



Will return power back to the people, says Navjot Singh Sidhu

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Monsoon lull may force oilseed farmers to shift to cotton, maize: CRISIL

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Dhawan's men look to seal ODI series against Sri Lanka

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NEARBY



Protecting children a priority, Centre tells HC

NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed the Delhi High Court that it has asked the States to ensure immediate rehabilitation of children orphaned due to COVID-19, in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice Act and leveraging the facilities under child protection services.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

DU to hold entrance tests for 13 courses

NEW DELHI

Delhi University will conduct entrance tests for 13 courses for the coming academic session, with four courses being added this year, said officials. The university is also planning to increase the number of test centres for the entrance test, conducted for all PG and select UG courses.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Women's groups want U.P. population Bill nixed

NEW DELHI

The U.P. government's proposed law on population control is "unconstitutional" as it violates the right to equality and should be "immediately withdrawn", demanded women's organisations, health networks and academics in a memorandum to President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Rahul, Prashant Kishor, ex-EC Lavasa on list of spyware targets

Analysis confirms Pegasus attack or attempts on 10 Indian numbers, says report

Decoding Pegasus

Pegasus is a spyware, developed and licensed by an Israeli company, NSO Group. It can be used to infiltrate smartphones that run on both iOS and Android operating systems, and turn them into surveillance devices. A low down:

- Pegasus's method of attack is called zero-click attacks, which do not require any action by the user. The spyware can hack a device simply by giving a missed WhatsApp call
- It will alter call logs so that the user has no knowledge of what happened
- Once the spyware enters the device, it installs a module to track call logs, read messages, emails, calendars, Internet history, and gather location data to send the information to the attacker

which is sold by the NSO Group. The spyware can secretly unlock the target's phone, computer or other devices, collect information and transfer it to another device without the permission of the user. The Israeli company has said it sells Pegasus only to government agencies to fight terrorism and other serious crimes and that it does not operate the spyware licensed to its clients.

Those who were targeted in India included *The Wire*'s editors Siddharth Varadarajan and M.K. Venu, journalist

Sushant Singh and Mr. Kishor, a forensic analysis found. The phone of Mr. Kishor, who worked with the Trinamool in West Bengal and the DMK in Tamil Nadu that went to the polls in April, was found to have been compromised as recently as July 14.

Investigations confirmed the Pegasus attack, or signs of potential targeting, on phones linked to 10 Indian numbers and 27 phones around the world, according to *The Guardian*.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8
MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 9

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Youth drowns taking selfies in waterlogged underpass

Heavy rain brings traffic to a standstill; constable's car falls into sinkhole in Dwarka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As heavy rain lashed the Capital on Monday, a 27-year-old man drowned while allegedly clicking selfies in a waterlogged railway underpass in south-east Delhi's Pul Prahadpur.

Eyewitnesses told the police that Ravi Chautala from Jaitpur had gone to the waterlogged underpass to shoot videos when he drowned.

"We got information about the incident at 1.40 p.m. Fire brigade and divers were sent to the spot for the rescue operation," said DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena. The body has been sent to AIIMS for an autopsy, the police said, adding that further probe is under way.

Waterlogged streets, wall collapses, uprooted trees and traffic jams were reported from across the city.

In Dwarka's Sector 18, a car fell into a sinkhole as a portion of the road caved in.

The white car belonged to a constable in Delhi Traffic Police, who was safely rescued. The car was also taken out from the pit with the help of a crane.

108 mm of rainfall

The Met department said the Safdarjung weather station - official record of the city - received 108 mm of rainfall over the past 24 hours with 69.8 mm of rainfall occurring overnight and 38.4 mm between 8.30 a.m. and 5.30 p.m. on Monday.

Other weather stations like Palam and Noida received 165.9 mm and 159.5 mm of rainfall, respectively over the past 24 hours.

Gurugram received 185 mm of rainfall. The all-time record for the heaviest rainfall for July was recorded on



A waterlogged street; a car falls into a sinkhole in Dwarka after heavy rain lashed the city on Monday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA; PTI



July 21, 1958 – 266.2 mm.

According to the IMD, rainfall measuring 15 mm is considered "light", between 15 and 64.5 mm is "moderate", between 64.5 mm and 115.5 mm is "heavy", between 115.6 mm and 204.4 mm is "very heavy", and above 204.4 mm is considered as "extremely heavy".

The rain brought down the maximum temperature on Monday, which settled at 26.5 degrees Celsius, eight degrees cooler than normal. The minimum was 24.2, three degrees below normal. Rain is likely to continue on Tuesday with the weatherman predicting partly cloudy sky with light rain/thundershowers. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to settle between 32 and 24 degrees Celsius respectively.

Traffic snarls were witnessed in areas, including ITO, Pul Prahadpur, Ring Road near Millennium Park, Sarai Kale Khan, Kilokri, near IP Flyover, Dhaula Kuan, Vikas Marg, Azadpur, among others. Waterlogging was reported from Ring Road, Pragati Maidan, Palam, Kirari and Rohtak road.

"Waterlogging reported at Pul Prahadpur under a railway bridge. Traffic is diverted from MB [Mehrauli-Badarpur] road towards Mathura road," the Delhi traffic police tweeted.

Rain is likely to continue today. Day temperature to settle around 32 degrees Celsius

In other tweets complaining of waterlogging, Delhi Traffic Police tagged the Public Works Department (PWD) for swift action.

According to data shared by the municipalities, waterlogging was recorded at 37 locations under SDMC and at seven under North body.

Nineteen incidents of trees being uprooted, and six cases of wall collapse were reported in the area under SDMC jurisdiction.

Badarpur] road towards Mathura road," the Delhi traffic police tweeted.

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Incessant rains wreak havoc in Gurugram

One person drowns; houses vacated fearing collapse in Naharpur Rupa village

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Incessant rains from the early hours of Monday till the afternoon wreaked havoc on Millennium City. While water gushed inside houses and basements in several parts of the city, heavy waterlogging was reported from roads, intersections and underpasses on the highway.

Meanwhile, water leakage through the roof of Ambience Mall forced the management to shut it down.

One person drowned in an underpass for non-motorised transport at Rajiv Chowk, said Assistant Divisional Fire Officer Gulshan Kalra. He also said a couple of houses on the verge of collapse in Naharpur Rupa village were evacuated.

The Flood Control Room set up by the district administration received 127 complaints of waterlogging throughout the day.

Sheetla Mata Mandir
The district received a record 160 mm rainfall in less than 36 hours since Sunday morning, said the State Revenue and Disaster Management Department.

Though all major roads and intersections in the city



Commuters wade through the waterlogged Delhi-Gurugram Expressway on Monday. ■ PTI

temple premises.

Harish Om, 70, a resident of Sector 7 and vice-president of the BJP Zila Mandal, said:

"When I woke up at 5 a.m., I found my house inundated with two-three feet of foul-smelling sewage water. I tried calling the helplines, but there was no response."

The underpasses on the National Highway at Rajiv Chowk, Hero Honda Chowk, Medanta and IFFCO Chowk were also inundated. A senior NHAI official said pumps were installed to flush out stagnant water, but the heavy rains led to waterlogging.

Temple officer Yogdutt Sharma said power supply to the shrine had to be cut to avoid any untoward incident after rainwater entered the temple premises.

Besides, water leakage occurred at some points on the second and third floors of Ambience Mall.

"The Mall management decided to get all the electrical circuitry checked as a safety measure. The mall will reopen tomorrow [Tuesday]," said the Ambience Mall spokesperson.

Measures taken

The district administration said 113 pumps were installed at as many critical flooding points, and 32 suction tankers were deployed to flush out water from basements, besides pressing 14 excavators into service to deal with traffic jams on the roads.

Protesting farmers refuse to budge

Leaking tents and wet mattresses fail to dampen spirits at the Capital's borders

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

said that no extreme weather can deter their will to continue the agitation.

Jagjeet Singh, the district president of Bharatiya Kisan Union from Barnala, who has been protesting at the Tikri border said that it started raining around 2 a.m. on Monday. "The tarpaulins, which protect the tents from the rains, were put up months ago. They are not equipped to hold rainwater, due to which most of them

came down, resulting in water inside the tents," he said.

Sukhbir Singh from Patiala said, "Vegetables that were stored inside a trolley specially designed for them remained safe. But the rest along with the flour was destroyed. Cooking remained a big problem all through Monday." He added that people spent the night on wet mattresses, "many protesters are lodging in wet trucks and trolleys", he said.

Sukhwinder Singh Barwa from Ropar, who has been protesting at the Singhu border and is a member of Sanjhhi Satkh - an initiative by protesters to help children study at the border - said water reached up to two feet on Monday. "It was impossible to walk. Many elderly people couldn't get out of their trolleys for breakfast or lunch in the morning. We arranged food for them and provided it in their trolleys," he said.

**Government of Karnataka
Department of Co-operation**

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Sri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

Sri B.S. Yediyurappa
Hon'ble Chief Minister
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Creation of a new Ministry of Co-operation is the landmark moment in the history of Co-operative movement of the country which will guide the nation in years to come. The whole country profusely applauds the Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi ji for providing impetus to the co-operatives for building an Atma-Nirbhar Bharat. The co-operative movement which had primarily rural base has moved progressively to various segments of urban life over a period of time. The ministry with its guidance on policy administrative and legal issues will herald a new dawn of Co-operation among the rural and urban population. It will lead to creation of wider markets for the rural produce leading

I presume that I am privileged on behalf of the people of Karnataka in general and co-operative organizations of the state in particular to pay humble thanks to Hon'ble Prime Minister Sri Narendra Modi Ji and Hon'ble Home Minister and Minister of Co-operation Sri Amit Shah Ji as a token of our gratitude for initiating unique steps for comprehensive development of the country as a whole by strengthening the Co-operative movement in a pragmatic way as the very principle of Co-operative is "One for All & All for One."

- S.T. Somashekhar
Minister for Co-operation, Government of Karnataka

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To value and preserve the rich heritage of our composite culture - is the fundamental duty of every citizen of the country, enshrined in our constitution



Wear
mask



2 meters distance
from others



Sanitize hands
frequently

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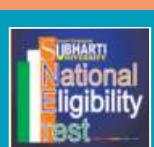


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SCIENCE - 9639015552 • B.C.A • B.Sc. In PCM/PSM/CBZ, Computer Science, Biotechnology, Agriculture • B.Sc. (Specialization) in Mathematics/Physics/Chemistry/Zoology/Botany • M.Sc. in Mathematics/Physics/Chemistry/Zoology/Botany/Biotechnology/Computer Application • M.C.A • D.C.A. • A.D.C.A. • P.G.D.C.A.	NURSING - 9639010015 • ANM • GNM • B.Sc. Nursing • B.Sc. Nursing J & K (SFRC) • Post Basic B.Sc. Nursing • M.Sc. Nursing - Community Health Nursing, Medical Surgical Nursing, Obstetrical & Gynaecological Nursing, Paediatrics Nursing, Psychiatry Nursing • Nurse Practitioner in Critical Care Nursing	LIBRARY SCIENCE - 9639011195 • B.Lib. Bachelor of Library & Information Science • M.Lib. Master of Library & Information Science	EDUCATION - 9639018327 • D.El.Ed. • B.El.Ed. • B.Ed. • M.Ed. • M.A.

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Timings

DELHI

TUESDAY, JUL. 20
RISE 05:37 SET 19:19
RISE 15:43 SET 01:36
WEDNESDAY, JUL. 21
RISE 05:37 SET 19:19
RISE 16:52 SET 02:24
THURSDAY, JUL. 22
RISE 05:38 SET 19:18
RISE 17:58 SET 03:20

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 26 24

Safdarjung 26 24

Palam 26 24

Delhi Palam Today

32°C Light rain spells &

thunderstorm likely at some

places with cloudy sky. Warm

and humid day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

35°C Warm and humid day.

Short spells of light rain and

thundershower likely at some

places with cloudy sky.

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DU to hold entrance tests for 13 courses

University plans to increase number of centres for DUET; registration process for PG courses from July 26

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi University (DU) will conduct entrance tests for 13 courses for the upcoming academic session, with four courses being added this year, according to officials.

The varsity is also planning to increase the number of test centres for the Delhi University Entrance Test (DUET), which is conducted for all postgraduate courses and select undergraduate courses, officials said.

For the upcoming academic session, admissions to Bachelors in Physiotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Prosthetics and Orthotics and Masters in Physiotherapy will be conducted through DUET, according to the an-



Students outside Delhi University's School of Open Learning. • FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

nouncements made by senior officials of the university.

NTA to conduct "DUET for all postgraduate programmes, selected undergraduate programmes and MPhil and PhD programmes will be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA) for which dates will be announced soon. Non-NET candidates who are desirous of seeking admissions to PhD and MPhil pro-

grammes have to appear for DUET 2021," said Rajeev Gupta, chairperson of DU Admissions.

Mr. Gupta added, "This year, Delhi University is planning to increase the number of test centres for DUET. This was one of the prominent demands of candidates. All entrance tests will be conducted through NTA's computer-based mode."

Registration process

The university on Saturday had announced that the registration process for undergraduate courses will begin on August 2 and continue till August 31 while applicants seeking admissions to PG, MPhil and PhD programmes can complete the registra-

tion process between July 26 and August 21.

The varsity had said that admissions to undergraduate courses will be based on merit like previous years. "The admission branch is working with principals of colleges on modalities for deciding cut-offs so as to avoid over and under admissions," Mr. Gupta said.

Cut-offs in Sept.

The cut-offs are likely to be announced early September, at least a week after the registration process closes. The admission process will be completely online and students will not be required to visit colleges or departments for any purpose, the officials specified.

City continues to face jab shortage

Delhi sees 36 new COVID cases, 3 deaths

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

city had only 72,240 doses of Covishield and 2,05,630 of Covaxin, as per the data.

The city continued to see a downward trend in COVID-19 cases with only 36 new infections being reported over 24 hours, taking the total to 14,35,565, according to a health bulletin.

The city faced a similar situation on most days of last week. Health Minister Satyendar Jain had said on July 12 that 500 vaccination centres were shut due to the shortage.

Only 11,358 doses of vaccine were administered in the city on Sunday. The figure is usually less on Sundays as government vaccination centres are shut.

On Monday morning, the

BJP should stop spying on journalists, says AAP MP

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

AAP MP Sanjay Singh on Monday attacked the BJP over the Pegasus controversy and dubbed it as "Bharatiya Jasoo Party".

"Abki baar jasoos sarkar. BJP = Bharatiya Jasoos Party," Mr. Singh said in a tweet in Hindi. He said the BJP should stop "spying" on journalists and Opposition

leaders. He also protested against the Central government at Parliament.

"On the back of 'Digital India' they have hatched 'Surveillance India,'" said AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha.

No comment on issue made by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Deputy Minister Manish Sisodia till 7 p.m. on Monday.

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The tender documents can be downloaded from [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tncsc.tn.gov.in/www.tenders.tn.gov.in) at free of cost till 12.00 P.M. on 28.07.2021.
DPR/2156/TENDER/2021
Managing Director

The tender documents can be downloaded from [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tncsc.tn.gov.in/www.tenders.tn.gov.in) at free of cost till 12.00 P.M. on 28.07.2021.

Managing Director

Interfaith U.P. couple gets interim protection

High Court to hear matter on July 27

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday granted interim protection to an interfaith couple from Uttar Pradesh seeking to get married and have it registered under the Special Marriage Act here.

Justice Mukta Gupta granted protection through the local police station and posted the case for further hearing on July 27.

The petition stated that the couple have known each other for the past two years and wanted to get married. The man, who practices Islam, said that his family, after much convincing, has agreed to their relationship. However, the family of the woman, who are Hindu by religion, has "clearly refused to accept their relationship". The woman said in June this year, her family

asked her to get married to a boy from their community. When she refused, her father physically harassed and abused her, the plea said.

The couple said they don't want to apply for the solemnisation of marriage from their hometown. "As by doing it, both the families of the petitioner no. 1 and no. 2 will be informed by the police during the verification process," the plea said.

The couple said they are "scared of groups and individuals who are against interfaith marriage". They said that the woman's father has political influence and has many contacts in Lucknow, so they fear getting harmed. The couple said they want to solemnise their marriage under the Special Marriage Act as they want to practice their own respective religion.

'When Venice comes to you!': it rains funny tweets as Gurugram goes under

Residents post pictures, videos, satirical takes on situation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

An autorickshaw stuck on a waterlogged road in Gurugram on Monday. • PTI

With several parts of the Millennium City left inundated, houses flooded, and roads virtually turned into rivers due to rain, the Twitterati had a field day posting pictures and videos of waterlogged areas accompanied with hilarious comments aiming apparently at the administration for doing little to prevent the repetition of the situation every monsoon.

Tweeting a picture of a water-logged street, Jeeveshu, a stand-up comic, wrote: "Thanks Mr. Khattar for making a swimming pool outside Sheetla Mata Mandir...the devotees will get a relief from the scorching heat and can also enjoy swimming." #BREAKING !! Tau Devi Lal Stadium newly converted to Tau Devi Lal Lake will be inaugurated to

outside Sheetla Mata mandir in old city with a tweet in Hindi, tagging Haryana CM Manohar Lal, that read: "Thanks Mr. Khattar for making a swimming pool outside Sheetla Mata Mandir...the devotees will get a relief from the scorching heat and can also enjoy swimming." #BREAKING !! Tau Devi Lal Stadium newly converted to Tau Devi Lal Lake will be inaugurated to

IN BRIEF**Cong. attacks Delhi govt. over waterlogging**

NEW DELHI The Delhi Congress on Monday hit out at the Delhi government and the BJP-ruled municipal corporations for not desilting drains in the Capital ahead of monsoon and said that their lies had been exposed as several areas of the city were waterlogged after the first heavy rains of the season.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that it has become a recurring feature for the Capital to get waterlogged and flooded. Meanwhile, L-G Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal conducted a review meeting on Monday and called for enhancing the city's drainage system to make it "world class".

Infant among three dead in Dwarka road accident

NEW DELHI Three persons from two families were killed when their car collided with a DJB tanker in Dwarka's Jafarpur Kalan on Saturday. The accused driver has been arrested, the police said. The victims include a four-month-old toddler, the police said.

Govt. makes suggestions on draft MPD-2041

NEW DELHI Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday chaired a review meeting on the draft Master Plan for Delhi 2041. The Delhi government put forth several suggestions to the draft MPD-2041. The government proposed that multilevel parking at public parks should be allowed, affordable housing be increased and sports activities be permitted in all categories of land use.

THE HINDU

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BALURGHAT DEVELOPMENT BLOCK Abridged E-Tender Notice 2nd CallTender for NIT No.-2066 Dated 17/07/2021 of Block Development Officer, Balurghat Development Block is invited by the undersigned. Last date of submission is 02/08/2021. The details of NIT may be viewed & downloaded from the website of Govt. of West Bengal <http://wbtenders.gov.in> & viewed from office notice board of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Block Development Officer Balurghat Development Block Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

BALURGHAT DEVELOPMENT BLOCK Abridged E-Tender Notice 2nd CallTender for NIT No.-2073 Dated 19/07/2021 of Block Development Officer, Balurghat Development Block is invited by the undersigned. Last date of submission is 03/08/2021. The details of NIT may be viewed & downloaded from the website of Govt. of West Bengal <http://wbtenders.gov.in> & viewed from office notice board of the undersigned during office hours.

Sd/- Block Development Officer Balurghat Development Block Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one girl Namely: Rajeshwari, D/o: Hazari Lal, R/o: C-128, Gali No. 1, Swaroop Nagar, Delhi, Age: 21 Years, Height: 4'11", Complexion: Fair, Face: Long, Built: Thin, Wearing: Grey Colour Suit Black Pajami & Red Colour Slippers in feet has been missing since 03.07.2021 from her house. In this regard DD No. 82A, Dated 04.07.2021 has been lodged at PS, Swaroop Nagar, Delhi.

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

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/113/ON/2021

SHO PS, Swaroop Nagar, Delhi

Ph: 011-27811415, 27811738

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The image displays three screenshots of a Telegram channel interface. The channel is titled "Live Class - UPSC" and has 1585 subscribers. The screenshots show:

- Left Screenshot:** A list of study materials (PDFs) for "Hindi Sahitya Notes - Drishti".
 - Vol = 01: हिंदी_भाषा_और_नागरी_लिपि_का_इतिहास.pdf (86.6 MB PDF)
 - Vol = 02: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_1.pdf (42.0 MB PDF)
 - Vol = 03: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_2.pdf (29.7 MB PDF)
 - Vol = 04: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_3.pdf (50.0 MB PDF)
 - पद्य_साहित्य_मध्यकालीन_कविता.pdf (61.5 MB PDF)
- Middle Screenshot:** A grid of thumbnail images for "Class video" (157 media). Each thumbnail shows a person standing in front of a whiteboard with handwritten notes.
- Right Screenshot:** Two video player frames showing lectures.
 - Lecture = 01: A man in a white shirt is speaking. The video duration is 2:13:48 and size is 451.1 MB.
 - Lecture = 02: A man in a dark blue shirt is speaking. The video duration is 2:23:46 and size is 501.3 MB.

IN BRIEF



Enforce plastic ban in Tirumala, officials told

TIRUMALA
Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) additional executive officer A.V. Dharma Reddy on Monday appealed to devotees not to carry plastic water bottles to Tirumala town. At a meeting, he directed the heads of various TTD departments to enforce total ban on plastic at the Alipiri tollgate to prevent pilgrims from carrying plastic bottles.

Driver dead, 15 injured in bus accident in Kerala

KANNUR
The driver of a bus belonging to the Karnataka State Road Corporation died and 15 passengers were injured when the vehicle went out of control and hit a tree on the Makootam road, which connects Kerala and Karnataka. The sleeper coach, coming from Bengaluru to Kannur, met with the accident at Methiyadipara around 4.30 a.m. owing to poor visibility in heavy rain and thick fog. The injured passengers were shifted to various hospitals in Irity and Virajpetti.

YSRCP MPs' appeal in Rajya Sabha turned down

VIJAYAWADA
A notice served by YSR Congress Party MP V. Vijaya Sai Reddy to Rajya Sabha Secretariat on Monday, requesting the Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu to take up a discussion on the Special Category Status (SCS) to the residuary State of Andhra Pradesh by suspending the day's listed business was turned down. This led to the trooping of YSRCP MPs into the well of the House in protest against the denial of an opportunity to flag the issue.

Telangana Cong. MP under house arrest

Revanth Reddy says he couldn't attend Parliament, where he wanted to raise Kokapet 'land sale scam'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
HYDERABAD



Land row: TPCC chief A. Revanth Reddy addressing a press meet in Hyderabad on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy and several senior party leaders were on Monday placed under "house arrest" at different places here, the police said.

Mr. Reddy, MP from Malajigiri, had alleged that there were irregularities to the tune of ₹1,000 crore in the e-auction of lands in Kokapet conducted by the Telangana government last week.

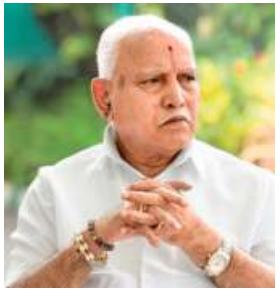
Dharna plan

The Telangana Congress were planning to hold a dharna at Kokapet on Monday over the land auctions. As a precautionary measure,

Congress working president T. Jayaprakash Reddy, Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, Mohammed Ali Shabbir and other senior leaders were placed under "house arrest".

Clip rips apart confidence in Yediyurappa camp

CM goes into a huddle with his confidants



B.S. Yediyurappa

A 47-second audio clip, allegedly of Karnataka BJP president Nalin Kumar KATEEL, created ripples in the political circles on Monday as it hinted at leadership change. Though Mr. KATEEL denied it was his voice and sought a probe into the 'fake' clip, many party legislators, cutting across camps, took the contents at face value, triggering further speculation, disappointment and intense lobbying.

In the purported clip, the person speaking in Tulu indicates there will be leadership change, "three people are in the race and the next

Mr. Yediyurappa huddled with his confidants, which included Ministers Basavaraj Bommai and R. Ashok, over lunch at a star hotel in Bengaluru on Monday.

Party's call: Minister

Mr. Eshwarappa, saying he believed Mr. KATEEL's claim, also said he would abide by the party decision.

"It would not even pain me. I will be a Minister until the organisation asks me to. I am 72 years old now and it is evident that the organisation is giving opportunities to youngsters both in the party and in administration. If that is the party's call, I will go," he said.

Meanwhile, several Ministers, especially those who defected from the Congress and Janata Dal (S), are also anxious of their positions.

UP. caps Bakrid gatherings at 50

Orders also issued against animal sacrifice at public places



CM Yogi Adityanath

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW**
The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday issued fresh directives ahead of Bakrid, prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people at any place to celebrate the festival, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The government also issued orders against animal sacrifice at public places in the State.

Chaired a meeting with senior officials to review the COVID-19 situation in Uttar

High Court seeks Centre's reply on CHRI petition

Suspension of registration challenged

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response from the Centre on a petition by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI) challenging the suspension of its registration for 180 days for alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA).

The High Court also granted time to the Centre's counsel to get instructions on permitting the CHRI to utilise 25% of the amount received as foreign funding till the suspension of its registration is revoked.

Foreign fund

The court also asked the Centre's counsel to take instructions if it would allow CHRI to receive foreign fund in the future, subject to not utilising them without per-

mission of the authorities or of the court.

During the hearing, Central government standing counsel Anil Soni said as per the rules, they have 180 days' time to respond to the NGO seeking to revoke the suspension order.

'Endless time'

Justice Rekha Palli, however, said, "I am not going to give you this endless time of 180 days".

The CHRI had moved the court challenging a June 7 order passed by the Home Ministry, suspending its registration for 180 days.

CHRI's counsel said that the suspension order is contrary to the framework of the scheme set out under the Act and even the suspension was passed without initiating any inquiry and is liable to be set aside.

22 children in detention camps for foreigners

They are with nine women: Assam CM

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Assam's detention camps for foreigners are currently housing 22 children, 20 of them below 14 years of age, the 126-member State Assembly was told on Monday.

Replying to a question from Congress MLA Sherman Ali Ahmed, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the children are with nine women convicted as foreigners, distributed among the Kokrajhar, Tezpur and Silchar detention camps.

The State has six detention camps for foreigners and they currently have 181 inmates, 61 of whom are declared foreign nationals and 121 convicted foreign nationals awaiting deportation, Dr. Sarma said.

Replying to another question by All India United Democratic Front MLA Nazrul, the State has six detention camps for foreigners and they currently have 181 inmates, 61 of whom are declared foreign nationals and 121 convicted foreign nationals awaiting deportation, Dr. Sarma said.

Replying to another question by All India United Democratic Front MLA Nazrul,

Hoque, the Chief Minister said 2,551 people were sent to the detention camps from December 29, 2009, to June 30, 2021, after they were declared non-citizens by various Foreigners' Tribunals. The first detention camp inmate was Krishna Biswas of Goalpara district, he said.

'29 died in camps'

The Chief Minister said 29 declared foreigners have died in the detention camps since 2009 while many were granted bail over the years.

"According to a Supreme Court order on May 10, 2019, seeking the release of declared foreigners after three years in detention, 273 were released. Similarly, 481 others were released after another Supreme Court order on April 13, 2020, reducing the detention period to two years," Dr. Sarma said.

"They were placed under house arrest to maintain law and order," a senior police official said.

'Violation of rights'

Mr. Reddy, in a letter addressed to the Lok Sabha Speaker, said he was "prevented" from attending the monsoon session of Parliament, which began on Monday. This violated his parliamentary privileges, he said.

Mr. Reddy said he wanted to raise in Parliament the sale of government land at "throwaway prices to ruling TRS functionaries and relatives by the State government".

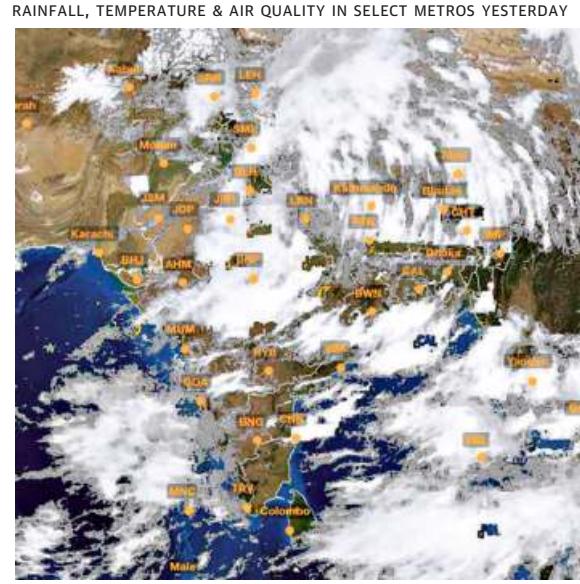
"Despite knowing that I have to attend the Parliament session and repeated

requests to the officials concerned, the Telangana police at the instance of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, Chief Secretary and the DGP have obstructed discharge of my duties as a parliamentarian and voice the people's concerns," Mr. Reddy said in the letter.

The TPCC chief also tweeted: "Fearing I will take up the Kokapet land sale scam in Parliament, the police at the instance of the CM and the DGP prevented me from attending Parliament. No matter what @inctelangana will bring truth to light."

However, the ruling TRS had rejected the allegations made by Mr. Reddy and said the land auction was transparent.

WEATHER WATCH



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

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few/isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Assam, Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Vidarbha, Karauli, Puducherry, Karaikal and Lakshadweep.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	39	32.0	25.7	Kozhikode	19	30.7	23.6
Ahmedabad	0.7	33.7	27.0	Kurnool	0.6	32.5	24.1
Aizawl	75.2	26.0	20.0	Lucknow	2	32.8	26.1
Allahabad	—	36.1	26.0	Madurai	—	38.8	24.6
Bengaluru	4.3	27.6	20.3	Mangaluru	37.6	27.6	23.0
Bhopal	—	34.0	26.7	Mumbai	70	27.9	25.0
Bhubaneswar	32.3	35.8	27.4	Mysuru	8	27.7	19.2
Chandigarh	0.6	32.7	26.3	New Delhi	70	26.5	24.2
Chennai	3	36.1	25.0	Patna	77	34.2	25.4
Coimbatore	6	32.6	22.0	Port Blair	71	28.7	22.1
Dehradun	66	25.2	23.1	Puducherry	—	35.2	25.8
Gangtok	18	21.7	17.9	Pune	12	26.3	21.7
Goa	147	26.0	23.2	Raipur	—	34.0	26.0
Guwahati	0.2	32.7	26.4	Ranchi	6	30.2	27.7
Hubballi	—	24.0	21.0	Shillong	40	23.1	17.6
Hyderabad	38	29.2	21.6	Shimla	17	22.5	18.6
Imphal	18	22.0	17.0	Srinagar	2	27.3	20.0
Jaipur	9	28.8	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	0.2	31.6	23.4
Kochi	5	30.2	23.4	Tiruchi	—	36.3	26.0
Kohima	—	26.0	18.0	Vijayawada	5	34.5	25.0
Kolkata	—	34.1	28.9	Visakhapatnam	3	34.0	25.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.27	.31	.20	.93	.93	■
Bengaluru	.3	.46	.108	.38	.38	■
Chennai	.11	.5	.34	.25	.72	■
Delhi	.5	.15	.50	.36	.129	■
Hyderabad	.2	.64	.15	.11	.17	■
Kolkata	.11	.22	.27	.46	.64	■
Lucknow	.44	.10	.39	.38	.103	■
Mumbai	.44	.20	.57	.21	.92	■
Pune	.129	.20	.57	.21	.92	■
Visakhapatnam	.13	.44	.39	.31	.64	■

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)
Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes



Health above faith

SC lays down salutary principle that right to life must override religious sentiments

It does not require any higher wisdom to know that there is considerable risk to public health during massive religious gatherings in the midst of a pandemic. Yet, it took some prodding by the Supreme Court for Uttar Pradesh to cancel the annual Kanwar Yatra. The yatra, in which Kanvaris, devotees of Shiva, make a pilgrimage to collect water from the Ganga, was not held last year due to COVID-19. This year, it was scheduled to start on July 25. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath appeared keen that the pilgrimage be held this year, and had convened a meeting on July 9 to discuss preparations and security arrangements, along with putting measures in place to avoid the spread of COVID-19 infection. However, the Court was perturbed by reports of the plan to conduct the yatra, resulting in the initiation of *suo motu* proceedings. Disagreeing with even the idea of a 'symbolic yatra' in deference to religious sentiment, the Court had reiterated a principle that is being observed in most places: the idea that the health of the public and their right to life are paramount. "All other sentiments, albeit religious, are subservient to this most basic fundamental right," the Court had observed on July 16, while giving the State government time till July 19 to call off the gatherings on its own. The Uttarakhand government had earlier cancelled the yatra in its territory, rightly heeding warnings by experts that such large gatherings posed a major risk, amidst fears and expectations of a third wave. Uttar Pradesh was helped by the various Kanwar Sanghs that offered to avoid taking out the yatra this year too.

Despite the fact that the organisation of the Kumbh Mela earlier this year was seen as responsible for a surge in infections in the run-up to the disastrous second wave that overpowered the country's health system for weeks, there are sections that believe that rituals and gatherings associated with religious faith must be allowed with some restrictions. There may be a case for relaxations aimed at economic revival and restoration of normality in most parts of the country, but there really is none when it comes to choosing between religious rights and the right to life and safety. The easing of lockdown restrictions for three days in Kerala to help people celebrate Bakrid is a case in point. It has attracted justified criticism, as any relaxation after a long spell of severe curbs will have to be based on a scientific assessment of the number of daily infections, the rate of positivity and signs of abatement. Kerala is one of the States whose daily numbers are causing concern, and the easing of restrictions defies logic and flies in the face of science. The State government will be hard pressed to explain its decision to the top court, which will quite rightly demand much more than a routine clarification that the relaxations were accompanied by instructions for maintaining the COVID-19 protocol.

Laughter challenge

The Congress seems intent on undermining strong regional leaders, as seen in Punjab

Deciphering the political calculus of the Congress can be a tough task. The latest example is the appointment of Navjot Sidhu as the President of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee. After mounting a relentless public attack against CM Amarinder Singh and publicly praising other parties, Mr. Sidhu is now tasked with leading the Congress. He spent 13 years in the BJP, five in the Congress, while flirting with the idea of joining the AAP in between. He joined the Congress ahead of the 2017 Assembly election which the party won mostly on account of Mr. Singh's skills. Mr. Sidhu got a cabinet berth but fell out with the CM soon enough. Mr. Singh opposed Mr. Sidhu's visits to Pakistan, and a ticket for his wife in the 2019 Lok Sabha election. The Congress won eight of the 13 Lok Sabha seats from Punjab. Punjab constitutes 15% of the Congress's total Lok Sabha strength of 52. Mr. Sidhu had little support among MPs, MLAs or party workers until the Gandhis – Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka – tilted the scales in his favour. On the one hand there is strong evidence of his opportunism, lack of maturity, unprincipled greed for power that includes claiming a Lok Sabha seat for his wife within two years of defecting to the Congress, and inability to work as part of a team. On the other hand, he has absolutely no track record of any political activism, public service or being ideologically aligned to the Congress in any manner.

Opportunists without any convictions might be used for particular roles in a party's strategy, but handing over the command to such a turncoat shows the complete bankruptcy of the Congress and an insult to those who fight the long battle. The misplaced assertion of authority by the Gandhis in riding roughshod over the CM and MPs, is a repeat of the old mistakes that pushed regional satraps out of its fold. Mamata Banerjee, Himanta Biswa Sarma, and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy are outstanding political minds who command power in their respective States as CMs of West Bengal, Assam and Andhra Pradesh. They felt suffocated in the durbar politics of the Congress, in which Mr. Sidhu has flourished. Strong regional leaders deliver results but also behave in an assertive and even authoritarian manner, as it appears to be the case with Mr. Singh. But then, humiliating them is no way to rein them in. Now that the deed has been done, perhaps the Gandhis will explain to the party workers what their rationale is, and what they expect Mr. Sidhu to deliver. In the absence of a convincing explanation, the only message is that the high command would stoop low to promote any court jester to undercut a leader who builds any independent standing. If Mr. Sidhu is the future of the Congress, that future appears bleak at this point.

The crisis ahead, from learning loss to resumption

If schools revert to business as usual, India has to be prepared to confront a disaster in educational outcomes



R. RAMANUJAM

Since school closure has led to a great loss of nutrition and schooling for the poorest sections of our society, there is some urgency in the calls we hear to reopen schools. However, the important question remains this: if schools were to reopen tomorrow, are we prepared for their resumption? Will it be merely business as usual?

The disruption

In what has been perhaps an educational disruption in history without parallel since the mass education system took root in India, schools have been closed for 16 months now, with no clarity on or a timeline for their resumption as yet. The country has promoted online classes and e-connectivity as the solution, perhaps inevitably so, since physical contact between teachers and children has not been possible. The focus has been on secondary and higher secondary education, with most States ensuring some form or other of online classes for this segment. However, due to a lack of connectivity as well as a lack of access to e-devices, only a fraction of children even in this age group has had online education of any kind.

When it comes to children in the primary and upper primary classes, even such access has been limited to a minuscule fraction. Children of the poor, studying in government schools, have been especially disadvantaged in this regard.

Further aggravating the situation is the quality of online education – it is largely abysmal. As most studies show, the percentage of teachers in the country capable of handling digital platforms for pedagogic purposes is very small. The educational material provided

by them has also been mere reproduction of what is used in a physical classroom. Hence, even where online classes have taken place regularly – as in the case of urban schools, with students largely from middle and high income groups – the teaching-learning processes have by and large been poor.

As has been well documented by now, all this has resulted in what commentators have termed nutrition loss and learning loss. Worldwide, many studies in the last year have documented a loss of learning in children. In the Netherlands, despite a short lockdown, equitable school funding, and excellent broadband access, researchers found that among eight to 11 year olds, "students made little or no progress while learning from home" and that "learning loss was most pronounced among students from disadvantaged homes" (<https://bit.ly/3hORC5N>). A large multi-State study in the United States records that the pandemic "has also prompted some students to leave the public school system altogether".

According to a study by the Azim Premji Foundation (<https://bit.ly/2UqW8lh>) in January 2021, covering more than 16,000 children in the age group six to 11 years, and across five States, 92% of children on average have lost at least one specific language ability from the previous year across all classes; the figure is 82% when it comes to mathematical ability.

A question that looms large in the minds of teachers, parents and especially the children, is a basic one: will a child, who was in Class four in March 2020, and did not get to attend a single class during the academic year 2020-2021, be admitted into Class six now in (say) August 2021? In areas where this means admission to a different school, is this automatic? In some States this has already been addressed and answered this year. Age-appropriate enrolment, as guaranteed under the Right to Education Act, is being uniformly



implemented. But this has not been ensured across India, with many States not taking up enrolment for this year as yet.

Even assuming that enrolment is not an issue, if we return to the child in the illustration above, as the child enrolls into Class six, will she start with Class five textbooks, or Class six textbooks, or some new "bridge" material?

This is, of course, a decision to be taken by the State government, but what is the rationale to be used? And what are the implications?

International experience

'One way of addressing the learning crisis might be to repeat the entire academic year. The government in Kenya has decided to do just this'. Some countries, such as the Philippines, allow extended time for classes on resumption, both in duration of school hours and more calendar days of interaction.

'Another approach is to reduce and synthesize the curriculum so that students are able to focus on a few subjects and learn them well'. This is followed, for instance, by the State of Ontario in Canada.

One-to-one tutoring for the most disadvantaged learners has been taken up in many countries.

Among the most prestigious such programmes is the National Tutoring Programme in the United Kingdom for which the government has announced funding to the tune of £350 million. Ghana has also announced a national programme of tutoring. There are several such programmes in different States in the U.S. In Italy, university students are volunteering to conduct one-one-one classes for

middle school children from poor immigrant backgrounds.

Accelerated education programmes or "bridge courses", which condense several months (or even years of schooling) into a few weeks or months, are another option. This concept has been taken up in several countries.

One strong voice emerging from all these experiences is: "Acceleration, not remediation". The advice is to go with exposure to age-level grade-level content, and plug the holes where necessary. Many educators warn against a deficit model that starts with measuring "loss" and tries to "fill the void", before returning to the "normal". Such models tend to ignore the complexity of psychological preparedness in children, and reduce learning to a single dimension of achievement, which invariably works against children in low-resource contexts.

Some have even asserted that "...there is no such thing as learning loss", and that students have learned a great deal about life, home economy, health and much else during the pandemic that cannot be measured by standardised tests; that learning should begin with acknowledging this and building on such informal learning.

In the words of Tony Cotton (<https://bit.ly/3wRMOf0>), a renowned mathematics educator from the U.K., "The curriculum should not be seen as a fixed list of content that must all be covered before the learner can leave school. If the curriculum can be seen as a map, as a landscape, there is always plenty of time to explore."

The agenda ahead

Given the state of preparedness of our education system, and based on what we have seen during the last year, it is hard to see our schools taking up a curriculum based on where the children are, in terms of what they have learnt from life during the novel coronavirus pandemic. The most likely event is that schools will simply

revert to business as usual, with a reduced syllabus, and no change whatsoever in the overall curriculum or pedagogy, and racing through the syllabus to "catch up". Children who cannot keep up would simply be left behind. This would be a great disaster. It is very likely that children from the poorest sections will be the ones who are affected the most, by having to race in accelerated learning programmes with no support at home. Teachers, without preparation for handling such a new context, can only fall back on covering the syllabus, leading to the alienation of already marginalised students.

What we need now is nothing less than a national rejuvenation programme for elementary education. The school system cannot do what is needed by itself. We need a vast body of volunteers engaging in small groups with children from the most disadvantaged sections, working in tandem with schools, which will need to focus on safety measures and average performance. It is critical that we should not reduce education to foundational literacy and numeracy, but treat children as they are, study the experiences they bring, and address their nutritional, emotional and intellectual well-being as a whole. This requires a flexible curriculum rooted in local reality, working with physical material, and pedagogy based on sound principles of psychology of learning.

The country has already shown during the pandemic that it lacks the capability to re-imagine examinations, whether it be at the secondary school level, or at university. Now, with the education of small children, a similar lack of imagination in curriculum and pedagogy will be splendidly ironic: without ourselves learning any lesson from the pandemic, we would be demanding that the children learn their lessons.

R. Ramanujam was faculty at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai, until recently. The views expressed are personal

Egypt takes centre stage in West Asian affairs

The instrument that Cairo is using to assert its diverse interests in a complex region is not military force, but diplomacy



TALMIZ AHMAD

Most important developments in West Asia are increasingly revealing an Egyptian fingerprint. Egypt's diplomats and intelligence officers recently negotiated the end of the 11-day Israel-Palestine conflict, with the new Israeli government looking to Egypt to manage the turbulent cauldron of Gaza. Turkey, which has been hostile to Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi for the coup in July 2013, when he overthrew the Muslim Brotherhood government in Cairo headed by President Mohammed Morsi, is anxious to reopen relations.

Egypt, after long years of neglect, has now become active in re-engaging with its neighbours in Africa, with substantial economic and defence partnership agreements. Finally, Egypt, with Iraq and Jordan, announced in Baghdad at the end of June that a new tripartite grouping of these West Asian States had been set up, proclaiming the advent of *al-Sham al-Jadid*, the "New Levant".

Political, economic changes
Just a few years ago, after the overthrow of the country's first democratically elected government, Egypt survived with a \$12 billion aid package from Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Kuwait. These West Asian deposits were supplemented by grants in 2013-14 for the import of petroleum products, valued at another \$16 billion (<https://bit.ly/3exXb6w>).

West Asian politics was also lar-

gely influenced by the active role of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, in Syria, Yemen and Libya. Egypt found itself a reluctant partner in these ventures, though it was low key in Yemen and maintained ties with the Assad government in Damascus. In Libya, it was pushed into a more active role to confront the Tripoli-based administration, but here, too, it refused to deploy troops in the country.

Egypt's role in the blockade of Qatar from June 2017, initiated by Saudi Arabia and the UAE, was also relatively lukewarm. Egypt allowed Qatari LNG to pass through the Suez Canal, while Qatar made no effort to dilute its investments in Egypt or order the repatriation of 2,50,000 Egyptian workers in the country.

The failure of Saudi Arabia and the UAE to achieve any success in their military interventions, or in the blockade of Qatar, has opened the space for Egypt to regain the influence it has traditionally enjoyed in Arab counsels. This has been greatly facilitated by the good management of its economy through difficult times. Economic reforms from 2015 finally provided foreign exchange reserves of \$40 billion by 2018 and a growth rate of 5.6% in 2019 (<https://bit.ly/3eAlfpb>).

The instrument that Egypt is using to assert its diverse interests in a complex and conflictual region is not military force, but diplomacy.

Regional challenges
The principal challenge that Egypt presently faces relates to Ethiopia's plan to construct the "Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam" (GERD) on the Blue Nile. Egypt fears this project could restrict its access to the waters of the Nile, the source of 95% of its fresh water. Seeing the project as an "existential threat", Egyptian officials have said that "all options" are on the

table. However, Egypt has actually embarked on robust diplomatic engagements in its African neighbourhood, with defence agreements with the "ring countries" around Ethiopia – Sudan, Uganda, Burundi, Rwanda and Kenya – to safeguard its interests.

Ethiopia has initiated its own diplomatic effort in the Horn of Africa by firming up ties with Somalia, Eritrea and South Sudan. In response, Egypt has agreed to build a major dam and hydropower project in Tanzania, so that the latter will compete with Ethiopia in the export of power in the region. At the end of June, Egypt wrote to the UN Security Council seeking international intervention on the dam issue; it said that, with this effort, "we will have exhausted all the peaceful means".

Egypt's other challenge is relations with Turkey. The two countries met at the deputy Foreign Minister level in Cairo in early May and discussed the issues that divide them: Libya and the East Mediterranean. In Libya, Turkey has deployed about 500 soldiers and another 2,000 fighters from its militia in Syria in support of the Tripoli-based authority. Egypt and the UAE have so far backed the Tobruk-based administration and supported the rival Libyan force, led by Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar, with weaponry and mercenaries.

In March 2021, an interim government of National Unity was formed that brings together the two rival administrations in one

national order until elections are held in December this year. But this arrangement is still fragile, and competitions for power between the Tripoli and Tobruk-based rivals are ongoing.

Libya's peace process demands that foreign troops leave the country. Though the Syrian militants have started leaving, Turkey asserts that its own soldiers have been invited by the government and is showing no signs of withdrawing them, while Russia insists that withdrawal of foreign troops will be a "step-by-step" process so that a power balance is maintained. In the East Mediterranean, Egypt, with other littoral partners, has delineated energy claims in the sea which conflict with Turkey's claims. With neither side willing to compromise, there are serious fears of conflict. On July 3, Egypt affirmed its interest in Libya by inaugurating a new naval base close to the Libyan border.

Coalition for cooperation
The just-announced tripartite coalition of Egypt, Iraq and Jordan is clearly an attempt by the partners to broaden their regional engagements: Iraq would like to free itself from the Iranian grip and expand ties with its Arab neighbours. Jordan is unhappy with the recent Saudi role in trying to topple King Abdullah and replace him with a disgruntled half brother, Prince Hamza. Egypt views the partnership as an opportunity to move beyond its traditional dependence on Saudi Arabia and the UAE and assert its own leadership in the region.

Together, the partners constitute a near-contiguous land mass, with a total population of 150 million (<https://bit.ly/3kwy2g6>) and considerable domestic agricultural and industrial capacity. They are looking at extensive cooperation in energy connectivity and re-

construction areas. Membership is open and, later, Syria and Lebanon could also join this group.

The outlook
While Egypt's diplomacy has already placed it in the vanguard of regional affairs, it also faces serious challenges. As of now, Ethiopia is not budging on GERD, raising fears of a military confrontation.

At home, due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, unemployment has increased, recovery has been slow, and the percentage of workers without adequate income has gone up from 55% to nearly 75%. The poverty rate is still 2% higher than in 2015, when reforms had started. Further deterioration in the economy could compel Egypt to seek assistance from the Gulf States, which would dilute its independent posture in regional affairs.

Again, under the country's stringent counterterrorism laws, tens of thousands of government critics are in detention. During the election campaign, Joe Biden, now U.S. President, had promised that there would be "no more blank checks for Trump's favourite dictator", a reference to al-Sisi. However, it remains to be seen if the U.S. will actually go through with this.

As of now, Egypt is riding high. The Egyptian President recently revamped the museum of ancient history in Cairo and presided over parades of mummies of former Egyptian pharaohs as they moved to their new home. Perhaps, he feels a kinship with those old rulers who had brought Egypt so much glory all those centuries ago.

Talmiz Ahmad is a former Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the UAE, and Ram Sathe Chair for International Studies, Symbiosis International University, Pune



Punjab MLA's", July 19.

D. SETHURAMAN,
Chennai

Photo: AP

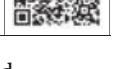
ratio than those who did not (Page 1, July 19). Can we hope that food and education advocates will find a way out to ensure the continued supply of nutritional midday meals for children hailing from poor economic backgrounds till schools reopen? Localised distribution/supply of meals under the guidance and leadership of local body representatives can be thought of.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,
Malippura, Kothamangalam, Kerala

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Surveillance reform is the need of the hour

The proposed legislation related to the personal data protection of citizens fails to consider surveillance



ANUSHKA JAIN & TANMAY SINGH

It is worth asking why the government would need to hack phones and install spyware when existing laws already offer impunity for surveillance. This unsettling query arises on the basis of reports emerging from a collaborative investigation by journalists from around the world, including from India's *The Wire*, titled the 'Pegasus Project'. Reports say that over "300 verified Indian mobile telephone numbers, including those used by ministers, opposition leaders, journalists, the legal community, businessmen, government officials, scientists, rights activists and others", were targeted using spyware made by the Israeli firm, NSO Group.

Threat to press freedom

Subsequent reporting showed that the Pegasus spyware had been used to target 37 phones, of which 10 belonged to Indians. Amnesty International's Security Lab was then able to confirm that Pegasus was used to compromise the phones of former journalist of *The Indian Express* Sushant Singh, former editor of the *Economic and Political Weekly* Paranjoy Guha Thakurta, former *Outlook* journalist S.N.M. Abdi, and *The Wire's* two founding editors Siddharth Varadarajan and M.K. Venu.

These revelations highlight a disturbing trend with regard to the use of hacking software against dissidents and adversaries. In 2019, similar allegations were made about the use of Pegasus against journalists and human rights activists. Most of them were situated in Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh as the hack targeted lawyers related to the Bhima Koregaon case and Dalit activists, respectively. However, despite repeated calls for investigations, the relevant State governments failed to do so.

A significant number of Indians reportedly affected by Pegasus this time are again journalists. This is not surprising since the World Press Freedom Index produced by Reporters Without Borders has ranked India 142 out of 180 countries in 2021. What is shocking, however, is that



the press requires (and in democracies is afforded) greater protections on speech and privacy. Privacy and free speech are what enable good reporting. They protect journalists against threats of private and governmental reprisals against legitimate reporting. This has been recognised in Supreme Court decisions. In the absence of privacy, the safety of journalists, especially those whose work criticises the government, and the personal safety of their sources is jeopardised. Such a lack of privacy, therefore, creates an aura of distrust around these journalists and effectively buries their credibility.

Problematic provisions

The government, in its purported undated and unsigned response, relied on existing provisions of law under the Indian Telegraph Act of 1885 and the Information Technology (IT) Act of 2000. Even without the use of Pegasus or any other hacking software and surveillance, these provisions are problematic and offer the government total opacity in respect of its interception and monitoring activities. While the provisions of the Telegraph Act relate to telephone conversations, the IT Act relates to all communications undertaken using a computer resource. Section 69 of the IT Act and the Interception Rules of 2009 are even more opaque than the Telegraph Act, and offer even weaker protections to the surveilled. No provision, however, allows the government to hack the phones of any individual since hacking of computer resources, including mobile phones and apps, is a criminal offence under the IT Act. Nonetheless, surveillance itself, whether under a provision of law or without it, is a gross violation of the fundamental rights of citizens.

The very existence of a surveillance system impacts the right to privacy and the exercise of freedom of

speech and personal liberty under Articles 19 and 21 of the Constitution, respectively. It prevents people from reading and exchanging unorthodox, controversial or provocative ideas. Regardless of whether a citizen knows that their email is being read by the government, the perceived danger, founded on reasonable suspicion that this may happen, itself impacts their ability to express, receive and discuss such ideas.

There is also no scope for an individual subjected to surveillance to approach a court of law prior to or during or subsequent to acts of surveillance since the system itself is covert. In the absence of parliamentary or judicial oversight, electronic surveillance gives the executive the power to influence both the subject of surveillance and all classes of individuals, resulting in a chilling effect on free speech. Constitutional functionaries such as a sitting judge of the Supreme Court have reportedly been surveilled under Pegasus without any checks outside the executive wing of government. Vesting such disproportionate power with one wing of the government threatens the separation of powers of the government. In response to a Right to Information (RTI) request in 2013, the Central government had revealed that 7,500 to 9,000 orders for interception of telephones are issued by it every month. However, RTI requests for such information are now denied citing threats to national security and to the physical safety of persons.

The government, in its purported response, stated that any surveillance which takes place happens through a "due process of law". However, the existing provisions are insufficient to protect against the spread of authoritarianism since they allow the executive to exercise a disproportionate amount of power. Such surveillance, when carried out

entirely by the executive, curtails Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution (empowering the Supreme Court and High Courts, respectively, to issue certain writs) as it happens in secret. Thus, the affected person is unable to show a breach of their rights. This violates not only the ideals of due process and the separation of powers but also goes against the requirement of procedural safeguards as mandated in *K.S. Puttaswamy (Retd) v. Union of India* (2017).

Role of judiciary

Thus, in order to satisfy the ideal of "due process of law", to maintain an effective separation of powers and to fulfil the requirements of procedural safeguards and natural justice, there needs to be oversight from another branch of the government. Only the judiciary can be competent to decide whether specific instances of surveillance are proportionate, whether less onerous alternatives are available, and to balance the necessity of the government's objectives with the rights of the impacted individuals. The need for judicial oversight over surveillance systems in general, and judicial investigation into the Pegasus hacking in particular, is also essential because the leaked database of targeted numbers contained the phone number of a sitting Supreme Court judge, which further calls into question the independence of the judiciary in India.

Surveillance reform is the need of the hour in India. Not only are existing protections weak but the proposed legislation related to the personal data protection of Indian citizens fails to consider surveillance while also providing wide exemptions to government authorities. When spyware is expensive and interception is inefficient, the individuals surveilled will be shortlisted by priority and perceived threat level to the existing regime. But as spyware becomes more affordable and interception becomes more efficient, there will no longer be a need to shortlist individuals. Everyone will be potentially subject to state-sponsored mass surveillance. The only solution is immediate and far-reaching surveillance reform.

Anushka Jain is the Associate Counsel (Surveillance and Transparency) and Tanmay Singh is the Litigation Counsel at Internet Freedom Foundation

Making India a sporting nation

India can compete better in the international arena if different States are developed as centres of excellence for different sports



GAUTAM BHATTACHARYA

Two econometricians, Bernard A.B. and Busse M.R., in a paper in *The Review of Economics and Statistics* (February 2004) tried to establish that "total GDP is the best predictor of the national Olympic performance". They also claimed that host countries are "likely to win an additional 1.8% of the medals beyond what would be predicted by their GDP alone". Since then, many studies have attempted to understand the factors that influence most the ability of a nation to win medals at the Olympics. One such work after the Rio Olympics showed that medals per hundred billion of dollars (based on purchasing power parity data of 2015) are highest in some Caribbean nations and lowest in some Asian and African nations. These results negate to a considerable extent the hypothesis that total GDP is the best predictor of the performance of a nation at the Olympics.

Factors that determine performance

There are many factors which are important in determining the performance of a nation in various sports. Beyond a threshold level, the average standard of living in a nation and the country's population size may be important determinants for its performance at the Olympics. The size of total GDP is hardly important in countries like India where a sizable segment is fighting hunger. A person of poor health can never be a good sportsperson. In countries where there are high levels of stunted growth, malnutrition and anaemia, we cannot expect good athletes. Thus, South Asian countries and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa don't fit in the econometric models built on total GDP.

Genetic factors are also no less important. The U.S., Australia and the Netherlands are powerhouses in swimming, but not China. Perhaps, taller people have an advantage in swimming or basketball but height is not important in shooting or gymnastics. China excels in shooting along with the U.S. and Germany. East Asian nations do better at table tennis than Western nations. Russia, East European nations and Central Asian countries do well in amateur boxing whereas China and Central Asians countries do better in weightlifting and wrestling.

Mobilising resources in world-class training provides an edge to sportspersons. Such infrastructure makes the U.S. the superpow-

er in athletics and gymnastics, Germany in equestrian, and the U.K. in diving, sailing and cycling. For poor nations, creating such infrastructure is a luxury.

During colonial rule, India got some exposure to international sporting events earlier than many Asian and African nations. The Calcutta Football League, for example, is the oldest football league in Asia. Durand Cup is the oldest existing football tournament in Asia. This exposure gave India an edge over other 'Third World' nations in the 1950s and early 1960s. Resources in India were spread thinly across sports disciplines. As more and more nations started coming into the international sports arena, India's relative position started declining from the 1970s.

Asian countries such as Kazakhstan, Singapore and Malaysia may stand below India in the medal's tally at the Asian Games, but are ahead of it at the Olympics. This is primarily because India is moderately good at many sports but not good enough to be the best at any of them. In contrast, Jamaica does well at the Olympics in sprinting and Kenya gets medals in long-distance running. They perform better than India though they are not great sporting nations. In recent years, India has shown promise in shooting, amateur boxing, wrestling, gymnastics and badminton. We need to concentrate more on sports where the physical build of an average Indian will not stand as a disadvantage.

One State, one sport

States need to be integrated in a bigger way in India's sports policy. Can we not develop different States as centres of excellence for different sports? People of different States have different food habits and build. It's not impossible to develop training infrastructure for different sports in different parts of the country depending on the inclination of people of that area and their habits and build. Unless we start grooming our children, who show potential, for international sports, India can hardly succeed at the Olympics. Individual talent alone cannot take us ahead. The policy of "One State, One Sport" can be a game-changer in India.

India's best performance at the Olympics was in London (2012) where it won two silver medals and four bronzes and ranked 56th in the medal's tally. At the Rio Olympics (2016), with one silver and one bronze, India's rank came down to 67. Whatever the predictions of the econometricians, if India can find a place in the top 50 sporting nations in the medal's tally of the rescheduled Summer Olympics at Tokyo commencing on July 23, that will be good enough to boost the nation's morale.

Gautam Bhattacharya is a former civil servant

A more humane police force

Political will is an essential component in bringing about any major reform in the Indian police force

VIKRAM VINCENT

While improvements in pay scale and promotions are necessary aspects of police reforms, little has been spoken about reforms needed at the psychological level. Why do citizens fear going to a police station or dealing with the lower ranks of the police force?

they are coerced. A staggering 65% of the participants applied the maximum level of pain on the "victim" while the remaining 35% remained in a range. Only a minuscule number refused to inflict any pain even under coercion. The results of Milgram's experiment were shown to be true even in variations of the experiment.

Behaviour with the citizenry

In the Indian police force, the lower ranks of police personnel are often verbally abused by their superiors. Many are not considered as individuals, are not shown compassion by the senior ranks, and work in inhuman conditions. While the alleged excesses of the police cannot be justified, it is important to look at how the treatment meted to police constables has affected the interaction of the police with the public. Many policemen deal with citizens in the manner that they do only because their work environments are not harmonious. Their relationship with their superior officers is stressful and sycophantic. There is no concept of welfare and this manifests in their improper behaviour with the citizenry.

Several committees have made several recommendations on the issue of reforms for a healthy police system. The Supreme Court of India was forced to intervene as neither the Central government nor the State governments acted upon those recommendations. It is clear that the problem is with the political apparatus considering the history of the Police Act. The Police Act of 1861 was legislated by the British right after the revolt of 1857 to bring in efficient administration of police in the country and to prevent any future revolts. This meant that the police were to always comply with those in power. Considering the results of the privatisation of the prison system and militarisation of the police system in the U.S., it would be disastrous to even consider this as a solution in India. Thus, political will is seen as an essential component in bringing about any major reform in the Indian police force.

Vikram Vincent holds a PhD from IIT Bombay

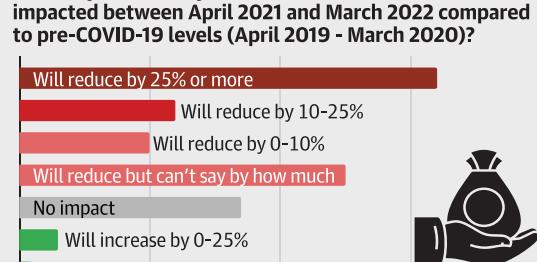
DATA POINT

A hole in consumers' pocket

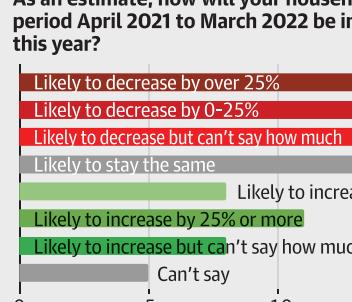
A majority of households in India felt that their income levels are likely to reduce by at least 25% in the next year compared to the pre-COVID-19 levels. Also, one in five said that their household savings would decrease up to 25% in the next year. The responses are excerpts from the recent Mood of the Consumer survey conducted by LocalCircles, a community social media platform. The survey received 70,500 responses from 382 districts. The survey was conducted online, and the participants were verified citizens registered with LocalCircles

About 86% of the respondents said that they were paying more to buy vegetables, groceries and essential items since the second COVID-19 wave started

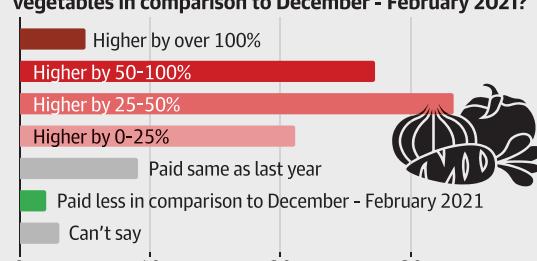
How do you believe your household income will be impacted between April 2021 and March 2022 compared to pre-COVID-19 levels (April 2019 - March 2020)?



As an estimate, how will your household savings for the period April 2021 to March 2022 be impacted by COVID-19 this year?



Since the second wave of COVID-19 started in March 2021, how much more has your household paid on average for vegetables in comparison to December - February 2021?



At this time, in your household finances planning, how long are you expecting uncertainty due to COVID-19 last this year (April 2021 - March 2022)?



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JULY 20, 1971

Eventful years

(From an Editorial)

The two years since the nationalisation of 14 major banks have certainly been the most eventful in the history of Indian banking. They have brought about hectic branch banking and a distinct change in the pattern of lending. In the first 18 months, 2,900 new branches were opened, most of them in rural and semi-urban centres. Deposits with the 14 banks have increased by Rs. 882 crores to about Rs. 3,408 crores. There was also an increase in the number of accounts of small borrowers to 11.7 lakhs by March this year from only 2.8 lakhs in June 1969. These developments have no doubt great significance, especially as 30 to 40 per cent of fresh credit extended by all banks has been in favour of borrowers in the priority sectors. The pace of deposit growth has obviously been stimulated by the strengthening of the infrastructure and by a new class of people taking seriously to the banking habit.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JULY 20, 1921

Improving inheritance laws.

Mr Cousins writes: The Committee meetings of Madras Women have been held at the Gokhale Hall on Saturday last and the previous Saturday at which arrangements have been made to hold a representative meeting in support of the legislation which is being brought forward by Mr. T.V. Seshagiri Aiyer, M.L.A., to improve the present inheritance laws, relating to Hindu women. The meeting will be held in the Small Hall of the Senate House, on Saturday the 23rd instant, at 4:30 P.M. under the joint auspices of practically all the Women's Associations of Madras. Lady T. Sadasivier has consented to preside and the members of Committee include Sister Subbalakshmi, Dr. Muthulakshmi, Miss Chattopadhyay, Mrs. Cousins, Mrs. Lakshmi, Mrs. Rajammal, Mrs. Mahadeva Shastri etc. There is a strong feeling among women that the present laws are not treating women justly, and especially widows in cases where no will has been made and all over India, women welcome the efforts of Mr. Seshagiri Aiyer to reform the existing laws in this connection. The Madras meeting is one of a number which is being held throughout Indian cities to give public expression to those opinions.

FROM PAGE ONE

Rahul, Kishor, Lavasa on list of spyware targets

The family members of a Supreme Court employee who had accused the then Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi of sexual harassment in 2019 are on the list. Mr. Lavasa, who is on the list, served as an Election Commissioner between January 2018 and August 2020, and had expressed dissenting views on the three-member election panel's ruling that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had not violated the Model Code of Conduct in 2019.

Others on the list include Gagandeep Kang, a well-known virologist, M. Hari Menon, the India country head for the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and two employees of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention based in Delhi.

Forbidden Stories, a Paris-based non-profit organisation, and Amnesty International got access to the list of thousands of potential targets worldwide and shared it with 17 media publications, including *The Wire*, *The Guardian* and *The Washington Post*. Am-

nesty's International's Security Lab provided forensic analyses and technical support, while Forbidden and the media houses conducted the investigation, called the Pegasus Project.

Responding to the reports, Mr. Gandhi called targeted surveillance "illegal and deplorable".

"If your information is correct, the scale and nature of surveillance you describe goes beyond an attack on the privacy of individuals. It is an attack on the democratic foundations of our country. It must be thoroughly investigated and those responsible be identified and punished," he said in a statement.

India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, according to *The Washington Post*, said the claim of government surveillance of specific people "has no concrete basis or truth associated with it whatsoever." However, the government refused to answer to a question on whether it is a client of NSO, *The Post* reported.

The remarks by Mr. Modi to the media were made just before the session got underway. The session had a stor-

At media briefing, PM repeats invite for special meeting on COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi marked the beginning of the monsoon session of Parliament urging Opposition members to raise "the most difficult and sharpest questions" in the House, but also told them to allow the government to respond in a "disciplined atmosphere".

He also repeated his invitation to floor leaders of all parties for a meeting with him on Tuesday evening to discuss the vaccination policy and management of the COVID-19 pandemic. Mr. Modi had made the same offer at the all-party meeting on Sunday, which had been rebuffed by Opposition leaders who demanded a discussion in Parliament rather than a "PowerPoint presentation".

The remarks by Mr. Modi to the media were made just before the session got underway. The session had a stor-



Point of view: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the media at Parliament House. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

my start, with both Houses of Parliament being repeatedly adjourned for the day without the customary introduction of newly appointed Ministers.

"I would like to urge all the MPs and all the parties to

ask the most difficult and sharpest questions in the Houses but they should also allow the government to respond in a disciplined environment. This will boost democracy, strengthen people's trust and improve

the pace of development," Mr. Modi said. "I hope every issue related to the pandemic and our fight against it would be discussed. I would like all floor leaders to attend a session tomorrow evening to have a presentation on the pandemic situation. It can be discussed on the floor of the House too," he added.

'Get vaccinated'

The Prime Minister also made an appeal that everyone should be vaccinated against COVID-19 and follow protocols related to it strictly. "Vaccine is given in the 'baahu' (arm) and those who take it become 'bahubalis' (strongmen) in the fight against COVID-19. It's being taken forward," he said.

The offer for a meeting over COVID-19 comes despite Opposition leaders terming it "highly irregular" and not according to norms of a Parliament session.

Multiple adjournments mar RS proceedings

Protests by Opposition over price hike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Vehelement protests from the Opposition parties on repeated fuel price hikes, ongoing farmers' agitation and the alleged mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic among other issues led to multiple adjournments in the Raja Sabha on the first day of the monsoon session of Parliament.

The protests also prevented Prime Minister Narendra Modi from introducing his new Ministers. The Congress, TMC, AAP, YSR Congress and Left members were in the well of the House, protesting about different issues when Mr. Modi rose to speak.

Mr. Modi said it should make everyone proud that several women, several people belonging to the SC and ST communities, have taken oath as Ministers. Many new Ministers were children of farmers and belonged to OBC communities.

"It seems some people

cannot digest that more women, SC, ST and OBC community members are becoming Ministers," he stated.

17 notices

The Opposition was up in arms after House Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu disallowed 17 notices by different Opposition parties to suspend the scheduled business.

He said it was not feasible to take 17 issues in one go, and assured the members that all the important matters would be taken up in due course of time.

But the Opposition continued the protests, forcing Mr. Naidu to adjourn the House first till 2 p.m. and then till 3 p.m.

As soon as the House reassembled at 3 p.m., Opposition members entered the well of the House. The House was adjourned within 20 minutes, for the final time with the Opposition continuing the protest.

IN BRIEF



Naqvi appointed Deputy Leader of House in RS

NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday appointed Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi as the Deputy Leader of the House in the Raja Sabha. Leader of the House Piyush Goyal made the announcement in Parliament. Mr. Goyal was holding the post till now. He was promoted after the outgoing Leader of the House, Thawarchand Gehlot, was appointed as the Governor of Karnataka. Mr. Naqvi had also served as the Parliamentary Affairs Minister.

Pramanik a Bangladeshi citizen, says Trinamool

NEW DELHI

The Trinamool Congress on Monday alleged that the Minister of State for Home Affairs Nitish Pramanik is a Bangladeshi citizen. The party, at a press conference in Delhi, said they would not let Mr. Pramanik make any intervention in Parliament. In an online press conference, party leader Derek O'Brien said, "It would have been our pleasure to let Prime Minister Narendra Modi introduce his new Council of Ministers. But we did not because all Ministers have to be citizens of India. The Minister of State for Home Affairs is not. He is a citizen of Bangladesh."

SP slams BSP's Brahmin outreach programme

The community is with us: SP leader

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

A day after Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati announced a new outreach campaign to woo the Brahmin community, the Samajwadi Party (SP) on Monday said the community still remembered the "oppression" it faced under her rule through the registration of "false" cases under the SC/ST Act.

SP national secretary Abhishek Mishra accused Ms. Mayawati of remembering Brahmins only when polls approached. "The oppression meted out to Brahmins under her rule, the false cases lodged under the SC/ST (Act), the entire State, every section and every community remembers that," he said.

Every community, especially the Brahmins, was with the SP and saw their future in Akhilesh Yadav, asserted Mr. Mishra. A Brahmin himself and former Minister in the previous SP government in 2012-2017, Mr. Mishra said Mr. Yadav

gave respect to the community at every step and added to their strength and progress.

On Sunday, Ms. Mayawati appealed to Brahmins to take "inspiration" from Dalits and remain "firm" in not falling for any lure or gimmicks deployed by other parties, especially the ruling BJP. She said she was "proud" that the Dalit community, to which she belongs, did not fall for any amount of lure from other parties, especially the BJP, in the past few elections.

To attract the community to her party and build consensus among them that their interests were secure only under a BSP government, Ms. Mayawati deputed Satish Chandra Mishra, Rajya Sabha member and a Brahmin face of the BSP, to start a campaign with special meetings with the community, starting July 23. The campaign will start from the politically sensitive town of Ayodhya, which has religious significance for Hindus.

We will work together to enhance cooperation, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with the newly appointed Nepal Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba on Monday.

The call has established a communication line between Mr. Modi and Mr. Deuba, who won a vote of confidence in the House of Representatives on Sunday night.

"Spoke with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba to convey my congratulations and best wishes. We will work together to further enhance the wide-ranging cooperation between India and Nepal, including in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mr. Modi in a social media message after the conversation.

Taking over

Mr. Deuba was appointed as Prime Minister on July 12 by a Constitutional Bench of



Sher Bahadur Deuba

the Supreme Court of Nepal, which observed that his predecessor, K.P. Sharma Oli, had violated constitutional norms and had to step down.

Mr. Modi had congratulated Mr. Deuba after he won the vote of confidence. In a message to Mr. Deuba, he said both sides should work on "all sectors". The Ministry of External Affairs said the two leaders focused primarily on battling the pandemic.

Mr. Oli had been criticised

for his alleged failure to contain COVID-19, which has left at least 9582 people dead.

Vaccine challenge

Nepal's main challenge is its inability to access COVID-19 vaccine, for which it had initially depended on the Serum Institute of India. Supply of Indian vaccines was interrupted during March-May when the second wave peaked in India. Subsequently, the U.S. stepped up efforts and Nepal will receive 1.5 million vaccine doses from it.

Bilateral interaction between the two neighbours turned cold last year owing to the Kalapani territorial dispute and top-level visits were blocked because of the pandemic and diplomatic spat.

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Mr. Oli had been criticised

Women's groups want U.P. draft population Bill nixed

Proposed law is unconstitutional

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Uttar Pradesh government's proposed law on population control is "unconstitutional" as it violates the right to equality and should be "immediately withdrawn", demanded women's organisations, health networks, academics in a memorandum to President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday.

The Draft Uttar Pradesh Population Control, Stabilisation and Welfare Bill, 2021, proposes a two-child policy and those violating it would be barred from contesting local body elections, applying for government jobs and getting subsidies under government welfare schemes.

According to the memo-

randum, the Bill will result in people not registering their marriages because of the disincentives mooted by the government, which is likely to make women and children in situations of domestic violence or abusive relationships vulnerable and could result in denial of maintenance and support as well as right to property.

The signatories of the memorandum include the All India Democratic Women's Association, Sama, Jan Swasthya Abhiyan, Saheli, National Federation for Indian Women, AIDWA, former Union Health Secretary Sujatha Rao, Dr. Mir Shiva of Initiative for Health & Equity in Society and Aruna Roy of Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan, among others.

Businessman Raj Kundra arrested

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Raj Kundra, businessman and husband of Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty, was arrested on Monday by the Mumbai Police in a case related to the alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through certain apps, a senior official said.

Mr. Kundra, arrested by the Crime Branch, appeared to be the key conspirator in the case, he said. "There was a case registered with the Crime Branch, Mumbai, in February 2021 about creation of pornographic films and publishing them through some apps. We've arrested Raj Kundra in this case on 19/7/21," the Mumbai Police Commissioner said in a statement.

only during the Emergency that the ILC was not held. "On every issue related to labour, the government used to sit with labour representatives and employer representatives regularly and chalk out solutions. India also has a legal obligation to do so since the Parliament has ratified Convention No. 144 of the ILO related to strengthening tripartite mechanism," the letter stated.

Afghanistan's Army chief scheduled to visit India

NEW DELHI

Amid the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, the nation's Army chief Lt. Gen. Wali Mohammad Ahmadzai is scheduled to visit India on a three-day visit from July 27. He is scheduled to meet Army chief General Manoj Naravane and National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, a defence official said. Lt. Gen. Ahmadzai was appointed the Army chief last month. Another visit by the Afghan Deputy Minister for acquisition and technical planning, which was scheduled from July 11 to 16, has postponed. Afghanistan has long requested India for offensive military hardware.

T.N. will face Mekedatu issue legally: Stalin

CHENNAI

Ruling out any scope for negotiations on the Mekedatu dam issue, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Monday said the State would face the issue legally. Mr. Stalin, who was in New Delhi to invite President Ram Nath Kovind to various events in Tamil Nadu, said he had already met the Prime Minister and expressed his opposition to Karnataka's move to build the dam. Mr. Stalin said, "The Prime Minister has given an assurance. The Union Minister for Jal Shakti has given his word. The case is already in court. We will face it legally."



The day after: Punjab Congress Committee chief Navjot Singh Sidhu in Chandigarh on Monday. ■ PTI

Sidhu pushes 18-point agenda for Punjab

'Will return power back to the people'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A day after he was appointed president of the Punjab Congress Committee, former State Minister Navjot Singh Sidhu said on Monday that he would work towards giving power back to the people through the Congress's 18-point agenda for the State.

"Will work along with every member of Congress family in Punjab to fulfil the mission of #JittegaPunjab as a humble Congress worker to Give Power of the People Back to the People through the #PunjabModel & High Command's 18 Point Agenda ... My Journey has just begun!!" Mr. Sidhu said in a tweet.

"Today, to work further for the same dream & strengthen the invincible

fort of @INCIndia, Punjab. I am grateful to Hon'ble Congress President Sonia Gandhi Ji, Shri @RahulGandhi Ji & Smt @priyankagandhi Ji for their faith in me & giving me this pivotal responsibility," he said.

The All India Congress Committee appointed Mr. Sidhu president of the Congress State unit, besides Sangat Singh Gilzian, Sukhwinder Singh Danni, Pawan Goel and Kuljit Singh Nagra as working presidents.

The 18-point programme was suggested by the three-member AICC panel set up to resolve the power tussle between Mr. Sidhu and Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

The agenda includes issues surrounding action in the 2015 sacrilege cases and against the drug menace.

The Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh on Monday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to convene the Indian Labour Conference (ILC), the most recent session of which was held in 2015, at the earliest.

In a letter, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-affiliated Central trade union said the ILC was "required to

uphold the noble tradition of tripartism in the country"

and that India being a founding member of the International Labour Organisation had traditionally "upheld the high ideals of tripartism". The letter, written by BMS general secretary Binoy Kumar Sinha, said the ILC was held every year or after two years in exceptional circumstances.

The BMS added that it was

SC orders activist's immediate release

Mr. Farasat submitted that the Facebook posts were criticism against the advocacy of cow dung and urine as cure. He said stringent NSA provisions had been slapped against the activist to chill his free speech. His client's son had spent days in custody pursuant to criminal cases initiated against him followed by spell of preventive detention after grant of bail.

CMYK

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The BMS added that it was

only during the Emergency that the ILC was not held. "On every issue related to labour, the government used to sit with labour representatives and employer representatives regularly and chalk out solutions. India also has a legal obligation to do so since the Parliament has ratified Convention No. 144 of the ILO related to strengthening tripartite mechanism," the letter stated.

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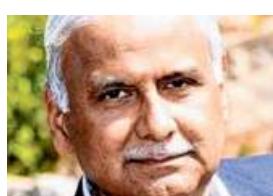
only during the Emergency that the ILC was not held. "On every issue related to labour, the government used to

A peephole that both shocks and surprises polity



Pegasus report is dirty, worthless: Bihar CM

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday called the Pegasus report "dirty and worthless." "All this is dirty and worthless. It is not good to disturb anyone like this. All this new technology has its misuse. People are troubled and their work is hindered," Mr. Kumar told presspersons on the sidelines of the weekly *Janata Durbar* (people's court). Mr. Kumar's party, the Janata Dal (United), is a partner of the BJP at the Centre and in the State. To a question on the farmers' protest, Mr. Kumar said their agitation was confined to a few regions. "Bihar has been taking initiatives for farmers and, therefore, there is no agitation here," he said.



'Those snooping have wasted their resources'

NEW DELHI
The co-founder of the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), Jagdeep S. Chhokar, on Monday said whoever was snooping on him had wasted their resources. Mr. Chhokar was reacting to reports of his name figuring on a list of potential snooping targets of the Pegasus spyware. Mr. Chhokar said his work with the ADR was "all in the public domain".



MVA leaders slam BJP govt. over report

PUNE
Leaders in the tripartite Uddhar Thackeray-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government slammed the BJP government amid reports of alleged "snooping" using the Israeli spyware, Pegasus. Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday demanded clarifications from both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the issue, while stating that the reports proved that the Union government was "weak".

Several Delhi-based envoys, staff of NGOs on Pegasus list

Diplomats from Iran, Afghanistan, China and Nepal on it

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

While reports of Indian politicians and journalists being targets of surveillance operations carried out with the help of the Pegasus spyware took centre stage on Monday, French newspaper *Le Monde* reported that several Delhi-based diplomats were on the list of potential targets for phone hacking from 2017 to 2021, along with a phone associated with Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan.

On Monday, media organisations in the 17-member consortium published more details of the leaked database allegedly belonging to Israeli technology company, the NSO group, that developed Pegasus. The U.S.-based *Washington Post*, the U.K.-based *The Guardian* and *The Wire* in India reported that the telephone numbers of a British High Commission official and two officials of the American Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and employees of international NGOs such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation were in the database of those targeted.

New Delhi has hostile re-

Illegal surveillance is not possible in India'

IT Minister's statement followed Opposition protests on the first day of the monsoon session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Information Technology (IT) and Communications Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Monday told the Lok Sabha that illegal surveillance was not possible in India, given its laws and robust institutions. He alleged that news reports about the Pegasus software being used to illegally tap phones was "an attempt to malign the Indian democracy".

In a *suo motu* statement, he said there was no factual basis to the reports, as multiple checks and balances in India did not allow any unauthorised person to snoop on people.

The Minister's statement followed Opposition protests on the first day of the monsoon session over reports that several prominent personalities, including Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, were potential targets of surveillance.

In a collaborative investigation by an international



Quick rebuttal: Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw in the Lok Sabha in New Delhi on Monday. •PTI

media consortium, more than 300 verified mobile phone numbers, including two serving Ministers, over 40 journalists, three Opposition leaders, one sitting judge, and several business persons and activists in India, were identified as potential targets of hacking.

News portal *The Wire* carried reports about possible hacking using Pegasus, the

Israeli software that is sold only to government agencies to tackle terror and crime.

"A highly sensational story was published by a web portal last night. Many over-the-top allegations were made around this story. The press reports appeared a day before the monsoon session of Parliament. This can't be a coincidence," Mr. Vaishnaw said.

"In the past, similar claims were made regarding the use of Pegasus on WhatsApp. Those reports had no factual basis and were denied by all parties, including in the Supreme Court. The press reports of July 18 also appear to be an attempt to malign the Indian democracy and its well-established institutions," he observed.

The only basis of these re-

ports was the fact that the media consortium had access to a leaked database of 50,000 numbers and the individuals linked to these phone numbers were taken as people who were being spied upon, he noted.

The news portal's report admitted that the mere presence of the phone in the list did not indicate spying unless the devices were put through technical analysis, he asserted.

The Minister quoted the Israeli company NSO, rubbishing the claims and pointing out factual inaccuracies in their report.

He explained the "well-established procedure" for lawful interception of electronic communication for the purpose of national security by agencies at the Centre and the States.

"When we look at this issue through the prism of logic, it clearly emerges that there is no substance behind this sensationalism," Mr. Vaishnaw stated.

Govt. compromised national security: Cong.

Party demands dismissal of Amit Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday accused the Narendra Modi government of "treason" and compromising national security amid reports of the Pegasus software being used to spy on people. They demanded the dismissal of Union Home Minister Amit Shah and an inquiry into the role of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



er activists through a foreign entity's spyware not treason and an inexcusable breach of national security," Mr. Surjewala asked.

The party also contended the IT Minister's claim that illegal surveillance was not possible, adding that former IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on November 28, 2019, in a reply to a call attention motion in the Rajya Sabha, had admitted that there were 121 names where WhatsApp was possibly infected due to the software and that a notice had been issued to the NSO group, the company that produces the spyware.

'Lies in tatters'

"The Constitution has been trampled upon, the rule of law has been murdered, and the oath of office that the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and this government took lies in tatters," Mr. Surjewala said.

Shashi Tharoor, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on IT, tweeted, "If GOI did it that's very bad; if somebody unauthorized did it, that's worse. If a foreign govt say China or Pakistan did it, then national security demands that our govt should investigate and this is why an independent investigation is absolutely indispensable."

Targeting Mr. Shah, Mr. Kharge said, "If you can't run the office you hold as per the rule of law, then you should not be occupying such an office."

The Congress posed a set of questions to the Prime Minister, including who – whether the Prime Minister or the Home Minister – ordered the purchase of Pegasus and how much money had been spent.

"Is spying on India's security forces, judiciary, Cabinet Ministers, Opposition leaders, journalists and oth-

ers for the surveillance of Indian citizens in an illegal and unauthorised manner.

"Use of a cyber spy software to hack smartphones even by the government is prohibited under Indian laws. Under what law has the government undertaken such surveillance activities over citizens?" the CPI(M) asked.

CPI general secretary D. Raja said, "It seems this government is very close to the Israeli administration. The revelations are extremely shocking."

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Gehlot seeks SC probe in snooping case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday sought the Supreme Court's intervention in the Pegasus spying case, adding that *suo motu* action and an order for an investigation from the apex court would bring out the truth and set all allegations and counter-allegations to rest.

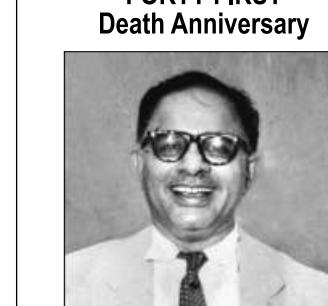
"It is the most appropriate case for judicial inquiry by the Supreme Court," Mr. Gehlot said. He said the reports on the hacking of mobile phones and spying using the Pegasus software were "very shocking and worrisome".

"Now the list of people who were snooped includes former Congress president Rahul Gandhi [as well]. It is not yet clear where the list will end," he tweeted.

The senior Congress leader pointed out that if the Union government had been honest, it would have taken the issue seriously and had it investigated when former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh raised it in the Rajya Sabha in 2019.

"This is a very serious matter whose truth should be brought out before the public," Mr. Gehlot said.

In fond memory of
Sri P. BRAHMAYYA GARU
on the occasion of the
FORTY FIRST
Death Anniversary



Born: 02-10-1908 Died: 20-07-1980

Inserted by:
Family Members
Partners and Staff of
M/s. BRAHMAYYA & Co.

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For more details visit

Negative RT-PCR report must for flyers to Kolkata

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government on Monday made it mandatory for flyers to Kolkata to either produce proof of full vaccination or a negative RT-PCR test report even as the city recorded zero COVID-19 deaths for the second time in three days.

"As per latest guidelines of W.B. Govt, all in bound flight passengers (commercial & non-commercial flights) shall produce at time of boarding either proof of full vaccination or RT-PCR negative test report for test conducted within 72hrs of such flight departure," Kolkata airport tweeted.

The State recorded 12 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking its toll to 18,001, but Kolkata did not record a single death.

Assam government bans mass gathering on Id

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A fresh set of COVID-19 guidelines issued by the Assam government on Monday said the upcoming festival of Id should be celebrated at home.

The directive on Id-ul-Zoha, or Bakrid, scheduled on July 21, came a week after the Assam government tabled a cattle protection Bill in the 126-member Assembly.

The Bill seeks to restrict transportation of cattle within and through the State besides preventing the sale of beef within a 5 km radius of temples and religious places of non-beef-eat-

Protecting children is a priority'

Govt. tells HC that it has directed States to ensure rehabilitation of COVID orphans

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Centre has informed the Delhi High Court that it has asked the States to ensure immediate action for rehabilitation of children orphaned due to COVID-19, in accordance with the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and leveraging the facilities under child protection services.



Timely help: A patient being administered medication at a COVID-19 isolation centre in New Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

law," the Ministry said. It added that "implementation of the Act is the primary responsibility of the States and Union Territories".

The Ministry's affidavit came in response to a petition before the High Court seeking directions to safeguard the interests of the children who lost their parents to COVID-19 and who do not have any one else to take care of them and face the risk of being trafficked.

The petition also sought

grant of appropriate financial compensation to the family members of those citizens who lost their lives during the COVID-19 pandemic after being denied access to adequate health care infrastructure in terms of hospital admission, oxygen cylinders, injections and medications.

Mental health care

The Ministry acknowledged that the second wave of the pandemic, "given its spread

and severity, has created much anxiety and panic across the country".

"As it is a matter of fact, children have been particularly vulnerable to the psychosocial and mental health impacts of the pandemic. Under these circumstances, service providers might also be finding it challenging to support children with their psychosocial and mental health care needs, along with other decisions about placement and safety," the Ministry admitted.

The Ministry said it had decided that calls from women and girls seeking psychological counselling or showing aggravated behaviors landing on '181-WHL' may be diverted to the National Institute of Mental Health & Neurosciences (NIMHANS) on helpline number 080-46110007 for them to provide psychological support to the affected persons.

Pakistan accuses India of 'using' FATF for political ends

It says Jaishankar's remarks at meeting revealed manipulation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India is "using" the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) for political designs against Pakistan, said the Pakistan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, criticising External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar for a statement claiming credit for Pakistan's continuance on the world body's watchlist.

According to a Pakistan MFA statement on Monday, Mr. Jaishankar's reported comments made to a group of BJP members as part of a training workshop, "vindicated" Pakistan's repeated accusation that India had pushed for Pakistan's grey listing in 2018 for "political" rather than "technical" reasons, which continues to date.

"India's credentials for as-



S. Jaishankar

sessing Pakistan in FATF as co-chair of the Joint Group or for that matter any other country are subject to questions, which we urge FATF to look into," the MFA in Islamabad said, adding that the Pakistani government was also considering contacting the FATF president for "appropriate action", although it is unclear what that action would be.

On Sunday, news agency

ANI reported that Mr. Jaishankar had addressed BJP members as part of a series of "e-Chintan" workshops on Indian foreign policy achievements under the Modi government. According to the report, Pakistan's grey listing for the past three years, including the most recent decision of the FATF plenary session to keep Pakistan on its "increased monitoring" list, were cited as the outcome of Indian efforts by the Minister.

"Due to us (government), Pakistan is under the lens of FATF and it was kept in the grey list. We have been successful in pressurising Pakistan and the fact that Pakistan's behaviour has changed is because of pressure put by India by various measures," Mr. Jaishankar was quoted as saying.

Govt. sanction must for prosecution, says Purohit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Lieutenant-Colonel Prasad Purohit, who is an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blasts case, told the Bombay High Court on Monday that sanction should be sought from the government before prosecuting him in the case.

Advocate Shrikant Shinde, representing Mr. Purohit, said the special National Investigation Agency court conducting the trial said the issue of sanction would be decided at the end of the trial.

Swamy, 84, was the last of the 16 to be arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case and sent to prison.

Mr. Shinde argued that prior sanction should be sought under Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (prosecution of judges and public servants). He went on to say that Mr. Purohit was playing his role and discharging his official duty by gathering information and that he was an "unsung hero" of the Army.

Stating that the trial was going on and 181 witnesses had been examined, NIA counsel Sandesh Patil said approximately 150 more witnesses were left. Hence the issue of sanction could be considered at the end of the trial, he said.

Rain deficit may hit oilseed farmers

Monsoon lull could force them to shift to less water-intensive crops, says study

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The lull in the monsoon post June 23 has resulted in a 32% rainfall deficit during that period, and is likely to push farmers into changing their kharif crop patterns, according to an analysis by CRISIL research issued on Monday.

Especially in northwest and central India, which are seeing rainfall deficits as high as 55%, farmers may be forced to move from oilseeds such as soybean and groundnut to crops which have lower water requirements, such as cotton and maize.

Overall, sowing was slower than last year, with the total sown acreage lagging behind 12%.

The southwest monsoon arrived in the country on



Slow start: Overall kharif sowing was slower than last year, with the total sown acreage lagging by 12%.

June 3 this year, and had covered almost 93% of kharif acreage by June 23, a week before its usual onset. Until that point, there had been a 28% surplus rainfall. After that point though, the monsoon played truant, resulting in a 32% deficit compared with the long period average, between June 23 and Ju-

ly 12. The highest deficit of 55% was in the northwest region, with Punjab and Haryana recording 70% and 80% deficits respectively. However, CRISIL noted that this may not have too much of an impact on sowing as these States have high levels of irrigation. It's a different story in Rajasthan, which

saw a 58% deficit during that period. "If not recovered within the next 10 days, [this] may effectuate a shift from soybean to maize in key deficit areas," said the report.

Central India saw a 39% rainfall deficit, with Gujarat hit particularly hard. "A continued dry spell in the State this marketing year could effectuate a major crop shift from groundnut to cotton," said CRISIL. By July 16, Maharashtra's total kharif acreage was down 11% in comparison to the previous year, and farmers may shift from soybean to cotton if the rainfall deficit does not recover. Similarly, Karnataka farmers, facing a 37% deficit during this period, are likely to opt for cotton and maize.

The report, titled "India Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story", shows that the general category is better off than SCs and STs, Hindus are better off than Muslims, the rich are better off than the poor, men are better off than women, and the urban population is better off than the rural population" on most health determinants, interventions and indica-

Oxfam report highlights sharp inequalities in health indicators

General category is better off than SCs and STs, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Sharp inequalities exist across different caste, religious, class and gender categories on various health indicators, according to a report by Oxfam India.

The report, titled "India Inequality Report 2021: India's Unequal Healthcare Story", shows that the general category is better off than SCs and STs, Hindus are better off than Muslims, the rich are better off than the poor, men are better off than women, and the urban population is better off than the rural population" on most health determinants, interventions and indica-

tors. The findings are primarily based on secondary analysis from rounds 3 and 4 of the National Family Health Survey and various rounds of National Sample Survey.

The report shows that while women's literacy has improved across social groups over the years, SC and ST women lag behind the general category by 18.6% and 27.9% respectively.

There exists a gap of 55.1% between the top and bottom 20% of the population in 2015-16. Though the female literacy rate among Muslims (64.3%) is lower than all religious groups, inequality has reduced over time.

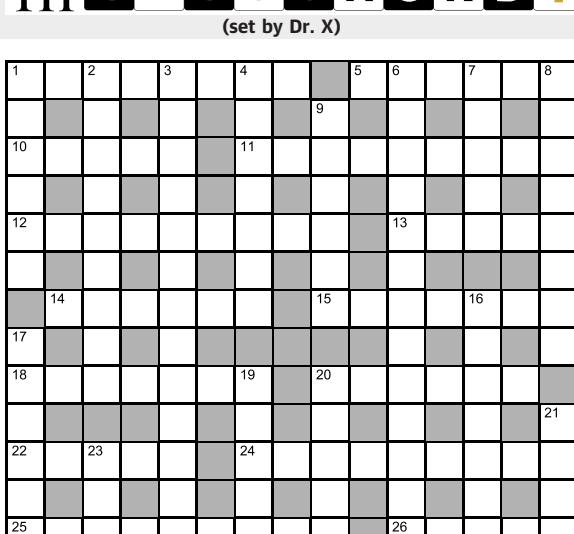
As far as sanitation is concerned, 65.7% households have access to improved, non-shared sanitation facilities in the general category while SC households are 28.5% behind them and ST are 39.8% behind them.

An examination of health interventions too shows disparities.

The share of institutional deliveries in India has increased from 38.7% in 2005-06 to 78.9% in 2015-16, but inequalities persist, with ST households 15% below the general category, Muslims 12% behind Hindus and a 35% gap between the poorest and richest 20% of the population.

TH CROSSWORD + 13304

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ACROSS

- Freshly made chips are heavenly (8)
- Pastry, not zero-calorie perhaps (6)
- Shoot around excellent city in Middle East (5)
- Relieve sozzled valet, one overwhelmed by drink (9)
- Clap wheel to conduct fantastic feat by end of rally (6,3)
- Problem near hilum at centre of the kidneys (5)
- On the contrary, prepared most exceptional lunch (6)

- 15 Give boy practical type of experience (5-2)
18 Pour gin out for exclusive circle (7)
20 Proceed to prosecute in conclusion (6)
22 Hard criminal kills fellow consequently (5)
24 Revolting associate facing sack over consuming heroin and crack (9)
25 Polar explorer managed to tackle small problem around southern base (9)
26 Slap face of country bumpkin (5)
27 Love THCC, say, taking new shape (6)
28 Girl pays attention and shines (8)
- DOWN
- Cruel person from Mossad is terrifying (6)
 - Snubbing drug addict in band (9)
 - Discovered one footprint beside container in decisive moment (5,2,6)
 - Worried by snake, one entering hotel (2,1,4)
 - What artist recording another's songs might do to conceal evidence? (5,6)
 - A drink around middle of day? Another time (5)
 - Group visiting isle served wine (8)
 - Bird going around lake is duck (6)
 - One in the dock with girl found dead in warehouse (9)
 - Sensation! Celebrity invites model to date (8)
 - Honour president by increase in salary (6)
 - Elizabeth, an older consuming alcohol (7)
 - Communicates with leading performer, briefly reviewing scene (6)
 - Stentorian as always, somewhat twangy (5)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13303

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Global call for 'end' to Taliban offensive

Over a dozen nations say 'offensive is in contradiction to their claim to support a negotiated settlement'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

More than a dozen diplomatic missions in Afghanistan on Monday called for "an urgent end" to the Taliban's ruthless military offensive, saying it was at odds with claims they want to secure a political deal to end the conflict.

The statement – signed by the U.S., EU, and more than a dozen other missions in Kabul – follows another round of inconclusive talks in Doha over the weekend between the Afghan government and the Taliban that many hoped would kickstart the ailing peace process.

"The Taliban's offensive is in direct contradiction to their claim to support a negotiated settlement," it read.

"It has resulted in loss of innocent Afghan lives, including through continued targeted killings, displacement of the civilian population, looting and burning of buildings, destruction of vital infrastructure, and damage to communication networks."

For months, the two sides have been meeting on and off in the Qatari capital, but have achieved little, if any, notable success – with the discussions appearing to

have lost momentum as the militants made enormous battlefield gains.

A joint statement released late on Sunday said little more than they had agreed on the need to reach a "just solution", and to meet again next week.

"We also agreed that there should be no pause in the negotiations," Abdullah Abdullah, who oversees the Afghan government's delegation, said on Monday.

No talks on truce

He noted, however, that neither side was currently pursuing a joint ceasefire during the talks, despite urgent calls from Afghan civil society and the international community to end the surge in fighting.

Ahead of the second day of talks, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada had said "the Islamic Emirate strenuously favours a political settlement" despite the group's lightning victories on the ground.

Akhundzada has said his group remained committed to forging a solution to end the war, but slammed the group's opponents for "wasting time".

But the Qatari facilitator of the talks said at the end of



Afghan government negotiator Abdullah Abdullah, left, and Taliban representative Abdul Ghani Baradar, right, in Doha [APF]

the two days that the sides had merely agreed to "work to prevent civilian casualties", far short of previously agreed ceasefires.

"The two sides agreed to continue negotiations at a high level until a settlement is reached. For this purpose, they will meet again next week," said Qatar's counterterrorism envoy Mutlaq al-Qahtani who oversees the talks for Doha.

Fighting continues

Despite the latest round of shuttle diplomacy, fighting continued to flare in Afghanistan with both the Taliban and government making claims of taking and re-taking territory in various areas across the country.

Despite coming days

ahead of the Id-al-Adha holiday, the statement notably made no mention of a formal call for a ceasefire.

Over the years, the Taliban have announced a series of short truces during Islamic holidays.

However, the group has been criticised for using them to resupply and reinforce their fighters, allowing them to launch devastating onslaughts on Afghanistan's security forces once the truces expire.

With foreign forces in the last stages of withdrawal due to be complete by the end of August, the Taliban have cut a huge swath across Afghanistan, capturing hundreds of districts, seizing key border crossings and encircling provincial capitals.

Turkey to talk to Taliban over Kabul airport

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISTANBUL

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday said Turkey plans to hold talks with the Taliban over its refusal to let Ankara run Kabul airport. "God willing, we will see what kind of talks we will have with the Taliban and see where these talks take us," Mr. Erdogan said.

Russia to hold drills near Afghan border

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Russia said on Monday it will stage military drills next month with Tajikistan and Uzbekistan at the Kharbmaidon training ground near the Afghan border with Afghanistan, where the Taliban has led an offensive against government troops.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa to seek second term as President

This is a shift from his earlier position to serve only one term

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Monday said he would seek a second term in office, shifting from his earlier position to serve only one term.



Gotabaya Rajapaksa
probable presidential bid in 2024.

Mr. Basil remarked that reducing prices of essential goods will be the government's immediate focus, as families were "struggling to have three meals", Tamil daily Virakesari reported on Sunday.

Mr. Gotabaya, 72, had promised a people-centred economy in his poll manifesto titled 'Vistas of Prosperity and Splendour', which was later adopted as his government's policy framework following his big win in November 2019. With the pandemic affecting the country's revenue – mainly from exports, tourism, and worker remittances – and its foreign reserves, Colombo faces the risk of defaulting on its external debt for the first time in the country's borrowing history.

Mr. Gotabaya's remarks coincide with growing criticism, including from his voters, of the government's apparent inability to address the acute financial strain on ordinary families, amid an unprecedented economic crisis stifling the country.

In a recent meeting with provincial officials, the newly-appointed Finance Minis-

U.S. journalists don't need to reveal sources

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

on Monday. The board recommended his repatriation, but that couldn't be completed during Obama administration, it said.

Nasser arrived on Monday in Morocco, where police arrested him and said they would investigate him on suspicion of committing terrorist acts – even though he was never charged while in Guantanamo.

The prisoner, Abdullatif Nasser, who is in his mid-50s, was cleared for repatriation by a review board in July 2016. The board determined that Nasser's detention was no longer necessary to protect U.S. national security, the Pentagon said

The U.S. government pledged on Monday to steer clear of legal orders that force journalists to reveal their sources, with only rare exceptions.

The new policy, announced by Attorney General Merrick Garland, comes after revelations that former President Donald Trump's Justice Department secretly obtained phone records of journalists investigating his administration, including from CNN and Washington Post.

Microsoft hack caused by China: U.S., allies

U.S. officials describe the attack on email servers as a 'pattern of irresponsible behaviour in cyberspace'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

The Biden administration and Western allies formally blamed China on Monday for a massive hack of Microsoft Exchange email server software and accused Beijing of working with criminal hackers in ransomware attacks and other cyber operations.

The announcements, though not accompanied by sanctions against the Chinese government, were intended as a forceful condem-

nation of activities a senior Biden administration official described as part of a "pattern of irresponsible behaviour in cyberspace." They highlighted the ongoing threat from Chinese government hackers even as the administration remains consumed with trying to curb ransomware attacks from Russia-based syndicates that have targeted critical infrastructure.

The broad range of cyber-threats from Beijing dis-

closed on Monday included ransomware attacks from government-affiliated hackers that have targeted victims – including in the U.S. – with demands for millions of dollars.

Meanwhile, the Justice Department on Monday announced charges against four Chinese nationals who prosecutors said were working with the Ministry of State Security in a hacking campaign that targeted dozens of computer systems, including

companies, universities and government entities. The defendants are accused of stealing trade secrets and confidential business information.

No sanctions announced
Unlike in April, when public finger-pointing of Russian hacking was paired with a raft of sanctions against Moscow, the Biden administration did not announce any actions against Beijing.

The European Union and

Britain also called out China. The EU said malicious cyber activities with "significant effects" that targeted government institutions, political organisations and key industries in the bloc's 27-member states could be linked to Chinese hacking groups.

The U.K.'s National Cyber Security Centre said the groups targeted maritime industries and naval defense contractors in the U.S. and Europe and the Finnish Parliament.

U.S. duo jailed over Carlos Ghosn escape

REUTERS

TOKYO

A Tokyo court on Monday doled out the first sentences in Japan related to Carlos Ghosn's arrest and escape, imprisoning U.S. Army Special Forces veteran Michael Taylor for two years and his son Peter for one year and eight months for helping the former Nissan Motor Co Ltd chairman flee to Lebanon in 2019.

"This case enabled Ghosn, a defendant of serious crime, to escape overseas," Hideo Nirei, the Chief Judge, said.

"One year and a half has passed, but there is no prospect of the trial being held."

The judge said the elder Taylor played a "leading role" in the escape by escorting Mr. Ghosn onto the jet, while his son had taken care of his luggage and provided him with a key to a hotel room where he changed clothes.

U.K. lifts curbs as scientists warn of pandemic surge

'Clinically vulnerable youngsters to be vaccinated'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

The British government on Monday lifted pandemic restrictions on daily life in England, scrapping all social distancing rules in a step slammed by scientists and opposition parties as a dangerous leap into the unknown.

Nightclubs reopened and other indoor venues were allowed to run at full capacity, while legal mandates covering the wearing of masks and working from home were scrapped.

"We are against opening up without any precautions in place," Mr. Ashworth said.

But professor Neil Ferguson from Imperial College London warned that Britain was on course for 1,000,000 cases a day, as the Delta variant runs out of control.

Meanwhile, Mr. Zahawi said the government will administer vaccines to clinically vulnerable youngsters, including those aged 12 to 15 with severe neuro-disabilities, Down's Syndrome, immunosuppression and multiple or severe learning disabilities, but not to all children due to an ongoing review into potential side effects.

but we've got to do it cautiously," he added.

In a bid to demonstrate a bit of caution, Vaccine Minister Nadhim Zahawi told the BBC he would continue to wear a mask in "crowded indoor places".

But Jonathan Ashworth, the opposition Labour Party's health spokesman, said the government was being "reckless", echoing experts who say the reopening endangers global health.

"We are against opening up without any precautions in place," Mr. Ashworth said.

"We're planning to make full vaccination the condition of entry to nightclubs and other venues where large crowds gather. Proof of a negative test will no longer be enough," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Monday.

He defended the reopening – dubbed "freedom day" by some media – despite scientists' grave misgivings after daily infection rates in Britain topped 50,000, being only Indonesia and Brazil.

"If we don't do it now, we've got to ask ourselves, when will we ever do it? So this is the right moment,

around 1,000 of them still exist today, according to the study published by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag).

That is far more than the few hundred researchers had expected to find at the beginning of the project.

"We were surprised by the sheer numbers," Daniel Odermatt, head of the Eawag Remote Sensing Group that carried out the study, said in a statement.

And even if the world were to fully implement the 2015 Paris Agreement two-thirds of the Alpine glaciers will likely be lost, according to a 2019 study by the ETH technical university.

"In formation" was also surprising, pointing out that "180 have been added in the last decade alone".

Glaciers in the Swiss Alps are in steady decline, losing a full 2% of their volume last year alone, according to an annual study by the Swiss Academies of Science.

And even if the world were to

fully implement the 2015 Paris

Agreement two-thirds of the Alpine

glaciers will likely be lost,

according to a 2019 study by the

ETH technical university.

He said the "marked acceler-

Climate change has added over 1,000 lakes in Swiss Alps: study

Glaciers there lost a full 2% of their volume last year alone

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA

Climate change has dramatically altered the Swiss Alp landscape – at a quicker pace than expected – as melting glaciers have created more than 1,000 new lakes across the mountains, a study published on Monday showed.

The inventory of Swiss Glacial lakes showed that almost 1,200 new lakes have formed in formerly glaciated regions of the Swiss Alps since the end of the Little Ice Age around 1850.

"Around 1,000 of them still exist today, according to the study published by the Swiss Federal Institute of Aquatic Science and Technology (Eawag).

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He said the "marked acceler-

ICAR - INDIAN INSTITUTE OF RICE RESEARCH

(Formerly Directorate of Rice Research)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 30, Telangana State.
Phone : 040-24591256, FAX : 040-24591217 Date : 14.07.2021

NOTICE TENDER

Sealed tender are invited by the Director, Indian Institute of Rice Research, Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500030 (Telangana) for entering into ANNUAL RATE CONTRACT FOR CHEMICALS/GLASSWARES/ PLASTIC WARE for the year 2021 - 2022 at this Institute.

For details please visit IIRR website <http://www.icar-iirr.org> & CPP Portal <http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

Sd/- Senior Administrative Officer IIC

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION (A Statutory Body of the Government of A.P.)

3rd, 4th & 5th Floors, Neeladri Towers, Sri Ram Nagar, 6th Battalion Road, Atmakur(V), Mangalapet(M), Guntur - 522 503, Andhra Pradesh

Web: www.apscche.ap.gov.in | Email: secretaryapscche@gmail.com

e-Procurement Notice(Second & Final)

Dt.19-07-2021

Tenders are here by invited from reputed companies/agencies/firms "For conduct of Web based Admission Counselling by APSCHE" through e-procurement portal <https://tender.apscche.ap.gov.in/> with tender Id No. 426679. Tender schedule is available from 19.07.2021 & last date of tender submission is 28.07.2021 by 04:00 PM.

The schedule & other details of the tender can be downloaded from e-procurement portal <https://tender.apscche.ap.gov.in/> or www.apscche.ap.gov.in.

</div

MARKET WATCH

	19-7-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,553	-1.10
US Dollar	74.88	-0.42
Gold	46,967	-0.74
Brent oil	69.31	-0.42

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	673.70	-13.90
Asian Paints	598.95	-7.35
Axia Bank	755.20	-15.95
Bajaj Auto	3882.85	-49.10
Bajaj Finserv	12721.10	-24.60
Bajaj Finance	6015.40	-110.05
Bharti Airtel	538.45	-2.70
BPCL	453.90	5.90
Britannia Ind	3450.15	9.15
Cipla	974.00	-3.15
Coal India	144.45	-1.10
Divis Lab	4807.45	49.85
Dr Reddys Lab	5419.35	12.80
Eicher Motors	2579.75	-37.50
Grasim Ind	1558.80	-13.50
HCL Tech	1000.20	-4.80
HDFC	2481.65	-55.25
HDFC Bank	1471.00	-51.35
HDFC Life	678.70	-19.30
Hero MotoCorp	2887.10	-17.60
Hindalco	396.95	-8.55
Hind Unilever	2408.65	-8.75
ICICI Bank	655.90	-4.40
IndusInd Bank	1015.85	-28.45
Infosys	1541.70	-13.75
Indian Oil Corp	105.95	-0.15
ITC	207.75	-0.15
JSW Steel	698.40	-5.20
Kotak Bank	1722.80	-26.70
L&T	1609.60	-9.15
M&B Suzuki	775.80	-4.00
Maruti Suzuki	7165.55	-138.00
Nestle India Ltd.	17752.45	98.25
NTPC	121.40	2.30
ONGC	114.60	-2.20
PowerGrid Corp	233.15	-0.70
Reliance Ind	2098.95	-13.45
SBI Life	1037.85	-12.40
State Bank	427.90	-2.10
Shree Cements	27996.85	-99.30
Sun Pharma	689.25	0.65
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	765.55	2.55
Tata Motors	308.85	-2.40
Tata Steel	1266.40	-12.05
TCS	3184.60	-10.20
Tech Mahindra	1094.20	-8.95
Titan	1680.35	-15.00
UltraTech Cement	7312.35	-22.20
UPL	833.25	-4.30
Wipro	573.80	-3.95

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on July 19		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.67	74.99
Euro	87.92	88.30
British Pound	102.39	102.83
Japanese Yen (100)	68.02	68.31
Chinese Yuan	11.51	11.56
Swiss Franc	81.04	81.40
Singapore Dollar	54.83	55.07
Canadian Dollar	58.35	58.61
Malaysian Ringgit	17.67	17.76

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Hyundai gets 11,000 bookings for Alcazar

CHENNAI
Hyundai Motor India Ltd. has received more than 11,000 bookings within a month of unveiling the Alcazar SUV. One-third of bookings are for the top-of-the-range signature variant, and diesel powertrains contributed to 63% of bookings, HMIL said. "So far we have sold more than 5,600 units of Hyundai Alcazar," said Tarun Garg, Director (Sales, Marketing & Service).

FY21 tea exports fall to 203.8 million kg

KOLKATA
Tea exports dipped to 203.8 million kg during the 2020-21 fiscal compared with 241.31 million kg in the corresponding period a year earlier, official data showed. The value of exports fell marginally to ₹5,311.53 crore in 2020-21 as against ₹5,457.10 crore in the year-earlier period, according to data available with the Tea Board. PTI

Nuvoco Vistas gets SEBI nod for ₹5,000-cr. IPO

NEW DELHI
Cement maker Nuvoco Vistas Corporation Ltd., part of the Nirma Group, has received capital markets regulator SEBI's go-ahead to raise ₹5,000 crore through an Initial Public Offer (IPO). The share sale comprises fresh issue of shares worth ₹1,500 crore and an offer-for-sale of ₹3,500 crore by promoter Niyogi Enterprise, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). PTI

Mahindra recalls 600 vehicles to fix engines

NEW DELHI
Mahindra & Mahindra on Monday said it was recalling about 600 vehicles to inspect and replace faulty diesel engines. M&M said it was undertaking proactive inspection and replacement of diesel engines in some of its vehicles manufactured at Nashik factory, on suspicion of premature wear of engine parts due to contaminated fuel received at the factory on a particular date. PTI

India on course for 11% growth this fiscal, to meet deficit goal'

CEA says capex will boost construction, but warns of 'irrational exuberance'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Playing down concerns about high inflation and rising commodity prices, Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) Krishnamurthy Subramanian said on Monday that India was on course to grow at about 11% and meet the fiscal deficit target of 6.8% of gross domestic product this year.

Asserting that the Union Budget's plan to scale up capital spending by 35% in FY22 would boost construction activity and create jobs in the informal sector, Mr. Subramanian said this would boost demand and enable the country to get growth without high inflation.

"I don't foresee a problem



Urging restraint: We must not repeat the mistakes of bank-led infra funding which led to the NPA problem, says the CEA. ■ AP

at all in meeting those estimates for infrastructure spending," the CEA said in an interaction with the Indian Construction Equipment Manufacturers Association, before warning

them against a potential risk of 'irrational exuberance' over the coming few years.

"We should not repeat the mistakes of bank-led infra funding which led to this entire bad assets' problem. The

main lesson for all of you should not be to repeat the mistakes we had after the global financial crisis," he said, asserting that a limited focus on revenue expenditure after the 2008 crisis had led to runaway inflation.

Inflation, he contended, was a 'touch higher' due to temporary supply-side effects from recent economic restrictions. "I don't anticipate inflation to be a problem when you create growth by working on the supply side," he said, arguing that India's failure to undertake supply-side reforms after the 2008 crisis led to a triple whammy of high fiscal and current account deficits with runaway inflation.

NCLAT stays Twin Star's Videocon takeover bid

Appellate body lists hearing on Sept. 7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

After considering Bank of Maharashtra's contentions, NCLAT stayed the orders of the NCLT

Professional of Videocon and the successful resolution applicant Twin Star. It has asked them to reply within two weeks and posted hearing on September 7.

"NCLAT after considering the contentions of Bank of Maharashtra stayed the orders of the NCLT," advocate Chaitanya B Nikte, who had filed on behalf of Bank of Maharashtra, told PTI.

Videocon Industries and its 12 group companies had a total admitted claims of ₹64,838.63 crore.

Revival signs seen since 2nd wave peak: FM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Asserting that the Indian economy is showing signs of revival since the peaking of second COVID-19 wave in May, the government on Monday said the country's strong fundamentals and market size would continue to attract market-seeking greenfield investments.

Quoting the World Investment Report 2021, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in a written reply to Lok Sabha said FDI inflows into India rose by 25.4% to reach \$64 billion in 2020, from \$51 billion in 2019, becoming fifth largest recipient in the world in 2020, up from eighth position it held in the previous year.

It was not immediately clear when the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), or the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) initiated the investigation.

Mr. Chaudhary did not say which companies were involved. Shares of Adani group companies, which operate airports and ports, power generation and trans-

mission, coal and gas trading, closed between 1.1%-4.8% lower on Monday.

"SEBI is investigating some Adani Group companies with regard to compliance with SEBI Regulations. Further, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence is investigating cer-

tain entities belonging to the group," he said.

Entities under lens not named; shares of group firms slide



mission, coal and gas trading,

tain entities belonging to the group," he said.

Extend declines

Stocks of companies controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani last month recorded their biggest-ever declines in the week ended June 18, after sections of the media reported the accounts of three Mauritius-based foreign investors in Adani companies had been frozen. Shares in the six Adani firms have fallen between 12.9% and 44.9% in the five weeks after the reports.

A spokesman for the Adani group did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment.

GST: ₹81,179 cr. due to States for 2020-21

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

More than ₹81,000 crore GST compensation is due to States for 2020-21, while for April-May this year, ₹55,345 crore is outstanding, Parliament was informed on Monday.

In a written reply in the Lok Sabha, MoS for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said GST compensation of ₹91,000 crore had been released to all States/ UTs to partly meet the compensation payable for last fiscal year as the amount in GST compensation fund was not adequate to meet the full requirement.

"The economic impact of the pandemic has led to higher compensation requirement," he added.

Blackstone to buy 70% in Simplilearn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Private equity firm Blackstone on Monday said it is acquiring a 70% stake in online learning platform Simplilearn Solutions for \$250 million (about ₹1,860 crore).

In a joint statement,

Blackstone said private equity funds managed by it have entered into an agreement to buy out existing investors Kalaari Capital, Helion Venture Partners and Mayfield Fund, who together own 60% of Simplilearn. Sources told PTI that the deal

would provide an exit to the existing investors by buying out their 60% stake.

The new investors will also pick up an additional 10% from promoters and other management personnel, and values the company at \$400 million.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
DEPARTMENT OF EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL JUSTICE & EMPOWERMENT, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AN ISO 9001:2015 INSTITUTION

Manovikas Nagar, Secunderabad-500 009, Telangana Tel: 27751741-745, Fax: 040-27750198. www.niepid.nic.in

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION 2021-22

The National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (Divyangan) is a registered society established in the year 1984 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Government of India. The institute is an apex body having tripartite functions of training, research and services in the field of intellectual disability in the country. Since past 37 years, the institute has been making striking advances in building capacities to empower persons with intellectual disabilities.

Director I/C, NIEPID invites applications for admission into the following courses for the Academic Year 2021-22:

COURSES at NIEPID, Headquarters, Secunderabad	Criteria for admission	DD in favour of towards cost of Applications	Last date of receipt of applications without late fee	Last date of receipt of applications with late fee of Rs.200/-
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Unprecedented medal haul on the cards

The nine pugilists in the fray have the experience and class to land the winning punches

TOKYO OLYMPICS

Y.B. SARANGI

India has fielded its biggest boxing squad, consisting of nine pugilists of class and calibre, for the Olympics and expects an unprecedented medal haul.

Worlds silver medallist and No.1 ranked Amit Panghal (52kg), Worlds bronze medallists Manish Kaushik (63kg) and Vikas Krishan (69kg), the talented Ashish Kumar (75kg) and the experienced Satish Kumar (+91kg) form the men's squad.

Six-time World champion and London Olympic bronze medallist M.C. Mary Kom (51kg), Worlds bronze medallists Simranjit Kaur (60kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69kg), and two-time Asian champion Pooja Rani Bohra (75kg) are the women boxers in the fray.

In top form

Amit is in top form and has landed medals in recent international events. If he gets a chance, avenging his loss



Power-packed: The Indian contingent that will don the gloves to do battle in Tokyo.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

against World and Olympic champion Shakhobdin Zoirov will be on top of his agenda.

Amit may also face leading competitors, such as double Worlds medallist Mohamed Flissi, former World champion Yosbany Veitia, Olympic light flyweight silver medallist Yuberjen Martínez and Olympic silver medallist Yoel Finol.

Manish, who has recovered from surgery and COVID-19, and can pose problems for his opponents.

BOXING

Worlds silver medallist and Commonwealth Games champion Pat McCormack, Olympic silver medallist Lorenzo Sotomayor and World champion in welterweight and Olympic medallist Andrei Zamkovoy.

Ashish and Satish can beat

any opponent on their day. Among the women, 38-year-old Mary will attract maximum attention.

Olympics bronze medalist Ingrit Valencia, Worlds bronze medallist Virginia Fuchs, World champion Huang Hsiao-wen, Worlds silver medallist Busenaz Surmeneli, Worlds silver medallist Angela Carini and twice Worlds bronze medalist Nadine Apetz.

Giant-killer

The fifth-placed Pooja will look to enhance her reputation as a giant-killer. She will have company in Worlds bronze medalists Khadija El Mardi and Tamara Thibeault, ex-World champion and Olympic medallist Li Qian, World champion Lauren Price and World and Olympic silver medallist Nouchka Fontijn.

Tracking Indian boxers' progress will be exciting.

tors, including World champion Beatriz Ferreira, two-time Worlds medallist Sudaporn Seesondee, former World champion Kellie Harrington and World and Olympic bronze medallist Mira Potkonen.

Lovlina, ranked fifth, has overcome hiccups to be fighting fit. She may have to take on elite rivals such as former World champion Chen Nien-chin, current World champion Busenaz Surmeneli, Worlds silver medallist Angela Carini and twice Worlds bronze medalist Nadine Apetz.

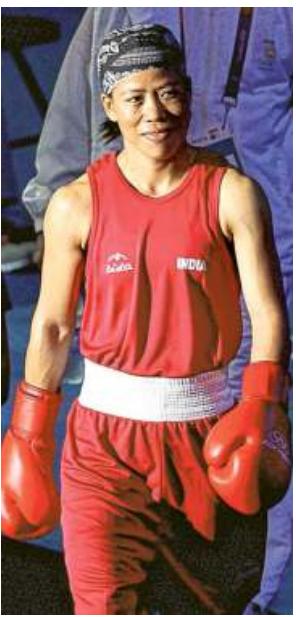
Heartbreak

Gurcharan Singh's controversial quarterfinal loss in the 2000 Sydney Games was the first instance of an Indian boxer getting close to an Olympic medal.

In the 81kg last-eight bout, in which Gurcharan and his rival Andriy Fedtchouk were tied on 12 points, the Ukrainian was declared the winner based on a tie-break score of 60-42.

Eight years down the line, Vijender Singh (75kg) claimed a bronze in Beijing to become the first Indian to land an Olympic medal.

The creditable perfor-



Vijender Singh and M.C. Mary Kom. ■ FILE PHOTOS

Four years later, eight boxers qualified for the London Olympics.

Even as the men returned empty-handed, M.C. Mary Kom (51kg) – then a five-time World champion – secured a bronze medal on women's boxing's Olympics debut.

After drawing a blank in Rio, the Indian boxers are keen to get back on the medals tally in Tokyo.

Mirabai capable of a podium finish

She has improved dramatically in the last seven years

WEIGHTLIFTING

Y.B. SARANGI

Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, India's lone representative in weightlifting, has had a roller-coaster ride the last five years.

The diminutive 26-year-old, who came into prominence by securing the silver medal in 48kg with a total of 170kg at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, experienced ignominy in Rio as she recorded three 'no lifts' in clean and jerk following an 82kg effort in snatch.

However, Mirabai bounced back to win the World title with an aggregate of 194kg in 2017 and improved her total (196kg) to take the 2018 Commonwealth Games gold in Gold Coast.

Fighting back

Lower back pain snatched away nearly a year from Mirabai, but the gritty lifter fought back to register 201kg in the revamped 49kg in the



Exciting prospect: Mirabai, snapped at a training session in Tokyo, has the acumen to come good. ■ TWITTER/SAIMEDIA

World championships in 2019. She bettered it (203kg) at the Nationals at Kolkata in 2020.

Mirabai raised the bar further by aggregating 205kg, including a clean and jerk world record of 119kg, in the Asian championships in Tashkent this year.

Notwithstanding the absence of North Korean Ri Song Gum, the second-ranked Mirabai is expected to be challenged by some riv-

als, including Hou Zhihui (China), Jourdan Elizabeth Dela Cruz (USA), and Beatriz Candelario (Dominican Republic).

Mirabai, who has increased her performance by 35kg in the last seven years, is considered a strong medal prospect.

She has been working on her snatch performance in order to give India its second weightlifting medal after 21 years.

Grapplers hold much promise

Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat headline a strong squad

WRESTLING

Y.B. SARANGI

Studded with world-beaters, the Indian wrestling contingent will be a force to reckon with in Tokyo.

Three-time World Championships medalist Bajrang Punia (65kg) and Worlds medalists Ravi Kumar Dahiya (57kg), Deepak Punia (86kg) and Vinesh Phogat (women's 53kg) instill confidence in the Indian camp.

The competent trio of Seema Bisla (50kg), Anshu Malik (57kg) and Sonam Malik (62kg) complete a squad that has the potential to produce the best-ever performance in the Olympics.

Twenty-seven-year-old Bajrang, ranked No. 2 in the toughest weight class which has 12-13 medal contenders, will try to achieve his long-cherished dream in his Olympic debut.

Tough challenge

Bajrang may face tough challenge from the likes of World champion Gadzhimurad Rashidov, two-time Worlds medalist Daulet Niyyazbekov, former World

champion Takuto Otoguro, double Worlds bronze medalist Alejandro Valdes and Individual World Cup winner Vazgen Tevyan.

The fourth-placed Ravi and Deepak, ranked second, are young but have shown their class.

Two-time World champion Zaur Uguev, double Worlds medalists Suleyman Atli and Nurislam Sanayev, former Worlds silver medalist Arsen Harutyunyan and ex-World and Asian champion Yuki Takahashi will be some top names in Ravi's category.

Deepak's weight division has leading wrestlers including World and Olympic champion Hassan Yazdani, Worlds bronze medalist Artur Naifonov, former World champion David Taylor, four-time Worlds medalist Ali Shabanau and ex-Worlds silver medalist Sosuke Takatani.

Proving her worth

Among the women, Vinesh, 26, is ranked number one and has proved her worth time and again.

Vinesh, who exited the Rio Olympics after injuring

her leg midway through a contest, fought back to win gold medals in the 2018 Commonwealth Games and Asian Games and a bronze in 2019 World championships.

The determined Vinesh, who was infected with Covid last year, has collected four gold medals this year to exhibit her current form.

In a world class field – including two-time World champion Mayu Mukaida, twice Worlds medalist Pang Qianyu, Individual World Cup gold medalist Maria Prevolaraki, World champion in 55kg Jacarra Winchester and World and Olympic medalist Sofia Mattsson – Vinesh will have to give her best to live her dream.

The young Anshu and Sonam, who graduated to the elite level in a fast-forward manner, have underlined their potential by grabbing quota places in the Olympics. Late bloomer Seema has also hurdled over several obstacles to qualify.

With no fear and nothing to lose, these lesser-known wrestlers will leave no stone unturned to achieve glory.



Well-equipped: Bajrang Punia and Vinesh Phogat are capable of handling world-class opponents in their quest for Olympic success. ■ FILE PHOTOS

Jadhav's feat in Helsinki

Sushil has two medals to his credit



Achievers all: K.D. Jadhav, Sushil Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt and Sakshi Malik have graced the podium. ■ FILE PHOTOS

REWIND

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Since its debut in the 1920 Antwerp Olympics, India has taken a long time to make its mark in the sport.

Independent India's first individual Olympics medal came from wrestling when K.D. Jadhav secured a flyweight bronze at Helsinki in 1952.

Despite a rich wrestling tradition, India could not make an impression for several decades as some of its grapplers narrowly missed out on medals.

Missing out

Randhir Shindes (featherweight, 1920), Sudesh Kumar (flyweight, 1972), Prem Nath (bantamweight, 1972), Jagminder Singh (lightweight, 1980) and Rajinder Singh (welterweight, 1984) finished fourth when just the top three medals were awarded.

Indian freestyle wrestlers began to shine in the qua-

drennial event after rules changed to give two bronze medals, via repechage rounds, in each weight division from the 2008 Games.

Going one better

56 years after Jadhav's feat, Sushil Kumar surprised all claiming a bronze medal in 66kg at Beijing.

By bagging a silver in 2012, Sushil became the first Indian to take two individual Olympic medals. Yogeshwar Dutt's bronze in 60kg in London raised the profile of the sport. Four years later in the Rio Games, Sakshi Malik picked up a bronze in the 58kg weight class.

Roll of honour

Silver: Sushil Kumar (London, 2012)

Bronze: K.D. Jadhav (Helsinki, 1952), Sushil Kumar (Beijing, 2008), Yogeshwar Dutt (London, 2012), Sakshi Malik (Rio, 2016)

REWIND

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Indian lifters' participation in the Olympics was occasional until 1992 and their performances, mostly ranks obtained in double digits, were forgettable in the previous century.

Sanamacha Chanu (53kg) and Karnam Malleswari (69kg) finished inside the top-10 when women's weightlifting debuted in the 2000 Sydney Games.

Malleswari, hailing from Andhra Pradesh, made his



Karnam Malleswari. ■ FILE PHOTO

Roll of honour

Bronze: Karnam Malleswari (Sydney, 2000)

sixth with an aggregate of 195kg.

Malleswari not only became the first Indian woman to land a medal in the Games but remains the lone lifter from the country to have bagged an Olympic medal.

Kunjara Devi did 190kg to place fourth in the 48kg weight class in Athens in 2004.

It will take a special effort from struggling Sri Lanka to pull one back

Adhiban beats Vedit

INDIA IN SRI LANKA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO

India's young guns will get another opportunity to flaunt their exceptional talent and secure a series win against Sri Lanka in the second ODI here on Tuesday.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan was left in awe as Prithvi Shaw, Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav made batting look ridiculously easy in the first ODI.

India wants to play more aggressively in the shorter formats, and the trio's performance served as a perfect template. It also reinforced the might of India's bench strength.

India is unlikely to make

changes as it would like to first pocket the series.

It will take a special effort from the struggling Sri Lankan side to pull one back.

The inexperienced team showed it has the talent to compete. Most of the bat-

men got starts but could not convert. Both teams might be interested in chasing, with the slow pitch playing better in the evening.

The squads:

India: Shikhar Dhawan (captain), Prithvi Shaw, Devdutt Padikkal, Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav, Manish Pandey, Nitish Rana, Ishan Kishan, Sanju Samson, Hardik Pandya, Krinal Pandya, Krishnappa Gowtham, Yuvendran Thamilchelvan, Kuldeep Yadav, Varun Chakaravarthy, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Chetan Sakariya, and Navdeep Saini.

Sri Lanka: Dasun Shanaka (captain), Dhananjaya de Silva, Avishka Fernando, Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Pathum Nissanka, Charith Asalanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Ashen Bandara, Minod Bhanuka, Lahiru Udara, Ramesh Mendis, Chamika Karunarathne, Dushmantha Chameera, Lakshan Sandakan, Akila Dhananjaya, Shiran Fernando, Dhananjaya Lakshan, Ishan Jayaratne, Praveen Jayakrema, Asith Fernando, Kasun Rajitha, Lahiru Kumara, and Isuru Udana.

Match starts at 3 p.m. IST.

According to BCCI sources, Pant, who had tested positive for COVID-19, has completed his stipulated 10-day isolation and is "recovering".

Recovering well

According to BCCI sources, Pant, who had tested positive for COVID-19, has completed his stipulated 1

Indian men's doubles hopes end in tennis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
India's hopes of fielding a men's doubles team at the Tokyo Olympics ended on Monday.

After Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan had failed to make the cut, the All India Tennis Association (AITA) had explored the possibility of pairing Bopanna with Sumit Nagal, after the latter earned a singles spot on Friday.

The rationale behind the move was the ITF's 'Singles Priority' rule in place for Tokyo, which allows players in the singles draw to play doubles if any spot was available after 24 Direct Acceptance places (based on combined doubles ranking) and a quota of 86 athletes per gender was reached.

ITF clarifies

The ITF, however, clarified to Bopanna that the rules did not allow for any change of nomination after the June 22 deadline.

TV PICKS

Sri Lanka vs India: 2nd ODI: Sony Ten 1, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 3 p.m.

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

England vs Pakistan: 3rd T20I, Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 11 p.m.

NBA: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. (Wednesday).

IN BRIEF



Lahiri finishes T-3 at Barbasol championship

NICHOLASVILLE (US)
Anirban Lahiri fired a seven-under 65 to finish tied third at the Barbasol golf championship for his best result of the season. Lahiri ended on 20-under 268, one stroke behind the play-off duo of Seamus Power and J.T. Poston. Power went on to take his first PGA Tour title. PTI

John Woodcock passes away

LONDON
John Woodcock, one of the most respected cricket writers, who covered the game for *The Times* for more than three decades, passed away aged 94. He also edited *Wisden's Cricket Almanack* between 1981 and 1986. The veteran scribe is also remembered for driving to India, along with Henry Blofeld, in a Rolls Royce to cover England's tour in 1976-77.



Kevin Anderson wins seventh ATP title

NEW YORK
World No. 113 Kevin Anderson defeated 20-year-old American Jenson Brooksby 7-6(8)-6, 4-2 to win the Hall of Fame Open on Sunday. This was the seventh career ATP title for the 35-year-old South African, who last won a title in 2019 at Pune. AFP



Krejcikova inches towards the top 10

PARIS
French Open champion Barbora Krejcikova, who continued her fine form with victory at the WTA event in Prague over the weekend, edged ever closer to the top 10 in the rankings released on Monday. The 25-year-old eased past fellow Czech Tereza Martincova in the Prague Open final on Sunday to collect a third title in four tournaments and climb two places to 11th in the world, just two points behind Romania's Simona Halep. AFP

India in Tokyo



Ultimate challenge: Gymnast Pranati Nayak, rowers Arjun Lal and Arvind Singh, archer Deepika Kumari and swimmers Sajan Prakash, Maana Patel and Srihari Nataraj will be eager to make their presence felt at the Olympics. ■SAIMEDIA

Racist abuse of Hamilton condemned

Red Bull too voices its displeasure at the incidents

FORMULA ONE

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

Mercedes, Formula One and its governing body the FIA issued a joint statement Monday condemning the online racist abuse aimed at Lewis Hamilton.

Hamilton was targeted following the Mercedes driver's crash with rival Max Verstappen on the opening lap of Sunday's British Grand Prix that sent the championship leader hurtling out of the race.

"Formula One, the FIA and the Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team condemn this behavior in the strongest possible terms," the statement said. "These people have no place in our sport and we urge that those responsible should be held accountable for their actions."

Diverse and inclusive
"Formula One, the FIA, the drivers and the teams are working to build a more diverse and inclusive sport, and such unacceptable in-



Tough days: Hamilton was targeted following his crash with Verstappen on the opening lap of British GP. ■GETTY IMAGES

stances of online abuse must be highlighted and eliminated."

Verstappen's team Red Bull also issued a statement criticising the attacks on Hamilton.

"While we may be fierce rivals on-track, we are all united against racism," the team said.

"We condemn racist abuse of any kind towards our teams, our competitors and our fans."

"As a team we are disgusted and saddened to witness the racist abuse Lewis endured yesterday on social media after the collision

Under-fire Olympic composer steps down

Bullied classmate during childhood

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO

Keigo Oyamada, a Japanese composer working on the Tokyo Olympics opening ceremony, resigned on Monday after coming under fire for bullying a classmate during his childhood.

"I sincerely accept the opinions and advice I have received, express my gratitude, and will keep them in mind for my future actions and thoughts," he said on his social media accounts.

"I apologise from the bottom of my heart."

Reports of his past verbal abuse of a child with disabilities surfaced online recently, sparking a backlash on social media and demands for his resignation.

The Tokyo Games organ-

isers said on Sunday that he would stay on because he had shown remorse about his past actions.

Oyamada, also known as Cornelius, apologised online last week. Some critics had said he should hold a news conference and apologise in person. Others also questioned why he hadn't apologized earlier.

Oyamada, whose works have been compared to the American rock musician Beck, talked about the abuse in Japanese magazine interviews he gave in the 1990s.

It was not immediately clear if the music for Friday's opening ceremony would be modified. Oyamada's is the latest resignation to plague the Games.

Olympic movement deserves Nobel: Yunus

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO

The Olympic movement deserves to win the Nobel Peace Prize, former award winner Muhammad Yunus said Monday.

Yunus, a Bangladeshi banker who was awarded his Nobel in 2006 for pioneering micro-credit loans to impoverished people, has worked with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on a business program for athletes.

"I think it has a very good case to establish itself as a candidate," Yunus said in an online conference call ahead of receiving an Olympic award at the opening ceremony of the Tokyo Games on Friday.

Yunus cited North and South Korean athletes marching under one flag at the opening ceremony of the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games as an example of the Olympics using sports to create peace.

"If that is not peace-making I don't know what it is," Yunus said.

"Definitely the Olympics has a tremendous reason to believe it can win the peace prize one day."

Asked if sports should be rewarding or engaging with China, Yunus referred to the ancient tradition of the Olympic truce revived by the modern Olympics.

On Friday, Yunus will receive the IOC's Olympic Laurel award.

TOKYO TITBITS



Gauff tests positive, pulls out of Games

WASHINGTON
Teen tennis star Coco Gauff of USA will miss the Olympics after testing positive for COVID-19, she announced on Sunday. Gauff tweeted her sadness at missing out on "a dream come true". AFP

Beach volleyball and gymnast test positive

PRAGUE
Czech beach volleyball player Ondrej Perusic has tested positive for COVID-19 in the Tokyo Olympic Village, officials said. Also, an American woman gymnast tested positive at a training camp in Inzai. Another team member, who was in close contact, is self-isolating, an official said on Monday. AFP

Investigation into trouble at Euro final

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

The English Football Association (FA) has commissioned an independent review to investigate the "disgraceful scenes" which marred the national team's shoot-out loss to Italy in the Euro final. The FA announced on Monday that it had informed the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) of the review and vowed to identify those responsible for the trouble that occurred before and during the match.

"We are determined to fully understand what happened outside and then inside Wembley Stadium," the FA said in a statement.



Top athlete: UAE Team Emirates made Pogacar one of the highest paid cyclists in the world. ■AFP

It is easy to see why the UAE Team Emirates made Pogacar one of the highest paid cyclists in the world.

Given the stage wins he has racked up on his three grand tours, three each on

the 2019 Vuelta a Espana, and two consecutive Tours, Pogacar clearly has the will to win, the panache to launch ruthless attacks, the talent to make those attacks count, and the willpower to

Vedant Mohan — a precocious talent

The talented left-hander is currently training in Spain

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Vedant Mohan is a talented left-hander, very quick on his feet, training with good coaches in Spain, at the Soto Tennis Academy, Sotogrande.

His parents Dhruv Mohan and Anisha Nair, were so impressed by the boy's drive for tennis excellence that they left their jobs in Oman Airlines and Infosys to groom him in Spain.

"They had options to train Vedant at the John McEnroe academy in the US, apart from academies in Australia and Spain.

"They chose Spain as the boy got a considerable scholarship and Europe was viewed as the best place for tennis," said the grandfather of Vedant, Air Commodore K.N.V. Nair, from Chennai.

Even though the boy was nine years old, and entry was only for kids 12 years and above, McEnroe was willing to make an exception for Vedant after seeing his training / playing videos.

It was, in fact, tennis ace Vijay Amritraj who had advised the parents after see-



Bright future: Vedant Mohan's maturity on court and mental strength are way above his age, according to his coach Andrei Razwan.

ing the boy's videos, to give him the best possible training.

From the age of 7, Vedant who started playing tennis in Muscat, where his father

worked as a commercial pilot – has been winning matches and tournaments in the under-10 and under-12 age groups.

As a 10-year-old he conti-

nued to win events above his age group in Spain.

"The boy has technique equal to a 12-year-old. His maturity on court and mental strength are way above his age.

"He is the most talented player I have ever coached. I see a bright future for him," said coach Andrei Razwan.

Two other coaches of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) also believe that Vedant is 'special'.

"The tennis academy is in a village. So, the parents have no job opportunities there. They are spending from their savings to support the bright kid," said the grandfather.

The family hopes that Vedant would get matching support for his fledgling career, so that he can make a big mark in the game.

Morikawa — taking the pro circuit by storm

Becomes first player to win two Majors on first attempt

GOLF

ASSOCIATED PRESS

In a year of firsts in the Majors, Collin Morikawa might have topped them all.

His performance over four days at the British Open was unlike anything seen at Royal St. George's.

Confidence personified
He played with the confidence of a Major champion, which he is from his PGA Championship title last year.

"When you make history – and I'm 24 years old – it's hard to grasp," Morikawa said.

The silver claret jug in his possession as he stood on

the 18th green, Morikawa first paid tribute to Matthias Schmid of Germany, who won the silver medal as low amateur. "It feels like literally two years ago I was an amateur," Morikawa told him. That is entirely literal.

Two years ago, the ink was barely dry on his diploma from the University of California. He has won two of the eight Majors he has played since then. The last player to win two professional Majors in so few attempts was Bobby Jones nearly a century ago.

Season of firsts
The Major season began with Hideki Matsuyama becoming the first Japanese player to win the Masters. Phil Mickel-

son became the first player at age 50 to win a Major at the PGA Championship. No one had ever birdied the last two holes at the US Open to win by one shot until Jon Rahm at Torrey Pines.

And then along came Morikawa, as pure an iron player as there is in the game today, making his own brand of history. He is the first to win two Majors that he played for the first time.

Elite company
His status is better defined by the company he now keeps. In the last century of golf, only seven other players have won two Majors before turning 25 – Spieth, Jones, Gene Sarazen, Jack Nicklaus, Seve Ballesteros, Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy.



Major player: Collin Morikawa has caught the world's attention with his exploits in quick time. ■GETTY IMAGES

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Year - 2020-21

Total - 157 Video lectures + 20 Booklet Pdf

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Contact on Telegram ➤ @prakashstudy24

The image displays three screenshots of a Telegram channel named "Live Class - UPSC" with 1585 subscribers. The channel contains 157 media files (video lectures) and 20 document attachments (booklets).

Screenshot 1 (Left): Shows a list of attachments for "Hindi Sahitya Notes - Drishti". The attachments are:

- Vol = 01: हिंदी_भाषा_और_नागरी_लिपि_का_इतिहास.pdf (86.6 MB PDF)
- Vol = 02: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_1.pdf (42.0 MB PDF)
- Vol = 03: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_2.pdf (29.7 MB PDF)
- Vol = 04: हिंदी_साहित्य_का_इतिहास_3.pdf (50.0 MB PDF)
- पद्य_साहित्य_मध्यकालीन_कविता.pdf (61.5 MB PDF)

Screenshot 2 (Middle): Shows a grid of thumbnail images for 157 video lectures. Each thumbnail includes a play button and a timestamp (e.g., 58:44, 2:26:06, 2:50:28, 2:22:37, 2:22:26, 2:18:06, 2:31:21).

Screenshot 3 (Right): Shows two video player frames. The top frame shows a lecture titled "Orientation class" with a duration of 2:13:48 and a file size of 451.1 MB. The bottom frame shows a lecture titled "Lecture = 01" with a duration of 2:23:46 and a file size of 501.3 MB.