraded from 7.0% to 7.5% as economic activity normalizes," the lender added.

## Recovery to remain patchy, says Parekh

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh said the unpredictability of the virus remained the key challenge to the overall macroeconomic environment.

"The world is still susceptible to recurring waves of infections. Thus, economic recovery will remain uneven and patchy," Mr. Parekh said addressing shareholders at the 44th AGM on Tuesday.

The veteran banker said owing to the second wave, the Indian economy would mirror a trend seen in FY21, wherein the second half of the financial year would be significantly stronger than the first.

This commitment builds on Wipro's existing cloud business with clients and significantly expands the investment with its partners and hyperscalers, creating industry solutions that accelerate results for mutual clients, as per a filing.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Wipro Ltd. said it would invest \$1 billion in cloud technologies, capabilities, acquisitions and partnerships over the next three years.

The firm unveiled Wipro FullStride Cloud Services to bring together a full portfolio of its cloud-related capabilities, offerings and talent for the convenience of its global clients.

This commitment builds on Wipro's existing cloud business with clients and significantly expands the investment with its partners and hyperscalers, creating industry solutions that accelerate results for mutual clients, as per a filing.

Wipro FullStride Cloud Services, we are in a far stronger position to simplify, orchestrate and accelerate the cloud journey for our clients," said Thierry Delaporte, chief executive officer and managing director.

"With our \$1 billion investment in cloud capabilities and the launch of Wipro FullStride Cloud Services, we are in a far stronger position to simplify, orchestrate and accelerate the cloud journey for our clients," said Thierry Delaporte, chief executive officer and managing director.

online select media interaction on Tuesday.

On Amit, Vijender said, "He is world No. 1 and that brings a lot of benefits. His better," Vijender, who will be part of Sony Sports live studio show, Sports Extraaa, for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games from July 23, said during an

online select media interaction on Tuesday.

On Amit, Vijender said, "He is world No. 1 and that brings a lot of benefits. His

style is exciting. I am told he boxed well in Dubai (in the Asian championships)."

On another southpaw Vikas, Vijender said, "This is his third Olympics and I hope he makes it (to the podium)."

Vijender admired Mary, who landed a bronze medal in the 2012 London Olympics.

"She is a strong woman. I pray she comes back with a medal. She is fighting after having three kids and we must learn a lot from her."

## Sharing experiences

Vijender expected Mary and Vikas to share their experience with others.

"Manish Kaushik (the Bhawani boxer who qualified in 63kg) asked me about the Olympic Village. I shared my

experience so that he would know how it would be over there. Olympians like Mary and Vikas should share their experience with others."

Vijender, who won his Olympic medal in the middle-weight division, had a word of advice for fellow middle-weight pugilist Ashish Kumar.

"Stay away from social media and save your energy.

When you go to the Olympic Village, you are treated like a king. Whatever you want to do in the village, you can do there. Don't waste your energy, just focus on why you are here and what you are doing."

Vijender urged the countrymen to encourage all the nine boxers who can perform better after the disappointing show in the Rio Games.

Online select media interaction on Tuesday.

On Amit, Vijender said, "He is world No. 1 and that brings a lot of benefits. His

style is exciting. I am told he boxed well in Dubai (in the Asian championships)."

On another southpaw Vikas, Vijender said, "This is his third Olympics and I hope he makes it (to the podium)."

Vijender admired Mary, who landed a bronze medal in the 2012 London Olympics.

"She is a strong woman. I pray she comes back with a medal. She is fighting after having three kids and we must learn a lot from her."

Sharing experiences

Vijender expected Mary and Vikas to share their experience with others.

"Manish Kaushik (the Bhawani boxer who qualified in 63kg) asked me about the Olympic Village. I shared my

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# Focus on men's team and Deepika's performance

Consistency will be the password for the lone woman qualifier as she has her own reputation to defend

## TOKYO OLYMPICS

A. VINOD

India, unlike in Rio 2016, will not have a full house in Tokyo, what with only four archers making the grade. The absence of the women's team will be felt greatly, which is inescapable as India will now take a shot in only four of the five events to be held.

The country is yet to win a medal in the sport at this level, though it has had a steady participation in the discipline since Seoul 1988. In Tokyo, the key focus, however, will be on the men's team and the performance of Deepika Kumari, the lone woman qualifier.

The talented Odisha archer, who has had her skills honed at the Jamshedpur-

based Tata Sports Academy, is back as World No. 1. A lot is expected from Deepika as she shoots to a possible run for glory in her third Olympics. She was tipped to do well in both London 2012 and Rio four years later, but fared badly, going through her shots hurriedly and thus losing momentum.

This is the time for Deepika to make amends and prove her real worth as she will be in action in both the women's recurve singles and the mixed pairs alongside Atanu Das – an event which has been included in the Games for the first time.

Hopefully, consistency will be Deepika's password this time around as she has her own reputation to defend.

Besides Atanu, the men's team will comprise Tarun-



**The target:** The Indians will hope to come up with a good show in the ranking rounds and get a favourable draw. ■ TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

## ARCHERY

deep Rai and newcomer Pravin Jadhav. The latter was in great form in the trials in April as he surprisingly out-

scored both his seniors. While Atanu will be taking part in his second Games, it will three-in-a-row for veteran Tarun. The trio will be seen in action in the men's team as also the individ-

dual event.

The competitions will be held from July 23 to July 31, but the first hurdle that the Indians will face will be the ranking rounds on the opening day. A good showing here

will help them through a favourable draw thereafter.

But again, there will be no room for any faux pas as a poor outing could spell doom for the chances of the Indian team.

# Sania & Co. have a herculean task awaiting them

The former doubles No. 1 has experience, but Ankita, Nagal have to punch above their weights

## TENNIS

N. SUDARSHAN

India's faint hopes of a tennis medal at the Tokyo Olympics will rest on Sania Mirza. The former doubles World No. 1 will be making her fourth Olympic appearance and the 34-year-old will have in tow Ankita Raina, six years her junior.

The challenge that awaits the Indian duo, however, will be herculean, with accomplished pairs such as Barbora Krejčíková-Katerina Siniaková of the Czech Republic (reigning French Open and three-time Major champions), Elena Vesnina-Vera Zvonareva of Russia (both three-time Slam champions) headlining the field.

United States' Bethanie

Mattek-Sands, France's Kristina Mladenovic, Hungary's Timea Babos, Belgium's Elise Mertens and Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka are other notable names, who have 19 Major women's doubles titles among them.

**Noteworthy record**  
Sania's record – three women's doubles and three mixed-doubles Slam trophies – is similarly noteworthy, but her lack of match practice and current form are worries. In 2021, she has played just eight women's doubles matches across four tournaments, with a win-loss record of 4-4.

None of these have come with Ankita, with whom Sania last played in the Group I Asia-Oceania Billie Jean King Cup round robin in March



**Faint hopes:** Sania Mirza will be making her fourth Olympic appearance – this time with Ankita Raina, six years her junior.

2020, winning all three matches.

Since then, Ankita has entered the doubles top-100,

won a WTA Tour-level trophy and featured in multiple Grand Slam main draws. But she will require a once-in-a-

lifetime effort to come close to a medal.

In men's singles, the late entry of Sumit Nagal brought cheer but hopes of a podium finish appear far-fetched. The 23-year-old's win-loss record of 13-13 since reaching the quarterfinals at the Buenos Aires ATP 250 in March is far from ideal going into an event that is almost Grand Slam-like, with nine of the world's top-15, including four of the top-five, present.

In fact, the last Indian to win a singles match at the Olympics was Leander Paes in 1996. Ending that drought will be a good achievement.

Nagal and Sania are eligible for mixed-doubles, but with a combined ranking of 153, they may struggle to be among the top-16 teams.

The spirit of tennis has long straddled the conflicting worlds of nationalism and globalism. While the Davis Cup held a special place, many top players prioritised Grand Slams that brought individual glory and had global appeal. Tennis, in fact, was reintroduced as a medal-winning discipline at the Olympics only in 1988, after a gap of 64 years.

But for Indians, tennis has

long been a source of national pride, riding on the exploits of the Krishnans (Ramanathan & Ramesh), Amritraj (Anand and Vijay) and the rest. In this, Leander Paes' singles bronze from the 1996 Atlanta Olympics ranks high. It was independent India's second individual me-



Paes during the bronze medal match. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

dal, ending a 44-year drought after K.D. Jadhav's bronze (wrestling, Helsinki 1952).

Paes beat a top-10 player in Thomas Enqvist, ruptured tendons in the wrist in the semifinal loss to Andre Agassi and fought back from a set down against Fernando Meligeni of Brazil in the playoff to bag the historic medal.

But for that, India has had

little success. There hasn't been a singles match win since Paes' effort and his famed partnership with Mahesh Bhupathi across four Olympics didn't fetch a single medal. The closest was at Athens 2004, but the duo lost a marathon bronze medal playoff to Croatia's Mario Ancic and Ivan Ljubicic.

The nation's best chance was at London 2012, when it had Paes, Bhupathi and Rohan Bopanna in the top-20. But it will be best remembered for off-court bickering and a clash of egos.

Bopanna and Sania Mirza narrowly missed out at Rio 2016, losing the mixed-doubles semifinal against Venus Williams and Rajeev Ram in a match-tiebreak before being defeated in the bronze medal playoff by Czech Republic's Lucie Hradecká and Radek Stepanek.

## Content with participation

AMOL KARHADKAR

Ever since table tennis was included as an Olympic sport in Seoul 1988, at least one Indian has participated in the Games every time. However, in true Olympic spirit, for all the last eight editions, India's paddlers have mostly been content with participation.

When it comes to men's singles, right from Chetan Baboor to A. Sharath Kamal – who have featured in three Olympics each – to Kamlesh Mehta, who figured in the 1988 and 1992 editions, no Indian paddler has entered the pre-quarterfinals; so has been the case with the women's and men's doubles entrants.

## INDIA IN LANKA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO

Tailender Deepak Chahar brought India back from the dead with a steely 69 off 82 balls and script the visiting team's series-sealing victory in the second ODI against Sri Lanka here on Tuesday.

With a world ranking of 42, Bhavani will have a mountain to climb.

She rose through the world rankings mainly through a good performance in the World championships in 2019 in Budapest. Bhavani entered the round of 16, the first-ever Indian fencer to achieve the feat.

Bhavani defeated two



Bhavani the first Indian fencer at the Olympics.

jumped 23 places to be ranked 44.

But the competition will be fierce in Tokyo, with a handful of world class fencers waiting to light up the Makuhari Messe Hall from July 26.

2016 Rio Olympics gold medallist Yana Egorian of Russia, who has slipped to 23 in the world rankings, reigning World champion Olga Kharlan of Ukraine, World No. 1 Sofya Velikaya of Russia, who is a two-time Olympics silver medallist (2012, 2016), and two-time Olympic gold medallist Mariel Zagunis (2004, 2008) of USA have all done quite well in the season gone by.

If Bhavani is able to get past two opponents, it will be an achievement to savour.

## TABLE TENNIS

AMOL KARHADKAR

History is in the making. Even if India's paddlers don't earn a first Olympic medal in what has been conventionally considered a "lesser sport" by some in the Indian sports ecosystem, Tokyo 2020 will still be a historic occasion for the country's table tennis community.

### Sharath's distinction

While veteran A. Sharath Kamal will become the first Indian paddler to feature in four Olympics, Manika Batra will be India's first female paddler to make a second successive appearance in the quadrennial extravaganza.

The two will also hope to



**On a mission:** India's paddlers will hope to elevate the sport's stature by doing well in Tokyo. ■ TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

pull off a miracle in mixed-doubles and make their appearance even more significant next week. In an event that has been introduced at the Olympics for the first time, the pair of Sharath and Manika will be India's lone medal hope, albeit remote, in Tokyo.

The duo gave India its first

table tennis medal at the Asian Games, in 2018, and ensured it wasn't a fluke by qualifying for the Olympics in style.

In a draw of the top-16 pairs in the world, it will be interesting to see if they can cause three upsets in a row. When it comes to singles, it will be a bridge too far. It will



**Rising to the occasion:** Deepak Chahar's unbeaten half-century took India past the finish line. ■ AP

## SCOREBOARD

### SRI LANKA

Avishka Fernando c Krunal b Bhuvneshwar 50 (71b, 4x4, 1x6). Minod Bhanu c Pandey b Chahal 36 (42b, 6x4), Bhanuka Rajapaksa c Ishan b Chahal 0 (1b), Dhananjaya de Silva c Dhawani b Deepak Chahar 32 (45b, 1x4). Charith Asalanaka c sub (Padikkal) b Bhuvneshwar 65 (68b, 6x4), Dasun Shanaka b Chahal 16 (24b, 1x4), Wanindu Hasaranga b Deepak Chahar 8 (11b, 1x4), Chamika Karunaratne (not out) 44 (33b, 5x4), Dushmantha Chameera c sub (Padikkal) b Bhuvneshwar 2 (5b), Lakshan Sandakan run out 0 (1b), Kasun Rajitha (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-6, w-13, nb-2); Total (for seven wkts, in 50 overs): 275.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-28 (Minod, 13.2 overs), 2-77 (Rajapaksa, 13.3), 3-124 (Avishka, 24.6), 4-134 (de Silva, 27.2), 5-172 (Shanaka, 35.2), 6-194 (Hasaranga, 39.1), 7-244 (Asalanaka, 47.1), 8-264 (Chameera, 49.1), 9-266 (Sandakan, 49.3).

### INDIA BOWLING

Bhuvneshwar 10-0-54-3, Deepak Chahar 8-0-53-2, Hardik 4-0-20-0, Chahal 10-1-50-3, Kuldeep 10-0-55-0, Krunal 8-0-37-0.

### INDIA

Prithvi Shaw b Hasaranga 13 (11b, 3x4), Shikhar Dhawan lbw b Hasaranga 29 (38b, 6x4), Ishan Kishan b Rajitha 1 (4b), Manish Pandey run out 37 (31b, 3x4), Suryakumar Yadav lbw b Sandakan 53 (44b, 6x4), Hardik Pandya c de Silva b Shanaka 0 (3b), Krunal Pandya b Hasaranga 35 (54b, 3x4), Deepak Chahar (not out) 69 (82b, 7x4, 1x6), Bhuvneshwar Kumar (not out) 19 (28b, 2x4); Extras (b-1, lb-4, w-16); Total (for seven wkts, in 49.1 overs): 277.

### FALL OF WICKETS

1-28 (Shaw, 2.6 overs), 2-77 (Ishan, 4.6), 3-65 (Dhawan, 11.6), 4-115 (Pandey, 17.2), 5-116 (Hardik, 17.6), 6-160 (Suryakumar, 26.6), 7-193 (Krunal, 35.1).

### SRI LANKA BOWLING

Rajitha 7.0-1-53-1, Chameera 10-0-65-0, Hasaranga 10-0-37-3, Sandakan 10-0-71-1, Karunaratne 6-1-26-0, Shanaka 3-0-10-1, de Silva 3-0-10-0.

### Toss: Sri Lanka

India won by three wickets with five balls to spare and took an unassailable 2-0 lead.

# Rahul and Jadeja warm up in style

## INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DURHAM

K.L. Rahul (101 retired out) and Ravindra Jadeja (75) powered the Indians to 306 for nine in 90 overs on the opening day of the warm-up game against County Select XI on Tuesday.

Rahul and Jadeja, who came together with the side wobbling at 107 for four, added 127 for the fifth wicket. The former was at his fluent best during his 150-ball knock, stroking 11 fours and a six. The latter's 146-ball innings had five fours and a six.

Rohit Sharma, leading the side in the absence of Virat Kohli and Ajinkya Rahane who were rested for the match with minor niggles, fell for nine. Mayank Agarwal contributed 28.

Cheteshwar Pujara (21) and Hanuma Vihari (24) failed to click before it was left to Rahul and Jadeja to resurrect the innings. India's fringe players Avesh Khan and Washington Sundar turned up for County Select after the home team lost players due to COVID-related isolation. Avesh bowled 9.5 overs before sustaining a thumb injury.

**The scores:** Indians 306/9 in 90 overs (K.L. Rahul retd. out 101, Ravindra Jadeja 75, Craig Miles 3/39) vs County Select XI; **Toss:** Indians;

Rahul. ■ TWITTER/BCCI

Bhuvneshwar lends able support; Sri Lanka lets the match slip away after being in a commanding position

## INDIA IN LANKA

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Tailender Deepak Chahar brought India back from the dead with a steely 69 off 82 balls and script the visiting team's series-sealing victory in the second ODI against Sri Lanka here on Tuesday.

With a world ranking of 42, Bhavani will have a mountain to climb.

She rose through the world rankings mainly through a good performance

## TV PICKS

TNPL 2021: Star Sports 2 (SD &amp; HD), 7.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Maymol steps down as women's football coach

**NEW DELHI**  
After four years in charge of the senior Indian women's football team, head coach Maymol Rocky has stepped down due to personal reasons. She thanked the AIFF for its "trust" in her abilities. PTI

## All set for The Hundred

**LONDON**  
The Hundred, a brand new 100 balls per side format of cricket, starts on Wednesday. The Hundred will feature eight franchise teams – all featuring men's and women's sides. The tournament will begin with a standalone women's match, between Oval Invincibles and Manchester Originals. AFP

# 'Best chance for a medal in last 20 years'

This is the most open men's tournament in the last five editions, says former India captain Rasquinha

## OLYMPICS

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

Former India hockey captain Viren Rasquinha feels the Indian team has a realistic chance to win an Olympics medal in Tokyo.

Assessing the Indian men's team's chances, Rasquinha underlined the Manpreet Singh-led side's improvement.

"This is the best chance for a medal in the last 20 years. Our last chance was in Sydney 2000 when we just missed out on a place in the semifinals. This team has really played well. They have improved gradually and consistently and have beaten all the top teams over the last four-year Olympic cycle."

## First goal

"The first goal should be to come out of the pool to the quarterfinals. We are not going to get an easy quarter-



Dedicated stint: Rasquinha said P.R. Sreejesh, in pic, and Manpreet deserved to win an Olympic medal for their long service. •TWITTER

nal match," Rasquinha, who will be part of Sony Sports live studio show, Sports Extraa, for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games from July 23, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

Rasquinha appreciated the Graham Reid-coached side. "There is a lot of freshness, enthusiasm and hard running. A lot on the lines of fitness. Players can adapt to

different positions. Undoubtedly, it's a very good team."

A former midfielder, Rasquinha praised India's current linkmen. "With Manpreet leading the midfield, he is the fulcrum, he is the guy with boundless energy and is the bridge between defence and attack. Vivek Sagar Prasad is a crafty midfielder. A lot of depth in the mid-

field and they are going to play an important role."

Rasquinha said P.R. Sreejesh and Manpreet deserved to win an Olympic medal for their long service to Indian hockey.

"This is the most open men's hockey tournament in the last five Olympics. There is no clear favourite. Any of the top seven-eight teams

can win gold. If India plays well consistently under pressure, you have to have six-seven really good consistent matches, it can win that medal."

Rasquinha said the women's side became fit in recent times. "I see them doing weight training regularly. Now they are able to match the Europeans who play a tough body game with a lot of close marking."

## Inspirational leader

Rasquinha said women's team captain Rani Rampal should inspire the side. "Rani is a great leader, also an incredible goal scorer under pressure. A lot relies on her shoulder. She has to inspire the entire forward line. She cannot do it alone."

Rasquinha, who works for Olympic Gold Quest, praised the synergy between government agencies and NGOs in supporting the Tokyo-bound athletes.



## SHORT TAKES

Mithali back on top of women's ODI rankings

DUBAI

Mithali Raj is back on top of the ICC Women's ODI rankings list with 762 points while Smriti Mandhana is ninth. In the bowlers' list, Jhulan Goswami is the lone Indian in the top-10 at the fifth spot while Deepthi Sharma holds an identical slot in the

all-rounder's category. In the T20I rankings, Smriti attained a career-best equalising third position.

## Tamim leads Bangladesh to series sweep

HARARE

Captain Tamim Iqbal hit his fastest century in One-Day International cricket as Bangladesh beat Zimbabwe by five wickets to complete a 3-0 series whitewash on Tuesday. Earlier Zimbabwe exceeded the expectations of captain Brendan Taylor by posting 298 in the third and final ODI.

Opener Regis Chakabva laid the foundation with a brisk 84.

**The scores:** Zimbabwe 298 in 49.3 overs (Regis Chakabva 84, Ryan Burl 59, Sikandar Raza 57, Mustafizur 3/57, Saifuddin 3/87) lost Bangladesh 302 for five in 48 overs (Tamim Iqbal 112, Nurul Hasan 45 n.o.). **Toss:** Bangladesh. **MoM:** Tamim; **MoS:** Shakib. Bangladesh wins by five wickets and the series 3-0. AP

## Women's Asian Cup's official logo unveiled

NEW DELHI

The tournament logo of next year's Women's Asia Cup to be held in India was unveiled by the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) on Tuesday. The tournament will be conducted in Mumbai and Pune from January 20 to Feb. 6. The 2022 edition has been expanded to 12 teams – four more than the last four editions. It will also feature a newly-introduced quarterfinal stage for the first time in Asian women's football history. PTI

## We can definitely beat the best, says Ankita Raina

She eyes podium finish at the Games, playing doubles alongside Sania Mirza

## TENNIS

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

At 28, Ankita Raina, who will be making her Olympics debut partnering six-time Grand Slam winner Sania Mirza in the Tokyo Games tennis competition, says her own enthusiasm and Sania's experience could well be the surprise weapon in their campaign to win an Olympics medal.

"There's a big mix of emotions – excitement, nerves, pride! But, I'm determined to focus on the task at hand, and give it my best shot," Ankita



Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

are continuing to work on building on our partnership and understanding. Preparing for the Olympics requires its own tactics, routines, and planning, and we and our teams have been very focused and dedicated towards that," Ankita on playing with Sania.

"It's of course great to partner with someone like Sania, who has been a role model for me! To be representing the country, at the

aggressively and runs down the balls. I've been working on my serve and net game which is a process and I feel it's improved as I've had good performances this year," she said.

## Fans will be missed

"It's natural to have nerves. But, my best has always come when I've played for the flag, and this pressure is a privilege," Ankita said even while stressing that the fans would be missed in Tokyo.

"We're up against the best in the world with many challenges. I think we just have to trust in ourselves and

I'm someone who plays

keep the faith and keep fighting," she said.

"Sania has beaten the best in the world, and I've had a good season as well, having also won an Asiad medal before."

"I think we just have to stick to our guns, and we can definitely beat the best," she said.

"We obviously want to aim for the best, but it's important to just take it one match at a time, bring laurels to the country, and a podium finish would be where I would like to see us at the end of the Games," Ankita said.

## Tiwary has no problems wearing two hats

I will gel with other players like a friend, says former India player

## CRICKET

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

Wearing two hats, that of a minister and of a professional cricketer, is not a problem for former India cricketer Manoj Tiwary.

The inclusion of Tiwary among 39 Bengal probables for the forthcoming domestic season was a surprise for many. But the 35-year-old never had any confusion about the challenging decision he took a few months ago.

"When Didi (West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee) asked me to join pol-

itics, I could not say no. When I told her that I wanted to play and did not want to end my career abruptly, she said, 'You can play as long as you can'." Tiwary, a Trinamool Congress MLA from Shibpur, told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

For Tiwary, who is West Bengal's Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, it's about managing the two jobs well. "I have a very good team which knows how to handle different situations. I was confident that managing the two things would not be difficult," said Tiwary, a former Bengal skipper.

"My job is to work on my fitness and skill set. By God's grace, I have been contributing to the team with my batting, bowling and fielding for the last 18 years."

Tiwary said his position in the government would not affect his relationship with fellow-players in the Bengal side. "I am not going to present myself as a minister. I will gel with other players like a friend. And they can crack jokes on me."

Tiwary wants to see Bengal as the Ranji champion again. "A lot of investment has been made on younger players in the last five-seven years... We want to achieve that (title) as a team," he said.

THE HINDU

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