

'Started jabbing after manufacturer's word'

Struggling to give 2nd dose; govt. to HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AAP government has informed the Delhi High Court on Friday that it made preparations for vaccinating people with Covaxin in the Capital based on its manufacturer Bharat Biotech's assurance that it will receive 5 lakh doses in May and four times that in June.

Delhi government said it received only 1.5 lakh doses of Covaxin in May and due to the Centre's instructions not to set aside any stock for the second jab, all of it was used to provide the first dose to as many people in the 18-44 age group.

Justice Rekha Palli said that it should have stopped providing people with the first dose of Covaxin when it realised by May 11-12 that it will not be getting any more supplies from Bharat Biotech to provide the second doses.

Overconfidence

The court said the Delhi government was "overconfident" that it will get the requisite supplies of the vaccine. It said that if there was no confirmation from Bharat Biotech with regard to additional supplies, then the present situation, where thousands of people may not



get the second dose within the incubation period of six weeks from the first dose, was "your own doing". "After May 11-12, you [Delhi government] should have stopped. But you went on vaccinating till May 24," the court said.

Delhi government told the High Court that by June 9, Bharat Biotech would send around 15,000 doses of Covaxin and an additional 90,000 by July 2. The court said the first lot of supplies would help only 10% of the 1.5 lakh persons who were given the first dose and by the time the second lot arrives, it would not be of any help to them.

"People took the first shot of vaccine under the belief that you would provide them with the second one also," the court remarked while posting the case for further hearing on June 7.

As supplies dwindle, schools and NGOs too are collaborating in the endeavour

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

With a limited supply of vaccines at government facilities over the past week, several resident welfare associations, academic institutions and hospitals have come together to organise vaccination camps in a localised manner.

A vaccination drive has been organised by Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh at Mount Abu School from June 1 for the 18+ category. While prior registration is required on the government portal, each dose of Covishield was administered for ₹1,050.

Jyoti Arora, principal of Mount Abu School, said: "We were probably the first private school to have collaborated for such a drive. We provided the required infrastructure, which included space for registration kiosk, waiting areas and observation areas. The campus is being sanitised daily. The vaccination drive continued in a full-fledged manner for three days and 250 people were vaccinated."

A vaccination camp was set up by a city-based NGO in collaboration with Fortis Escorts Hospital for residents



People registering for paid vaccines for 18-44 age group at BLK Hospital in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

of Malviya Nagar, Safdarjung Development Area and Green Park. Around 1,000 people were vaccinated between May 29 and June 2, officials involved in the organisation of the camp said. "The camp was organised based on requests of the RWAs as there were several people who could not get the jabs due to the paucity of vaccines," an official said.

Drive-through facilities

Several drive-through vaccination camps were also organised across the city. In-draprastha Apollo Hospitals on Friday launched a two-day drive-through facility at the Ambience Mall in Vasant

Kunj. "Apollo Hospitals is administering Covishield at the drive-through facility between 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and is open to everyone above 18 years. People need to be registered on the Cowin app. A total of 150 people were vaccinated on the first day," read an official statement from the hospital.

The drive-through vaccination drive at the Chhatrasal Stadium, organised by the North district administration, saw a steady stream of visitors in cars, two-wheelers and even e-rickshaws, visit the centre for vaccination.

Over 550 doses have already been administered at the

centre, said Kusum Arora, who is in charge of the facility. While vaccines are being currently administered to only the 45-plus category, Dr. Arora said the facility will be open for those above 18 over the coming days.

Parallel sessions

"Two parallel sessions are being run between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. at the stadium. This has been done to avoid overcrowding and reduce waiting time. While people with online registrations are welcome, there is a facility for spot registration as well. The staffers are fully trained and Covishield is being administered at the centre," said Dr. Arora.

Ajay Chauhan (51), who arrived at the centre to get vaccinated, said: "I am not too savvy with technology and hence had been struggling to register myself on the portal. The staffers are fully trained and Covishield is being administered at the centre," said Dr. Arora.

"That is what is troubling us," a Bench of Justice Manmohan and Justice Najmi Waziri remarked.

"You [Centre] were asking for waiver of patents all over the world. We have good products in India. These products could have been manufactured in each and every State," the High Court said, referring to Panacea Biotech's plant in Himachal Pradesh.

"In Himachal, if you have produced this, the entire State could have been vaccinated in three weeks. Even people from Russia are able to locate it, and we are unable to locate them. That is what is troubling us," the court remarked.

The court also queried why the Centre did not engage with local drug manufacturers to produce the vaccine developed by an Indian manufacturer. "There is an Indian company which has developed its own vaccine. If other manufacturers were told way back last year, there would be crores of vaccines all over the country by now," the court remarked, adding, "Why are you not thinking on those lines?"



Why are you unaware of drug manufacturing plants in India, asks HC

It could be produced in every State'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday questioned how the Centre and various government departments were unaware of the "untapped potential" of drug manufacturing plants in India, with capabilities to produce COVID-19 vaccines, when foreign firms have been able to locate them.

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Seeks arbitral award
The court's observations came while hearing a plea of Panacea Biotech, which has sought the release of an arbitral award, passed in its favour and against the Centre, saying it needs funds at the earliest in the larger interest of humanity as it has already manufactured trial batches of COVID vaccine Sputnik V in collaboration with Russian Direct Investment Fund and wanted to scale it up.

SI ends life at police station

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 31-year-old Sub Inspector posted in east Delhi's Pandav Nagar Police Station allegedly ended his life inside the station on Friday morning while on duty.

Police said that the incident took place around 10.30 a.m. He was rushed to the hospital where he was declared dead. No note has been recovered, a senior officer said.

The SI was from Agra and resided in Delhi with his wife, parents and siblings.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

National-level handball player to be quizzed in wrestler murder case

Sushil was riding the woman's scooter at the time of his arrest

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



The Delhi police will question a national-level handball player whose scooter Sushil Kumar was using when he was arrested in connection with the alleged murder of a young wrestler at Chhatrasal Stadium here, officers said. A senior police officer said they will ask the woman to join the investigation.

Sushil and his associate Ajay were arrested on May 23 from Mundka when they were riding on a scooter.

On Wednesday, a court here rejected Delhi Police's

Sushil and his associates allegedly assaulted Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends Sonu Mahal and Amit Kumar at the stadium on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over a property dispute. The 23-year-old Sagar succumbed to injuries later.

Police had said there is electronic evidence wherein he and his associates could be seen beating Sagar with sticks.

A video surfaced on the social media purportedly showing Sushil and his associates allegedly hitting another man with sticks.

DU plans fee waiver for students who lost parents to COVID-19

Varsity sends letter to colleges to conduct survey, gather info

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



Delhi University is considering giving a fee waiver to students, who have lost their parents to COVID-19, according to senior DU officials. A letter has been sent to the colleges to conduct a survey and gather information pertaining to it, officials said.

Balram Pani, DU's Dean of Colleges, said: "We are thinking of giving a fee waiver to students who have lost their parents to COVID-19. Students who have lost both their parents or one parent who was the breadwinner of

and colleges can carry out the necessary checks. Once requisite permission from the governing bodies are sought, this can be implemented."

Speaking at a prayer meeting held in the memory of university employees, who lost their lives during the pandemic, DU Vice-Chancellor P.C. Joshi said that providing free education to students of the university who lost their parents to COVID-19 was a key area for the administration and that the university was "actively considering" the matter.

HC surprised with Centre counsel's reply

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday was surprised with the submission of Centre's counsel that Amphotericin B, one of the medicines used for treating black fungus was readily available in the market.

When the court said if the medicine was available in abundance there should not have been so many deaths, Central government standing counsel Kirtiman Singh said people were not dying because of lack of medicines but the disease black fungus itself is dangerous.

Drug addict held for making PCR call threatening PM

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man was arrested for allegedly calling Police Control Room and threatening the Prime Minister. He allegedly told the police that he made the call because he wanted to go to jail.

call late Thursday night in which the caller threatened the Prime Minister. The call was traced to Khajoori Khas following which the accused was detained.

During questioning, it emerged that he was a drug addict.

"On Thursday evening,

he consumed drug and went home after which his father scolded him. He got angry and left the house and decided to call police," the officer said.

When the accused was asked why he made the call, he allegedly told the police that he wants to go to jail

because "that's where he likes to stay".

The accused was earlier involved in a murder case and was sent to juvenile home in 2018.

Salman was released in 2019 and was not involved in any criminal activities, the police said.

Troubled waters



A polluted Yamuna river in Kalindi Kunj on Friday, on the eve of World Environment Day.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Pleas in HC against order on annual school fees

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Several appeals, including one by the AAP government, have been moved in the Delhi High Court against its single-judge order allowing private unaided recognised schools to collect annual and development charges from students for the period after the lockdown ended in the national capital last year.

The petitions were initially listed before a bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh on Friday. However, since the Bench did not sit, the matter was transferred to another Bench comprising

Justices Manmohan and Navin Chawla to be heard in the second half of the day.

Senior advocate Vikas Singh and Delhi government standing counsel Santosh K Tripathi, appearing for the AAP government, and the lawyers representing the students told the Bench that an interim order be passed to maintain the status quo as the private schools have started harassing the parents.

The HC Bench declined to pass any such order, saying it has not gone through the petitions and listed the matter for further hearing on June 7.

3 arrested for abducting, killing man

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man and his two accomplices were arrested for allegedly abducting a man and killing him to take revenge in outer Delhi's Mundka, police said on Friday.

The incident took place on the intervening night of May 31 and June 1 when Naveen, who knew the victim Akshay Drall took him along with his associates Charanjeet and Nitin in his car on the pretext of a drive. The trio then killed him. The body was later recovered, they said.

Office of the Executive Engineer, Transmission Line Maintenance Division-III, JKPTCL, Amargarh, Sopore
Tele No: 01954-225010 Fax: 01954-225010, E-mail: tlmd3rdamargarh@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

E-NIT No- EE/TLMDA/ 13 of 2021 DATED - 02-06-2021

Executive Engineer, TLMD-III, JKPTCL Amargarh Sopore on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir Union territory invites e-tenders (In Two Cover System) valid for 180 days from reputed, experienced and financially sound "A" Class Electrical Contractors and Executors fulfilling the eligibility criteria specified in the standard bidding documents for the work detailed below.

The complete bidding process is online. However, hardcopies consisting of Tender Fee and bid securing declaration in cover-I to be submitted in the office of the undersigned before two days of e-Bid Submission end date and the Techno-Commercial bid (as per SBD) in cover-II has to be submitted only by the Lowest Bidder in the office of undersigned on the day which will be communicated to lowest bidder. Financial bids must be submitted online only as per prescribed format.

The Standard Bidding Document is available on website <https://jkttenders.gov.in>.

Scope of Work

OVERHAULING/DESULGAGING OF FOUR UNITS OF 20MVA AND ONE UNIT OF 15 MVA THREE PHASE 132KV/33 KV POWER TRANSFORMERS OF VARIOUS GRID STATIONS FALLING UNDER THE JURISDICTION OF TLMD-III, JAMMU-KASHMIR, SOPORE

The information regarding schedule of downloading of the tender document and submission dates thereof is as per the table below:

Critical Dates

1. Date & Time of down loading of Standard Bidding Document

2. Sale of Bid Document (Start)

3. Sale of Bid Document (End)

4. Clarifications start date

5. Clarifications end date

6. e-Bid submission (start) date & time

7. e-Bid submission (end) date & time

8. Pre bid meeting Date and Time

9. Pre bid meeting Place

10. Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time

11. Venue of opening of technical & financial e-Bids

12. Online financial e-Bid opening date & Time

Timings DELHI		
SATURDAY, JUN. 05		
RISE 05:24	SET 19:17	
RISE 02:22	SET 14:53	
SUNDAY, JUN. 06		
RISE 05:24	SET 19:17	
RISE 02:51	SET 15:46	
MONDAY, JUN. 07		
RISE 05:24	SET 19:18	
RISE 03:21	SET 16:38	

Capital witnesses 523 new COVID-19 cases, 50 deaths

Over 77K tests in 24 hrs; Jain visits hospitals being remodelled

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 523 fresh COVID-19 cases and 50 deaths on Friday, stated a health bulletin released by the Delhi government.

The bulletin also said 77,174 tests had been conducted in the city in 24 hours with a positivity rate of 0.68%. The positivity has been below 1% for the fifth day in a row. The Capital now has 8,060 active cases with 3,813 people under home isolation.

The bulletin also stated that 53,035 beneficiaries have been vaccinated in 24 hours, of which 37,747 got their first dose and 15,288 got their second dose. The total number of beneficiaries so far stands at 55,51,666, of which 12,64,460 have been given both doses.

The cumulative figures in the Capital now stand at 14,28,449 with 24,497 deaths and 13,95,892 recoveries. On Thursday, Delhi had recorded 487 COVID-19



A woman gets vaccinated at the BLK Hospital in New Delhi on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

cases, the lowest daily count in over two-and-a-half months and 45 fatalities. This was the first time the daily death count had gone below the 50-mark since April 11 when the tally was 48.

The government said it is working on revamping several existing hospitals to increase the number of beds as well as building new hospitals.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday visited the Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital,

which is being remodelled by the government with advanced facilities. He also visited LNJP hospital where a new building is being built for mother and childcare.

The Delhi government also said it is building two new hospitals at Madipur and Jwalaipuri and the bed capacity of Acharya Shree Bhikshu Hospital, Shri Dada Dev Matri Avum Shishu Chikitsalya and Guru Gobind Singh Hospital is being augmented to around 500, 300 and 572 beds respectively.

'Self-sufficient'
"The two plants are enough to meet the daily requirement of oxygen for 70 beds in the hospitals in normal circumstances. Earlier, the oxygen was supplied daily by tankers, but now we are self-

Gurugram gets four oxygen generator plants

These have been set up in 3 hospitals with combined capacity of over 3 tonnes/day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GURUGRAM

Four oxygen Pressure Swing Adsorption (PSA) generator plants, including two at Sector 10 Civil Hospital, have been set up in three different hospitals in Gurugram with a combined capacity of more than three tonnes per day.

The hospital authorities claimed the plants would be enough to meet their daily pre-COVID days' requirement and do away with their daily dependence on tankers.

The four plants were inaugurated by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal a week ago.

Deputy Civil Surgeon (Civil Hospital) Maneesh Rathee said the two plants with the capacity of one tonne and half tonne each were set up inside the hospital premises and both were fully functional.



An oxygen plant at Sector 10 Civil Hospital in Gurugram.

■ ASHOK KUMAR

sufficient," said Mr. Rathee.

He, however, conceded that the capacity was not enough to meet the increased demand of oxygen such as during the peak of the COVID wave. Mr. Rathee added that the hospital had 30 big oxygen cylinders to meet increased demand as seen during the second wave and the supply can also be augmented through tankers.

Mr. Rathee, involved with the process of setting up the

plants, said hospital authorities were always on tenterhooks during COVID wave since the tankers usually got delayed, but now with the setting up of the plant inside the hospital they could "relax".

Similarly, two plants with a capacity of one tonne each have been set up at ESIC Hospitals in Sector 9A Gurugram and Sector 3 in Manesar. Medical Superintendent at ESIC Hospitals, Subhra Gup-

ta, said both the plants were functional and they expected to meet their daily pre-COVID days need of oxygen.

All four plants have been donated and installed by Maruti Suzuki under its Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative. The company plans to install 24 more such plants in different parts of the country by mid-June. A separate team has been deployed by the company with round-the-clock monitoring to ensure that these generator plants are installed successfully in hospitals and are operational. The monitoring will continue for a few months to ensure that these generators keep operating satisfactorily well after installation.

Gurugram Chief Medical Officer Virender Yadav said three more such plants would be set up at Sohna, Pataudi and Sector 31 Polyclinic in the city.

"The capacity of the Sohna and Pataudi plants will be 500 Litres Per Minute [LPM] each. We have procured equipment for both hospitals. The capacity for Sector 31 Polyclinic will be 100 LPM," said Mr. Yadav.

₹5L compensation to kin of those who died due to oxygen shortage

Govt. forms four-member panel to inspect all such deaths

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Senior AAP leader Atishi on Friday said there were no more doses of Covaxin available for 45+ and 18-45 years age group. She requested the Central government to provide as much Covaxin as previous month to ensure everyone gets second dose on time.

"For Covaxin, there is a

great concern amongst people as the shortage of vaccines continues to persist. This concern has been the minds of both – youth between 18-44 years and those above 45 years of age. For 18-44 years, there is no vaccine available for neither the first dose nor the second. For those above 45 years, Covishield is available for both the first and the second dos-

es but the supply for Covaxin for them is almost over from today onwards," Ms. Atishi said.

She said, "So now the stock of Covaxin in Delhi needs to be supplied for both age categories and we would like to request the Central government to strengthen the supply chain..."

She added that the Capi-

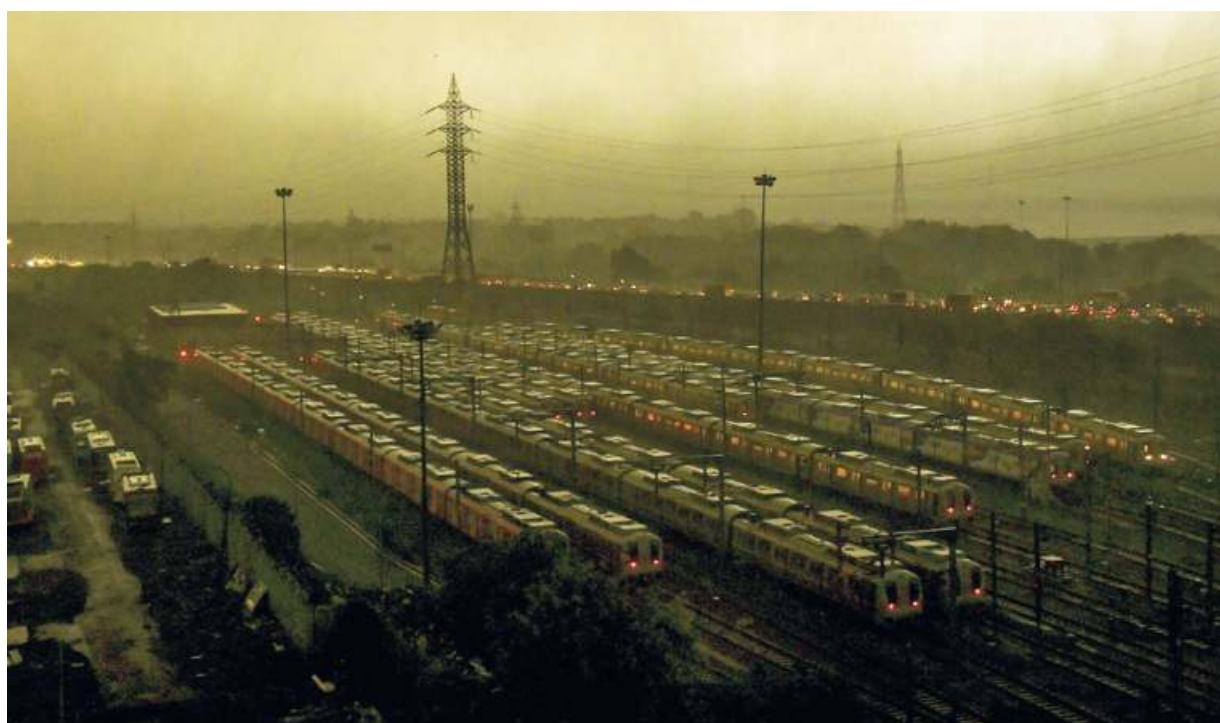
tal has around 6 lakh doses of the vaccine available for those above 45 years, out of which the majority of doses 5,90,000 are that of Covishield. "Thus, from tomorrow [Saturday] onwards, the centers which were administering Covaxin will shut down for those above 45+ age group. Covaxin will not be available as second dose in these centers," she added.

oxygen.

The Delhi government announced ₹5 lakh medical assistance to all those families who lost a member due to oxygen crisis. "The second wave resulted in a massive oxygen crisis across Delhi and the nation. The government formed a four-

member medical expert panel with the responsibility to inspect this issue. It will disburse ₹5 lakh as medical assistance to all those families who lost a member due to oxygen crisis," Mr. Sisodia said. He added that L-G Office in Delhi will inspect each claim.

Rain lines



A thunderstorm with light to moderate intensity rain and wind speeds up to 60 kmph brought down the temperature in the city, which has been on the rise over the past few days, on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

First pier of Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor completed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The first pier of the elevated section of the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) RRTS corridor's Delhi portion has been constructed near the upcoming New Ashok Nagar RRTS station. Part of the RRTS' Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut corridor being constructed by the NCRTC, the height of the constructed pier is 6.5 meters.

MLA seeks PM assurance on no mosque demolition

6 mosques in Central Vista vicinity: Khan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

this apprehension of the members of Muslim community, which apprehension is also underpinned by the demolition of two mosques in U.P., i.e. Ghareeb Nawaz Mosque demolished on 17.05.2021 in Barabanki and another mosque demolished on 28.05.2021 in Khatauli Town of Western U.P., the undersigned is receiving frantic enquiries," he said.

Mr. Khan, citing apprehensions shared by the community on social media in this regard, expressed concern related to the mosques located in the Lutyens' Zone in the vicinity of the axis of the project.

Mr. Khan specifically mentioned the Zabta Ganj Mosque situated at the end of the waterbody near the India Gate, another mosque situated within the precincts of Krishi Bhawan as well as the President House. "Owing to

IN BRIEF

Do not implement odd-even: CAIT to CM

NEW DELHI
The CAIT on Friday wrote to CM Kejriwal and L-G Bajjal, saying they do not want the odd-even system should not be implemented in the functioning of shops and markets.

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**Environment, Forest & Climate Change Dept.
Govt. of Bihar**

World Environment Day - 2021

Trees also breathe air and require water for survival.

**Let's all take a pledge together
that we shall conserve environment and natural
resources every moment, every day.
We shall not tie the trees in fetter and
shall rear them up as our children.**

**We hope that we all shall witness such beautiful
and clean environment for longevity.**

Happy World Environment Day!

जल-जीवन-हरियाली

#BiharGovtInitiative #JaJeevanHariyali #HariyariBihar #GreenHaiBihar
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IN BRIEF



Monsoon has set in over Karnataka: IMD

BENGALURU
The southwest monsoon has set in over Karnataka, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday. The IMD issued rain, thunderstorm and lightning warnings for various districts, including Dakshina Kannada, Udupi, Uttara Kannada, Belagavi, Chamarajanagar, Mandya, Dharwad, and Shivamogga. IMD's C.S. Patil said north interior and coastal Karnataka saw widespread rainfall, while south interior parts received fairly widespread rainfall.

Three die of asphyxiation during manhole work

BENGALURU
Three labourers working in a manhole without any safety gear died of asphyxiation in Ramanagaram, around 50 km from Bengaluru, on Friday morning. They were among five labourers working on a new underground drainage line of the Ramanagaram City Municipal Council. The labourers were residents of Kamala Nagar in Bengaluru. In January, two labourers died while cleaning manholes for Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board.

Vigilance team questions Kerala BJP leader

KANNUR
A Vigilance team on Friday questioned Kerala BJP national vice president A.P. Abdullakutty in a corruption case regarding a light-and-sound show held at the Kannur fort. The probe pertains to alleged financial irregularities in the purchase of equipment for the show. It is alleged that over ₹1 crore was spent unnecessarily from the State exchequer for the show. The ₹3.58-crore project was implemented in 2016 when Mr. Abdullakutty was the Kannur MLA.

Kerala Budget steps up health spending

₹20,000 crore to combat COVID-19, says Balagopal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Welfare deal: Finance Minister K. N. Balagopal presenting the budget in the Assembly in Thiruvananthapuram on Friday. ■ PTI

Projecting 'health above all' as the vision for development and assuring equitable health care, nutrition and sustainable improvement in employment, income and economic welfare, Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal presented a tax-free revised Budget for 2021-22 in the Assembly on Friday.

Mr. Balagopal, in his maiden budget, unveiled a ₹20,000 crore package to tide over the crisis induced by the second wave of COVID-19, ₹1,000 crore for free vaccination for all above 18 years, ₹500 crore for purchase of allied equipment, ₹5,300 crore for the five-year project for finding a permanent solution to the coastal distress and upgrading coastal infrastructure and ₹2,600 crore loan scheme for financial rejuvenation.

"Overcoming the pandemic has become the prerequisite for development. In essence, the strategy for effective health care has become our strategy for development in this Budget," the Minister said.

All the proposals in the Budget presented by his predecessor T.M. Thomas Isaac on January 15 and the promises made in the LDF ma-

nifesto would be implemented, he said.

Environment has got priority with the announcement of a comprehensive package to contain the effects of floods through 'room for river' schemes as in the Netherlands, 'living with water', and eco-friendly constructions.

Procurement of 10 hydrogen powered buses for KSRTC and decision to convert 3,000 diesel buses to CNG as part of reducing the corporation's operational losses and carbon footprint figured in the Budget.

Malabar literary circuit and bio-diversity circuit, rejuvenation package for tourism sector, aggressive marketing for increasing footfalls and memorials for K.R. Gouri and R. Balakrishna Pillai have been included.

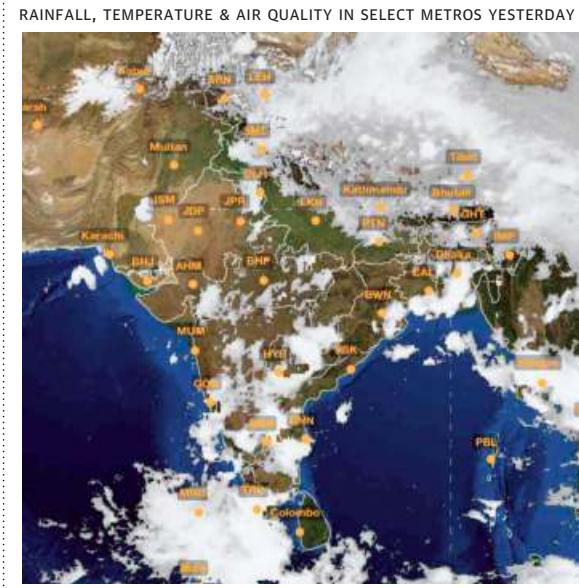
Though Mr. Balagopal said increasing taxes was inevita-

ble considering the financial crisis, the Finance Minister did not announce any new tax proposals in view of the prevailing situation due to the pandemic.

The Finance Minister made it clear that the government did not believe in tax collection by intimidating and coercing traders and industrialists. But, he said steps would be taken to strengthen the system to identify and penalise evaders. Fresh revenue sources would be explored once the situation improved.

A cumulative deficit of ₹1,866.79 crore at the end of the financial year has been projected in the Budget, as additional expenditure of ₹1,715.10 crore is anticipated. Revenue deficit is expected to touch ₹16,910.12 crore, while capital expenditure is likely to fall to ₹12,546.17 crore.

WEATHER WATCH



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

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, central Maharashtra, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Gujarat, Konkan & Goa, Yanam, Telangana, Karaikal, Mahe, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...-36.2...	26.6	6.8...	Kozhikode	68...-30.2...	24.2	4.2...
Ahmedabad	...-38.6...	27.9	4.4...	Kurnool	4...-35.5...	24.5	2.9...
Aizawl	...-26.1...	18.0	2.9...	Lucknow	2...-39.4...	24.9	2.9...
Aligarh	...-40.3...	29.4	5.7...	Madurai	34...-35.7...	23.0	2.9...
Bengaluru	9...-31.5...	21.5	2.9...	Mangaluru	12.6...-29.0...	23.0	2.9...
Bhopal	...-37.5...	24.6	5.4...	Mumbai	...-34.3...	25.4	2.9...
Bhubaneswar	...-37.4...	27.0	5.6...	Mysuru	56...-33.0...	21.2	2.9...
Chandigarh	...-35.0...	24.6	5.4...	New Delhi	...-39.5...	26.1	2.9...
Chennai	...-36.2...	28.5	5.4...	Patna	...-37.6...	25.0	2.9...
Coimbatore	0.2...-34.6...	23.6	5.4...	Port Blair	...-33.2...	26.1	2.9...
Dehradoon	...-35.0...	21.8	5.4...	Puducherry	...-34.2...	26.8	2.9...
Gangtok	6...-22.2...	16.5	5.4...	Pune	...-32.8...	23.3	2.9...
Goa	12...-32.3...	25.0	5.4...	Raipur	19...-37.5...	22.6	2.9...
Guwahati	...-35.6...	26.0	5.4...	Ranchi	...-34.5...	24.2	2.9...
Hubballi	...-26.0...	23.0	5.4...	Shillong	...-27.1...	18.1	2.9...
Hyderabad	...-34.0...	25.0	5.4...	Shimla	...-28.0...	18.1	2.9...
Imphal	5...-28.3...	20.8	5.4...	Srinagar	...-28.2...	14.7	2.9...
Jaipur	...-36.8...	27.4	5.4...	Thiruvananthapuram	27...-32.5...	24.0	2.9...
Kochi	15...-28.4...	25.6	5.4...	Tiruchi	...-37.6...	26.4	2.9...
Kohima	...-28.0...	17.0	5.4...	Vijayawada	4...-37.5...	25.4	2.9...
Kolkata	...-37.6...	28.8	5.4...	Visakhapatnam	...-35.6...	26.8	2.9...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO	NO	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	33	52	16	63	90	...
Bengaluru	2	34	38	21	51	...
Chennai	8	5	41	12	69	...
Delhi	7	26	96	281	184	...
Hyderabad	5	13	36	56	54	...
Kolkata	3	19	23	70	73	...
Lucknow	17	69	67	187	132	...
Mumbai	2	16	62	37	44	...
Pune	6	17	67	61	50	...
Visakhapatnam	16	42	26	50	68	...

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jodhpur, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 24.00. In contrast, Raichur, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 24.

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

SO: 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: 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.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.

Man kills nurse; her kin bludgeons him to death

The woman had spurned his advances

STAFF REPORTER
CHITTOOR

A man allegedly murdered a woman in Andhra Pradesh by slitting her throat and stabbing her while she was asleep, after she reportedly spurned his advances.

The youth later reportedly attempted suicide, but was killed allegedly by the woman's siblings, at Samabaih Kadriga locality on the outskirts of Chittoor on Friday.

According to information available, Sushmitha, 24, a nurse, reportedly rejected the proposal of Chinna, 28, her neighbour, who was allegedly pestering her to accept.

On Thursday evening, he accosted her at the hospital

and repeated his proposal, which she reportedly rejected again.

On Friday morning, when Sushmitha was asleep at home, Chinna sneaked in by scaling the terrace and allegedly slit her throat and stabbed her with a knife. After the attack, he attempted suicide by slitting his throat, and collapsed in front of Sushmitha's house. Alerted by the commotion, the woman's relatives in the neighbourhood bludgeoned Chinna to death.

"Both families were having long-standing personal disputes. Those who fatally attacked the accused would be booked," said Deputy Superintendent of Police (Chittoor) N. Sudhakar Reddy.



National High Speed Rail Corporation Limited

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NHSRCL invites open tender for "Providing office space on lease basis in Mumbai for National High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd." (Tender Notice No. NHSRCL/MAC/PM/CMP MUMBAI/OFFICE SPACE/21-22/02). Tender can be downloaded from 10:00 hrs. of 03.06.2021 to 24.06.2021 upto 10:00 hrs. from website <https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app>.

Last date of submission of bid is 13:00 hrs. of 24.06.2021.
Chief Project Manager

भारतीय खाद्य नियम		FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA
T.C.-3V, Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow-226 010 (U.P.) Phone No.: 0522-2270063, 4109238. E-mail: gmup.fci@gov.in, agmcontup.fci@gov.in		REGIONAL OFFICE CONTRACT SECTION E-TENDER NOTICE

Online tenders under two bid systems are invited from experienced/in-experienced/ Sole Proprietary concern or Registered Partnership Firm or a Private Limited Company or a Public Limited Company incorporated in India for appointment of HTC at FSD Khurja & RH Bulandshahr in UP Region. The terms and conditions and other details are available at <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and FCI website <http://www.fci.gov.in>. Critical dates involving in the tender enquiry are illustrated below in tabular manner.

Tender document Download Start date & time	Tender document Download End date & time	Online Bid Submission Start date & time	Online Bid Submission End date & time	Online Technical Bid opening date & time	Pre-bid Meeting
04.06.2021 9:00 AM	25.06.2021 03:00 PM	04.06.2021 03:00 PM	25.06.2021 03:00 PM	28.06.2021 12:00 PM	10.06.2021

Tender/Contractor shall execute the work following the directions issued by the Honble Courts Further, any corrigendum in this regard will be published on CPTT portal or on the FCI website <http://www.fci.gov.in>, if necessary.

General Manager (UP)

KARNATAKA STATE MEDICAL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED

PHI Building, Opp. To SP Polytechnic, K.R. Circle, Sheshadri Road, Bangalore - 560011.



Two cheers

India betters score in the latest SDG Index, but methodological tinkering is cause for concern

India's push in the right direction in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to clean energy, urban development and health has helped it improve its overall SDG score from 60 in 2019 to 66 in 2021, according to NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2020-21. Besides SDGs on eradication of poverty and hunger, measures related to the availability of affordable, clean energy in particular, showed improvements across several States and Union Territories. The campaign to improve the access of households to electricity and clean cooking fuel has been shown to be an important factor. While this is cause for cheer, the Index reveals that there has been a major decline in the areas of industry, innovation and infrastructure besides decent work and economic growth, again made worse by the lockdowns imposed by the governments seeking to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. But the stark differences between the southern and western States on the one hand and the north-central and eastern States on the other in their performance on the SDGs, point to persisting socio-economic and governance disparities. These, if left unaddressed, will exacerbate federal challenges and outcomes, as seen in the public health challenges during the second wave across some of the worse-off States.

Notwithstanding the improvement in key indicators, the Index has curiously made some methodological changes that render comparisons on some SDGs over previous years moot. The SDG on inequality shows an improvement over 2019, but the indicators used to measure the score have changed. The 2020-21 Index drops several economic indicators and gives greater weightage to social equality indicators such as representation of women and people from marginalised communities in legislatures and local governance institutions, and crimes against SC/ST communities. By dropping the well-recognised Gini coefficient measure and the growth rate for household expenditure per capita among 40% of rural and urban populations (instead, only the percentage of population in the lowest two wealth quintiles is used), the SDG score on inequality seems to have missed out on capturing the impact of the pandemic on wealth inequality. This could be a significant miss as a UN assessment of the impact of COVID-19 had said that the South Asian region may see rising inequality. Methodological issues on measuring other SDGs have been flagged before, but the lack of adequate measurement of economic inequality seems to be a glaring miss. Like in the first wave, the second wave, with more fatalities, has had similar outcomes on livelihoods and jobs. While the better score for India in its endeavour to achieve SDGs will bring some cheer, governments must work on addressing pressing issues such as increased inequality and economic despair.

Winds of change

Israel gets new coalition, but it is unlikely to survive long with its ideological contradictions

In Israel's fractious political landscape, Benjamin Netanyahu has been known as the master of survival. In power since 2009, he has seen allies come and go, protégés turning out to be rivals, and elections happening in the shortest intervals. But he hardly missed an opportunity to turn crisis into political gain, which allowed him to become the longest serving Prime Minister, overtaking David Ben-Gurion. However, this may be ending. A coalition of eight parties, under the leadership of Opposition politician Yair Lapid, could oust Mr. Netanyahu from power and form a 'change' government. In this, Mr. Lapid, who leads the centrist Yesh Atid party, has joined hands with the right-wing Yamina of Naftali Bennett, and other parties ranging from settlers to left-wing and Arab parties. According to the coalition agreements, Mr. Bennett, who was part of the far-right Jewish Home before founding Yamina, would be the PM for two years followed by Mr. Lapid. Mr. Lapid says his coalition has the support of 61 Members of the Knesset (MKs) – a razor-thin majority in the 120-member Parliament. Messrs. Lapid and Bennett are now pushing for a quick vote in the Knesset, while Mr. Netanyahu is putting pressure on the right-wing MKs of the coalition to vote against the government.

Even if the coalition does sail through the Knesset vote, it might, with its conflicting ideological views, remain fractious and feeble. But that does not diminish the importance of the political changes that are under way. The country has seen four elections in the last two years, with no party winning a majority on its own in any. Last year, Mr. Netanyahu formed a short-lived unity government with the Opposition leader, Benny Gantz. Mr. Gantz, leader of the centrist Blue and White, is now with Mr. Lapid. It is Mr. Netanyahu's repeated and failed attempts to form a stable right-wing government that have led the anti-Netanyahu parties from across the spectrum to come together. Also, this is the first time in Israel's history that an Arab-majority party has signed a government coalition agreement. Till last year, Arab parties were considered untouchables by the mainstream Jewish parties. But now, the United Arab List (Ra'am), which has 4 MKs, has officially joined the coalition, breaking a political separation wall. If voted out of power, Mr. Netanyahu will have to fight a corruption trial and possible leadership challenges within the Likud without the shield of premiership. When the Gaza fighting broke out on May 10, coupled with riots in Israeli cities, many thought it would help him politically. But the Gaza fighting appears to have weakened his position among his right-wing allies, who alleged that his government surrendered to Hamas by agreeing to the ceasefire. Mr. Netanyahu is now caught between unhappy right-wing allies and a united opposition.

Saving biodiversity, securing earth's future

The National Biodiversity Mission can help mend the dysfunctional relationship between humanity and nature



KAMAL BAWA

On this World Environment Day (June 5), with the novel coronavirus pandemic raging across our vast country, we must reflect on the ways to rebuild our relationship with nature. India's vast and rich biodiversity gives the nation a unique identity, of which we can be proud. The varied ecosystems across land, rivers, and oceans, feed our people, enhance public health security, and shield us from environmental disasters. Our biodiversity also serves as a perpetual source of spiritual enrichment, intimately linked to our physical and mental well-being.

Staggering value of forests

And while the precise economic value of all ecosystem services provided by biodiversity may not be known, estimates suggest our forests alone may yield services worth more than a trillion rupees per year. Imagine how much greater this value will be with grasslands, wetlands, freshwater, and marine added. Sadly, today, we face not only one of the worst public health crises but also worldwide declines in biodiversity. Globally, we have lost 7% intact forests since 2000, and recent assessments indicate that over a million species might be lost forever during the next several decades. Our country is not an exception to these trends.

Climate change and the ongoing pandemic will put additional stresses on our natural ecosystems even though it is becoming clear that repairing our dysfunctional relationship with nature is one of the ways to mitigate climate change and curtail future outbreaks of infectious diseases that can bring unimaginable misery. Thus, preserving biodiversity is directly relevant to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of our people. We must rethink and reimagine the concept of One Health for all living organisms, including the invisible biota in soils that sustain our agricultural systems.

Investments in the field

Fortunately, our government is considering major investments in biodiversity science to meet societal needs. In 2018, the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STAC) in consultation with the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change and other Ministries approved an ambitious National Mission on Biodiversity and Human Well-Being (NMBHWB). A Bengaluru-based Biodiversity Collaborative is working with the National Biodiversity Authority to hold consultations and prepare road maps of the Mission that will be steered by a core of the country's leading biodiversity science and conservation organisations, from public, academic, and civil society sectors.

The Mission will strengthen the science of restoring, conserving, and sustainably utilising India's natural heritage; embed biodiversity as a key consideration in all developmental programmes, par-



ticularly in agriculture, ecosystem services, health, bio-economy, and climate change mitigation; establish a citizen and policy-oriented biodiversity information system; and enhance capacity across all sectors for the realisation of India's national biodiversity targets and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs).

Furthermore, the Mission will allow India (home to nearly 8% of global biodiversity on just 2.3% of global land area, and containing sections of four of the 36 global biodiversity hotspots) to emerge as a leader in demonstrating linkage between conservation of natural assets and societal well-being.

An important framework

The ongoing spread of COVID-19 places this Mission among the most significant national initiatives. The pandemic has exposed the dysfunctional relationship between humanity and nature, and we must urgently address the issues it has laid bare: the emergence of infectious diseases; lack of food and nutritional security; rural unemployment; and climate change, with all its stresses on nature, rural landscapes, and public health. In response to these critical and interrelated issues, the Mission offers a holistic framework, integrated approaches, and widespread societal participation.

The Mission's comprehensive efforts will empower India to restore, and even increase, our natural assets by millions of crores of rupees. Mitigation programmes will lessen the impacts of climate change and other natural disasters, such as pandemics and floods. We can rejuvenate agricultural production systems and increase rural incomes from biodiversity-based agriculture while also creating millions of green jobs in restoration and nature tourism. Restoration activities across India's degraded lands, which amount to almost a third of our land area, alone could generate several million jobs.

The Mission will help India meet its commitments under the new framework for the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), and UN SDGs related to pressing social issues including poverty alleviation, justice and equity, and protection of life. It will generate a strong national community committed to sustaining biodiversity, promoting social cohesion and uniting the public behind an important goal.

Mission programmes will offer nature-based solutions to numerous environmental challenges, including degradation of rivers, forests, and soils, and ongoing threats from climate change, with the goal of creating climate-resilient communities. Scientific inputs, especially related to geospatial informatics and policy, can guide the development of strategies for conservation and ecosystem management.

Equally important, the Mission's "One Health" programme, integrating human health with animal, plant, soil and environmental

health, has both the preventive potential to curtail future pandemics along with the interventional capability for unexpected public health challenges. Additional programmes, directed at food and nutritional security, will in turn also influence public health outcomes.

Need for a cadre

The planned Mission recognises that we need a strong and extensive cadre of human resources required to meet the enormous and complex environmental challenges of the 21st century. This will require training professionals of the highest calibre in sustainability and biodiversity science, along with an investment in civil society outreach. The gains of environmental change will be upheld and carried forward by the cultural change from environmental education for millions of students, from kindergarten to postgraduate levels.

Finally, biodiversity is everywhere, and we interact with biodiversity all the time in our daily lives. Public engagement, whether it is in the policymaking arena, or in exploration, restoration and conservation of biodiversity, is a critical component of the planned Mission.

Today, on the heels of the International Day for Biological Diversity celebrated last month, nothing could be more important than to renew our pledge to nurture all life on earth.

Kamal Bawa is President of the Bengaluru-based Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), and currently leads the Biodiversity Collaborative. The views expressed are personal

The time to limit global warming is melting away

There are no second chances and nations must use COP26 to address the enormous threat of climate change



ALOK SHARMA

This is an incredibly difficult time for the world. The world is facing two momentous challenges: COVID-19 and climate change. Both need us to come together globally to find a way forward. World Environment Day (June 5) is an important moment to take stock on climate change.

When I was in India earlier this year – my first visit to Asia in my new role – I saw first-hand India's ambitious work on renewable energy, and held vital discussions with government leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, businesses and civil society. I was inspired by the resolve I saw.

India's response

India has a strong record on tackling climate change, including impressive domestic targets to have 450GW of renewable energy by 2030, and establishing the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). India played a critical role in delivering the landmark Paris Agreement and we are

working just as closely with India in the run-up to COP26, the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties, to be hosted by the United Kingdom in Glasgow from November 1-12, 2021. Last month, Mr. Modi and the U.K.'s Prime Minister Boris Johnson committed through the 2030 UK-India Roadmap to work closely together on the best ways to drive the green growth agenda. They reaffirmed their personal commitment to work together for an ambitious outcome in November and sustained action beyond.

When the U.K. welcomes the countries of the world to Glasgow in five months' time, it will be a moment to get the world on track to address the enormous threat of climate change and build a cleaner, brighter future for everyone.

In 2015, the world signed the Paris Agreement, to limit global temperature rises to well below 2°C, aiming for 1.5°C, because the science tells us that would avoid the worst effects of climate change.

Emissions have to be cut

In terms of limiting warming, every fraction of a degree makes a difference. An average global temperature rise of 2°C, compared to 1.5°C, would see hundreds of millions more people affected. The Climate Action Tracker estimates that countries' current emissions



reduction targets have us on course for average temperature rises of 2.4°C. To limit warming to 1.5°C, we must halve global emissions by 2030. So this is the decisive decade.

This is what makes this year's COP so critical, and as hosts of COP26, the U.K. is pressing for urgent action around four key goals.

First, to keep 1.5°C within reach, globally, we need to reach net zero by the middle of this century. To achieve this we will need to take strong action over the next decade. In the U.K. we have found that setting ambitious short-term targets backed up by a net zero target has given a clear signal that the future is low carbon. India will reach its own decisions, but I firmly believe India has an opportunity to show that a different development path is possible. An opportunity to be at the forefront of a new global green transition with all the benefits of jobs and cleaner

air that brings. India has already proved it has the innovation and political will to do this. India has quadrupled wind and solar capacity in the last decade.

Our second goal is to protect people and nature from the worst effects of climate change. Even as the world has been dealing with the novel coronavirus pandemic, the dangers of global warming have continued to become more evident.

Having been born in India and having spent time as the U.K.'s Secretary of State for International Development, I am committed that this COP will deliver for the communities most vulnerable to climate change. The two cyclones, Tauktae and Yaas, that hit India last month, show that we must act on the very real need for flood defences, warning systems and other vital efforts to minimise, avert and address the loss and damage caused by climate change. India's CDR, which the U.K. is proud to partner on, is already a great initiative towards this.

Funding promise

Our third goal is for developed countries to deliver the \$100 billion they promised annually to support developing countries. The U.K. is pushing for all developed countries to increase their climate finance commitments ahead of COP26, to deliver the right flow of

finance and technology to meet the needs of countries such as India in their transition. This is a personal priority for me, one that I am committing to work tirelessly to deliver – we need all developed countries to step up, as it is a matter of trust.

Working as a team

Fourth, we must work together to deliver on these goals. That includes building consensus among governments for an ambitious, balanced and inclusive outcome – so that the negotiations in Glasgow are a success. As well as bringing businesses and civil society on board behind our COP26 goals, and building up international collaboration in critical sectors.

We must act now, to launch a concerted effort to reduce emissions throughout the next decade. And use the COVID-19 recovery to reimagine our economies, building a better future.

I call on all countries to step up efforts on these goals, because COP26 is our last chance for keeping hopes of limiting global warming to 1.5°C alive, and our best chance of building a brighter future; a future of green jobs and cleaner air.

This is our moment. There are no second chances. Let us seize it together.

Alok Sharma is COP26 President

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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



To read more letters online, scan the QR code

Court on sedition

In recent years, mere criticism against the government of the day has been found sufficient to initiate sedition charges. Against this background, the Supreme Court of India's quashing a sedition case registered against a senior journalist sends a clear message (Page 1, "Journalists need protection against sedition charges," June 4). The actions of the government spring from laws enacted by the British in the pre-Independence era. While quashing the sedition charges, the top court has not laid down any new rules. Given that the ruling dispensation is using this existing law liberally to act against those who criticise it, it is time the law is amended to define clearly what is sedition and what is not.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

■ The judiciary has ensured that Indian democracy

remains alive and kicking. Except for a short period during the Emergency, the freedom to question and criticise leaders including the Prime Minister was a given – with none of the prickliness displayed by this government. It is unfortunate that the mainstream media often baulks at giving space to critics of the government.

Though social media channels have given many a platform to voice their opinions, it remains to be seen how long this space too remains free.

ANTHONY HENRIQUES,
Mumbai

■ The original wording of the sedition law is the cause for its continuous misuse and there is enough equivocation in its range to be able to suppress a great deal of activities. Even if there is a decline in the rate of conviction in such cases, and the person is acquitted, there is every likelihood that he may be targeted by applying the law again. This aspect of

the law adversely affects a person's freedom of speech and expression. It is ironic that conviction is not required to stifle dissidence. The Supreme Court's intervention is important to ensure that citizens are not robbed of their right of freedom of speech and expression.

VENU G.S.,
Kalluvathukkal, Kollam, Kerala

■ The law adversely affects a person's freedom of speech and expression. It is ironic that conviction is not required to stifle dissidence. The Supreme Court's intervention is important to ensure that citizens are not robbed of their right of freedom of speech and expression.

D. HRIDHII BHATTACHARYA,
Kolkata

■ The prevailing violence against doctors, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, is jeopardising

India's banks on the other hand seem to be the main losers.

GOVARDHANA MYNEEDU,
Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

■ Doctors in peril

The profession which imparts life to the masses is now seen to be begging for life. What a shame. The recent incidents of violence against doctors in Assam and Karnataka are outright barbaric. Surprisingly enough, we, as doctors, have no support of the masses, no media channel to highlight our plight and no human rights activists to protest against these acts. We spend endless hours of service trapped in a PPE suit and with utmost dedication in handling this pandemic. There has to be legislation or an amendment of existing laws to deal with and reduce such instances.

D. HRIDHII BHATTACHARYA,
Kolkata

■ The prevailing violence against doctors, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, is jeopardising

not only the lives of doctors but also the lives of those patients dependent on the doctors. The Government of India should amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and add a clause for severe punishment against those who perpetrate atrocities against doctors.

SANDEEP GOYAL,
Noida, Uttar Pradesh

■ Uncharitable comment

It is unfortunate that Justice Vipin Sanghi of the Delhi High Court, while commenting on the Centre's vaccination policy, has questioned it for prioritising older people over the younger population. He has tried to justify his statement with his most uncharitable remarks, that the '80 year olds are not going to carry this country forward. They have lived their lives...' He has conveniently forgotten that it is only the hard work and sacrifices of many elders that have made India into the good state it is today.

MANI NATARAJAN,
Chennai

■ Lockdown rules

Extending or otherwise the complete lockdown, especially in Tamil Nadu, lies in the hands of the people. The scenes telecast by various channels are a mirror to the attitude of a majority of our people, who are habituated to throwing caution to the winds. Even if the daily case count is down, rules come first. There has to be caution and compliance.

MANI NATARAJAN,
Chennai

been given to all.

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

■ Library project

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin's announcement that a state-of-the-art library is to come up in Madurai is a befitting gift for this ancient

In Gujarat, a crisis of epidemic proportions

While the ferocious second wave of COVID-19 is slowly on the wane, Gujarat has recorded the highest number of mucormycosis cases in the country. **Mahesh Langa** reports on how a State with poor public health infrastructure and manipulated data was unprepared to tackle the surge in cases

In April, Bhavesh Desai (name changed), 56, was happily dreaming of a peaceful retired life in two years when he was suddenly assailed by two infections, one after the other. First, all food became insipid and Desai lost his sense of smell – both symptoms of COVID-19. By the time the RT-PCR test result came bearing bad news, the Class 2 government employee in Ahmedabad with two children had developed a fever and cough. With his condition worsening, Desai began searching for a hospital bed. Two days later, he found one in a private hospital where he was treated for two weeks. By the time he recovered, Desai was fatigued but relieved.

However, within a few days, Desai's cheeks began to swell like small melons and his muscles became numb. He was referred to the Civil Hospital, where he was diagnosed with mucormycosis, commonly called the 'black fungus'. Desai had never heard of it. He was shocked to learn that this aggressive infection could affect his eyes, nose and even brain. Desai found himself back in hospital. This time, the doctors had to remove his left eye to save his life. "I don't know if I should feel happy that I have survived two deadly infections or sad about losing an eye. The other eye has just 70% vision," he says.

Desai is among the 5,000 cases of mucormycosis that have been reported as of June 3 in Gujarat. Official records state that more than 250 people have died from the invasive fungal infection. With the State already grappling with a deadly COVID-19 wave, the rise in cases of 'black fungus' is a new cause of concern.

A surge in mucormycosis cases
Over the past few weeks, mucormycosis cases have increased across Gujarat, with Ahmedabad, Surat and Rajkot reporting very high numbers, particularly among those patients who, during prolonged hospitalisation, were administered high doses of steroids and antibiotics. Patients suffering from the fungal infection usually have a stuffy and bleeding nose, swelling of the eyes, blurred vision, and droopy eyelids.

"In Ahmedabad Civil Hospital, we have had 850 patients with mucormycosis. The ENT division has conducted 498 surgeries on patients who had the fungal infection," says J.V. Modi, Medical Superintendent of Civil Hospital. At the time of going to print, more than 100 patients with mucormycosis were waiting in hospitals for their operations. "In Surat alone, around 100 people must have lost their eye or even their jaw bone due to the infection. It is more dangerous than COVID-19," says a doctor from Surat's Civil Hospital.

According to doctors, mucormycosis normally progresses slowly from the nose to the eyes and brain, but the real enemy this time is COVID-19. A host of factors can trigger mucormycosis. First is a weak immune system. The heavy use of steroids during COVID-19 treatment among diabetic patients can increase their sugar levels and create a conducive environment for the fungus to grow and thrive in the body, they say. So, a rational use of steroids and constant monitoring of sugar levels are important.

Though the State Health Department declared the fungal infection as an epidemic and created separate wards in Civil Hospitals in Ahmedabad, Surat and Rajkot, it has not made public the details of the number of cases, deaths, surgeries conducted, or people who have lost their vital organs as a consequence of the infection.

"As soon as the second wave of COVID-19 started declining in Surat, the city witnessed a sudden surge in mucormycosis cases," says Manoj Mistry, a newspaper editor from the Diamond City, which saw thousands of COVID-19 deaths from early March to mid-May.

The government has also not fixed the treatment costs for patients of mucormycosis who are being attended to in private hospitals even though Gujarat had emerged as the State with the highest number of mucormycosis cases in India by the second week of May.

Luckily for Desai, treatment for the infection in Civil Hospital, a government hospital, did not cost him much. However, his stay at a private hospital for two weeks for COVID-19 treatment depleted his savings by half. "Despite the charges capped by the government for COVID-19 treatment in private hospitals, it's still very high and beyond the means of any middle-class family," he says.

Those who have been treated in private hospitals for both the infections have paid huge sums for treatment. "More than COVID-19, treatment for mucormycosis is expensive because it also involves delicate surgery by specialist doctors," a medical practitioner says. "Normal surgery will cost not less than ₹1 lakh in addition to expenses on medicines, hospitalisation and so on."

To tackle the epidemic, the Gujarat government notified a State-controlled



An inside view of the mucormycosis ward at Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad. (Below): A relative of a patient shifting him to a wheelchair in the mucormycosis ward at Civil Hospital, Ahmedabad. • VIJAY SONEJI



distribution policy of the anti-fungal drug Amphotericin-B, used to treat mucormycosis, for private hospitals after the issue of shortage of the drug was taken up by the Gujarat High Court that sought a response from the State government. And on May 27, an 11-member State-level task force comprising experts and doctors was formed and will play a key role in framing Gujarat's policy on mucormycosis treatment.

Throwing caution to the winds

Meanwhile, the government is also busy trying to get the pandemic under control. Gujarat has seen an avalanche of COVID-19 cases during the second wave. On March 1, 427 daily cases and one death were reported. This shot up to 2,410 daily cases and three deaths on April 1 and then 13,847 daily cases and 172 deaths on May 1. On June 1, there were 1,561 daily cases and 22 deaths.

The virus has officially killed about 6,000 people since mid-March. However, data from hospitals, crematoria and burial grounds suggest that the number of deaths is as high as 15 times the official number.

According to doctors, the official data on deaths capture only those who did not have co-morbidities and died of COVID-19. "For those who had COVID-19 but also suffered from diabetes or hypertension, the cause of death is attributed to the co-morbidity," a medical practitioner says.

Leading regional language newspapers such as *Gujarat Samachar* and *Sandesh* have raised questions on the government's data by devoting increasing numbers of pages to obituaries. The State government has also not been forthcoming about casualties in homes. However, the Chief Minister has maintained that the State follows the guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

During the second wave, the virus also spread to remote villages, where public health infrastructure is especially rickety in such demanding times, making the government's work even more challenging.

The Gujarat government seemed ill-prepared for the brutality of the second wave. From December 2020, the State began to shut some of its COVID-19 care centres unlike neighbouring Maharashtra which kept them open and even be-

gan to build more such centres. Gujarat also deserved COVID-19 beds in private and government hospitals since the pandemic appeared to be on the decline. In February, Gujarat turned its focus to elections for municipal corporations like Ahmedabad, Surat, Rajkot, Vadodara, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar, 31 district panchayats, 231 taluk panchayats, and 81 municipalities. Voting was held in two phases on February 21 and 27. In the first phase, all six municipal corporations went to vote and the results were declared on February 23. The results for the second phase of polling for panchayats and municipalities were declared on March 2.

In the run-up to the election, there was aggressive campaigning across the State. Much like in other parts of the country, caution was thrown to the winds at these gatherings. Neither the leaders nor the public observed physical distancing or wore masks despite the fact that the Chief Minister himself contracted the virus during campaigning.

"In Gujarat, the second wave was initiated by the authorities and political parties which were more interested in local elections than in following COVID-19 norms. As soon as the elections ended in the State, COVID-19 cases began to surge," says a prominent doctor and member of the State government's COVID-19 task force. He adds that the cases had in fact started rising from the second week of February, but the authorities suppressed the data as holding elections was given more importance than public health.

"As a member of the medical fraternity, I am also partially responsible for not going public and warning government authorities as well as the public at large. As part of the IMA [Indian Medical Association], we should have expressed and

communicated our apprehension about the second wave to the government," says another leading doctor.

By the first week of March, the pandemic curve began going north in the State and by mid-March, there was an alarming rise in cases and deaths in all the major cities. By the end of the third week, COVID-19 cases began to be reported from semi-urban places and by March end, from the villages. It was when cases began rising rapidly that the government began to prepare at a feverish pace, adding beds and ramping up facilities.

"Undoubtedly, the local elections brought the virus to the villages, which had escaped its clutches during the first wave. Every village had an election meeting or a rally without any COVID-19 norms," says the District Collector of one of the worst-affected districts.

From mid-March onwards, the State administration shut down public transport services in the cities, banned mass gatherings, restricted movements in markets and religious places, and limited participation in social events and family events. However, those measures came too late. Many say these were attempts to close the stable door after the horse had bolted.

A summer of horror

April 2021 was arguably the most cruel month in the history of contemporary Gujarat. The healthcare sector was bursting at its seams and thousands of deaths were being reported every day. The administration appeared to be struggling in dealing with the crisis.

"It's not that the administration was not working but our all efforts were falling short because of the sheer number of cases and deaths that were taking place. We were overwhelmed. There was a shortage of hospital beds, essen-

tial medical supplies, ambulances, and even mortuary vans to take the dead to their final destination," a senior official says. The State and its people never anticipated a second wave, he says.

According to another bureaucrat, more people may have died for want of oxygen, hospital beds or essential medicines rather than COVID-19 in April. "We could have saved thousands of lives if there was an adequate number of beds, supply of oxygen and perhaps proper pandemic management," he says.

A senior staff member at Civil Hospital describes the situation as being "completely chaotic". "There were long queues of patients waiting to be admitted, there were 80-90 ambulances carrying patients for admission outside hospitals... At least 100 people must have died just waiting to be admitted," he says.

The administration was forced by the Gujarat High Court, which took suo moto to cognisance of the situation, to swing into action. It was only after the High Court's intervention that the Health Department started conducting RT-PCR tests at all the district headquarters. Before that, there were no laboratory facilities to even conduct tests in half of the 33 districts of the State.

There also appeared to be no mechanism in place for oxygen procurement and supply in the initial stages of the second wave. After the situation became dire in April, the government appointed two bureaucrats as nodal officers for oxygen supply.

Though the State government has denied that deaths were caused due to the lack of oxygen, Mistry says patients have died without oxygen in several hospitals. Local media reported dozens of deaths in the north Gujarat and Saurashtra regions due to shortage of oxygen in hospitals in remote districts.

"The Centre had allotted 1,000 tonnes of oxygen to the State based on the number of cases and patients, while our requirement was around 1,350 tonnes. Why was Gujarat given less oxygen than required, you may ask. That is because it fudged cases and projected low figures," says a top bureaucrat and core group member who was involved in pandemic management.

The IMA in Ahmedabad and Surat even warned that there would be a law and order situation in the cities if oxygen supply was not ramped up in hospitals.

The neglect of public health

Gujarat's health infrastructure struggled to cope during the health emergency despite the fact that the State saw a lower number of daily cases compared to neighbouring Maharashtra or even

southern States like Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The official number of daily cases never crossed 20,000 in Gujarat compared to Maharashtra where daily cases touched 70,000 and Karnataka where they touched 50,000.

"Yet the situation seemed worse in Gujarat. All the figures from daily case numbers to daily tests to cases of hospitalisation and deaths were lower than the actual count. That made our job more difficult because the numbers were kept artificially low, but in reality, there were no beds available anywhere in the city," says the CEO of a top hospital in Ahmedabad.

There are huge numbers of vacancies in healthcare centres. There are almost 8,000 vacancies of medical and paramedical staff in the panchayat-run primary and community health centres in districts and municipal-run health centres in the cities, for instance.

"When the High Court asked the State government whether all the districts have HRCT (High Resolution Computed Tomography) machines to conduct CT scans since in certain cases the virus is not detected in RT-PCR tests, 15 out of 33 districts had no CT scan machines in government-run hospitals and health centres," wrote Congress spokesperson Manish Doshi to the Chief Minister.

In the last two decades, while the private health sector has grown visibly in cities like Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Surat and Vadodara, public healthcare has not seen concomitant growth. "The State will have to now promote public health infrastructure and manpower. The pandemic has shown that it cannot rely on the private sector to compensate for public health," a senior bureaucrat says. He says the State should follow the examples of Kerala or Tamil Nadu while investing in public health.

In 2017, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India pointed out in its audit report the poor healthcare conditions in districts and rural areas. It said that in some hospitals, patients were being forced to sleep on the floor in rural health centres as there were no beds available. The condition of rural and district hospitals and health centres does not seem to have improved since. Total spending on health remains below 4% of the Budget.

"In my district, in the main Civil Hospital, there were almost 700 patients with only a dozen medical staff including two doctors, a few nurses and paramedics to attend to them. This was the situation in April when the pandemic was at its peak," says a District Collector from the Saurashtra region. "If we don't draw proper lessons now and improve our healthcare, the next wave could be even more fatal," he says.



FROM PAGE ONE

Amarinder Singh briefs AICC committee

Beyond the sacrilege, issue is learnt that several MLAs had raised issues about the style of functioning of the Chief Minister, his lack of accessibility was cited as a problem and the dominance of the bureaucracy. But not many could name a replacement who could match Captain's stature.

Similarly, most MLAs were keen to ensure that Mr. Sidhu doesn't leave the party but were not yet ready "to hand over the steering wheel to him" ahead of the elections.

RBI holds rates, cuts GDP forecast

Explaining the rationale behind the MPC's decision, the RBI Governor said the forecast of a normal monsoon, the resilience of agriculture and the farm economy, the adoption of COVID-compatible operational models by businesses and the gathering momentum of global recovery could all provide tailwinds to revival of domestic economic activity when the second wave abated.

"On the other hand, the spread of COVID-19 infections in rural areas and the dent on urban demand pose downside risks," he observed. Noting that the retail inflation reading for April at 4.3% had brought some relief and policy elbow room, Mr. Das said a normal southwest monsoon along with comfortable buffer stocks should help to keep cereal price pressures in check.

On the other hand, the

Delta variant led to most post-vaccine cases in Delhi

However international variant Alpha, that in previous studies has been associated with a spike in cases in Delhi in February and March was absent in vaccination breakthrough-cases analysed.

The study also reports a new mutation in Delta called T478K that the scientists believe has a role to play in allowing the coronavirus to better infiltrate human cells.

"Our data indicates B.1.617.2 shows high transmissibility and surges without any increase in the Case Fatality Ratio (CFR). We estimate the transmissibility to be as much as 50% greater than B.1.1.7. Viral load of B.1.617.2 appears to be higher than B.1.1.7 and based on data from India and UK, so does vaccination breakthrough rate. B.1.617.2 is capable of creating very fast

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U.S. vaccine 'gift' may not be substantial

2-3 million doses expected; Centre welcomes lifting of restrictions on vaccine ingredient exports

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The government on Friday welcomed the U.S. decision to lift restrictions under its Defence Production Act on the export of vaccine ingredients to AstraZeneca vaccine manufacturers worldwide, which would help the Serum Institute of India produce more doses.

However, Washington's announcement of gifting India and dozens of other countries with a first tranche of 25 million doses of assorted American vaccines could run into regulatory delays, as issues of indemnity and authorisation have not been resolved at present.

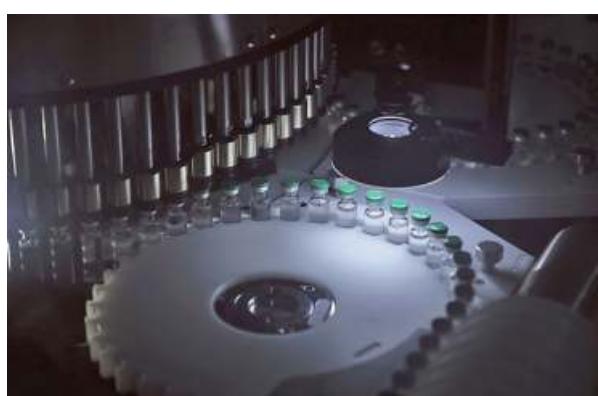
"Indian diplomacy is focussed on securing the vaccine supply chain," said External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar, who had raised the issue of easing U.S. exports of vaccine ingredients and components to India during his visit to Washington last week. On Thursday, the U.S. White House announced that it was relaxing

export restrictions for U.S. companies to supply manufacturers of AstraZeneca, Novavax, and Sanofi vaccines.

"This policy change will hopefully increase the supply of raw materials globally and to India; boosting our vaccine production capacity and strengthening our united fight against this pandemic," tweeted SII CEO Adar Poonawalla, thanking Mr. Jaishankar and U.S. President Joseph Biden for the move.

While the government said the U.S.'s decision on vaccine ingredients was a big relief, officials questioned whether the U.S. government's other big announcement of plans to gift 25 million doses of Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson vaccines would have a major impact, as it is not expected to be a substantial number.

According to the White House "Factsheet" on regional distribution, India is one of 16 Asian countries that will receive a total of seven million (70 lakh) vac-



Vital vials: As more raw materials come in, the SII aims to ramp up production capacity to 10 crore doses a month. ■ AP

cines, and also part of a grouping of another 13 high priority countries that would receive a total of six million vaccines.

Supply of doses

"As a result, India's dose will not be more than about two to three million doses in total," estimated one government official, pointing out that India is vaccinating about 2.8 million people a day at present.

It is also unclear how quickly these vaccines could be distributed in India, given procedures and approvals required. In a notification on June 1, the government amended its previous order of April 15, further easing the Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) trial and testing requirements for all vaccines that have received clearances from the U.S. FDA, WHO, United Kingdom, Japan and Europe.

However, the three American companies will still need

to apply for and be granted the Authorisation. At present, India has granted EUA only for Covishield, Covaxin and Russian-developed Sputnik, and according to a press note by National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19 (NEG-VAC) Chairman Dr Vinod Paul last week, "No application of any foreign manufacturer for approval is pending with the drugs controller."

Meanwhile, the issues over granting indemnities or a waiver of liabilities in case of adverse effects of the vaccines have not yet been resolved between the government and U.S. manufacturers. According to MEA sources, the government expects that Washington will help in ensuring that the vaccines being gifted will adhere to local regulations on indemnity. The government also hopes that the U.S. will redouble efforts to disburse the bigger tranche of 60 million AstraZeneca vaccines at the earliest, as these have the approvals needed.

CBSE panel to give report on evaluation method in 10 days

12-member committee will decide on assessment criteria

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has set up a 12-member committee to decide on assessing Class 12 students in the wake of cancellation of the board examinations. The panel would submit a report within 10 days, a notification issued by the board on Friday said.

The notification, signed by CBSE's controller of examinations Sanyam Bhardwaj, said steps were being taken "to compile the results of Class 12 students as per a well-defined objective criteria in a time-bound manner." The panel includes Dr. Bhardwaj himself.

Vipin Kumar, Joint Secretary from the Education Ministry's Department of



The CBSE has cancelled the Class 12 final exams.

School Education, will be part of the panel, along with the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan and the Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti.

The CBSE is considering several proposals for alternative assessment, including using internal assessment and practical exam marks, as well as using students' performance from Class 9 onwards.

the Chandigarh administration.

Two members will represent the CBSE schools, while a representative from the University Grants Commission will provide the perspective of higher education institutions that use the Class 12 results for admission processes. The National Council for Educational Research and Training will also have a representative on the panel.

The board exams were cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in accordance with last year's National Education Policy, which recommended the introduction of coding-related activities from the middle school level, and also called for increased integration of a variety of skills into the school syllabus.

Simple tools

The CBSE currently offers nine such skill modules in middle school, and up to 38 skill subjects for older classes. Coding is now being introduced as a skill module with a duration of 12 hours

for Classes 6-8. "The idea is to simplify the coding learning experience by nurturing design thinking, logical flow of ideas and apply this across the disciplines. The foundations laid in the early years will help the students to build the competencies in the area of AI, Data Sciences and other disciplines," said the notification sent to all CBSE schools on June 3.

Noting the importance of giving students a solid foundation on data science and technology, a skill module of 12 hours' duration has been introduced for Class 8 students, along with a more in-depth skill subject in Classes 9-12.

The CBSE announced that it would waive the application fee for schools which wish to introduce these subjects from Class II onwards.

AAI proposes salary deferral, revocation of perks

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Steeped in losses due to the impact of COVID-19, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has proposed a slew of measures, including salary and allowances' deferral, and revocation of certain perks, besides seeking financial sup-

port from the government.

Due to the fall in traffic at various airports, the AAI has incurred losses for the first time since its inception. It registered a 65% decline in its revenue in financial year 2021, from ₹12,837 crore in FY 2020 to ₹4,482 crore, resulting in a loss of ₹2,814

crore as compared to a profit of ₹1,985 crore.

At a meeting with the employees union and eight other staff associations on Thursday, the management proposed salary deferral, according to those who were part of the discussion. It suggested delaying payment of

allowances comprising 35% of the salary till next year, discontinuation of payment for overtime and a review of the leave encashment policy.

Staff salaries constitute the biggest chunk of expenditure incurred by the public sector undertaking at 50% of the total costs.

Opposition leaders question Jagan, Patnaik's letters to CMS

Jairam Ramesh says they should instead ask the PM

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders remain sceptical about the recent letters written by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy and Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to other Chief Ministers criticising the Centre's vaccination policy.

Unlike Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan and his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren's letters, where they demanded universally free vaccines, both Mr. Reddy and Mr. Patnaik have limited themselves to supply side problems and demanded that the Centre should handle the procurement. Mr. Patnaik said the global manufacturers were looking at the Union government for clearances and assurances. Mr. Reddy was more upfront in conceding that the global tender floated by the Andhra government did not receive any bidders because the situation had been reduced to "centre vs state". "The decision of giving the States a

larger say in the vaccination procurement was something that was unwarranted," Mr. Reddy wrote.

Mr. Patnaik talked about arriving at a "consensus", while Mr. Reddy wrote about the necessity to speak in "one voice".

Senior Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has questioned both the Chief Ministers asking them to question Prime Minister Narendra Modi instead of writing to him.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said that both Mr. Patnaik and Mr. Reddy, along with other Chief Ministers, should ensure that the Centre is not allowed to abdicate its elementary responsibility. "So far the BJD and the YSR Congress have supported the BJP government in Parliament. Now it is up to them to put pressure on the Centre to conduct free and universal vaccination."

For Mr. Patnaik also, Mr. Ramesh had a similar response. "It's all very well for Odisha CM to write to all CMs, but why can't he write to PM & persuade him? After all, BJD has always support-

In its response to the management, the employees' union has submitted its recommendations, which include recovering dues from airlines and airport operators, and suspending capital expenditure on infrastructure, including on Regional Connectivity Scheme airports.

APS RTC
Request for Proposal (RFP) for selection of bus operator for procurement, installation, operation & maintenance of fully built AC Electric Buses on Gross Cost Contract Model. APSRTC invites e-Tenders with reverse auction from the interested, qualified Bidders/Consortiums for procurement, installation, operation & maintenance of operator owned 9M/12M Fully built AC Electric Buses 350 nos in 5 cities (lots) for operation in scheduled routes of APSRTC's Gross Cost Contract model under Phase-II of FAME India Scheme (for Pre-qualified Bidders) may download the RFP and Bidder's Agreement from website <http://www.micromerchandise.com/procurement/> on 05.06.2021 onwards. (2) Last date for submission of e-Bids 14.06.2021 by 17.00 Hrs. (3) Reverse bidding will be on 23.06.2021 from 11.00 Hrs to 16.00 Hrs. (4) Technical Bids shall be submitted both online and offline and price Bids shall be submitted online portal <https://www.mpsrtc.ap.gov.in> (6) APSRTC reserves the right to cancel the notification without assigning any reason.

Bid notice No : APSRTC/C&B/01/2021-22-MED

Sd/- Chief Mechanical Engineer (C&B)

Information on the EOI can be obtained from the BIAL website www.bengaluruairport.com (<https://www.bengaluruairport.com/corporate/engage-with-us/tenders.html>). Bidding for this Project is through e-tendering. Applicants shall register on <https://www.bialtenders.in> as per the e-Tendering instructions provided with the information document.

Applicants shall view / download the EOI document from <https://www.bialtenders.in> (event id : 1593) from 0900 hrs IST on 5th June, 2021 to 2000 hrs IST on 15th June, 2021. Response to EOI must be submitted by uploading supporting documents online at <https://www.bialtenders.in> on or before 1600 hrs IST on 19th June, 2021. Consortium/joint venture participation is permitted.

Note: Any Further Addendums to this EOI shall be made available in <https://www.bialtenders.in> (event id : 1593)

For further information/clarification, write back to us addressing to:

HEAD - PROCUREMENT & CONTRACTS

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ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE

Kempegowda International Airport, Devanahalli, Bengaluru - 560 300

Contact person email: ramesh.hegde@bialairport.com

Phone No: 95388 82203 | www.bengaluruairport.com

Serum Institute gets DCGI's nod to produce Sputnik V

The output will be analysed at the Hadapsar facility in Pune

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The DCGI has granted permission to the Serum Institute of India (SII) to manufacture the Sputnik COVID-19 vaccine in India for examination, test and analysis with certain conditions, official sources said on Friday.



The SII will have to submit several documents before manufacturing Sputnik V.

es said. This licence, unless suspended or revoked, will be enforced for a period of three years from the date of its issuance on June 4.

The SII on May 18 had also applied to the Review Committee on Genetic Manipulation (RCGM), Department of Biotechnology seeking clearance for import of strains/seed lots and cell banks, and for carrying out research and development, the official sources said.

The RCGM has raised some queries over SII's application and has sought a copy of material transfer agreement between the Pune-based firm and the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology.

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories is currently supplying Sputnik V in India.

The SII plans to seek restricted emergency use permission of the vaccine in India.

Now, Mamata's picture on vaccine certificates

They were issued by the Bengal govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

As the vaccination drive picks up in West Bengal, now certificates of COVID-19 vaccination issued by West Bengal Health Department have a photograph of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

The Ministry stated that as commercial flight operations had been suspended on account of the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020, a number of foreign nationals who had arrived in India before March 2020 on valid visas had been stranded here.

It said that in the light of non-resumption of commercial flight operations, it had been decided that the visa or stay stipulation period of such foreign nationals stranded in India would be considered as deemed to be valid till August 31.

The certificate has a slogan "Be Alert, Be Safe" in both Bengali and English.

Vaccination certificates have carried photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which in the past was criticised by Trinamool Congress.

Minister and chairperson of Board of Administrators Kolkata Municipal Corporation Firhad Hakim defended the move saying that



there is nothing wrong in having photograph of the head of State on certificate.

Bhatiariya Janata Party (BJP) State spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said that the Trinamool Congress wants to project that the place that our Prime Minister holds in our parliamentary democracy can be replaced by the Chief Minister.

The Trinamool Congress and the BJP leadership also sparred over the GST (Goods and Service Tax) on vaccines by the Centre.

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SOUTHERN (R&B) CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
Phone: 0680-2281582, FAX: 0680-2281582, e-mail: sescpwd@yahoo.co.in
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) [e-Procurement]
Bid Identification No. S.E. S.C (R&B)-BAM-01/2021-22 No.1302//Dated:26.05.2021

1. Nature of work : Road / Building Works
2. No. of work : 06 Nos.
3. Tender Cost : Rs.10,000/- (online)
4. Class of Contractor : "B", "A" & Special Class
5. Availability of Bid document in the website : From 17.06.2021 10.00 AM to 01.07.2021 4.00 PM
6. Date of Opening of Bid : 02.07.2021 at 11.30 A.M.
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website <https://tendersissa.gov.in>.
8. Any Addendum/Corrigendum/ Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

B-123: Sd/- Superintending Engineer, Southern (R&B) Circle, Berhampur, OIPR-34103/11/0001/2122

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM
No. 4929 / TSM, Bhubaneswar, Dt. 04.06.2021
TCT-COOD-SCH-0047-2020
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF PASSENGER ROPEWAYS AT SELECTED TOURIST LOCATIONS OF ODISHA ON DBFOT BASIS
Department of Tourism (DoT), Govt of Odisha invites application for Expression of Interest for Development And Operation Of Passenger Ropeways At Selected Tourist Locations Of Odisha On DBFOT Basis.
The Proposals in the given format shall be submitted to Director, Tourism, Paryatan Bhawan, Lewis Road, Bhubaneswar-751014 on or before 05.07.2021 upto 11:00 Hrs.
The detail terms of EoI may be downloaded from our website : <https://dot.odishatourism.gov.in/?q=tender>

R-04
Director, Tourism
OIPR-37001/11/0006/2122

MP POORV KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD
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IN BRIEF



HC rejects plea seeking de-recognition of YSRCP

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Friday rejected Anna YSR Congress's petition seeking withdrawal of the status of the YuvaJana Sramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) as a "recognised party" and to de-register it for using the 'YSR Congress Party' abbreviation.

Militants attack CRPF vehicle in Kashmir

SRINAGAR
Militants on Friday opened fire on a vehicle of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in Budgam in central Kashmir. The militants were apparently hiding in a field. The vehicle was on patrol near Bilal Abad in Kralpora. The police and the CRPF have launched a joint operation in the area.

Identify people for Padma awards: Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Friday asked the States to set up search committees to find talented people who could be nominated for Padma awards but have been left out of consideration despite their exceptional contributions. The Narendra Modi government has been honouring many "unsung heroes," who are contributing to society in different ways, with Padma awards. The Centre opened the window for receiving applications on the portal padmawaards.gov.in from June 1 to September 15 for the awards to be announced on the eve of Republic Day 2022.

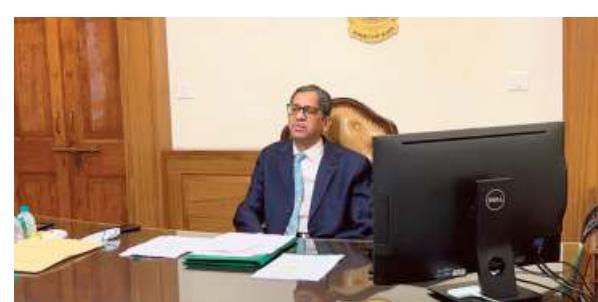
Expedite process of filling up judicial vacancies, CJI tells CJs

He moots virtual hearing facility in every courtroom

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Chief Justice of India, N.V. Ramana, asked the Chief Justices of High Courts to ensure that recommendations for judicial appointments to the High Courts reflect the social diversity of the country.

Chief Justice Ramana said this during his first-ever live and direct interaction with High Court Chief Justices. The discussion spanned two days and four sessions. The CJI also placed before the Chief Justices of High Courts the representations made by various Bar bodies to include lawyers primarily practising in the Supreme Court in the



Crucial meet: Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana interacting with Chief Justices of the High Courts. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

zone of consideration while recommending the names of judges for their High Courts.

The CJI also reminded the Chief Justices to expedite the process of filling up vacancies, particularly in the High Courts. This was a follow-up to the letter the CJI had written to the CJs of High Courts in the first week of May.

During the interaction, the Chief Justice of Madras

HC told the CJI about the vaccine hesitancy seen in some areas of the State. The Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, however, conveyed his satisfaction with the cooperation given by the Tamil Nadu government in the vaccination drive.

The session also saw the CJI convey to the Chief Justices his vision to draw from the experience of the pan-

demic and build modern, self-contained courts with a permanent facility to hold virtual hearings in every courtroom. He reiterated his wish to create a National Judicial Infrastructure Corporation and take forward a "nation plan" for judicial infrastructure.

The High Court Chief Justices also flagged the apparent "digital divide" seen in rural and tribal areas. They said the lack of digital connectivity had impacted judicial functioning. A proposal for mobile video conferencing vans was discussed. Chief Justice Ramana assured the High Courts that the Supreme Court would take up with the Centre the highlighted issues regarding sufficient vaccine supply, connectivity and court infrastructure.

Twitter storm seeks chapter on the northeast in NCERT books

YouTuber's remark triggers online stir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Paras Singh

A Punjab-based YouTuber's racial slur against an Arunachal Pradesh MLA fuelled a "know northeast" campaign via a two-hour Twitter storm on Friday.

Students, academics, professionals, politicians and activists across the eight northeastern States – Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura – bombarded the micro-blogging site with #AchaperforNE and #NortheastMatters campaigns from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The campaign tagging was aimed at pushing the National Council of Educational Research and Training

style of the people of the northeastern States.

"If all in the region unite for this, we can ask the Union Ministry of Education to include a chapter so that our counterparts beyond the region do not grow up ignorant about the Northeast and make comments like the YouTuber," he said.

YouTuber Paras Singh was arrested and brought to Arunachal Pradesh capital Itanagar on May 27 for calling Congress MLA and former MP Ninong Ering and the people of the State "Chinese". The YouTuber had ridiculed the MLA for appealing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to ban Battle-fields Mobile India, a variant of PUBG.

As punishment, the Arunachal Pradesh police have been teaching geography, history and other aspects of the State to the YouTuber.

Villagers, cow transporters clash, one dies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

A person was killed and five others were injured after a group of persons transporting cows from Bulandshahr to Mewat in Haryana allegedly clashed with villagers near Mathura in Uttar Pradesh, police said on Friday.

Six persons were transporting cows in a light truck to Mewat in Haryana, when they were confronted by villagers in the Kosi Kalan area of Mathura, said police. One person, Shera, said to be among those transporting the cows, died on the spot, said Shriram Chandra, Superintendent of Police (Rural), Mathura.

HC imposes fine on Juhi Chawla in 5G case

Court says the plea was a 'publicity stunt'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Juhi Chawla

The Delhi High Court on Friday rejected Bollywood actor Juhi Chawla's suit against the rollout of 5G technology in India, terming it a "publicity stunt" done without any personal knowledge of the issue.

Justice J.R. Midha also imposed a cost of ₹20 lakh on the petitioners – Ms. Chawla, Veeresh Malik and Teena Vachani – for wasting the court's time.

"The plaint is stuffed with unnecessary, scandalous, frivolous and vexatious averments which are liable

INS Sandhayak decommissioned

The hydrographic survey ship was built indigenously

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Hydrographic survey ship INS Sandhayak, the first of its class indigenously designed and built, was decommissioned after 40 years of service, at the Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam on Friday in a low-key event attended only by in-station officers and sailors, in line with COVID-19 protocols.

At sunset, the Naval Design and the Commissioning Pennant were brought down for the last time onboard INS Sandhayak in the presence of Vice Adm A.B. Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C), Eastern Naval Command (ENC), symbolo-



Bidding adieu: The ship was in service for 40 years and had participated in many significant operations. ■ FILE PHOTO

lising the decommissioning, a Navy statement said.

The ship was conceptualised by the then Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India, Rear Adm FL Fraser, who had a strong desire for indigenously designed and built hydrographic survey vessels in India, the Navy said. The design was finalised by Naval Headquarters and the construction be-

gan at Garden Reach Ship Builders Limited (GRSE) Kolkata (then Calcutta) by laying the keel in 1978. The ship was commissioned into the Navy on February 26, 1981, by Vice Adm M.K. Roy, then FOC-in-C, ENC.

"Since commissioning, the ship has been the alma mater, nurturing the hydrographers of the Navy and laying the foundation for a com-

plete hydrographic coverage of the peninsular waters," the Navy said. Also, the success of her design paved the way for all the survey ships in various modifications till recently, it stated. It said the ship had undertaken approximately 200 major hydrographic surveys and numerous minor surveys in both the east and west coasts of the country, the Andaman seas and neighbouring countries too.

The ship has also been an active participant in many significant operations such as Op Pawan (assisting the Indian Peace Keeping Force in Sri Lanka in 1987), Op Sarong, and Op Rainbow (rendering humanitarian assistance post 2004 Tsunami) and participated in the maiden joint Indo-US HADR Exercise 'Tiger-Triumph'.

SC rejects plea against HC order on scribe

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday rejected an appeal filed by a 22-year-old woman against a Delhi High Court (HC) order granting anticipatory bail to a Mumbai journalist whom she had accused of rape.

The court said it found no reason to interfere with the HC's order of May 13 protecting journalist Varun Hirani from arrest. "The question is of normal human conduct ... If a man and woman are in a room, the man makes a request and the woman complies with it, do we need to say anything more?" the court said at one point.

With the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting lives everywhere,

Brick kiln owners help Odisha workers return home

Volunteers and administration facilitate travel

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

In his decade-long annual migration to outside States for working in brick-kilns, Baladhar Thapa, a worker from Odisha's Balangir district, has perhaps for the first time returned home with a sense of dignity.

Often packed like sardines in unreserved train compartments, Mr. Thapa's travel back home used to be as exploitative as were his working conditions in brick-kilns. This year, however, may be an exception.

With the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupting lives everywhere,



Safe journey: A group of migrant workers upon their arrival from Telangana. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

brick kiln operators have funded train fares for migrant workers to travel back home. Masks, sanitisers and food packets have also been provided to them. Learning from the workers' traumatic experience during the first wave, some voluntary organisations, brick kiln owners and State government officials had planned for the re-

turn of workers. "A fortnight ago, I had booked tickets for 42 workers from Hyderabad to different districts of Odisha. They left for home on June 1. They should not contract the virus during their travel. We wanted these workers to come back and work with us again," said Kondappa Naidu, who operates a brick kiln in Telangana.

na. Mr. Naidu admitted that this was the first time he had booked tickets for workers employed by him.

This time, keeping in mind the vulnerability of workers, labour activists began consultations with brick-kiln operators in Tamil Nadu and Telangana in advance. "By the first week of May, workers had become desperate to return home. However, Odisha's second wave of COVID-19 was peaking around that time," said Umi Daniel of Aide et Action. "We motivated them to stay back in brick kilns, which are a little safer as they are situated in isolated locations, for some more time," he said.

After rounds of discussions with brick kiln owners, it was agreed that train fare would be funded. Districts adminis-

trations back in Odisha were informed in advance about the workers' return.

As of now, 300 workers have returned by travelling in reserved compartments. They were tested at temporary medical centres. Around 3,000 workers are expected to come back home via similar arrangements by June 15. Volunteers are constantly keeping in touch with the workers.

"A system has also been put in place to monitor their health status at their villages. Some alert workers have been given guidance over the phone to identify COVID-19 symptoms. They are expected to inform the nearest government authorities if anyone develops such symptoms," said Jyoti Prakash Brahma, another activist.

SC seeks response on Asaram Bapu's plea

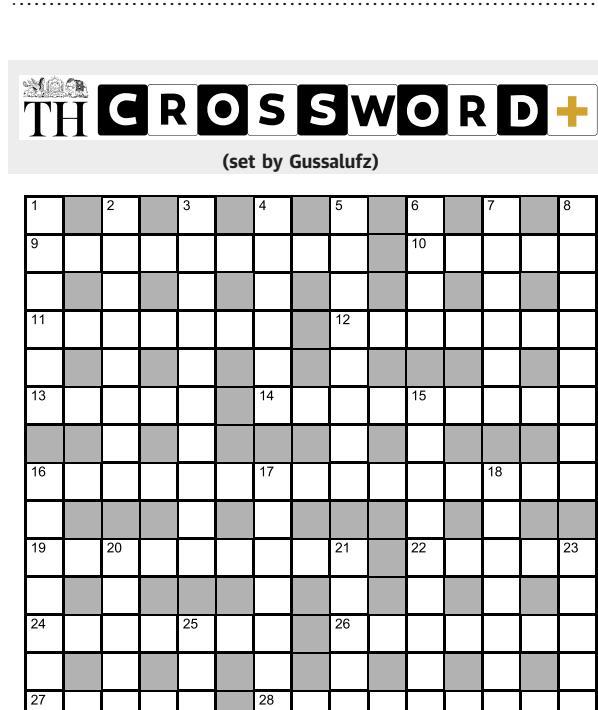
He sought treatment near Haridwar

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Rajasthan government to respond to a plea by Asaram Bapu, who is serving a life sentence in sexual assault cases, for permission to undergo treatment at an ayurvedic centre near Haridwar in Uttarakhand.

The top court, however, observed orally that it was not inclined to grant interim bail by suspending the self-styled godman's sentence for two months to enable him to get "holistic" treatment at a medical centre of his choice.

"Issue notice [to Rajas-



ACROSS
 9 Naughty erotic, can create an increase in size (9)
 10 Couple of nuns cited after taking clothes off (5)
 11 Go back inside with wisdom oozing (7)
 12 One might be attached to a horse: keeps blabbering about hugging horse's back! (7)
 13 Dada, perhaps, returning after getting old, for some more (5)
 14 Defender at front turns late to block attempt of extremely poor

Locked up at home, feeling down?
Lock your answers down pat online!

@ <https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>



- quality (9)
 16 Routine resettlements of software rights drag endlessly (15)
 19 Fresh, clean air, without a trace of smell or of some poisonous element (9)
 22 Comment scratched, essentially after one bad pun (5)
 24 Guy, having consumed drug without limits in retreat, is receptive to treatment (7)
 26 Mrs. happens to be flipping – rang in agitation over nothing! (7)
 27 Creature's responsibility, primarily: bridging tax (5)
 28 Head off to travel after home is run down (9)
- DOWN
 1 Harry's son left England (6)
 2 One getting carpet to fly around these days! (8)
 3 No sex – am a government agent rejecting scandal (10)
 4 Various birds looking for fish (6)
 5 Fond of an *idly*, every once in a while? (2,3,3)
 6 Swear in the middle of discussion (4)
 7 Bucket of kippers? *Interplanetary blistering barnacles!! Lubberly, earthworm-like starters!* (6)
 8 Carried by 10, having additional bulk? (8)
 15 Mending tool with tip of glass used in gardening, possibly (7,3)
 16 In a kind of rhythmic fashion, an animal climbing upon another of its kind – very absorbing! (8)
 17 Doctor had a nice house (8)
 18 Label oddly lacking on unopened aromatic compound jars (8)
 20 Columns or rows displaying possible impact of loss? (6)
 21 Whistle after toilet, wiping bottom and behind (6)
 23 Advertisement says electricity's initially included in rent (6)
 25 Indian bird, mostly gets garlic, perhaps (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

S	T	R	U	C	K	S	T	R	A	P	P	E	D	V	C	S	E	B
5	7	2	8	9	1	3	6	4	7	5	1	2	9	6	3	4	7	
8	6	3	4	7	5	1	2	9	4	1	6	2	3	7	8	5	6	
9	1	4	6	2	3	7	8	5	3	4	5	7	8	9	6	1	2	
3	4	5	7	8	9	6	1	2	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
4	9	6	3	1	2	5	7											



■ DREAM.GRAPHER

Instapick

Pride Month: The pandemic may be 'raining' on parades, but a mix of offline and online events are ensuring the rainbow colours are visible across the globe. From Pride Movie Nights in San Francisco, and Netflix's genre page, to Instagram's partnership with The Queer Muslim Project. The virtual community's Digital Pride Festival aims to inspire creativity and self-care. [@thequeermuslimproject](#)



Talking point

Naomi Osaka: The Japanese player didn't mince words when she withdrew from the French Open, admitting to " bouts of depression" since she won the United States Open in 2018. There has been vitriol (as expected), but also a large outpouring of support for the 23-year-old. The leaders of the four Grand Slam tournaments have now promised to address players' concerns about mental health.

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up, and other events you just can't miss



Sleight of hand

Simple things like rubber bands and pens turn into magical tools in the hands of **Mangesh Desai**. Catch the illusionist's workshop, **Everyday Magic for Kids**, today on Zoom, at 5.30 pm. ₹235, on [bookmyshow.com](#). Meanwhile, grown-ups can use their time and hands for something constructive. Sign up for a **Palm Weaving** workshop with artist-blogger Madhusree Attal Rathi, and learn how to make small mats and baskets. ₹749. On Zoom at 7 pm. in [bookmyshow.com](#)



Trip with Alice

Go down the rabbit hole with Alice. A theatrical, virtual reality show at London's **V&A museum** explores the "origins, adaptations and reinventions" of **Lewis Carroll's** surreal classic over the last 157 years. £20, on [vam.ac.uk](#). Closer home, **Daniel Fernandes** is ready with a new set of jokes – a mix of scripted and interactive stand-up – on a live Zoom show tomorrow. With a lot of material to be created out of conversations with his audience, the stand-up comic promises a show that is "not family friendly". At 7 pm. ₹399, on [punchliners.in](#)



Around the world

Kids have the lockdown blues? Theatre artiste **Raell Padamsee** has a solution: a series of fun Zoom workshops that explores everything from *Harry Potter* to Broadway. Kick things off on Monday with a **'Summer Cruise with Drama'**. Spread over 10 days, for children between ages four and 13, the 'adventure' trip will take them on a virtual tour of Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, let them experience a Venetian gondola ride, enact the history of the Taj Mahal, and much more. 11.20 am, 4.20 pm, and 5.40 pm. ₹4,300, on [in.bookmyshow.com](#)



Guneet Monga as mentor

If you've got a story, here's a crash course that will help you give it shape, form and structure. **Screenwriting Bootcamp with Satyanshu Singh** (*Chintu Ka Birthday* fame) consists of three writing workshops, one peer-feedback session, and one pitchfest – to a panel that will include writer-director Roshan Abbas, author Divya Prakash Dubey, and other veterans. Three participants with the best ideas will also get a mentorship session with producer **Guneet Monga**. June 18 - July 4, registrations are open now. ₹3,499, on [insider.in](#) (₹14,500, on [coach.com](#)).



Rainbow moment

As a shout out to Pride Month, **Fossil** has reimagined its Minimalist 40mm watch case as a limited-edition with rainbow indexes (₹5,495). The strap collection includes two reversible colourways (₹1,495) featuring hues of the transgender and rainbow flag. Details: [fossil.in](#). **GAP** has unveiled 100% organic tees, tie-dye hoodies, and more, designed by artists within the community (approx ₹2,000 onwards, [gap.com](#)), while **Coach** encourages you to tote your pride with their handbags (₹14,500, on [coach.co.in](#)).



Nature fix

This **World Environment Day**, tune into Netflix's docu-series, ***Life in Color with David Attenborough***, where the naturalist investigates how animals use colour to survive. While you are at it, also check out Discovery Plus' ***Endangered***, and Apple TV's ***The Year Earth Changed*** (read the full story on [weekend.thehindu.com](#)). If you'd rather read, **Rohan Chakravarty's** ***Green Humour for a Greying Planet***, a curation of the illustrator and wildlife buff's gag cartoons and comic strips, releases today. ₹399, on [penguin.co.in](#)



OTT update

There's a lot that's dropped (or is dropping) on OTT platforms. Here are a few to look out for. On Netflix, don't miss **Jagame Thandhiram**, the Tamil gangster film starring Dhanush and **Game of Thrones** fame James Cosmo. Then there's **Ray**, the four-part anthology (of adapted short stories of Satyajit Ray), and **Skater Girl**, about a teen from Rajasthan who becomes a skater. Over on Disney+ Hotstar, **Loki** gets his own adventure trip, **Raya and the Last Dragon** makes an entry, and **Luca** comes of age in the Italian Riviera.

Big shorts

Make time this weekend for Pedro Almodovar's lockdown film, *The Human Voice*, before journeying to the past with Satyajit Ray and others

NAMAN RAMACHANDRAN

When you think of auteurs, it is usually in connection with a feature film or films of theirs, not shorts. Many of them do begin with shorts as calling cards, before going on to global fame with feature films. For example, you may know Martin Scorsese for several features, including *Taxi Driver* and *Raging Bull*, but one of the films he cut his cinematic teeth with was the short *The Big Shave* (1967). Similarly, while you may delight in Christopher Nolan's work, including *Inception* and *Interstellar*, few remember him for the short *Doodlebug* (1997).

What I'm looking at this week is shorts that auteurs made after they'd already achieved international acclaim. Spanish filmmaker Pedro Almodovar was coming off the majestic *Pain and Glory* (2019) when he directed, in lockdown no less, the 30-minute short *The Human Voice* (2020). Almodovar had directed several shorts before his breakthrough *Pepi, Laci, Bom* (1980). But this film, now available in India via bookmyshow, showcases a master working at the height of his powers. A free adaptation of Jean Cocteau's monodrama of the same name, *The Human Voice* stars the ethereal Tilda Swinton as a woman who has broken up with someone but can't get over him or her. It is a solo performance, with Swinton at one end of a phone in a



A still from *The Human Voice* ■ PATHÉ

monologue (we can't hear what her interlocutor is saying).

Swinton's co-star is the apartment set she is in. And what an apartment it is, production designed to within an inch of its life by frequent Almodovar collaborators Antón Gómez and María Clara Notari. The last time you might have seen an apartment so striking was in *Pain and Glory*, where it was Almodovar's own living quarters that were gussied up. With *The Human Voice*, the director obviously rediscovered his appetite for shorts as he has two more in the works.

Another filmmaker who frequently returns to shorts amidst his feature film work is Hong Kong master Wong Kar Wai. After the film *In The Mood For Love* (2000), arguably the pin-

nacle of his career so far, he made several shorts, notable amongst which are the DJ Shadow music video *Six Days* (2002); *The Follow* (2001), his segment of a series of BMW motors' shorts collectively known as *The Hire*; and *The Hand* (2004), his exquisite segment of portmanteau film *Eros*, an extended version of which is available in the tremendous Criterion blu-ray box set, *The World of Wong Kar Wai*.

Swedish auteur Ingmar Bergman also dipped into the form occasionally. In 1976, where his other credit included *Face to Face*, he directed the short *The Condemned Women Dance*. And in 1984, while on *After The Rehearsal*, he brought out *Karin's Face*, mainly pictures of his mother Karin from his personal photo album.

At home, Satyajit Ray, in-between directing masterpiece after masterpiece, directed a few shorts. Incredibly, he made his first short *Two* in 1981, decades after he debuted with *Pather Panchali* in 1955. After that he directed the documentary short *Bala and The Inner Eye* and the fiction short *Pikoo*, all in 1981, and returned to the form just once more, with the documentary *Sukumar Ray* in 1987.

Naman Ramachandran is a journalist and author of *Rajimanthi: The Definitive Biography*, and tweets @namansr

She makes stress delicious

Meet Emma Seligman, the screenwriter-director behind the chaotic, bisexual Jewish comedy and indie hit, '*Shiva Baby*'



ROSELLA STEPHEN

Humid. Anxiety-inducing. Intense. In the last two months, film reviewers around the world have been explicit about the discomfort that creeps in while watching *Shiva Baby*, Emma Seligman's feature film debut. Yet not one of them wanted to cut short the experience. In fact, 'claustrophobia' joins sharp comedy and a breakout performance as some of the winning features of this tightly choreographed film about a floundering college student at a funeral service.

"Danielle [Rachel Sennett] was taken from my time in university in New York. I was very stressed about what I wanted to do. And a lot of my friends were seeking an arrangement where they had sugar daddies," says Canadian director and screenwriter, Seligman, over Zoom with *The Hindu Weekend*. Based on Seligman's short of the same name, her thesis project at NYU, the film has Danielle attending a shiva, which is a Jewish mourning ritual, with her parents. She runs into her sugar daddy there and her ex-girlfriend. It is stressful and chaotic.

Seligman, 26, shares that the film's themes of identity and empowerment are what she too struggled with in college. "What I wanted to be the backbone [of the film] was reckoning with your self worth as a young wo-

man, realising that it has been based on sexual validation and that it needs to go beyond that," she says, adding that she also "sprinkled" other parts of her life "like my family, my sexuality".

On June 11, MUBI will be launching *Shiva Baby* as their LGBTQI+ focus for Pride Month. Seligman remarks that she is lucky it is reaching people beyond the Jewish or bisexual audience. "The short film had a lot of success among my Indian friends too. They loved it and kept telling me they were into it," she recalls. As for the future of queer cinema, the challenges are many. Noting the lack of portrayal of bisexuality or pansexuality or gender fluidity on screen, she says, "We've made progress with telling gay stories and lesbian stories and trans

stories, which is wonderful. I think people sometimes worry that audiences may not be able to wrap their head around someone who is in between or fluid with their sexuality or gender. I hope more and more people at the top who make the decisions begin to understand that and not be confused."

While Seligman has often talked about her "very insular Jewish upbringing" she hands it to TV shows like the teen drama series, *The OC*, and the medical drama, *Grey's Anatomy*, for introducing bisexual characters on screen. "Eventually we got stuff like *The Bi*-sexual and *Transparent*, where there are tonnes of bisexual and pansexual characters. But as a kid, those were two shows that stuck out for me."

Meanwhile, the young filmmaker who managed to create her indie darling with a \$225,000 budget is on to the big league. Coming up next: a queer high school comedy, *Bottoms*, with her lead actor and collaborator, Sennett, and Elizabeth Banks' Brownstone production company.

Seligman tackles questions on authenticity, queer representation and her final van scene on [weekend.thehindu.com](#)



Emma Seligman (left), a still and poster from *Shiva Baby* on [weekend.thehindu.com](#)

SPIT TAKE

The dance of development

Let's not quibble over millions and billions, but direct the greenbacks where it's needed

KRISHNA SHASTRI DEVULAPALLI

Dear Landlady, I am

addressing our leadership. Your desire to invest \$500 billion in our country's National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) couldn't have come at a better time. Your dream of making India a global destination by supporting the completion of projects in energy, social infrastructure, manufacturing, etc, is indeed commendable.

While our indefatigable leaders may take some time to get back to you regarding your exciting offer, considering how busy they are now, as a dynamic, *atmanirbhar* citizen of New India, I have taken the liberty of responding to your letter with a small project that you could undertake in the interim. I assure you, it will enhance your reputation in no small way as a serious player in the infrastructure field.

That your establishment is locat-

ed in Secaucus, New Jersey, makes my proposal that much more poignant.

Getting right to it, if you have read my previous columns, you may be aware of Ambujam Mami. Now, serendipitously, her second daughter lives in New Jersey. This brings us to my proposal: lending your support to completing Mami's long-delayed *arangetram* project.

A little back story here. Mami's *arangetram* was originally scheduled to be held at NJ's own legendary State Theatre on September 12, 2001. Invites were sent out, videographers were ready, caterers had made *rava kesari* with extra cashew. It was, as they say, all systems go. The previous day's incident, unfortunately, put paid to Mami's dream. She recovered though, with intense coconut-oil-based ayurved-

ic therapy in Kerala, and with renewed vigour, set a date in August 2005. She chose Hallandale Beach, Florida, as her venue. This did have more than a bit to do with her *athimber*, Natarajan (aptly named, LOL), running a largish home for seniors who'd fill up the back rows of the auditorium. Alas, Hurricane Katrina made landfall on that precise day. I prefer not to mention the other dates of

Ambujam Mami's aborted *arangetram*s because they're bound to make us all revisit buried traumas. Suffice it to say, her *arangetram* saga is the tragic version of Forrest Gump.

Anyway, she is fighting fit now. Twenty years of non-stop practise have made her a Black Belt in Bharatanatyam (there is a school offering one here, BTW) and Sundaram Mama develop a per-

manent, if alarming, facial tic that makes him look like Lalita Pawar.

All we are asking for is an outlay of a mere \$100, 000, jujube for someone with \$500 billion.

Don't dismiss our proposal hastily, sirs, saying our ambitious yet low-cost project has nothing to do with any of the sectors you are interested in. It does. More than you can imagine.

Your interests lie in the energy, social infrastructure, manufacturing, transport, food processing, water, and sanitation sectors, don't they? Any good *arangetram* requires inputs from all these sectors.

A lot of energy will be required to power the twinkling serial lights on Ambujam Mami's 40-foot cut-out. Social infrastructure, you say? What is an *arangetram* if not education, community, play, youth, recreation, sports, and faith, all combined? As for manufacturing, we will be making cut-outs, printing invites, tailoring dresses, won't we? Don't even make us explain transport, food processing, water, and sanitisation, okay? People will travel to the venue, eat processed food, drink water, and go to the loo. All covered.

Looking forward to an early response from you, sirs. Let's make India great.

Yours in anticipation,

KSD

Krishna Shastri Devulapalli is a satirist. He has written four books and edited an anthology.



■ SREEJITH R KUMAR



On the couch with Irrfan

Entrapment, escape, and a startling breakthrough with a widowed professor from Bengal in a therapist's room in Brooklyn

SHEFALEE VASUDEV

It is Irrfan. Irrfan Khan. Is it, yes, oh, I mutter. The TV remote stays mute. Addicted to the might and madness of the human mind for years through books, films, talks, I let the jazz of adrenaline play my veins in prep for the fourth season of the HBO series, *In Treatment*, that debuted recently. I am surfing through previous seasons (which aired between 2008 and 2010) on Disney + Hotstar.

Having compulsively watched 50-something therapist Dr Paul Weston (actor Gabriel Byrne) over 70-plus episodes, I am in love with his non-verbals as with his spoken word. Shrink in shining armour. In dark jackets and polished shoes, he navigates his clients through abusive relationships, teenage rebellions, erotic transference, or difficult divorces. I have been in his clinic for many weeks, and Americans in therapy exhaling with cuss words amuses me. I was unprepared though to find Irrfan unpacking his life in Season 3.

In Treatment is intense. Often, a lifetime tides up between two people talking to each other. Reminiscent of intimate, theatre work. A viewer can pan Weston's book-lined, wood-panelled office with the camera or invisibly take a seat. Produced and deve-

loped by Rodrigo Garcia – based on the Israeli series *Le Tipul* – the programme shows four patients each week in sessions with Weston, followed by one with his own therapist to dust his mental cobwebs.

Flashback to Sunil

In Treatment won many honours at The Emmys and Golden Globes after its 2008 launch. Several episodes for Season 3 were written by playwright Adam Rapp, with author Jhumpa Lahiri consulting on the Irrfan story. I had no idea though, until a day after the actor's first death anniversary on April 29 this year that "one of the greatest actors alive", as Rapp described Irrfan to *The New York Times* over a decade ago, was grieving all those years back on a Brooklyn couch.

Sumir Sanyal, 2010. His psychic pain is as palpable as a limp, when herded by his son Arun and daughter-in-law Julia, he enters Weston's office. Irrfan plays a greying widower in his 50s. His anguish, as the recently-bereaved husband of Kamala, struggling with his bristling present, a Bengali maths professor from Kolkata who loves recreational cricket, is a fascinating part of his acting oeuvre. Barely written about in India. Who else could have played a man so

deeply thorned by conflict, shadowed by demons from a tumultuous past, and express it through the borderless language of his eyes.

Confused by his unnerving dreams and insomniac neurosis, Sanyal longs to return to Kolkata. His daughter-in-

law, a modern American woman, unabashed in her mannerisms as a wife, whose perfume reminds him of "black pepper and jasmine", a mother unfettered by ideas of sacrifice unlike Sanyal's dead wife, arouses a storm of resentment in him. The

arousal is the presenting problem.

"Can I smoke in your office... err Paul?" "Can I offer you some tea, Paul? In my country having tea with friends is how people grieve instead of paid therapy..," says Sanyal. Weston opens a window to prevent the smoke from Sanyal's life lighting a fire, and brews tea for him. Sanyal mourns his wife but also his Brahmin Bengali-ness. And Kolkata, where caste decides emotional fates.

A sudden déjà vu now circles me. I have met Sunil Sanyal before. It is not so much his sloppily, half-sleaved sweaters and closed toe, tan sandals, but the Kolkata-dusted bewilderment of a Bengali in New York that triggers the memory of Ashoke Ganguly from the 2006 film, *The Namesake*. Prof Ganguly was not as troubled in Mira Nair's adaptation of Lahiri's novel, but he is ponderous as only Irrfan can be.

Waiting for the connect

Now with the Covid-19 elephant in the room, the therapeutic space is crowded. As mental health dilemmas intensify globally, spiked peculiarly in the US by racial divisiveness, HBO has revived *In Treatment*. The fourth season opened on May 23 with African-American actor, Emmy awardee Uzo Aduba as the shrink. Dr Brooke Taylor sits on a Herman Miller chair

in a Los Angeles home that looks like a gallery of modern art with sorbet sofas and tech tools. A male home health aide, an immigrant, is on a virtual session. Others meet Taylor at her house, including a Black teenage sex addict identifying as lesbian female. Taylor represents change but in the episodes so far, the "connect" is just about warming up.

Like life clutched by the past, I rewind to Sunil Sanyal and Paul Weston, and find them seated on opposite sides of a glass in a detention centre. The boundaries are back. They speak through a visitor's telephone. Sanyal is being deported to India for the "criminal threat" he poses to his daughter-in-law's life while Weston struggles with a Parkinson's diagnosis.

"Will you be okay? Sometimes I worry about you..." a wry Sanyal quips to a grimacing Weston. "I know what it is like to feel such loneliness and I hope someday you will free yourself from it."

This last episode concludes with Sunil humming a Bengali song, of a moonlit night and a goodbye. *Vidhaye bandhu vidhaye* (farewell, friend, farewell)

It is a breakthrough moment.

Shefalee Vasudev is editor of *The Voice of Fashion*.



Just like home: Chips walley aloo and (below) Pyaz wali bhindi

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kiran's Cookhouse brings in the nostalgia of homemade food



FOOD SPOT

Home-cooked meal from the chef



RAHUL VERMA

One of the nice parts of our annual trip to the Himachal hills was a stopover in Chandigarh. We would, usually on our way back to Delhi, stop at our friend's parents' place. Her mother is an awesome cook and would give us a delicious meal. That was where I first had – and instantly fell in love with – baked aloo chips. The dish consisted of round pieces of thinly sliced potatoes, mixed with some chilies and other masalas and then put in the oven.

The dish popped up and hit my eyes last week when I



was looking at the menu of a small home chef outlet called Kiran's Cookhouse. That was the decider for me, and I placed an order for a vegetarian meal even though the kitchen offers dishes such as fried fish, kali mirch chicken and handi gosht. Apart from the chips walley aloo (as the dish is called), I asked for mixed pakoras, bharwa tinday-aloo, bharwa karela, masala bhindi, bedmi aloo, channey dal with lauki and, for dessert, paratha with gur. The rates are all very reasonable – between ₹100 and ₹200. For this feast, I paid a little less than ₹1,000.

Kiran's Cookhouse is in Noida, Sector 61, and I ordered through Swiggy. The food was still hot when it reached my doorstep. I started with the potato curry that came with the bedmi, and enjoyed the rush of asoefetida

that it triggered. I liked the lauki dal, too – bits of bottle gourd in a thick channa dal. I had thought I'd had enough of tinda (which I had to eat almost every day after a health issue three years ago). But despite the bad press the poor tinda generally gets, I quite like this watery vegetable. And stuffed tinda – where the vegetable is filled with sundry masalas – is a particular favourite of mine. This was rather tasty – the usual masalas (coriander powder et al) had given it a

punch.

What gladdened my heart was the chips walley aloo – potatoes sliced into thin discs, coated with dry spices, shallow fried and topped with chaat masala. Kiran Cookhouse's okra was good, too; it had been prepared with a fair amount of onions and chilies. The food, I thought, was like home cooked fare, even though the chilli quotient was rather high.

What didn't impress me was the dish I was most looking forward to – stuffed karela. I love this dish, and it is cooked rather well at home these days. Sometimes we stuff the whole gourd with pickle masala (fenugreek, fennel seeds etc) and occasionally grated raw mango. This one looked appetising, but didn't have the zing of a well-stuffed karela. Still, it was good to know that a kitchen was delivering the much-loved dish home. The paratha with gur didn't work for us either, but that was possibly because this is a dish that has to be eaten just off the tawa. I remember how I loved it when it was prepared in our village home on winter evenings – the paratha holding the melting gur which would burst into the mouth when I bit into it. Here, the paratha was a bit too rubbery, and the gur had already melted and become sticky.

But I am always happy when small entrepreneurs start their little businesses, focusing on old recipes that you don't get in restaurants. Next on my agenda is khatti dal, which I thought I'd had enough of during my Himachal sojourns back in the late 70s and early 80s. But it's nostalgic time – and this Himachali dish is cheerfully waving to me.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

GREEN LIVING

Code Earth

Vegan footwear and eco carpets for your conscious haul this summer

If we were to pick one positive brought about by the pandemic, it is how brands are taking their 'sustainability strategy' beyond mere tokenism. Biggies like Adidas and Unilever switched to green launches a while back, and food manufacturer Goodman Fielder's latest 'Better Together' strategy follows suit. With homegrown brands jumping on the bandwagon, we bring you the season's latest.

Compiled by Nidhi Adlakha

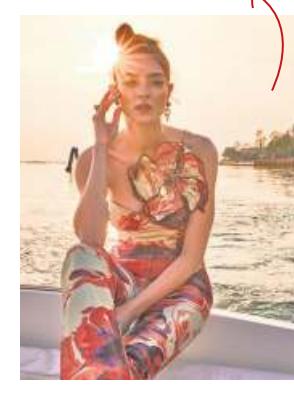


Foldable e-bike

Qubit
To commemorate World Bicycle Day that was observed earlier this week (June 3), our eyes are on this compact electric bike ideal for post-pandemic travel. Fold it and carry it almost anywhere – in public transport or your car's boot. At 15.5 kg, the lightweight cycle's battery is integrated into the removable seat post so you can do those pre- and post-ride stretches with ease. Available in black, white, red, ₹49,990 for X1, ₹66,658 for X2 on qubit.bike

Mirrors in Murano

La Fuori
Designer Vidur Adlakha's latest collection, Mirrors in Murano, transports you to the lanes of Italian town Burano, known for its delicate lace work. Designed in sustainable linen, silk, silk wool, and hand-picked cotton yarn, the ensemble features balletic dresses and evening gowns. This time around, the New York-based lifestyle brand has created combinations of tender pink and blue, and rich whites. Dresses from ₹11,000 onwards, on belafuori.com



Green cart

Myntra
From handloom and handcrafted, to natural-dyed and vegan and cruelty-free, the online shopping portal's 'Mynta For Earth' section is seeing an uptick in the participating brands list. Featured apparel brands include Taavi, Roadster and Ether, alongside beauty brands Earth Therapy, Daughter Earth, and others. Products ordered via this section are delivered in packages crafted from 100% recycled paper. mynta.com/earth



Plant fabrics

Littleens
This Jaipur-based kidswear brand features apparel in fabrics derived from soya, bamboo, milk, lotus, banana, roses, kala cotton, and more. Launched during the 2020 lockdown by Mitali Bhargava, the collections feature jumpsuits, dresses, etc, for girls, and blazers and shirts for boys. ₹6,000 onwards, on littleens.com



Vegan footwear

Birkenstock
Featuring on almost every 'top vegan footwear to buy' list is the German shoe manufacturer's vegan range. New launches include sandals crafted using the hard-wearing synthetic material Birko-Flor that come in a hand painted, floral look. While buyers only had the option of choosing from genuine leather or plastic footwear, the vegan range is 'entirely free of animal products'. Available in white, black, pink, etc, the shoes feature natural cork-latex for the footbed. ₹5,490 onwards, on birkenstock.in



Hong Kong seals off Tiananmen vigil site

Police arrest vigil organiser; hundreds gather to commemorate the victims of China's 1989 crackdown

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HONG KONG

Hundreds of people gathered near a Hong Kong park on Friday despite a ban on an annual candlelight vigil remembering China's deadly crackdown in Beijing's Tiananmen Square, and the arrest earlier in the day of an organiser of previous vigils.

Hong Kong police banned the vigil for a second straight year, citing COVID-19 social distancing restrictions, although there have been no local cases in the city for more than six weeks.

Police closed off large parts of Victoria Park – the venue of past vigils – and warned people not to participate in unauthorised assemblies, which carry a penalty of up to five years in jail.

Despite the ban and a heavy police presence, hundreds of people still turned up on Friday night to walk along the perimeter of the park. At 8 p.m., many turned on the flashlights on their smartphones while others lit candles in remembrance of those who lost their lives when China's military put down student-led pro-democracy protests at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands, were killed in the crackdown.



Tight control: Police holding up a warning banner as they disperse people from Victoria Park in Hong Kong. ■ GETTY IMAGES

mocracy protests at Tiananmen Square on June 4, 1989. Hundreds, if not thousands, were killed in the crackdown.

Fear of reprisals
In past years, tens of thousands of people have gathered in Victoria Park to honour the dead. Last year, thousands attended despite the ban to light candles and sing songs. Police later arrested over 20 activists.

Wong, who joined the hundreds near the park on Friday said the Tiananmen Square crackdown is a me-

mory shared by Hong Kongers, and he wanted to commemorate the students and citizens who were killed by the People's Liberation Army.

China's ruling Communist Party has never allowed public events on the mainland to mark the anniversary and security was increased at the Beijing square, with police checking pedestrians' IDs as tour buses shuttled Chinese tourists in and out.

Chinese officials say the country's rapid economic development in the years since what they call the "poli-

U.S. says it stands with 'brave' Chinese activists

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The U.S. said on Thursday it stands "with the people of China" in their fight for human rights on the eve of the anniversary of Beijing's deadly Tiananmen crackdown.

Secretary of State Antony

Blinken said his country will "honor the sacrifices of those killed 32 years ago, and the brave activists who carry on their efforts today in the face of ongoing government repression."

"The United States will continue to stand with the people of China," he said.

tical turmoil" of 1989 proves that decisions made at the time were correct.

Earlier on Friday, police arrested Chow Hang Tung, a vice chair of the Hong Kong Alliance which organised Hong Kong's annual candlelight vigil, the group said.

After the ban was issued, Ms. Chow urged people to commemorate the event privately by lighting a candle wherever they are.

"I'm already being persecuted for participating and inciting last year's candlelight vigil," she said. "If I continue my activism in pushing

for democracy in Hong Kong and China, surely they will come after me at some point, so it's sort of expected."

At the University of Hong Kong, students took part in an annual washing of the "Pillar of Shame" sculpture, which was erected to remember the victims of the Tiananmen crackdown.

"In cleaning the Pillar of Shame, we shall learn how our predecessors defended the freedom of expression before, and we shall not easily give up," said Charles Kwok, the president of the students' union.

17 cases of use of chemical weapons by Syria: OPCW

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK

The head of the international chemical weapons watchdog told the UN Security Council that its experts have investigated 77 allegations against Syria, and concluded that in 17 cases chemical weapons were likely or definitely used.

Fernando Arias called it "a disturbing reality" that eight years after Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, which bans the production or use of such weapons, many questions remain about its initial declaration of its weapons, stockpiles and precursors and its ongoing programme.

He said on Thursday that the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will be taking up a new issue at its next consultations with Syria – "the presence of a new chemical weapons agent found in samples collected in large storage containers in Sept. 2020."

Plea in Sri Lanka SC on cargo ship fire impact

Petitioners seek a probe into incident

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Environmentalists and fisher groups in Sri Lanka on Friday petitioned the Supreme Court seeking a probe into how a container ship bearing dangerous chemicals and plastic material – that burned off the coast releasing massive debris – was allowed into the island nation's territorial waters.

Their Fundamental Rights petition follows a nearly two week-long battle by the Sri Lankan Navy, with Dutch salvage experts and the Indian Coast Guard, to douse the flames onboard the Singapore-registered vessel, MV X-Press Pearl,

that was anchored about 9.5 nautical miles off the Colombo port.

After the fire was extinguished on Tuesday, the vessel has been slowly sinking into the Indian Ocean, off the Sri Lankan coast, heightening fears of a possible oil spill that authorities said they were preparing to handle. Meanwhile, the prolonged fire on the vessel led to large deposits of plastic pellets along the island nation's coastline, where several marine organisms were also found dead.

Experts have termed the development the country's "worst ecological disaster".

Over the next two weeks, authorities will study the impact of the incident on Sri Lanka's coastline, biodiversity and marine organisms, an official said. "We will be assessing the damage alone 125 km of our coastline that appears to be impacted by this incident," A.H. Gamini, a director with the Coast Conservation and Coastal Resource Management De-

partment told *The Hindu*. According to the petitioners, including the Colombo-based non-profit Centre for Environmental Justice, and activists and trade union leaders from the fisheries sector, apart from the 325 tonnes of bunker oil, the vessel was loaded with 1,486 containers carrying chemicals, including 25 tonnes of hazardous nitric acid, caustic soda, sodium methylate, bright yellow sulphur, urea, and cosmetics.

'Acid leak'

Citing media statements made by the shipping company, the petitioners said "poor packaging" likely led to an "acid leak", and on detecting the leak, the ship's captain had contacted two ports – Hazira [Gujarat] on the west coast of India and Hamad in Qatar – requesting to offload the leaking containers. The requests were denied, and the ship made its way to Sri Lanka, they said, asking who cleared the vessel's entry into Sri Lankan waters, and if permission was given despite knowledge of the "gravity of the risk".

The Singapore-registered MV X-Press Pearl is almost brand new, made in China, and commissioned in February, AFP reported. It was en route to Singapore from Hazira Port in Gujarat, officials said. Shipping company X-Press Feeders' CEO Shmuel Yoskovitz has apologised to Sri Lanka.

"I would like to express my deep regrets and apologies to the Sri Lankan people for the harm this incident has caused to the livelihood and to the environment of Sri Lanka," he said in a media interview.

Amid U.S. withdrawal, Beijing seeks closer Afghan ties

Wang Yi says China, Afghanistan and Pak. need to 'strengthen cooperation' for the sake of the region

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China is urging closer security and economic cooperation with Afghanistan in an apparent effort to bolster its influence in the region as the U.S. and its allies prepare to withdraw their forces from the country.

The official Xinhua News Agency reported that Foreign Ministers from China, Afghanistan and Pakistan

met via video conference on Thursday and agreed that the withdrawal of foreign troops from Afghanistan should be carried out in a responsible and orderly manner to prevent the deterioration of the security situation in Afghanistan and the return of "terrorist forces."

It quoted Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi as saying the three countries "needed

to strengthen communication and cooperation" for the sake of Afghanistan's interests and those of neighbouring countries.

"The security and stability of Afghanistan and the region are facing new challenges, with foreign troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan accelerated, the peace and reconciliation process in Afghanistan impacted, and armed conflicts and terrorist

activities becoming more frequent," Mr. Wang was quoted as saying.

Xinjiang security

China has long resented the presence of U.S. and allied forces in Afghanistan, but is equally wary of the country

becoming a haven for insurgents that could threaten security in its Xinjiang region

that shares a narrow border with Afghanistan.

Xinhua said Mr. Wang, Afghan Foreign Minister Mohammad Hanif Atmar and Pakistani Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi "stressed the need to ... forbid any terrorist organisations or individuals from using their territories to engage in criminal activities against other countries."

The U.S. is withdrawing the last of its 2,500-3,500 troops by September 11.

Pfizer jab produces less anti-bodies against Delta'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

People fully vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine are likely to have more than five times lower levels of neutralising anti-bodies against the Delta variant, first identified in India, compared to the original strain, according to research published in *The Lancet* journal.

The study also shows that levels of these anti-bodies that are able to recognise and fight the virus are lower with increasing age, and that levels decline over time, providing additional evidence in support of plans to deliver a booster dose to vulnerable people.

The study analysed antibodies in the blood of 250 healthy people.

U.K. regulator approves Pfizer vaccine for 12- to 15-year-olds

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON

The U.K.'s medicines regulator on Friday approved the Pfizer/BioNTech coronavirus vaccine for 12 to 15-year-olds, saying it is "safe and effective" in this age group and the benefits outweigh any risks.

"We have carefully reviewed clinical trial data in children aged 12 to 15 years and have concluded that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in this age group and that the

Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) said the decision followed a "rigorous review" of safety and effectiveness in the lower age groups and its conclusion is that the benefits of the vaccine far outweigh any risks.

"We have carefully reviewed clinical trial data in children aged 12 to 15 years and have concluded that the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine is safe and effective in this age group and that the

benefits of this vaccine outweigh any risk," said Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive.

Safety strategy

"We have in place a comprehensive safety surveillance strategy for monitoring the safety of all U.K.-approved COVID-19 vaccines and this surveillance will include the 12- to 15-year age group. No extension to an authorisation would be approved unless

the expected standards of safety, quality and effectiveness have been met," she said.

It will now be for the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to advise on whether this age group will be vaccinated as part of the deployment programme, the MHRA said.

The regulator said no new side effects were identified and the safety data in children was comparable with

Biden expands list of Chinese firms off-limits for U.S. investors

Order widens scope of the ban to include 59 companies



Joe Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Joe Biden on

Thursday expanded a black-

list of Chinese firms that are

off-limits to American inves-

tors over their links to Bei-

jing's "military-industrial

complex," in a sign of Wash-

ington's continued pressure

campaign against the Asian

power.

Former President Donald

Trump in November issued

a list of 31 Chinese compa-

nies that were deemed to be

supplying or supporting Chi-

na's military and security

apparatus, later adding even

more firms.

But after legal challenges

put the sanctions in doubt,

Mr. Biden's team reviewed the blacklist, removing some names and ultimately expanding it to 59 firms that Americans are prohibited from having a stake in. Many are subsidiaries of companies already included.

The sanctions target com-

panies involved in Chinese

surveillance technology

used to "facilitate repression or serious human rights abuses," which "undermine the security or democratic values of the United States and our allies," according to a White House statement.

The initial list published under Mr. Trump included major telecoms, construction and technology firms, such as China Mobile, China Telecom, video surveillance firm Hikvision, and China Railway Construction Corp.

China National Offshore

Oil Corporation was added to

the list in January. The in-

vestment ban takes effect on

August 2 and current share-

holders have a year to divest.

The sanctions target com-

NOTICE INVITING BID Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL)

In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-II, Bhubaneswar-751001
Tel.: (0674) 2380950; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in ; Email: logistics.osmcl@nic.in

Bid Ref.No.: OSMCL/2021-22/DRUGS-DHS-GEN-GR/IV/13 Date: 04/06/2021

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for Supply of Drugs & Medical Consumables (Group-IV) as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1.	Date & time of release of bid	04/06/2021, 3 PM
2.	Date & time for submission of queries by E-Mail - logistics.osmcl@nic.in	08/06/2021, up to 5:00 PM
3.	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time 16/06/2021, 3 PM End Date & Time 06/07/2021, 6:00 PM
4.	Date & time for submission of Tender Documents, Tender Document Fee of tender document	Start Date & Time 07/07/2021, 10 AM End Date & Time 14/07/2021, 11:00 AM
5.	Date & time of Online Technical bid Opening	

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	52100	-0.25
US Dollar	72.99	-0.10
Gold	48657	0.26
Brent oil	71.5	-0.05

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	833.85	8.55
Asian Paints	2924.90	-10.45
Axist Bank	742.05	-8.60
Bajaj Auto	4250.05	-23.30
Bajaj Finserv	12155.65	335.80
Bajaj Finance	5992.45	91.95
Bharti Airtel	532.70	0.65
BPCL	478.25	4.35
Britannia Ind	3489.30	-6.95
Cipla	946.40	-1.85
Coal India	153.10	4.05
Divis Lab	4261.60	29.40
Dr Reddys Lab	5255.00	-27.55
Eicher Motors	2744.60	-23.15
Grafin Ind	1503.25	44.50
HCL Tech	936.55	-2.90
HDFC	2619.05	35.05
HDFC Bank	1500.95	-19.60
HDFC Life	680.90	2.45
Hero MotoCorp	3048.40	40.05
Hindalco	395.05	-4.15
Hind Unilever	2342.05	-21.20
ICICI Bank	642.70	-7.55
IndusInd Bank	1009.30	3.55
Infosys	1385.65	-4.00
Indian Oil Corp	114.60	2.15
ITC	208.75	-1.30
JSW Steel	721.20	7.10
Kotak Bank	1811.20	-3.00
L&T	1537.55	26.70
M&M	804.60	2.55
Maruti Suzuki	7214.70	5.20
Nestle India Ltd.	17426.80	-372.60
NTPC	111.75	-0.05
ONGC	125.45	2.95
PowerGrid Corp	226.15	-0.15
Reliance Ind	2190.50	-19.15
SBI Life	989.15	2.30
State Bank	433.60	-6.05
Shree Cement	28153.65	-194.50
Sun Pharma	673.95	-1.55
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	686.95	6.95
Tata Motors	334.95	9.30
Tata Steel	1120.70	-1.30
TCS	3143.75	2.50
Tech Mahindra	1019.20	4.85
Titan	1679.50	-11.70
UltraTech Cement	6664.30	22.60
UPL	836.25	-4.00
Wipro	541.20	2.15

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.80	73.12
Euro	88.21	88.60
British Pound	102.94	103.40
Japanese Yen (100)	66.14	66.43
Chinese Yuan	11.36	11.41
Swiss Franc	80.51	80.91
Singapore Dollar	54.81	55.06
Canadian Dollar	60.04	60.33
Malaysian Ringgit	17.63	17.72

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Govt. caps trade margin on oxygen concentrators

NEW DELHI The government has capped the trade margin on oxygen concentrators in order to keep in check the price of the much-in-demand critical life-saving component amid the second wave of the pandemic. The trade margin has been capped at 70% on price to distributor level on oxygen concentrators. PTI

RailTel bags ₹120 crore order from BCCL

NEW DELHI State-owned RailTel Corporation on Friday said it has bagged a ₹120 crore order from Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. "RailTel Corporation of India Ltd. has received the work order of a total amount of ₹119.72 crore from Bharat Coking Coal Ltd. for implementation of MPLS-VPN services, along with miscellaneous services at 340 locations of BCCL for a period of 60 months," RailTel said in a filing with BSE. PTI

Lupin unveils inhalation product in U.S. market

NEW DELHI Drug firm Lupin on Friday said it has unveiled Arformoterol Tartrate, an inhalation product to treat conditions such as chronic bronchitis and emphysema, in the U.S. market. The product is the generic version of Sunovion Pharmaceuticals Inc's Brovaca inhalation solution, Lupin said in a statement. It is for use by nebulisation only, the Mumbai-based drugmaker noted. PTI

Bank credit rises 5.98%, deposits grow 9.66%

MUMBAI Bank credit grew 5.98% to ₹108.33 lakh crore while deposits rose 9.66% to ₹151.67 lakh crore in the fortnight ended May 21, RBI data showed on Friday. In the comparable period a year earlier, bank credit stood at ₹102.22 lakh crore and deposits at ₹138.29 lakh crore, according to RBI's Scheduled Banks' Statement of Position in India. In the fortnight ended May 7, 2021, advances had risen 6.02% and deposits, 9.87%. PTI

RBI adds hospitality sector aid with ₹15,000 cr. credit window

Hotels, restaurants, travel agents may benefit; trade says 3-year tenor 'too short'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has opened a separate On-tap Liquidity Window to help mitigate the adverse impact of the second wave of the pandemic on certain contact-intensive sectors. The move would provide liquidity of ₹15,000 crore till March 31, 2022, with tenors of up to three years.

Under the scheme, banks can provide fresh lending support to hotels and restaurants; entities related to tourism – travel agents, tour operators and adventure or heritage facilities; aviation ancillary services – ground handling and supply chain; and others including private



Timely step: Infusing liquidity will help as cash-strapped units couldn't have survived, says FHRAI's Kohli. ■ V SREENIVASA MURTHY

bus operators, car repair services; rent-a-car service providers, event/conference organisers, spa clinics, and beauty parlours/salons.

Banks will be permitted to park their surplus liquidity up to the size of the loan

book created under this scheme with the RBI at a rate which is 40 basis points (bps) higher than the reverse repo rate.

The hospitality sector welcomed the decision. "This is the first significant sign indi-

cating that the government has taken note of the severe effect that the pandemic has had on the hospitality industry and the huge economic impact it will have on the sector as well as the nation," Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) vice-president Gurbaish Singh Kohli said.

Infusing liquidity would provide support to cash-strapped businesses without which the industry couldn't have survived, he added. Ho-

wever, the tenure should be for at least five years as a duration of three years would not be sufficient to recover from the turbulence the industry faces, he stressed. (With PTI inputs)

Sensex slips as RBI trims GDP growth forecast

Banking, FMCG stocks weigh on index

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI Equity indices treaded lower, weighed by banking, energy and FMCG stocks, after the RBI left interest rates unchanged but slashed the GDP growth estimate for this fiscal following the second wave of COVID-19.

Laclustre global cues and a weak rupee also soured risk appetite, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 132.38 points, or 0.25%, lower at 52,100, a day after closing at its lifetime peak. The broader NSE Nifty slipped 0.13% to close at 15,670.25.

Nestle India was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, declining 1.97%, followed by SBI, HDFC Bank, ICICI



Bank, Axis Bank, Titan, HUL and Reliance Industries.

Bajaj Finserv, ONGC, L&T, Bajaj Finance and HDFC were among the gainers.

"A moderate increase in inflation forecast by the RBI led G-Sec yields increasing by 3 basis points, which resulted in profit-taking in banks," said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy, Reliance Securities.

RBI's view on cryptocurrency stays, have major concerns: Das

Governor urges due diligence before investors take a call

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday made it clear that the central bank's view on cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin remains unchanged and it continues to have 'major concerns' on the volatile instruments.

"There is no change in RBI's position on cryptocurrencies. Our circular clarifies the position very well," Mr. Das told reporters.

The RBI had first come out with a circular on the issue in 2018, cautioning people against investing in cryptocurrencies, that do not have sovereign character.

It had barred entities regulated by it from dealing in



such instruments. However, the Supreme Court, in 2020, struck down the circular.

Mr. Das said a revised notification to financial institutions on Monday was necessary because some banks were still referring to the old circular set aside by the Apex court and this was an attempt to set the record straight. The RBI had on Monday asked banks, NBFCs

and payment system providers not to refer to its earlier 2018 circular in their communications to customers.

"With regard to RBI's position on cryptocurrencies, I had said earlier, we have major concerns around cryptocurrency which we have conveyed to the government," Mr. Das said.

Some of the cryptocurrencies have seen a massive dip in their per unit trading prices lately, leading to erosion of investor wealth.

Mr. Das said the central bank is not into investment advice, but added that one should make one's own appraisal and do due diligence before taking a call on investing in cryptocurrencies.

PNB turns ₹586-crore profit in Q4

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) on Friday posted a standalone profit of ₹586.3 crore for the fourth quarter ended March, aided by an increase in interest income.

The second-largest public sector lender had reported a loss of ₹697.2 crore in the January-March period of 2019-20.

Total income rose to ₹22,531.7 crore from ₹16,388.3 crore. Interest earned climbed 36% to ₹8,789.5 crore, PNB said in a regulatory filing.

The numbers were not strictly comparable as Oriental Bank of Commerce and United Bank of India were merged into PNB effective April 1, 2020, it said. Net NPAs dipped to 5.7% against 5.8% in the year-earlier period.

"With WFH, consumer behaviour has changed to

Thai jewellery trade eyes India with a new range

WFH changing consumer behaviour'



embrace jewellery and accessories that highlight the upper half of the body visible on Zoom, MS Teams and Google Meets," said a spokesperson for Thailand's Department of International Trade Promotion (DITP).

Thailand's pre-COVID imports of gem and jewellery from India stood at \$300 million and exports about \$600-700 million.

One of its main markets is India, with an export value of \$143.97 million from January-March, as per DITP data.

U.S. job growth picks up pace

May unemployment rate falls to 5.8% as pandemic eases

REUTERS

WASHINGTON

U.S. employers boosted hiring in May as the easing pandemic, helped by vaccinations, pulled more people back into the labour force, offering assurance that the economy's recovery from the COVID-19 recession remained on track.

Non-farm payrolls increased by 5.59 lakh jobs last month, the Labor Department said in its closely watched employment report on Friday.

Data for April was revised slightly higher to show payrolls rising by 2.78 lakh jobs instead of 2.66 lakh as previously reported.

The unemployment rate fell to 5.8%, from 6.1% in April.

The improving public health situation and massive fiscal stimulus are supporting the economy.

At least half of the American population has been fully vaccinated and schools fully reopened in the fall, is expected to ease the worker scarcity by September.



Disease Control and Prevention. That has allowed authorities across the country to lift virus-related restrictions on businesses. But the reopening of the economy is straining the supply chain.

A worker shortage blamed on childcare complications, generous unemployment checks and lingering fears over COVID-19 sharply restrained hiring.

There are a record 8.1 million job openings.

Millions of workers, mostly women, remain at home as most school districts have not moved to full-time in-person learning.

Serena powers into round four to boost record hopes

Zverev clinical in his win over Djere; women's third seed Sabalenka crashes out following an error-ridden loss to Pavlyuchenkova

ROLAND-GARROS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Serena Williams sent out a warning to the rest of the depleted women's draw on Friday with a dominant straight-set win over Danielle Collins to reach the French Open last 16 for the first time since 2018.

The 39-year-old, still one short of Margaret Court's all-time record of 24 Grand Slam singles titles, won 6-4, 6-4.

Wide open

Serena, at eight, is now the highest seed left in her half of the draw, with all of the world's top four absent from the second week.

Third seed Aryna Sabalenka was beaten by Russia's Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 6-4, 2-6, 6-0.

The Belarusian made a whopping 39 unforced errors against 41 winners and served eight double faults to six aces as her disappointing run at the Grand Slam stage

continued.

Serena will next face Kazakhstan 21st seed Elena Rybakina, with a potential quarter-final against old rival Victoria Azarenka up for grabs.

The American had a slight scare in the second set when she fell 1-4 behind against 2020 quarterfinalist Collins, but won the next five games to secure victory.

Serena thundered down five aces and hit 22 winners against Collins, winning in just 85 minutes on Court Philippe Chatrier.

Easing ahead

German sixth seed Alexander Zverev eased into the last 16 for the fourth successive year with a straight-sets win over Serbia's Laslo Djere.

The 24-year-old, last year's US Open runner-up, saw off the 55th-ranked Djere 6-2, 7-5, 6-2 on Court Philippe Chatrier.

The comfortable nature of victory was welcome for Zverev, who had fought back from two sets down to beat unheralded compatriot O-

THE HIGHLIGHTS

0 For the first time in the Open Era (post 1967), there are zero Frenchmen in the third round of French Open

8 First time in eight years Azarenka is into the fourth round at Roland Garros. Last was in 2013 (semifinal)

17 Former World No. 7 Gasquet has lost all 17 of his matches against Nadal

39 Number of unforced errors third seed Sabalenka hit in her three-set loss. She also served eight double faults

SATURDAY'S PICKS

MEN

- 1-Djokovic vs Berankis
- 3-Nadal vs Norrie
- 8-Federer vs Koepfer (night session)

WOMEN

- 4-Kenin vs 28-Pegula
- 5-Svitolina vs Krejcikova
- 8-Swiatek vs 30-Kontaveit

C Madison plays a lot of really heavy balls. I didn't want to let her dictate the game. When she has time, she's probably one of the best strikers on tour

AZARENKA after her win over Keys

C It is far better to be on court because to entertain a three-year-old is tough. Takes a lot of energy. But it is nice here. They have a nice play room and we play a ton of Legos

SERENA on her daughter Olympia

car Otte in round one before edging three tight sets against Russian qualifier Ro-

man Safiullin.

"This is the main goal of my tennis career, to win

Grand Slams. I feel like the last year I'm on the right track again," said Zverev.

He will next face former World No. 4 Kei Nishikori, whose third-round opponent Henri Laaksonen retired injured following the opening set.

Rain briefly hit Roland Garros on Friday, but Zverev and Djere were able to continue under the Chatrier roof.

The World No. 6 struck 31 winners and four aces as he dragged himself out of difficulty in the second set, saving three set points at 3-5 down on Djere's serve before winning 10 of the next 12 games.

THE RESULTS

Third round: Men: Kei Nishikori (Jpn) bt Henri Laaksonen (Sui) 7-5, ret.; Federico Delbonis (Arg) bt 27-Fabio Fognini (Ita) 6-4, 6-1, 6-3; 6-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Laslo Djere (Srb) 6-2, 7-5, 6-2; Alejandra Davidovich Fokina (Esp) bt 15-Casper Ruud (Nor) 7-6(3), 2-6, 7-6(6), 0-6, 7-5; 2-Daniil Medvedev (Rus) bt 32-Reilly Opelka (USA) 6-4, 6-2, 6-4; 12-Pablo Carreno Busta vs Steve Johnson (USA) 6-4, 6-4, 6-2; 22-Christian Garin (Chi) bt Marcos Giron (USA) 6-1, 5-7, 6-2, 6-2.

Women: 21-Elena Rybakina (Kaz) bt Elena Vesnina (Rus) 6-1, 6-4; 15-Victoria Azarenka (Blr) bt 23-Madison Keys (USA) 6-2, 6-2; 31-Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (Rus) bt 3-Aryna Sabalenka (Blr) 6-4, 2-6, 6-0; Tamara Zidansek (Slo) bt Katerina Siniakova

(Cze) 0-6, 7-6(5), 6-2; 7-Serena Williams (USA) bt Danielle Collins (USA) 6-4, 6-4; Sorana Cirstea (Rom) bt Darya Kasatkina (Rus) 6-2, 6-2.

Thursday's results: Men: 3-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt Richard Gasquet (Fra) 6-0, 7-5, 6-2; Carlos Alcaraz (Esp) bt 28-Nikoloz Basilashvili (Geo) 6-4, 6-2, 6-4

Women: 8-Iga Swiatek (Pol) bt Rebecca Peterson (Swe) 6-1, 6-1; 14-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Zarina Diyas (Kaz) 4-6, 6-2, 6-4; 13-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt Fiona Ferro (Fra) 6-4, 2-6, 7-5.

Fallen seeds

- Men: 15-Ruud, 27-Fognini, 28-Basilashvili, 32-Opelka
- Women: 3-Sabalenka, 23-Keys

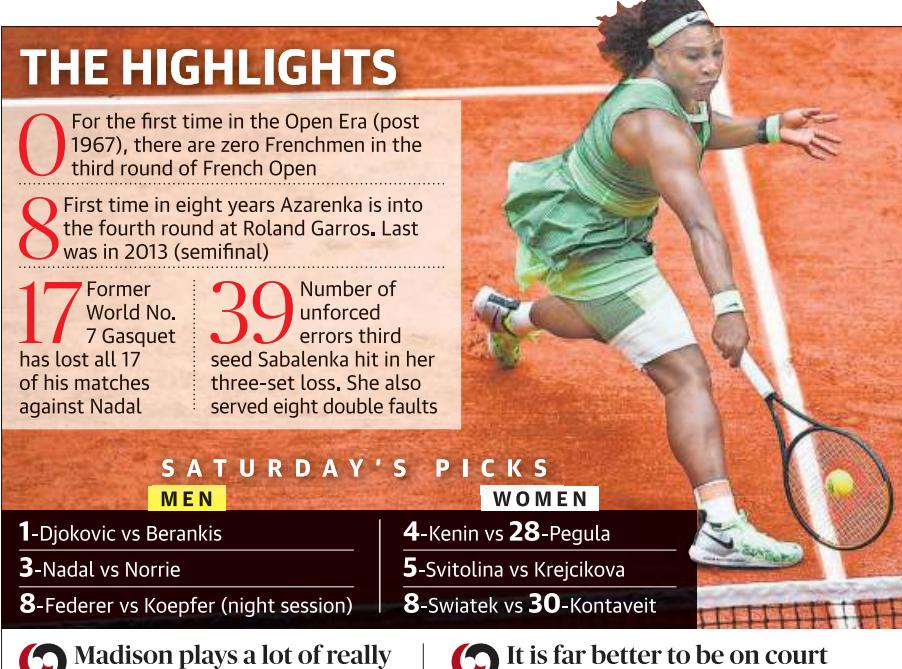
Sizikova denies match-fixing charge

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS

A Russian tennis player suspected of match-fixing last year has been arrested during this year's French Open, her lawyer told The Associated Press on Friday.

The player, 765th-ranked Yana Sizikova of Russia, denied the allegations, according to her lawyer, Frederic Belot. He added that Sizikova wants to file a complaint for defamation.

The Paris prosecutor's office confirmed to the AP that a "women's international player" was in custody, but it did not identify her. She was arrested on Thursday night on charges of "sports bribery and organised fraud for acts likely to have been committed in September 2020," the prosecutor's office said.



Shorter hard quarantine for Indian players

Ramesh Krishnan, the enchanting touch artist, turns 60

The eight-time winner of ATP Tour singles titles says his storied career 'feels like it was from another lifetime'

K. KEERTHIVASAN
CHENNAI

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SOUTHAMPTON**

Spinner Axar Patel said the Indian team will serve a three-day hard quarantine before it is allowed to train at the Aegeas Bowl here ahead of the World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

The Indian squad was in quarantine for 14 days in Mumbai prior to its departure and is in the middle of another yet shorter quarantine.

"The plan is to quarantine. We have been told that we can't meet each other for three days, so we will be quarantining for that much time," said Axar in a video posted by BCCI, capturing the team's journey to England in a charter flight.

The men's and women's squads were in the same flight. After landing in London, the contingent reached Southampton.



In 1979, I won the junior title at Roland Garros. The final was played on the Centre Court right after the men's singles final. As I walked off the court, the first person to congratulate me was the late, great Aussie, Lew Hoad, who was excited, in fact, more excited than me! I guess he was happy to see his good friend's son win the title.

he won in 1986. "I remember the tournament very well because on three consecutive days, I played some of my best tennis. Beating Connors, Cash and Andres Gomez will remain special. And to beat Connors is always a big challenge. Once you've beaten him, he has made you very sharp for the subsequent matches," said Ramesh, who made the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam thrice: Wimbledon (1986), US Open (1981 and '87).

The Ramesh Krishnan factfile

- DOB: June 5, 1961; Height: 5'7"
- Won the junior championships at Roland Garros and Wimbledon in 1979, was World No. 1 junior
- Key member of Indian team that made the Davis Cup final in 1987
- Beat the then-World No. 1 Mats Wilander in the second round of the 1989 Australian Open
- Won eight top-level singles titles and one doubles crown
- Coaches: T.K. Ramanathan (grandfather), Ramanathan Krishnan (father), Harry Hopman (1977-85), Roy Emerson (1985 onwards).

two matches stand out. Beating Australia [1987 World Group semifinals] in Sydney was a significant win and beating France in Frejus [1993 World Group quarterfinals] was special," he said.

Empathy for Osaka

On the Naomi Osaka issue – the Japanese player chose not to attend press conferences at the ongoing French Open for mental health reasons – Ramesh empathised with the 23-year-old four-time Grand Slam champion. "While I empathise with her, post-match press conferences are mandatory and an important part of the game. Maybe players can be granted a little extra time after matches to compose themselves before facing the press," he said.

Like most, Ramesh is stuck indoors these days. "I watch the French Open and see an assortment of films," he signed off.

Third day's play washed out

Perez fastest in practice

Hamilton fails to make the top-10



Sergio Perez.
GETTY IMAGES

Singapore GP cancelled: promoter

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BAKU

The Singapore Grand Prix, scheduled for October 3, has been cancelled "due to ongoing safety and logistic concerns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic," the race promoter announced on Friday.

"To cancel the event for the second year in a row is an incredibly difficult decision but a necessary one in light of the prevailing restrictions for live events in Singapore," Colin Syn, deputy chairman of the race promoter, said in a statement.

"In all regards I think this is the best Friday of the season, the most complete Friday in terms of data."

Milkha's wife's condition deteriorates

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Milkha Singh is "better and more stable" as he battles COVID-19 in the ICU of PGIMER Hospital here even as his wife and former volleyball captain Nirmal Kaur's condition deteriorated because of the same ailment.

Milkha also received a phone call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi enquiring about his health on Friday. In a statement, PGIMER said Milkha was better than Thursday when he was brought to the hospital with dipping levels of oxygen.

SUPER STAR DUO

Two teams which will rely heavily on star strikers are Wales and Poland. For Wales the spotlight will be on Gareth Bale to silence critics, who say he has lost his appetite for success, while Robert Lewandowski remains Poland's Plan A, B and C



WALES

GOALKEEPERS: Wayne Hennessey, Danny Ward, Adam Davies

DEFENDERS: Chris Gunter, Ben Davies, Connor Roberts, Ethan Ampadu, Chris Mepham, Joe Rodon, Tom Lockyer, Nebo Williams, Rhys Norrington-Davies, Ben Cabango

MIDFIELDERS: Aaron Ramsey, Joe Allen, Jonny Williams, Harry Wilson, David Brooks, Joe Morrell, Matt Smith, Dylan Levitt, Rubin Colwill

FORWARDS: Gareth Bale, Kieffer Moore, Tyler Roberts, Daniel James

COACH: Robert Page

FORM GUIDE: W | W | L | W | W

USUAL FORMATION: 4-2-3-1

FIRST MATCH: vs Switzerland, June 12, Baku, 6.30 p.m.

EURO APPEARANCES: 1

BEST PERFORMANCE: Semifinals 2016

DID YOU KNOW?

Founded in 1876, the Football Association of Wales is the third-oldest national association in world football, behind England (1863) and Scotland (1873)

COACH: Paulo Sousa

FORM GUIDE: L | L | D | W | L

FIRST MATCH: vs Slovakia, June 14, St. Petersburg, 9.30 p.m.

USUAL FORMATION: 4-4-1-1

EURO APPEARANCES: 3

BEST PERFORMANCE: Quarterfinals (2016)

KEY PLAYER: Gareth Bale

Due to turn 32 this summer, Bale remains the talisman and is Wales' all-time record scorer. A huge influence on and off the field, he has scored crucial goals throughout his international career since debuting in 2006

ONE TO WATCH: Ethan Ampadu | Still only 20, Ampadu's ability to play in both defence and midfield has enabled him to establish himself for Wales. Comfortable on the ball, Ampadu can play out from deep positions and is a solid presence at the back when not in possession

ONE TO WATCH: Krzysztof Piatek | Currently at Hertha Berlin after brief eye-catching spells with Genoa and AC Milan, Piatek has kicked off his burgeoning Poland career with a goal roughly every two matches



POLAND

GOALKEEPERS: Lukasz Fabianski, Wojciech Szczesny, Lukasz Skorupski

DEFENDERS: Kamil Glik, Maciej Rybus, Dawidowicz, Michal Helik, Kamil Piatkowski, Tomasz Kedziora, Tymoteusz Puchacz

MIDFIELDERS: Przemyslaw Frankowski, Grzeg

TV PICKS

Roland-Garros: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 p.m.
England vs New Zealand: 1st Test, (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
FI: Azerbaijan GP (Qualifying): SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Murray pulls out of Nottingham tourney

LONDON Andy Murray has withdrawn from next week's Wimbledon warm-up in Nottingham, but the former World No. 1 is still on course to play in the grass-court Grand Slam, according to reports. Murray is recovering from a groin injury. AFP



Suns topple champion Lakers

LOS ANGELES Phoenix Suns, fuelled by 47 points from Devin Booker, toppled NBA defending champion Los Angeles Lakers 113-100 on Thursday, handing superstar LeBron James his first first-round playoff exit. **The results:** WC: Portland Trail Blazers 115 lost to Denver Nuggets 126 (Nuggets wins series 4-2); Los Angeles Lakers 100 lost to Phoenix Suns 113 (Suns win series 4-2).

Brianna McNeal banned for doping violation

PARIS Olympics 100m hurdles champion Brianna McNeal has been banned for five years for tampering with the anti-doping testing process, the Athletics Integrity Unit announced on Friday. Brianna, 29, can still take part in the US trials for the Tokyo Olympics later this month while she appeals the ban, which is backdated to August 15, 2020, the AIU said in a statement. AFP

Pakistan picks Moin's son Azam in T20 squad

KARACHI Pakistan on Thursday named uncapped Azam Khan, son of former captain Moin Khan, in the T20 squad for the tours of England and West Indies. The selectors also recalled Imad Wasim for the three T20Is in England and five in the West Indies besides Haris Sohail for the three ODIs in England. Pace bowlers Muhammad Abbas and Naseem Shah have also won back spots in the squad that will play two Tests against the West Indies in Jamaica. PTI



Koeman to continue as Barcelona coach

MADRID Ronald Koeman has escaped the Barcelona axe with club president Joan Laporta announcing on Thursday the Dutchman would continue as coach next season. AFP

Sriram Balaji, Ramkumar duo in semifinals

INDIANS ABROAD

SPORTS BUREAU

BIELLA (ITALY)

Sriram Balaji and Ramkumar Ramanathan defeated Jacopo Berrettini and Flavio Cobolli 7-6(9), 7-5 to enter the doubles semifinals of the €44,820 Challenger tournament here.

Other results: \$52,080 Challenger, Little Rock, US: Pre-quarterfinals: Goncalo Oliveira (Por) bt Sasikumar Mukund 4-6, 6-4, 6-2.

Doubles (pre-quarterfinals): Michal Pervolarakis (Gre) & Sasi Kumar Mukund bt Ruben Gonzales (Phi) & Martin Redlicki (US) 6-2, 7-6(3); Christopher Eubanks (US) & Roberto Quiroz (Ecu) bt Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan & Purav Raja 7-6(5), 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: Pre-quarterfinals: Mauro de Maio (Ita) bt Siddhant Bantha 6-2, 2-0 (retd.).

The Athletics Federation

10-man India goes down to Qatar

Goalkeeper Gurpreet Sandhu's saves keep it from being a rout

FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DOHA

A 10-man India defended creditably but still suffered a 1-0 defeat to Asian champion Qatar in their World Cup qualifying round match here on Thursday.

Abdel Aziz scored in the 33rd minute in a match completely dominated by the Qatars. The two sides had played out a goal-less draw in their first leg match here in September 2019.

Group topper Qatar, which is yet to lose a match, had waves of attacks with eight to nine players in the Indian half for most of the time. Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu had to pull off a series of saves to keep the margin of loss small.

India played with 10 men from the 17th minute onwards after defender Rahul Bheke was red carded after a second booking; the first yellow card came in the ninth minute.

India did have two good moves in the match from counter-attacks with Manvir



Standout performance: India goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu gave a good account of himself in the game. ■ TWITTER/INDIANFOOTBALL

Singh in the thick of things on both occasions. India captain Sunil Chhetri, who returned to the team after recovering from COVID-19, was replaced by Udanta Singh at the start of the second half.

A win-less India remains in fourth spot in Group E with three points from six matches. India next plays Bangladesh on June 7.

Speaking after the match, Gurpreet said India must

learn to capitalise on its chances.

"I think we were very unfortunate with the result. Everybody in the pitch gave their everything and that's what we need. Very very unfortunate not to get something out of this game," he said in a video shared by All India Football Federation (AIFF) on its Twitter handle.

"I think everyone is gutted because the way we played,

we deserved something out of it. But things happen in football and we now move on to the next game."

India may have suffered a bigger defeat had it not been for Sandhu, who pulled off as many as nine saves in the group E match.

Asked about his saves, Sandhu said: "I honestly didn't (count the number of saves), but I think it was more than last time."

Pragg eyes another title

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

R. Praggnanandhaa will eye a second title on the Julius Bar Challengers Chess Tour when the Gelfand Challenge online event begins on June 10.

The field has 10 players each from two teams – Team Polgar and Team Kramnik – and follows a round-robin format.

These youngsters are trained and mentored by the highest rated lady player in chess history Judit Polgar and former World champion Vladimir Kramnik.

If Nihal Sarin and D. Gukesh are part of Team Polgar, Praggnanandhaa and Leon Mendonca represent Team Kramnik.

Winning the Polgar leg earned Praggnanandhaa a place in the Meltwaters Champions Chess Tour.

After the first leg, held in April, Team Polgar aggregated 96.5 points to Team Kramnik's 88.0.

The team ahead after four events will travel to Dubai to witness the Magnus Carlsen-Ian Nepomniachtchi World chess title-match in November.

Humpy to skip World Cup

'Thought there was no need for me to travel in these uncertain times'

CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

Konuru Humpy will not play at the chess World Cup, which gets underway at Sochi, Russia, from July 10.

"I have decided not to play because I have already qualified for the Candidates tournament and because I am not sure if participating in an event that will have more than 300 players is safe in the time of a pandemic," the World No. 3 told *The Hindu* on Friday.

"I could have taken the risk if I hadn't qualified for the Candidates, but since I have, by finishing second at the Grand Prix series, I thought there was no need for me to travel to Russia in these uncertain times."

She said she was hopeful of returning to tournaments

I have decided not to play because I have already qualified for the Candidates tournament and because I am not sure if participating in an event that will have more than 300 players is safe in the time of a pandemic

after a few months.

"I haven't played an event since February last year and I am itching to get back on the circuit," she said.

"I am planning to play at the Grand Swiss tournament later this year."

Though neither Humpy, the reigning women's World rapid champion, nor five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand is playing at the World Cup, India is still fielding a strong contingent in the form of P. Harikrishna, Vidit Gujrathi, B. Adhiban, Aravind Chithambaram, P. Iniyah, Dronavalli Harika, Padmini Rout, Bhakti Kulkarni and R. Vaishali.

Olympics-bound wrestler Sumit Malik fails dope test

Provisionally suspended, 'B' sample sent for testing

WRESTLING

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

In a jolt to Indian wrestlers' campaign in the Tokyo Olympics, 125kg freestyle wrestler Sumit Malik has tested positive for banned substance methylhexaneamine (MHA).

According to a Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) official, United World Wrestling (UWW) in its communication on Thursday night said Malik had been provisionally suspended for the doping violation.

As per the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) list, MHA is prohibited in competition only as a specified stimulant.

The WADA Code says "when an Adverse Analyti-



Sumit Malik
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

cal Finding is received for a prohibited substance or a prohibited method, other than a specified substance, a provisional suspension shall be imposed promptly..."

"The UWW has said that Sumit's 'A' sample returned positive. His 'B' sample is expected to be tested around June 10," said a WFI official

on Friday.

Malik was tested during the World Olympic qualifier in Sofia last month.

The WFI official said if Malik was held responsible for the doping violation (during the hearing process), then India would lose the Olympic quota place earned by him.

Altogether eight Indian wrestlers, four each in men and women's freestyle, have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics.

Four years ago, prior to the Rio Olympics, 74kg wrestler Narsingh Yadav had failed a dope test in controversial circumstances and was withdrawn from the Olympics after the Court of Arbitration for Sport handed the Indian wrestler a four-year suspension.

Tech Mahindra and FIDE sign MoU for Global Chess League

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

wildcard entrants, will play each other in an exciting format."

FIDE further stated, "A new holding company will be created to operate the functioning of the Global Chess League, in which the FIDE president will be part of the Board of Directors and five-time world chess champion Viswanathan Anand as mentor and partner."

"The competition will be established as a first-of-its-kind "phygital" (physical and digital) league, engaging professional players and others.

In principle, several franchise-owned teams, comprising titled players, juniors and

Former India hockey player Usman dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Former India hockey player Usman Khan has died after a prolonged battle with cancer, the sport's governing body in the country said on Friday while condoling his death.

Khan was 76 and survived by three sons and a daughter.

HI president Gyanendra Ningombam expressed condolences to Khan's family.

We have the team to finish among the top five: Amoj Jacob

ATHLETICS

STAN RAYAN
KOCHE

His progress in the quarter-mile this year has been amazing, and now Amoj Jacob believes that India has the men's relay team to finish among the top five in next month's Tokyo Olympics.

"For the first time, we have four runners who have gone below 46s. If we make it to Tokyo, we can finish among the top five in the 4x400m," said the 23-year-old, who is the country's fastest quartermiler this season, in a chat with *The Hindu* from the Patiala National camp.

"If you look at the personal bests of Muhammed Anas, Arokia Rajiv, Noah Nirnal Tomi and me, all of us have gone below 46s."

Jacob has improved his 400m personal best with every meet this year, opening with 46s in the Indian Grand Prix-2 in late February and



Amoj Jacob

then improving it to 45.70 (GP-3) and 45.68s while taking the Federation Cup gold in March.

Was he surprised by his stunning run?

"No, I was not surprised, I was prepared for the timing.

I thought I could run around 45.5s, but in the Federation Cup, my judgement was quite wrong. I ran the first 300 very fast, then I got tired," he explained.

Jacob has a fantastic target now, a time that will topple the national record (45.21s) that belongs to Muhammed

Anas, the 2018 Jakarta Asian Games silver medallist.

"Basically I want to run below 45s. To go below 45, I'll have to work on my start, the finish also. And also focus on the floating part, from 80 to 250m."

With such heavy thoughts running in his head, how does Anas look at him?

"I'm the youngest of the lot and Anas is like my elder brother, he guides me with technique and everything. The rivalry is only on the track."

If Jacob clocks 44.90s before June 29, it will bring him a Tokyo ticket in the 400m.

"But we are mainly focusing on the relays. The qualification time in the individual 400m is quite tough."

In the relays, India has a confirmed spot only in the mixed 4x400m and the next few weeks will be very anxious ones as the men's team is in the 14th spot in the Road to Tokyo rankings.

National inter-State meet at two venues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHE

The 60th National inter-State athletics championship will be held at two venues in Patiala, the National Institute of Sports (24 events) and the Punjabi University ground (19 events), from June 25 to 29.

"To avoid large gatherings at one place, we have decided to host the competition at two different locations in Patiala," said AFI president Adille J. Sumariwalla.

The event will be the last qualification opportunity for athletes for the Tokyo Olympics.

The Athletics Federation

Athletes who meet the AFI's qualification standards for this competition will only be allowed to take part.

Entries are to be submitted online, on the AFI website by the affiliated States/UT, from June 10 to 18.

The AFI, which confirmed the details of the inter-State meet on Friday, was however silent on the Indian Grand Prix-4 which it had planned to hold on June 15.

ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE COURSES

SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) in association with The Hindu Group brings a 15-part webinar series to provide expert career guidance to Class 10, 11 and 12 students.

Join the webinar on

6th June 2021 (Sunday) at 11:00 AM

to hear from the experts followed by a Q&A session.