

Monsoon may be delayed by a week: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A westerly trough has impeded the rapid progress of the monsoon in northwest India and it will take 7-10 more days for the wind system to reach the Capital, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday.

"The situation will be more clear on Wednesday," said Kuldeep Srivastava, head of IMD's regional forecasting centre.

IMD had earlier predicted that the wind system may reach Delhi by June 15-12 days early.

Normally, the monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27.

All terrorists criminals but not all criminals terrorists: HC

Court urges caution in use of the term for 'conventional offences'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

'Terrorist' has nowhere been defined in the UAPA.

Hence, the court must be careful in employing the definitional words and phrases used in section 15 (of the UAPA that defines 'terrorist act') in their absolute literal sense or use them lightly in a manner that would trivialise the extremely heinous offence of 'terrorist act', without understanding how terrorism is different even from conventional, heinous crime, the bench said.

The High Court's observation came while granting regular bail to JNU students Na-

tasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, and Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha, arrested in connection with the north-east Delhi riots.

UAPA's origin
The 'terrorist act', including conspiracy and act preparation to the commission of a terrorist act, were brought within the purview of UAPA by an amendment made in 2004, on the heels of Parliament repealing Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA).

POTA's precursor, the Terrorist & Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) was repealed in 1995.

The High Court said the phrase 'terrorist act' must



get its colour and flavour from the problem of terrorism as was earlier addressed by the Parliament under TADA and POTA.

Defining 'terrorism'
To understand the concept and construction of 'terrorism', the High Court referred to various judgments of the Supreme Court where

the issue has already been dealt with.

"Terrorism is one of the manifestations of increased lawlessness and cult of violence... A 'terrorist' activity does not merely arise by causing disturbance of law and order or of public order. The fallout of the intended activity must be such that it travels beyond the capacity of the ordinary law enforcement agencies to tackle it under the ordinary penal law," the Supreme Court had said in *Hindita Vishnu Thakur versus State of Maharashtra case*.

In the same judgment, the Supreme Court said, "Every 'terrorist' may be a criminal but every criminal cannot be

given the label of a 'terrorist' only to set in motion the more stringent provisions of TADA."

The High Court said, in its opinion, "The intent and purport of the Parliament in enacting the UAPA, and more specifically in amending it in 2004 and 2008 to bring terrorist activity within its scope, was, and could only have been, to deal with matters of profound impact on the 'Defence of India', nothing more and nothing less."

"Foisting extremely grave and serious penal provisions engrafted in sections 15, 17 and 18 UAPA frivolously upon people, would undermine the intent and purpose

of the Parliament in enacting a law that is meant to address threats to the very existence of our Nation," the court cautioned.

It reminded that a sacrosanct principle of interpretation of penal provisions is that they must be construed strictly and narrowly, to ensure that a person who was not within the legislative intent does not get roped into a penal provision.

"Also, the more stringent a penal provision, the more strictly it must be construed," the High Court remarked pointing at the use of the stringent provision under UAPA against the three students in the north-east Delhi riots case.

Teenager on joyride rams autorickshaw, kills driver

He was driving his father's luxury car

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

An autorickshaw driver died after he was allegedly hit by a luxury car being driven by an 18-year-old boy in west Delhi's Moti Nagar on Saturday morning, the police said on Tuesday.

The victim, Brindeshwar Mahto, used to reside in Trilokpuri with his family.

The Class XII accused, from Punjab Bagh, has been arrested.

The victim's brother, Chandeshwar Mahto, told the police that along with Brindeshwar, he had gone to Khyala with passengers in their respective autorickshaws at 6 a.m.

He said the accident hap-

pene when they were going towards Ramesh Nagar.

The accused, who was driving his father's car, was coming from the wrong direction when he hit Brindeshwar's autorickshaw.

The impact was such that the autorickshaw turned turtle. Chandeshwar, who was driving behind the victim's auto, rushed to the spot and nabbed the boy. Brindeshwar was declared dead at a nearby hospital.

The accused was with his three other friends at that time. A case on charges of rash and negligent driving and causing death due to negligence has been registered and the accused has been arrested.

Speeding car kills two in Daryaganj

Two arrested in the hit-and-run case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons were killed when a speeding car hit an e-rickshaw in Central Delhi's Daryaganj, the police said on Tuesday.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the case, they said.

A senior officer said a PCR call was received on Monday night at 10.30 p.m. regarding a road accident near Delight Cinema. On reaching the spot, an e-rickshaw was found damaged. The police learnt that the injured were taken a hospital.

Further inquiry revealed that a couple and their two

children were travelling in the e-rickshaw when they were hit by the car.

All five occupants of the e-rickshaw, including the driver, were injured. However, the driver and the woman passenger were declared brought dead at the hospital. The condition of the others is said to be stable.

The driver of the offending vehicle tried to escape but was chased by a man on a bike and nabbed near Jama Masjid. Next, two involved in the crime were held.

A case under relevant sections has been lodged and further investigation is under way, the police added.

'Bail for riots accused holds mirror to govt.'

Activists seek release of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, other anti-CAA protesters

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Students, activists and some political parties on Tuesday welcomed the Delhi High Court order granting bail to the three students, who were arrested under the UAPA in connection with the north-east riots, which took place in February last year.

Jamia Millia Islamia student Asif Iqbal Tanha and Jawaharlal Nehru University students – Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita – were granted regular bail by the Delhi High Court.

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) said through the order, the court had "shown a mirror to the government".

"It is a step towards undoing the gross injustice com-



Children play in Shiv Vihar, where riots had broken out in February 2020. ■ FILE PHOTO

anti-national and individuals are bullied, intimidated, threatened and imprisoned under UAPA and laws of sedition," a statement by the CPI (M) read.

Further, it added that similar standards should be applied to all the "false cases" and all political prisoners should be released.

Delhi University professor Apoorvanand, who was also questioned by the Delhi Police last year in connection with the riots, on social media said: "None of them should have been charged or arrested in the first place. All others must be freed. This whole exercise is a conspiracy to shield the real conspirators and perpetrators of the violence of Feb 2020 in Delhi. They are out and rul-

ing us. Spreading hate, planning violence [sic]."

The All India Students' Association (AISA) said the order had exposed the "legal and moral corruption" of the government.

It added: "While the bail has been granted, the struggle against UAPA and release of all political prisoners must continue. AISA demands immediate release of Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam and other anti-CAA protesters arrested in Delhi violence case under UAPA."

Stating that it was one of the happiest days of her life, Safoora Zargar, a Jamia Millia Islamia scholar – who was also arrested last year and later granted bail – tweeted: "...Let more follow. Let justice prevail..."

NCRTC plans to harness blended + renewable energy for RRTS project

Corporation signs MoU with SECI to explore electric mobility

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) on Tuesday signed an MoU with SECI (Solar Energy Corporation of India) to harness blended renewable energy for the Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) project.

According to the NCRTC, the MoU has provisions to explore possible opportunities in electric/transformative mobility, Hydrogen

based economy, and other alternative sources of fuels and energy. The MoU was signed in the presence of Jatinendra Nath Swain, Secretary (Fisheries), Vinay Kumar Singh, Managing Director NCRTC along with other senior officials of the NCRTC and SECI.

NCRTC, as part of its Energy Management Policy, intends to maximize the use of blended renewable energy such as solar power for meeting full energy require-

ment of NCRTC. SECI, being an industry leader, will help in arranging blended renewable energy to NCRTC round-the-clock at affordable rates for Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Corridor and cooperation to extend the same for other future corridors," it said.

According to the NCRTC, 40% of the total energy requirement of the Delhi Meerut RRTS corridor is targeted to be procured or generated from renewable energy.

'Serving liquor in hotels, eateries not allowed yet'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital is in the middle of its second week of unlocking but serving of alcohol in bars in hotels, clubs and restaurants has yet to be given nod by the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), the Excise department has clarified.

With a significant improvement in the COVID-19 situation in the city, liquor shops and restaurants that were closed as per DDMA order since April have reopened.

"Bars in the hotels, clubs and restaurants are not allowed to open till further orders," stated a clarification issued by the Excise Department issued Monday. All liquor shops in markets, malls and market complexes (outside containment zones) are allowed to operate between 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., it said.

The clarification was issued in view of queries related to serving alcohol in bars at hotels, clubs and restaurants after the govt. allowed restaurants to reopen.

AAP MP says nameplate defaced at residence, blames BJP 'goons'

Two persons arrested in connection with the incident: DCP +

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Sanjay Singh said the nameplate of his North Avenue residence was allegedly defaced by a few persons on Tuesday afternoon.

The MP blamed the BJP for the attack.

Two persons have been arrested in connection with the case, said DCP (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav.

"My house in North Avenue – around 100m from the President's house – has been attacked just now. I want to tell the BJP government and their goons, you can launch attacks or murder me, but I will keep talking about theft of money collected from the public for Ram Mandir. The people who steal money collected for Ram Mandir should be put behind bars," AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said in a video on Tuesday.

Mr. Singh added that the people, who were with him at that time, managed to nab two of the accused and handed them over to the police.

The Aam Aadmi Party has been alleging that there is a "big scam" involving BJP leaders in the land bought for Ram Mandir's construction. Today, he claimed an attack on house, everything is a scripted drama.

Mr. Singh said the incident happened when he was sitting on the lawns of his residence with a few persons at 12 p.m. He told the police that at that time, a few men came to the spot and started raising slogans against him. They then tried to damage the nameplate and threw it on the ground before fleeing the spot.



AAP MP Sanjay Singh stands near the defaced nameplate of his North Avenue residence in New Delhi on Tuesday.

■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

thieves."

A scripted drama: BJP
Reacting to the alleged attack, Delhi BJP Spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said in a tweet that it is a scripted drama. "Yesterday, he tried to malign Ram Mandir's construction. Today, he claimed an attack on house, everything is a scripted drama," Mr. Kapoor said.

Mr. Kapoor said an FIR has been registered under Sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) and 34 (common intention) of the IPC and Sec 3 of Delhi Prevention of Defacement of Property Act 2007.

He added that further probe is under way.

5 arrested for cheating people with offers, gifts

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man was arrested and a juvenile apprehended for allegedly opening fire at a man in south-east Delhi's Jamia Nagar, the police said on Monday.

DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena said the accused has been identified as Saiful Zafar. He has criminal records, including an attempt to murder. The incident happened on the intervening night of June 7-8. The juvenile involved in the case has been sent to observation home.

Five persons, including four women, have been arrested for allegedly duping people on the promise of providing attractive offers and gifts, police said on Tuesday, adding that they were running a fake call centre.

DCP (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said the accused have been identified as Rahul Rathore (30), a resident of Saraswati Vihar; Muskan (21) and Kajal (22), residents of Burari; Sonam (26), a resident of Rohini; and Babita (22) of Mukundpur. Police said that on the in-

tervening night of Monday and Tuesday, they received information regarding a fake call centre running at Sector-16 in Rohini. "A raid was conducted and the accused were arrested," Mr. Tayal said.

During probe, Rathore allegedly told the police that he obtained contact and credit card details of people from Brijesh and Dinesh after which he made calls to dupe them. He gave them false assurances of providing attractive offers, gift cards, VIP money saving cards etc. by posing as credit card service provider.

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PM on 30/06/2021 through Registered Post/ by hand to office of the Resident Commissioner, Assam Bhawan, 1 Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri New Delhi - 110021. Phone: 011-26877111.

The bid shall consist of two parts- Technical Bid and Financial Bid. Both the bids are to be placed in two sealed envelopes (clearly super scribbling 'Technical Bid' and 'Financial Bid') which both in term are to be placed in one single sealed cover. The bids of all parties whose financial bid is not in a separate sealed cover or the rates quoted by them finds mention in their technical bid shall be rejected forthwith. All the information sought under the head 'Terms and Conditions' and other information to be supplied with technical bid, while the price quoted by them will have to be mentioned only in the Financial bids of only those parties shall be opened whose technical bids are found to be eligible while, the Financial bids of disqualified technical bidders shall be returned unopened.

The technical bids shall be opened on 30/06/2021 at 4.00 PM in office of the Resident Commissioner, Government of Assam, Assam Bhawan, 1, Sardar Patel Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi - 110021 in presence of the Tender Committee and representative of each of the bidder who wishes to remain present. The decision of the Tender Committee shall be final with regard to technical bids. The financial bids of only those parties who qualify the technical bids shall be opened.

Details of terms and conditions of tender documents may be

Timings DELHI
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 16
RISE 05:24 SET 19:21
RISE 10:27 SET 23:58
THURSDAY, JUN. 17
RISE 05:24 SET 19:22
RISE 11:28 SET 00:00
FRIDAY, JUN. 18
RISE 05:24 SET 19:22
RISE 12:28 SET 00:32

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	39	27
Safdarjung	39	27
Palam	39	28

Delhi Paliom Today
35°C Rain and thunderstorm may occur at some places. Warm weather would continue with partly cloudy to cloudy sky.

Delhi Paliom Tomorrow
36°C Light rain and thunderstorm may occur at few places. Warm and humid day with partly cloudy sky.

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'BJP-led civic bodies failed to clean drains'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The AAP on Tuesday claimed that the BJP-led municipal corporations have failed to clean drains, which has resulted in increased waterlogging.

"The BJP-led civic bodies is playing with the lives of Delhites by not cleaning the drains," AAP leader Durgesh Pathak said.

"The AAP demands that the civic bodies should immediately start cleaning all the drains under their jurisdiction. On behalf of the AAP, I also want to appeal that the work should be done immediately and later they should not blame others for their failure," he added.

He said monsoon can arrive in Delhi anytime soon now and every year the national capital faces a massive waterlogging problem. "Last year, a child died due to waterlogging and in Kali Bagh, many jhuggis were washed away due to waterlogging. The reason behind this repeated waterlogging is that the BJP-led civic bodies does not clean the drains. In Delhi, around 90% of drains are under its jurisdiction," Mr. Pathak said.

He claimed that only 20% of the drains have been cleaned before the monsoon.

North corporation Mayor inspects Kishanganj ahead of monsoon

He directs officers to ensure completion of desilting work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash on Tuesday inspected the Kishanganj Rail Under Bridge (RUB) and its vicinity to check the preparations of the corporation before the monsoon onset.

Mr. Prakash was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner Sanjay Goyal along with engineer-in-chief K.P. Singh and other officials of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation.

During the inspection, the Mayor directed the officers of the Engineering Department to ensure that the de-

50% of jab centres for 18-44 age group shut, rest will close today'

AAP MLA Atishi says stock will last one day; city reports 228 new COVID-19 cases

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP MLA Atishi on Tuesday said that half of the government-run vaccine centres for the people of 18-44 age group were shut down on Tuesday and the rest will be shut down on Wednesday due to vaccine shortage.

"Only 31,000 doses of vaccine are available for the youth in Delhi. For 18-44 age group, less than one day's stock is available. Half the centres in Delhi are closed today and the rest of the vaccination centres will be closed tomorrow," she said.

Vaccine stocks

Both Covishield and Covaxin stocks for the age group will last for less than a day, as per the bulletin released by the government on Tuesday.

"Delhi is being unlocked and the vaccination of youth is most important at such a time. The youth are going back to their office. That is why our appeal to the Central government is to pro-



A health worker administers a dose of vaccine to an 18-44 age group beneficiary at a government school in Mandir Marg, New Delhi, on Tuesday. • R.V. MOORTHY

vide the vaccine to the youth of Delhi at the earliest," Ms. Atishi said.

She said that the pace of vaccination of youth in Delhi has started slowing down again due to the shortage.

Meanwhile, the downward trend in COVID-19 cases continued in the national capital with 228 new cases being reported in the past 24

hours, taking the total cases to 14,31,498, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

Also, 12 deaths were reported and the total number of deaths stood at 24,851. A total of 71,291 tests were done in a day, the bulletin said.

Of the total cases,

14,03,569 people have recovered and there are 3,078 active cases.

The test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.32%, which means that less than one person out of 300 people taking COVID-19 tests are now positive for the virus. The TPR was as high as 36% on April 22 and has been coming down since then.

Delhi prisons see only single COVID-19 case this month

Number of active cases till June 8 stood at 12: official data

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Delhi prisons on Tuesday stated that only a single inmate had tested positive for COVID-19 this month so far.

According to the prison administration, the last inmate to have tested positive for COVID-19 was reported on June 8 and the last staff member tested positive for the virus on May 29.

"COVID-19 cases have decreased but we are taking all the precautions. COVID-appropriate behaviour, including social distancing among the inmates, is being strictly followed.

Since March this year, 382 cases of COVID-19 infection have been reported among inmates. Of them 364 have recovered while there are 10 active cases, according to data. Eight inmates have succumbed to the virus too.

Among the prison staff members, 221 have been infected since March and of

them, 219 have recuperated while two are still undergoing treatment.

Interim bail

According to officials, over 2,000 undertrial prisoners were released on interim bail and around 700 convicts released on emergency parole under the department's decongestion drive.

The first COVID case was reported from Rohini jail on May 13 while two COVID-19 positive inmates lodged at the Mandoli jail, both senior citizens, had passed away on June 15 and July 4.

Jail officials have maintained that the Prisons Department remained vigilant and instructed its staffers to not only maintain hygiene and social distancing but also spread awareness about the infection.

Ready for visitors



Humayun's Tomb in New Delhi on Tuesday. Monuments in the Capital will reopen for the public from today. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHKAR

150 people booked for meeting at Khori Basti

Nirmal Gorana arrested on charges of instigating mob, flouting COVID-19 norms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
FARIDABAD

Nirmal Gorana, general secretary of Bandhu Mukti Morcha, was on Tuesday arrested by the Faridabad Police on charges of instigating the mob at a public meeting in Khori Basti, flouting the prohibitory orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, and not adhering to COVID-appropriate behaviour.

The Supreme Court had on June 7 ordered demolition of the structures on 170-

siting work was completed from all the drains.

Water stagnation

Mr. Prakash also directed the officials to ensure that all arrangements had been made to ensure that water does not stagnate inside the RUB and residents do not face any inconvenience.

"The Railways' work on a part of the Kishanganj Railway Under Bridge is underway which is almost 90% complete. The corporation has passed a ₹10-crore budget for the construction of roads on both sides of the RUB," he said.

According to Mr. Prakash, the construction work of the RUB would be completed by December after which there will be much relief from traffic problems in the area.

The Mayor said the North body would also start the work of beautification of the Azad Market Chowk very soon.

Plantation work and paintings are among the components of the beautification program, he said.

"The North Corporation is working at its best level to provide all possible facilities to the residents," Mr. Prakash said.

"The government claims to have laid pipelines in 93% of the colonies. When there was a Congress government in Delhi before 2014, ₹1,109 crore used to be spent on water tankers as most of the colonies had no water supply, now ₹1,783 crore is being spent on wa-

noring official notices which grant the villagers of Khori another three days before eviction....They are beating people as soon as they exit their houses," said a joint statement by Basti Suraksha Manch, Working Peoples' Charter, Bandhu Mukti Morcha and National Alliance of People's Movements.

Faridabad Police spokesperson Sube Singh denied the allegations made by the solidarity groups.

AAP govt. yet to fulfil its 2015 poll promise of water supply, says BJP

It claims to have laid pipelines in 93% of the colonies'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Tuesday accused the AAP-led Delhi government of not being able to fulfil its initial poll promise of providing safe and pure water through every tap in the national capital over the last seven years.

"The government claims to have laid pipelines in 93% of the colonies. When there was a Congress government in Delhi before 2014, ₹1,109 crore used to be spent on water tankers as most of the colonies had no water supply, now ₹1,783 crore is being spent on wa-

mised that if they died in the line of duty their families would be given ₹1 crore compensation. But, over 100 of them have died so far, and their families are still making rounds of Mr. Kejriwal's house but to no avail," Mr. Bidhuri alleged.

In a related development, the Rohini MLA said Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal had informed him that a three-member fact-finding committee had been formed to look into allegations of graft in the procurement of 1,000 buses by the Delhi Transport Corporation.

According to sources, the L-G has been monitoring the situation of water supply in the Capital and had sought detailed reports from the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) after incidents of shortage.

L-G speaks to UP CM over Delhi water supply

Baijal to talk to Haryana CM as well

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal has spoken to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and will be speaking to Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal with regard to the supply of water to the Capital, administrative source said here Tuesday.

In this regard, the source added, Mr. Baijal has sought a comprehensive status report from the DJB that will be followed by a detailed time-bound action plan over the coming days.

especially in jhuggi colonies, were reported over the last few days.

"It is felt that apart from the issue of supply of water, its management and distribution in terms of limiting leakage and wastage, as also addressing the issue of unequal distribution per person per day in different localities needs to be addressed at the earliest," a source said.

In this regard, the source added, Mr. Baijal has sought a comprehensive status report from the DJB that will be followed by a detailed time-bound action plan over the coming days.

NGT dismisses review plea alleging environmental violations in Aravali

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has dismissed a plea which alleged violation of environmental norms by construction of illegal roads and unauthorised mining in the Aravali in Gurugram district.

While dismissing the plea which sought a review of an earlier order, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said that the grounds taken by

the review applicant, that he was not an encroacher was not the issue for consideration before the tribunal.

"The matter in issue in the original application was illegal mining and encroachment of forest land and on the basis of the [forest department] report, the statutory authorities were directed to take further action in accordance with the law...no substantial ground for maintainability of the review ap-

plication is made out," the Bench said. The tribunal added, "The review application is devoid of any merit and deserves to be dismissed. For the determination of the right title and interest of any party, the aggrieved may approach the appropriate forum if so advised."

Earlier, the NGT had sought a report from the forest department on the allegations of illegal construction in a forest area.

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Curbs eased in Punjab as positivity rate drops to 2%

Eateries, cinemas can be opened at a maximum of 50% capacity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

With the positivity rate coming down to 2%, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday announced easing of the restrictions including allowing restaurants and other eating joints as well as cinemas and gyms to open at 50% capacity beginning June 16.

He said now 50 persons can attend weddings and funerals.

Under the new guidelines which will remain in effect till June 25 when they will be again reviewed, night curfew from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m.

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ENTERPRISE CONNECT

NFL records profit of Rs. 343.46 crores in 2020-21

Riding on the best-ever fertilizer sale of 59.37 Lakh MT, NFL has achieved a profit (PBT) of Rs.343.46 crores during 2020-21. The net profit of the company was registered at Rs. 249.63 crore. The results of the company were approved by the Board of Directors in its meeting held on 10.06.2021. During 2020-21, the company sold 50.10 Lakh MT of urea, including imported urea, compared to 47.93 LMT recorded in previous year. Company also fared well in marketing of other fertilizers like DAP, MoP, NPK etc. where a sale of 9.27 Lakh MT was registered in 2020-21 as compared to 9.10 Lakh MT in previous year. The company produced 37.99 Lakh MT of urea in its own plants during the year by recording a capacity utilisation of 117.59% as against production of 37.27 Lakh MT during the previous year.

Petronet LNG records highest ever PBT & PAT in current FY.

Petronet LNG records highest ever PBT of Rs 3,968 Cr and PAT of Rs 2,949 Cr in a financial year. During the FY 2020-21 (current year), Dahej terminal processed 849 BTBU of LNG as against 885 BTBU processed during the previous year. The overall LNG volume processed by the Company in the current year was 896 BTBU, as against the LNG volume processed in the previous year of 927 BTBU. During the quarter ended 31st March, 2021 (current quarter), Dahej terminal processed 204 BTBU of LNG, as against 206 BTBU processed during the corresponding quarter (Q4, FY 2019-20). In the previous quarter (Q3, FY 2020-21), 222 BTBU of LNG was processed. The overall LNG volume processed by the Company in the current quarter was 218 BTBU, as against 219 BTBU processed in the corresponding quarter. In the previous quarter, LNG volume processed was 235 BTBU. The Company has reported highest ever PBT of Rs 3,968 Crore in the financial year ending 31st March, 2021 (current year), as against Rs 3,111 Crore in the previous year. The PAT for the current year was reported at Rs 2,698 Crore. The Company has reported PBT of Rs 856 Crore in the current quarter, as against Rs 486 Crore in the corresponding quarter. In the previous quarter, PBT was Rs. 1,172 Crore. PAT for the current quarter was reported at Rs 623 Cr as against PAT of the corresponding quarter which stood at Rs 359 Crore. PAT of the previous quarter was Rs 878 Crore. The Board of Directors have recommended a final dividend of 35% on equity for approval of the shareholders in the AGM. The strong financial results were achieved due to robust operational efficiency and effective commercial planning by the Company.

IRCTC offers "work from Hotel with Nature" travel plans amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

IRCTC's efforts to rekindle the confidence among guests to step out for availing hospitality services in the post COVID world has met with reasonable success. "Work from Hotel with Nature" Packages for Puri, Konark & Gopalpur (Beach Destinations of Odisha) are launched. Booking started from 09.06.2021. As remote working becomes the new norm, and with location independence becoming an increasingly viable option, it's no surprise that more and more people are looking for inspiration beyond the four walls of their home office. Over time, there is an increased demand for more secluded and private environments due to health and safety concerns. Keeping this evolving trend in mind, Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation LTD (IRCTC) has launched exclusive packages for professionals who want to continue with their work with a different yet amongst natural environment near beach, forest from the comfort of hotel rooms, wherein they can relax and enjoy along with their routine. Working away from the typical office setting is expected to become the new trend during these pandemic times. Professionals can choose destinations among Puri, Konark and Gopalpur. The duration of package would be for a minimum of 03 nights which can be extended on prorate basis.

and weekend curfew from 8.00 p.m. on Saturday up to 5.00 a.m. on Monday will be in place. All essential activities, including those covered under existing 'Exemptions', will remain exempted from curfew restrictions.

Chairing a virtual review meet, the Chief Minister ordered opening of all restaurants (including in hotels), cafes, coffee shops, fast food outlets etc., cinemas, gyms at a maximum 50% of capacity, subject to all their employees having received at least one dose of vaccination. AC buses can also ply with 50% occupation.

Bars and pubs shall, however, continue to remain closed. All educational institutions i.e. schools and colleges will also continue to be closed.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is known to all that Allottee of Residential Flat, no. 090D BLOCK -B10/A Sector-34, NOIDA DISTT. G.B. NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH, M/S CAPITAL ART SERVICES, PROP. SMT. VANTI ARORA W/O LATE SH. YODHISHTER, R/O I-25, G.P.O. NOIDA, has sold the above said Plot on Agreement to Sell/G.P.A. basis.

1. Agreement to Sell /G.P.A was executed on SMT VANTI ARORA in favour of MR. BABU KHAN S/o MR. RISAL KHAN POST OFFICE DHANKAUR, DISTT. BHANDUPUR, U.P. which is registered in the office of sub Registrar office, NOIDA & the agreement to sell was not executed.

2. Because the Agreement to sell written in para 1 is not registered so with the help of this notice it is informed that the transfer of the above plot on the basis of Agreement to Sell/G.P.A goes in favour of MR. BABU KHAN S/o RISAL KHAN POST OFFICE DHANKAUR, DISTT. BHANDUPUR, U.P. if anyone has any objection, he/she can submit his/her objection in the concerned department of NOIDA Authority within 15 days of publication of this notice.

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME

I, (SUMEDA DEVI) W/o. Ravi Singh born on (05/05/1953) R/o. No. 106, New Ashok Nagar, Vasundhra Enclave, New Delhi - 110096, have changed my name to (SUMEDA DEVI) for all future purposes.

I Balesh Dagar spouse of Anil Kumar, Resident of F-45, Sadg Nagar, Palam, Delhi have changed my Name from Balesh Dagar to Balesh vide affidavit dated 15/12/20 before notary NCT of Delhi.

PERSONAL

LOST & FOUND

I, DR. Nitesh Kumar, s/o Sh. K. Prasad Address A011, Rajehi Veda, Tia, Sec 108, Gurgaon, lost the Builder/Buyer sale agreement for my apartment, 1002, Brigade Metropolis, Mahadevapura, Bangalore. It is Missing since 0th may 2021. If found kindly return to the above address.

ENTERPRISE CONNECT

Similar packages for other locations are also being explored.

Oil PSUs take up initiative to support various Art & Handicraft projects

In line with the government's commemoration of 75 years of Indian Independence – Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, an initiative by Oil PSUs to support various Art and Craft in the country. Bamboo Craft project of Madhya Pradesh supported by ONGC was launched in a webinar organized by National Oil Company Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) on 11 June 2021. As part of a larger initiative, central public enterprises under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas will take up 75 projects in different districts across the country. ONGC has launched the initiative to revive the struggling handicraft projects and empower the local artisans. ONGC will take up 15 of the 75 projects. The Bamboo handicraft of Madhya Pradesh has been launched on 11 June 2021. ONGC will address the challenges faced by the artisans and the art and handicraft forms, thereby improving the rural livelihoods associated with the handicrafts and handloom sectors. ONGC, in association with local NGOs and forums, is initially undertaking five projects across the country to support the handicraft sector, with an outlay of around 1.3 crore rupees. Speaking during the launch, ONGC CMD Subhash Kumar said, "Oil PSUs have always stood with the community wherever we have operational presence; these projects along with other flagship initiatives planned as a part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava, will significantly contribute to a resurgent, Atmanirbhar Bharat."

PSPL commits daily 8 hours of uninterrupted power to agriculture tubewell consumers for paddy season

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited is committed to provide daily 8 hours uninterrupted power supply to its 14 lac agriculture tubewell consumers in Punjab for the coming paddy season from 10th June, 2021. This was disclosed by PSPCL CMD Shri A.Venu Prasad here today in a press note. Shri A.Venu Prasad also assured that all esteemed consumers of state would be provided 24 hours continued, uninterrupted and quality power supply in Punjab. CDM said that PSPCL has already made level best arrangements to cater electricity supply to its consumers. In order to ensure supply to agriculture consumers during paddy season, PSPCL has also strengthened the electrical infrastructure of the villages. He said that PSPCL is anticipating to meet successfully more than 13000 MW demand during the paddy season. He said that in addition to existing sources at disposal of PSPCL, power arrangements under short term and banking with other states to the tune of 2700 MW have been made for this paddy season. He added that daily power supply to all AP consumers in the state has been divided into 3 groups at each sub-station. He also added that AP consumers of the PSPCL will be provided 8 hours power supply in day timings along with the international border of Punjab.

IREDA invites bids for Rs. 4500 crore Solar PLI scheme

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd. (IREDA), a PSU under the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) has invited bids from solar module manufacturers for setting up solar manufacturing units under the central government's Rs. 4,500 crore Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. MNRE has appointed IREDA as the implementing agency for the scheme. The Union Cabinet had earlier approved Rs. 4,500 crore scheme to boost domestic manufacturing of solar PV modules. The last date for submitting application is 30 June. The selection process for the successful bidders is to be completed by 30th July. IREDA had floated the invitation for application document on 25th May on its website and the electronic application process went live on 31st May. The applicants are required to set up either brownfield or greenfield manufacturing facility for the entire capacity allotted under the

SAD-BSP alliance may not deliver in Punjab Assembly polls

While the BSP is barely relevant, the SAD is trying to recover lost ground in the farming community

VIKAS VASUDEV
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) recently decided to jointly contest the Punjab Assembly elections, due early next year. The announcement has set the tone for the upcoming polls, even as keen political observers feel the alliance may not yield the "desired" results for either party.

In Punjab, which has the highest percentage of Dalit population among the States at close to 32%, the BSP used the Dalit vote as a political plank for the first time in 1992. However, since then, the party has received a declining response in the State. In 1992, it secured over 16% votes winning nine seats in Punjab, but that dropped to around 4% in the 2012 Assembly polls. In 2017, the BSP's vote share percentage hit a further low of 1.5%. Now, with the new alliance, the BSP is attempting to remain "relevant" in State politics.

On the other hand, the SAD has faced wrath of farming community, its key support base, which is demanding the repeal of the three farm laws. The party is hoping to neutralise its negative political impact through the newly formed alliance, hoping to win over the votes of the Scheduled Castes.

Crucial Dalit votes

Parties are aware of the importance of Dalit votes and have been making all efforts to garner it. The newly formed alliance is being seen as critical for the SAD, especially after it broke its alliance with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) over the farm laws issue. The SAD has already announced it would appoint a Dalit as Deputy Chief Minister if it forms the next government.



BSP chief Mayawati



SAD chief Sukhbir Badal

SAD is in trouble of even losing the traditional support base surrounding the 2015 Bargari sacrifice and subsequent police firing incident. Akalis supporting Jats (the farming community) is unlikely to go for Dalit candidates. Eventually, there would hardly be any significant gain for either of the two parties," added Mr. Kumar.

On June 6, the SAD-BSP inked an electoral alliance for the 2022 Assembly polls, in which the SAD will contest 97 seats and the BSP 20 – including eight seats in the Doaba region, seven in Malwa and five in Majha region of the State.

There are a total of 117 Assembly constituencies in Punjab.

Ashutosh Kumar, Professor of Political Science at Panjab University and author of *Electoral Politics in Punjab: Factors and Phases* believes that the SAD-BSP alliance is nothing more than a poll tactic, which is going to be insignificant in the upcoming polls. "This alliance is not going to have a major impact on the electoral outcome. The BSP has an almost negligible base in the State. It has been losing its support base. Its last win was one Assembly seat in 1997. SCs are divided on not only caste lines but also on religious lines. The BSP hardly has a base that the Akali Dal could capitalise on," he told *The Hindu*.

"On the other hand, the

ests of the farmers of the State, who mostly happen to be Jat Sikhs, the BSP has been struggling hard at least to keep itself alive in its birth place," he said.

Divisive factor

"Moreover, given the divisive factor of the caste divide in the State, it seems quite unlikely that the SC votes would be transferred to the SAD. Besides, the SCs of Punjab, like their counterparts in other parts of the country, are not a homogeneous category. They are sharply divided into 39 castes among themselves and got further fragmented into different religions and syncretic faiths, which metamorphosed into *deras*. The SAD-BSP alliance may not fetch SC votes for SAD across the socio-religious divisions within Dalits. Similarly, the BSP may also have to pay the price for signing the alliance with the SAD. Those SC affiliates of the BSP who were not comfortable with the SAD may like to dissociate themselves from the former for its political marriage of convenience," said Mr. Ram.

Ronki Ram, Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor of Political Science at Panjab University, pointed out that both the SAD and the BSP are currently entangled within their respective adverse political circumstances. "If the SAD is finding it difficult to maintain its heritage status – being a Panthic party of the Sikhs – for not defending the inter-

Budgam's 'killer' leopard captured

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The elusive "man-eater", which killed a four-year old student of the Delhi Public School after dragging her from the lawns of the house in an urban locality in central Kashmir's Budgam district on June 3, was captured alive on Tuesday.

"Scat samples of the leopard will be collected for DNA sampling. It will be matched with the samples taken at the site where the minor was found dead, to establish if the animal is the same," Chief Wildlife Warden, Kashmir, Rashid Naqash said.

The leopard was spotted and captured on Tuesday morning inside the premises of the Deputy Commissioner's office in Budgam.

On June 3, the animal pounced on the UKG student who was riding a bicycle on the lawns of her house and dragged her away. Her mutilated body was found in a nursery the next day after several hours of search.

Akali-BSP protest over 'vaccine scam'

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh hits back at the 'motivated hue and cry'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MOHALI

Punjab police on Tuesday resorted to the use of water cannons to disperse Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) workers and leaders as they marched to *gherao* the residence of Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh at Siswan in Punjab's Mohali over an alleged "vaccine scam".



SAD-BSP workers protesting in Mohali on Tuesday. ■ PTI

"Scheduled Caste scholarship scam and seed scam".

"Not only this, patronage is also being extended to the sand and liquor mafia, which had looted the State with several crores of rupees," he alleged.

IN BRIEF



Steps taken to tackle foot-and-mouth disease

ALAPPUZHA
The Animal Husbandry Department in Kerala has ramped up measures to tackle the spread of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Alappuzha. Around 3,000 head of cattle have been affected by the outbreak in the district in the last one-and-a-half months. At least 193 cattle died of the disease during the period.

Indigo flight reports tyre burst at Hubballi

HUBBALLI
Passengers of an Indigo aircraft from Kannur to Hubballi had a narrow escape after the flight reported a tyre burst on landing at the Hubballi airport on Monday night. The Bengaluru-bound flight 6E-7979 was grounded on the runway and was subsequently towed away. An official statement from Indigo Airlines said all the crew and passengers in the flight were safe.

ATS recovers one more gelatin stick in Kerala

KOLLAM
The Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) of the Kerala police on Tuesday recovered one more gelatin stick from a cashew plantation in Pathanapuram where explosives and detonators were found. The Pathanapuram police have been combing the area since the stash was discovered by forest beat officers on patrol duty on Monday.

₹248.47 crore released under YSR Vahana Mitra

GUNTUR
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy released ₹248.47 crore for the beneficiaries of the YSR Vahana Mitra scheme on Tuesday. Under the scheme, the government is providing ₹10,000 to auto-rickshaw and taxi drivers.

SC closes trial against Italian marines

Govt. plea to stop proceedings follows UN tribunal decision in May last year

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday ordered the closure of court proceedings in India against the two Italian marines who allegedly killed two fishermen off the Kerala coast after mistaking them for pirates in 2012.

A Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah agreed to the Union government's plea to stop the criminal trial and other proceedings against Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre, detailed on vessel *Enrica Lexie*, following a decision of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) in May last year that the duo would be tried in Italy.

Justice Shah, who read out the order, concluded that this was a "fit case to close all proceedings in India".



Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre. ■ PTI

The Bench ordered the amount to be transferred from the Supreme Court Registry to the Kerala High Court. The apex court asked the Chief Justice of the Kerala High Court to nominate a judge to hear the fishermen's families and disburse/invest ₹4 crore each to their rightful legal heirs. It said care should be taken that the mo-

ney reached the heirs and was not "diverted" into wrong hands.

"While disbursing the amount of compensation to the heirs, i.e., ₹4 crores each, their [heirs] interest is required to be protected so that the amount of compensation paid to them is not frittered away," the court noted.

It suggested investing the money in the name of the dependents/heirs of the deceased in a fixed deposit in a nationalised bank for some time.

The balance ₹2 crore, the court ordered, would be paid to the owner of the fishing boat that came under attack from the marines.

It urged Italy to resume the criminal proceedings against the marines in compliance with the U.N. tribunal.

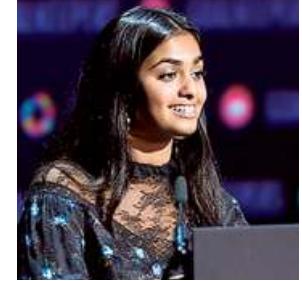
The court also asked Italy, India and the State of Kerala to cooperate with each other to bring justice in the case.

On April 9, the court told the Union government that it would consider passing an order to quash the criminal proceedings only after Italy deposited ₹10 crore as compensation.

Honoured for ending period poverty

Amika George received an MBE for her campaign for free menstrual products

SOMA BASU
MADRASI



Amika George

On Saturday, 21-year-old Amika George was honoured as a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to education.

As her extended family, spread across Kumplampoiaka, Kozencherry and Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, celebrated the news, she told *The Hindu* that the honour was a brilliant indication that young people were being taken seriously as players with real power to enact change when they see injustices.

Ms. George, who crusades for free hygiene products for girls living in poverty with no access to menstrual products, is from Edgware in North West London, and is currently pursuing the study of Indian colonial history at Cambridge University.

At 17, she read a newspaper article about young school and college girls in the U.K. missing up to a week's classes every month because they could not afford to buy sanitary products. "It seemed unfair that a natural biological process was responsible for girls falling behind. To imagine being absent from school hit me," she said in an e-mail interview.

The thought that these girls were no different from her except for their financial circumstances made Ms. George start a 'Free Periods' petition in April 2017, seeking government intervention. It met with an unexpected response. She was flooded with emails from girls from Asian communities and other ethnic backgrounds, who told her their families struggled to afford two square meals and they knew there wasn't money for sanitary napkins. In particular, she remembered one girl who wrote that every month, she searched her parents' wallets or behind boxes and sofas for coins to buy pads and felt embarrassed asking for help or talking about periods to her friends.

"The taboo was still deeply entrenched and I felt an-

gry that girls were being overlooked. It fuelled my determination to take the campaign to a meaningful completion," she said.

When her petition attracted 1,80,000 signatures, Ms. George was inspired to lead a protest outside the British Prime Minister's residence on Downing Street on December 20, 2017. She kept demanding change through media interviews and school visits, even though nothing tangible happened. She then launched a not-for-profit organisation, Free Periods, in January 2019 to persuade the U.K. government to pay for menstrual products.

Last March, the Chancellor announced special funds for every school and college in England for period products for all students, with monitoring of supplies.

UAE extends flight ban till July 6

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has extended its suspension of flight services from India to the seven emirates till July 6.

The movement of passengers, excluding UAE nationals, diplomats, and holders of the UAE golden visa, to Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Fujairah, Ajman, and Ra's al-Khaimah from India has also been suspended till July 6. "The General Authority of Civil Aviation, UAE, has suspended all inbound passenger movement to the UAE from India (excluding UAE nationals) till 6th July 2021," Air India Express said in a tweet.

The extension is in view of the prevailing situation due to COVID-19.

Yesterday

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.3	34.1	27.2	Kozhikode	66	31.0	22.8
Ahmedabad	40.6	29.1	29.1	Kurnool	—	33.5	26.0
Aizawl	—	—	20.0	Lucknow	9	32.6	25.3
Allahabad	—	33.7	26.1	Madurai	—	37.5	26.1
Bengaluru	0.4	26.7	20.0	Mangalore	3.4	28.4	22.8
Bhopal	—	—	24.2	Mumbai	—	32.3	27.6
Bhubaneswar	—	31.0	28.0	Mysuru	5	32.9	21.4
Chandigarh	—	36.0	27.6	New Delhi	—	37.8	27.2
Chennai	—	38.2	28.0	Patna	43	32.2	24.4
Coimbatore	0.9	31.8	23.0	Port Blair	13	30.7	24.6
Dehradun	—	33.7	24.3	Puducherry	—	37.6	25.4
Gangtok	14	19.2	17.5	Pune	2.2	29.5	22.8
Goa	119	27.3	24.1	Raipur	—	31.8	23.4
Guwahati	11	35.0	26.0	Ranchi	2	30.2	23.1
Hubballi	—	23.0	22.0	Shillong	—	26.4	18.0
Hyderabad	0.4	33.0	23.5	Shimla	7	25.6	15.9
Imphal	2	29.4	21.7	Srinagar	2.5	23.0	16.2
Jaipur	13	39.0	26.6	Thiruvananthapuram	3	31.5	24.6
Kochi	27	29.8	22.6	Tiruchi	—	38.1	26.2
Kohima	6	26.6	18.6	Vijayawada	—	34.2	27.0
Kolkata	11	30.3	26.5	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	30	45	41	.43	.156	...
Bengaluru	—	47	29	.18	.44	...
Chennai	—	5.5	43	.40	.73	...
Delhi	—	27	46	.155	.167	...
Hyderabad	—	47	35	.19	.16	...
Kolkata	—	21	26	.36	.45	...
Lucknow	.7	28	60	.35	.52	...
Mumbai	—	55	37	.31	.38	...
Pune	—	15	76	.97	.66	...
Visakhapatnam	—	56	39	.50	.92	...

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhilwadi, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 400, indicating a moderate level of pollution. Contrast Gadag, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 10.

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

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

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

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

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

Seeking hike in milk price, AIKS to protest tomorrow

It says private unions slash purchase cost citing low demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Demanding an increase in the per litre price of milk for dairy farmers, the Left-affiliated All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) has alleged that milk farmers were given a raw deal by private and co-operative milk unions who cut costs by claiming a low demand for milk during the pandemic-induced lockdown.

The AIKS has said that private and co-operative milk unions had slashed the purchase price of milk by ₹10 to ₹15 per litre, while keeping the selling rate unchanged for consumers. To protest this, the outfit has planned a Maharashtra-wide

protest tomorrow.

Agitation on June 17.

It has demanded that farmers be given the pre-lockdown rates of ₹35 per litre. "We demand that the State government audit all private and co-operative milk unions, which have reduced the purchase price of milk, claiming that the demand for milk has decreased during the lockdown period. It must take stern action against these cooperatives and recover the amount looted by them and return it back to the farmers," said Dr. Ajit Nawale of the AIKS.

He urged the government to make the anti-looting law applicable to private and co-operative milk unions so that milk producers could not be

looted in future. "Like sugar-cane growers, milk producers, too, should be given fair and remunerative price (FRP)," said Dr. Nawale.

In their list of demands to the State government, the AIKS has urged the government to adopt a one-brand strategy to prevent undesirable 'brand wars' in which ordinary milk farmers always lost out.

"The government should also ban toned milk and ensure that adulteration is stopped by strictly enforcing anti-adulteration laws. They must provide legal guarantees that pure milk will be available to consumers at reasonable prices," said Dr. Nawale.

The State government had already filled up around 1,200 of 4,084 college teachers' posts but the process halted due to COVID-19, he said.

Speaking to reporters, he also said that in-person classes would not start as of now, considering the pandemic situation. "The CET can be held in July last week or the first week of August," he said.

The State government had already filled up around 1,200 of 4,084 college teachers' posts but the process halted due to COVID-19, he said.

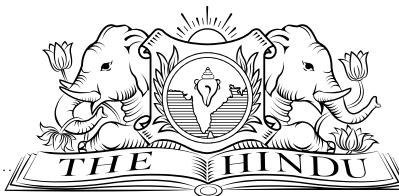
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The invisible tax

Emergent action is needed to rein in inflation as people face income losses, medical costs

The pandemic's second wave may have subsided but hopes of a smooth rebound in the economy in tandem with easing restrictions remain muddled, with the inflation numbers for May compounding the problem. The soaring pace of rising prices, both retail and wholesale, in the month that saw widespread lockdown-like restrictions, has come as a negative surprise. Inflation based on the Wholesale Price Index is reckoned to have hit a 25-year record of nearly 13%, while retail inflation touched a six-month high of 6.3%. While runaway fuel prices, that include high excise duties and taxes, were a key factor in driving up both the inflation indices, they were not the only ones at work. Retail inflation in food hit a six-month high of 5%, from barely 2% in April, with pulses and eggs as well as edible oils leading the surge. 'Fuel and light' inflation hit 11.6%, the highest in over nine years, and no respite is in sight on this front as pump prices for petrol raced past ₹100 a litre in even more parts of the country this month. Diesel has also crossed the century mark in Rajasthan's Sri Ganganagar, where freight costs add up on top of State and central taxes. Even if one were to discount food and fuel prices, core inflation has crossed the 6% mark for the first time in 31 months and is estimated at 6.6%.

Reacting to the April retail inflation print of 4.3%, after averaging a steep 6.2% through 2020-21, the RBI Governor had remarked earlier this month that it brought some relief and 'elbow room' for sticking with growth-supportive policy. If anything, May's inflation prints leave no such room for manoeuvre. Though the bank's Monetary Policy Committee may not switch away from its dovish policy, no further easing of interest rates can be expected at these price levels. Most economists expect inflation to remain higher than the average 5.1% estimated by the central bank for this year. If the Government wants the RBI to persist with its accommodative approach to facilitate growth, it must take some actions of its own to curb price rise, including meaningful cuts in fuel taxes that the RBI Governor has been advocating since February. So far, it has only obfuscated the issue with arguments ranging from 'the States should cut taxes first' to 'let's bring petroleum products under GST', and the latest claim by the Petroleum Minister who admitted that the prices are problematic, but the Government is 'saving money to spend on welfare schemes' and buying vaccines. For a population already reeling from job and income losses and higher medical costs since the pandemic's onset, the persistently high inflation is untenable. No welfare scheme can offset its disproportionately adverse impact on the poor.

Bracing for a threat

India must be alive to the dangers of emerging variants of the coronavirus

An emerging form of the Delta variant called AY.1 is raising global concern. Five of India's leading laboratories, since May, have submitted data to the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID) on its presence in India. Public Health England, a body in the United Kingdom, has said that of the 63 genomes in its repository as of June 7, six were from India. AY.1, or B.1.617.2.1, is a variant of Delta (B.1.617.2) and has all its characteristic mutations along with one called K417N. This particular one has previously been identified in the Beta variant (first detected in South Africa), which is an international variant of concern as it is highly infectious and known to reduce vaccine potency. The Delta variant is reportedly the most prevalent coronavirus variant in India and comprises close to a third of the genome samples, sourced from those with no international travel history, processed until late May. An additional concern with the K417N mutation is that some studies have found that it was associated with resistance to a newly developed monoclonal antibody treatment drug cocktail, Casirivimab and Imdevimab, for those assessed with a moderate to severe disease risk.

Scientists have said that AY.1 marks the continued evolution of the Delta variant. The Delta variant has become globally prominent in the same way as a mutation, D614G, increased the infectivity of coronavirus in March and April last year. Coronaviruses are marked by 'convergent evolution'; some defining mutations that emerge in different strains from around the world start to become more common in subsequent variants. These mutations are beneficial to the virus and, through a process of natural selection, help it infect human cells more efficiently as well as thwart defensive antibodies. Evolution is an incessant process, and it is impossible to forecast if SARS-CoV-2 will become a part of the human ecosystem – less contagious, and manifesting in sporadic outbreaks but ever present or buckling into oblivion under the force of counter-offensive measures such as vaccines, masks, lockdowns. As the virus and people continue to be engaged in a dialectical battle, humanity has a tool that has been absent in previous global pandemics – that of rapid genome sequencing. Several countries, including India, have the infrastructure and the resources to track threatening mutations. Unfortunately, the potency of a mutation to increase infectivity in a region can only be known retrospectively. However, this knowledge can help improve vaccines and enable researchers to perform quick tweaks, or in the parlance of software, develop upgraded patches that can blunt the threat from emergent variants. India has chosen to restrict genome sequencing studies to 10 government labs and not involve private labs, some of which have the capability and the expertise. Time and again, the country has suffered the consequences of a lack of preparedness. It is important not to downplay the seriousness of the threat.

America's mistakes in the 'forever war'

The U.S. misread the situation in Afghanistan, with the long war now leaving the Taliban at the height of their influence



STANLY JOHNY

President Joe Biden has set the September 11 deadline for all American troops to leave Afghanistan, winding up 20 years of the invasion by the United States. Military officials say the withdrawal would be complete about two months ahead of the schedule. The peace talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban that started in Doha last year have been frozen for months. The bid by the U.S. to hold a summit in Istanbul between the warring parties has been a non-starter. On the ground, the Taliban are making steady advances. Since May 1, the Taliban have seized eight districts in four different regions. At least six provisional capitals, including Kabul, Lashkar Gah (Helmand) and Kandahar, have the insurgents at their gates. As of now, about 22% of Afghanistan's 398 districts are in the Taliban's control and 24% with the government, while more than half of the country's territories are contested.

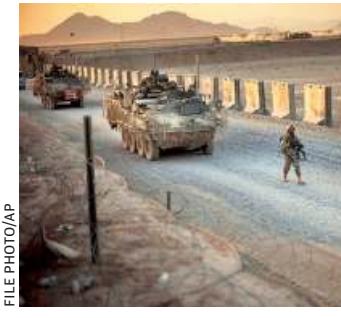
A neocon war

The longest war in America's history is also turning out to be one of its most disastrous. After 20 years of war, when the world's mightiest military is exiting Afghanistan, the Taliban, which it sought to perish, are at the height of their influence since they were driven out of power. Terrorist networks, which the U.S. vowed to destroy when it launched its global war on terror in Afghanistan, are now scattered across Asia and Africa, from eastern Afghanistan to the Sahel region. What went wrong for the U.S.?

The U.S. made three fundamental mistakes, which led to the superpower's humiliating exit from this clichéd 'graveyard of empires'.

First, the U.S. went into Afghanistan without learning anything from the country's history, or was blindsided by the unipolar hubris. Afghanistan was invaded by great powers in the 19th and 20th centuries as well. The British empire, which feared a Russian invasion to India via Afghanistan, sent troops to the country in 1839, ousted its ruler Dost Muhammad and established a client regime of its ally, Shah Shujah. But the British had to withdraw in the face of Afghan resistance, mostly by Pashtun warriors; while retreating in 1842, all of the British and Indian troops, except one doctor, were massacred by Afghans. In 1979, the Soviet Union sent troops to Afghanistan to salvage the country's nascent communist regime, orchestrated a coup and established a friendly regime. The Soviets, faced with a bloody Mujahideen resistance (which was bankrolled and trained by the U.S., Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), had to pull back in 1989 in ignominy. The U.S. might have thought that history would have been kinder to them when they launched the Afghan invasion in October 2001. It wasn't.

Once they invaded Afghanistan, the U.S., given the mistakes the British and the Soviets committed, could have had a strategically focused campaign, targeting its enemy, al-Qaeda, which was behind the September 11 attacks. It should have gone after the terrorists, destroyed their networks and then withdrawn. That is what a realist power would do. But the U.S., driven by the neoconservative globalism of the Bush administration, had set more ambitious goals for itself. It wanted to topple the Taliban and rebuild a centralised "de-



democratic" state in Afghanistan. How did building democratic institutions in Afghanistan from top-down serve America's foreign policy interests? The neoconservatives in Washington might have found it fascinating, but the move made little strategic sense. And now, the U.S. is retreating, practically leaving Afghanistan to the mercy of the Taliban, in return for assurances from them that they would not assist the terrorists such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State.

Strategic failure

After the Taliban regime was toppled and al-Qaeda driven back into the caves and mountains, the U.S. still had a chance to stabilise the country with help from its different factions and leave. In December 2001, Taliban spokesperson Mullah Abdul Salam Zaeef had offered to surrender. The Taliban sought modest terms – Mullah Omar, their leader, should be allowed to return home. But the Americans rejected the offer and promised to destroy the Taliban in every corner of the country. The Taliban are an indigenous military with deep roots in Afghanistan's Pashtun majority. Toppling them from power was easy, but defeating them in their country was not. And after vowing to defeat them, the U.S. launched the Iraq invasion to topple Saddam Hussein and export democracy there. This was the second mistake.

The U.S. took Pakistan's tactical

support for its war on terror for granted, overlooking the fact that Pakistan had deep strategic ties with the Taliban. Pakistan played a double game by supporting the U.S. campaign in Afghanistan while at the same time offering refuge and support to the Taliban.

For Pakistan, the Taliban have been their wild card to check India's influence in Afghanistan. When the U.S. declared victory in Afghanistan prematurely and went on to invade Iraq in 2003, it became easier for Pakistan to assist the Taliban's regrouping, at a time when the Afghan government was grappling with corruption and infighting on ethnic lines. For the ordinary Afghans living outside the provincial capitals, life did not change much under the new government. When the U.S. got stuck in the morass of the Iraq war, the Taliban were steadily making a comeback in Afghanistan's hinterlands. By the time the U.S. shifted its focus back to Afghanistan, after defeating the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria and amid growing calls at home to end the "endless wars", the Afghan war had already been lost.

Surrender to the Taliban

Granted, there is a realist case for the U.S. to leave Afghanistan. It seems to have reached the conclusion long ago that the war was one that could not be turned around. The war was also becoming increasingly unpopular at home, prompting Presidents, from Barack Obama to Donald Trump and Joe Biden, to promise to wind it up. The U.S. has also been shifting its focus to East Asia where China is rising. And given the foreign policy challenges the U.S. is facing now elsewhere, continuing troops and commitments in Afghanistan makes little sense. But the U.S. could have opted for a more orderly withdrawal. Instead, it surren-

dered to the Taliban's terms to pull back its troops. This was the third mistake.

The Taliban have not defeated the Afghan troops yet. The Afghan government has about 200,000 battle-hardened soldiers, including the U.S.-trained elite special forces. The government still controls most of the country's population centres. The Taliban's efforts to take over provincial capitals were successfully thwarted in the recent past, with air power help from the U.S. With the U.S. being present in Afghanistan, the conflict has been in a stalemate – the government not being able to defeat the insurgents and the Taliban unable to overrun the cities. The U.S. should have used this stalemate, coupled with mounting pressure on Pakistan, to extract concessions from the Taliban. Instead, the Trump administration went for talks with the Taliban on their terms. The Afghan government was kept out of the whole process because the Taliban do not recognise them as being legitimate. And the U.S. struck a direct deal with the Taliban, without addressing any of the Afghan concerns.

The American exit would now decisively shift the balance of power in favour of the Taliban. The insurgents have always known this. They have stepped up attacks and carried out targeted killings aimed at weakening the Afghan government and terrorising society immediately after signing the agreement with the U.S. in February 2020. And ever since the remaining U.S. troops started pulling back from Afghanistan on May 1, the Taliban have started capturing more territories. The war may be winding down for the Americans. But for Afghans, it will continue in one form or another.

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An acquittal with no good, but the bad and the ugly

The criminal justice system must observe the basics of a proper investigation, judicial fairness, and the survivor's rights



R.K. VIJ

The recent judgment of a trial court acquitting Tarun Tejpal, a former editor of a newsmagazine, who was charged, in 2013, of having sexually assaulted an employee, a young woman journalist, during an event the newsmagazine had organised in Goa, has created a furore and raised many questions about the law. The investigating officer has also been pulled up not only for the lapses in investigation but also for gaps in her knowledge of technology. The Goa government filed an appeal against Mr. Tejpal's acquittal in the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court requesting an immediate hearing. The Solicitor General of India, Tushar Mehta, during the hearing, said that the lower court's judgment lacked sensitivity regarding crimes against women and awareness of the sections of criminal laws. "The law has evolved. The entire judgement proceeds as if the victim is on trial," he added.

Key changes

Back in 2002, based on the recommendations of the 172nd report of

the Law Commission of India, two major changes were made in the Evidence Act (<https://bit.ly/3xp0Elk>). First, the Act was amended to prohibit the defence counsel from asking questions to the prosecutrix in a rape case about her general character to impeach her credibility. Second, the defence was not permitted to put questions to a witness in the cross-examination about the general immoral character of the prosecutrix and adduce evidence. Even if it is hypothetically assumed that the survivor had had sexual relations with someone, it does not give any person the licence to sexually assault her. The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly said that the purpose of cross-examining a survivor of rape is not to humiliate her but to get to the truth of the case. Therefore, questions about the past sexual life of the survivor should not have been permitted to be asked by the defence counsel as they violated the survivor's right to a fair trial. The law does not permit the character assassination of a victim any more.

Stereotypical evaluation

Second, the conduct of a survivor of sexual assault cannot be cast in a straitjacket formula. Every individual behaves differently under the given circumstances. When in this case, the survivor had been entrusted with an important task/s by her boss during the event and



was afraid of losing her job by exposing her boss's crime, her dual behaviour (i.e., in the public gaze and with acquaintances) cannot be termed unnatural. It would be too stereotypical and patriarchal to expect a survivor to be seen traumatised all the time in front of everyone. The Supreme Court, in *Aparna Bhat and Ors. vs. State of Madhya Pradesh & Ors.* (2021) specifically said that courts should desist from expressing any stereotype opinion, in words spoken during proceedings, or in the course of a judicial order about women. Stereotyping excludes any individualised consideration of a person's actual circumstances and their abilities. It affects women's right to a fair trial. Therefore, the judiciary must be careful not to create inflexible standards based on preconceived notions.

Details and omissions

Third, every omission does not amount to a contradiction; omission which by necessary implication leads to conflicting versions between the statements made before the police and the court would amount to contradiction. It is trite law that the previous statements of the prosecutrix and witness can be used to shake their credibility. However, it is quite natural for a survivor to share the incident in different words and details to different individuals. She is not expected to share the same graphic details of the sexual assault on her to every individual she meets or wishes to reveal the details to. Therefore, if the statement given during the trial is substantially consistent with the statement given to the police and judicial magistrate during the investigation, the difference of details given to other individuals through email or otherwise in the form of written statements, cannot be rejected by terming them as untrustworthy. The High Court, therefore, must clarify on this vital question of the law keeping in view the nature of the offence.

Punjab vs Ramdev Singh (2003) held that the name of the victim should not be mentioned in the judgments, it is of that Court, High Court or lower court, and she should be described as 'victim' in the judgment. It therefore implies that anything such as the survivor's husband's name, her email address, etc which could reveal her identity, should not have been mentioned in the judgment. It is against the spirit of the law.

Sensitisation is a must

It is true that the investigation must be unbiased, honest, just and in accordance with the law. The entire emphasis on a fair investigation has to be to bring out the truth of the case before the court. However, some lapses in investigation and ignorance about technical terms such as 'hash-value' with regard to electronic evidence, should not lead to a total rejection of the prosecution case. Many amendments have been made in the criminal laws since 1983 with regard to crimes against women. The police must pull up their socks to improve investigation skills, and the application of the law should not elude justice due to a lack of proper sensitisation among other stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

R.K. Vij is a senior IPS officer in Chhattisgarh. The views expressed are personal

The Supreme Court in *State of*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Education in Kerala

The article, "Higher education in Kerala needs a new chapter" (Editorial page, June 14), has overlooked the fact that "the linear expansion of arts and science colleges and even professional colleges" in Kerala was part of the strategy to enhance Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the State. It is well known that Kerala could not transmit the success in its school education to its higher education sector. There are social, economic, political and historical reasons for the inter- and intra-regional inequalities in access to higher education in Kerala. According to baseline data of the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) State Higher Education Plan (I), the GER in Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode,

Wayanad, Kannur and Kasaragod was much lower than the State average of 21.9%, thus justifying the establishment of more higher education institutions in these districts. Setting up of more government colleges and government-regulated aided or self-financing colleges will increase the access to higher education with a very low, or reasonable and affordable fee structure. Twenty arts and science colleges from the State including four government colleges have found a place in the list of top 100 colleges in 2020 in the NIRF ranking for India by the HRD Ministry. Similarly, four aided colleges have been recently reaccredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council with a superlative grade of

A+. It is worth mentioning that all these are government-aided colleges. Concerted efforts are needed for more expenditure on higher education, both public and private. To increase the expenditure on higher education as a proportion of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) from the present 1% to the targeted 2%, Kerala needs a revamped model of public-private partnership (PPP) in higher education.

M. USMAN,
Pazhamalur, Malappuram, Kerala

In Kerala, the poor state of affairs prevalent in its universities needs highlighting. It is everyone's knowledge that the top university administration including the appointment to teaching posts is in accordance with the interests

of powerful communities and partisan politics. The introduction of a choice-based credit and semester system has not resulted in quality enhancement. The extreme parochialism in the affiliated colleges in terms of student diversity and the recruitment of teachers has diminished the dynamics of the teaching-learning processes. To overcome this issue, all-India exchange programmes and exposure to outside institutions are needed. The details of the knowledge society have not been worked out so we are talking about a knowledge-based economy as in the developed world?

CHANDRAN KOMATH,
Kottayam, Kerala

Bank turnaround

A close look at the numbers announced by the IOB ('Business' page, "IOB net

surges twofold to ₹350 cr. as income rises", June 15) reveals that the public sector bank has done excellently well in all key parameters. The Government has time and again pumped in additional capital into most public banks and has also floated a new bad bank. After using tax-payer money to cleanse the balance sheets of public sector banks, how justified is the Government in planning to hand them over to private players?

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

AIADMK developments

Ever since the passing of AIADMK leader Jayalalithaa, there has been much speculation about the future of the AIADMK, but Monday's developments (Page 1, "OPS is dy. leader of AIADMK legislature party", June 15) should prove that

the party's second rung leaders can pull through on contentious issues. If the party manages to stonewall any attempt by its former interim general secretary V.K. Sasikala to "capture the party" and also stay united, it has a chance of knocking on the door of power again.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,
Chennai

TASMAC sales

The report, "On day one, ₹164 cr. worth liquor sold" (Tamil Nadu, June 15), was stunning. The volume of sales points to a rush and crowding. The public must realise that the goal now is to flatten the pandemic curve and not wantonly try and break the rules under the pretext of freedom.

A.J. RANGARAJAN,
Chennai



FROM PAGE ONE

Delhi riots: 3 student activists granted bail

Ruling that no offence under the anti-terror law is made out against any of the three student activists, the High Court said, "the phrase 'terrorist act' cannot be permitted to be applied in a cavalier manner to criminal acts or omissions that fall squarely within the definition of conventional offences as defined inter alia under the IPC (Indian Penal Code)".

The Delhi police had maintained that the accused engaged in "sloganeering and instigating the public against the government" and tried to create a "communally surcharged environment" with the intent to disrupt the unity and strike terror.

Responding to this, the High Court observed, "We find ourselves unpersuaded and unconvinced with this submission since we find it is not founded on any specific factual allegation and we are of the view that the mere use of alarming and hyperbolic verbiage in the subject charge-sheet will not convince us otherwise".

'Stronger foundations'
"The foundations of our nation stand on surer footing than is to be likely to be shaken by a protest, however vicious, organised by a tribe of college students or other persons, operating as a coordination committee from the confines of a University situated in the heart of Delhi," the High Court observed.

Noting that protests against governmental and parliamentary actions are legitimate, the High Court said though such protests are expected to be peaceful and non-violent, it is not uncommon for protesters to push the limits permissible in law.

AYI not a variant of concern yet: Centre

On vaccination, Dr Paul said reserves of the Novavax vaccine had come into India on Monday, and are likely to be produced domestically in "very large" quantities".

"What we know is that it is extremely safe and has a very high efficacy. There is a bridging trial of this vaccine underway in India. The positive results of this augur very well for our country. We should be proud that another vaccine appears to be the horizon in our country," he added.

The United States company, that has partnered with the Pune-based Serum Institute of India, tested its two-dose 'NVX-CoV2373' vac-

The prosecution case against Ms Kalita is that as part of a women's rights group called Pinjra Tod, and other activist groups, she had participated in a 'larger conspiracy' which led to violence and rioting in the north-east Delhi.

"Surely the right to protest is not outlawed and cannot be termed as a 'terrorist act' within the meaning of the UAPA, unless of course the ingredients of the offences under sections 15, 17 and/or 18 of the UAPA are clearly discernible from the factual allegations contained in chargesheet," the court added.

The case cited by the prosecution against Ms Narwal is that she was involved in instigating the local population in certain Muslim dominated areas in Delhi, particularly women, to protest against CAA and the exercise undertaken by the central government for creating a National Register of Citizens (NRC), by allegedly seeking to incite feelings of subversion.

The High Court remarked that "allegations relating to inflammatory speeches, organising of *chakka jaam* (road blockades), instigating women to protest and to stock-pile various articles and other similar allegations, in our view, at worst, are evidence that the appellant participated in organising protests".

Police to appeal
Following the order, a Delhi Police spokesperson said, "We are not satisfied with the interpretation of the provisions of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act by the Hon'ble High Court. We are proceeding with filing of a Special Leave Petition before the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India."

SC adjourns W.B. riots hearing

Centre makes the plea on petitions seeking a CBI or SIT investigation

The Supreme Court on Tuesday agreed to a request by the Union government to adjourn the hearing on the petitions seeking a CBI or a SIT (special investigation team) investigation into incidents of post-poll violence in West Bengal.

Appearing before a Vacation Bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah, Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta asked the court to schedule the hearing on June 18.

The court was primarily hearing a joint petition filed by the family members of BJP activists Abhijit Sarkar and Haran Adhikari, who were killed allegedly in the violence following the Assembly polls in May.

Total inaction'
The families have alleged "total inaction" and even "subversion" of the investi-

gation by the State administration and police.

The State government has replied that first information reports had been registered and several arrests made in connection with the murders.

In an affidavit filed on Monday on allegations of State complicity in the post poll violence, the Mamata Banerjee government maintained that these were "concocted stories" disseminated on social media by miscreants.

The State said, "No person can be forced to stay away from his/her house, as it is their inherent right to live in their houses peacefully".

The apex court was misled about the law and order situation. The petitions "reek of political motivation", it said.

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Paras group had the blessings of BJP and JD(U)

The saffron party worked meticulously behind the scenes, but maintained that the events were 'internal matter' of LJP

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

The breaking away of the majority of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) parliamentary unit from Lok Sabha MP Chirag Paswan to form an independent group in the Lower House, had the full backing of the BJP as well as the Janata Dal (U), and will have far-reaching consequences for the NDA equations in Bihar.

According to those aware of the run-up to the dramatic developments on Monday, the seeds of this split were sown on the day the results of the Bihar elections were being announced last November. The BJP had almost immediately reached out to the LJP's lone MLA, Raj Kumar Singh to secure his support in a delicately balanced House and got his backing for the Speaker's election.

"We were still talking to

him when the Janata Dal (U) got him to join their party. We were of the opinion that if he had stayed as an independent he could have been made Minister," said a senior Bihar BJP office-bearer.

Personal equations

After that, both NDA partners were in constant touch with the five MPs of the LJP, in effect isolating Mr. Chirag Paswan.

Minister of State for Home Nitinand Rai has excellent equations with Chandan Singh (MP from Nawada) who is also Suraj Bhan Singh's (a trusted lieutenant of late Ram Vilas Paswan) brother. Also, another MP, Veena Devi is actually from the BJP but fought from an LJP ticket as the seat she wanted to contest from (Vaishali), went to the LJP kitty in the alliance division,



A house divided: Posters of rebel LJP leaders painted black by Chirag Paswan supporters in Patna on Tuesday. ■ PTI

said the source.

A week before the events of Monday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda met with the party's Bihar unit president Sanjay Jaiswal, Mr. Rai, and BJP general secre-

tary in charge of Bihar, Bhupendra Yadav in New Delhi.

The BJP remained in the background of events, however, and continues to be tight-lipped. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Mr. Bhupendra Yadav's only comment was that

the events "were an internal matter of the LJP".

Within hours of the split in the LJP, Mr. Paswan's uncle Pashupati Nath Paras was recognised as the parliamentary party leader of the LJP in the Lok Sabha. Significantly, there was no talk of merging the party into JD(U), with Mr. Paras insistent on maintaining a separate entity.

Significance of split

The fact that the breakaway LJP has been recognised as a separate party with five MPs, means that the split between the two NDA allies - the BJP and the JD(U) - remains at 17 and 16 seats respectively in the Lok Sabha, with Mr. Paras in a strong position to claim the single Ministerial berth in the Union Council of Ministers promised to the LJP, whenever the next reshuffle happens.

If the LJP had merged with the JD(U) parliamentary party, they would have had 21 seats, four more than the BJP; their claim on multiple Ministerial berths would have been stronger, and the struggle with which we (BJP) have shrugged off the junior partner status to JD(U) in Bihar would have been for nought in future negotiations," said a source.

This intricate cut and thrust of alliance politics in a State which is considered to have the most political of electorates is far from over. Mr. Paras will have to do his best to emulate his canny elder brother, the late Ram Vilas Paswan, to stay afloat, while Mr. Chirag Paswan will have to go back to the starting point, albeit much diminished. The BJP and JD(U)'s complicated pas de deux in Bihar will continue.

After LJP split, eyes on Congress legislators

10 MLAs are in touch, say JD(U) leaders

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

After the split in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), now speculation is rife in Bihar for a possible break among 19 State Congress legislators. Congress leaders, though, have strongly denied it and said "such rumours are being spread by leaders of a party to create confusion".

If some ruling Janata Dal-United (JD-U) party leaders are to be believed, as many as 10 out of 19 Congress MLAs in the State are in constant touch with them and ready to break away from their party "at any time". "We now need the support of only three Congress

MLAs to make a split in the party by two-thirds to avoid action under the anti-defection laws," said a senior JD (U) leader, adding, "but, very soon these three too would come".

Party sources also told *The Hindu* that these 10 Congress MLAs include three legislators from the minority community, and two who have won elections in the 2020 Assembly elections from the Bhagalpur area.

With its dismal performance in the 2020 Assembly elections - winning only 19 out of 70 seats - the Congress in Bihar has been agog with internal bickering.

A notice released by the Paswan faction claimed that at 4 p.m. on Tuesday, a national executive meeting was called by the party, in which all the five MPs, Mr. Paras and Mr. Paswan's cousin Prince Raj were removed from the primary membership of the party. The notice is signed by the secretary general of the LJP, Abdul Khalil.

While the other faction claimed that they, too, had called a national executive meeting and decided to appoint Suraj Bhan, elder brother of party MP Chandan Singh and a close associate of the late Ram Vilas

Paswan as working president.

Both factions have also simultaneously shot off letters to the Election Commission of India.

"According to the party's constitution, only the president and the secretary general have the right to call for the party's national executive to meet. And the national executive not only has MPs and MLAs but also the secretary general, treasurer, 16 general secretaries, 16 national secretaries, and nearly 15 presidents of frontal organisations and presidents of State units," Mr. Khalil told *The Hindu*.

The Paswan faction has also written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla to recant the appointment of Mr. Paras as the Parliamentary party leader of the LJP, claiming that only the chairperson of party's Parliamentary board had the right to nominate the leader according to its constitution.

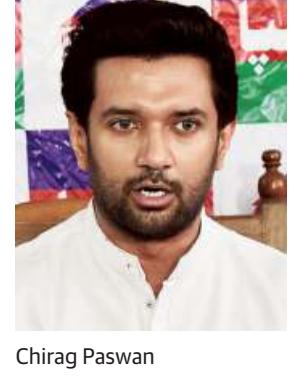
Mr. Paras's faction, meanwhile, is confident that it will be able to win the legal battle. "Our letter to the Election Commission on the appointment of Mr. Suraj Bhan as working president precedes their notice on removing all of us," Khagaria MP Mehboob Ali Kaiser said.

The question of ownership of the party, though, will be settled only by the Election Commission.

Ownership war begins in LJP

Chirag Paswan says he made every attempt to keep the party together

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Chirag Paswan

A day after the internal coup in the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), an intense ownership battle emerged between the two factions, one headed by Chirag Paswan and the other by his uncle Pashupati Nath Paras, who led the rebellion.

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+ House Standing Committee on IT summons Twitter representatives

It will hear views on steps taken to prevent misuse of social media

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Shashi Tharoor

The Standing Committee on Information and Technology, headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, has summoned Twitter representatives to appear before the panel on June 18 to hear their views on the steps they had taken to prevent the misuse of social media and online news.

Parliamentary standing committees are resuming work after a long gap on Wednesday. Most of them have not met since April due to the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Fireworks are expected in Thursday's meeting of the IT panel, with the Opposition and the BJP warring over Twitter tagging a few posts of BJP leaders as "manipulated media".

In May, Mr. Tharoor wrote to the Ministry of Electronics and In-

formation Technology (MeitY) on Twitter's "manipulated media" tag drawing the ire of panel member and BJP leader Nishikant Dubey, who wrote to Lok Sabha Speaker, demanding the ouster of Mr. Tharoor claiming that he is using the standing committee as an "extension of the Congress".

Mr. Tharoor had to issue a long

clarification, where he said that the committee decided to communicate with the MeitY through e-mail, because the standing committees have not been meeting and that the MeitY's response would be circulated to the members.

The agenda for Thursday's meeting is, "To hear the views of representatives of Twitter followed by evidence of representatives Electronics Technology 'Safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space."

Other than the differences between the Congress and the BJP on the "manipulated media" tag, the MeitY's ultimatum to Twitter to comply with the amended IT rules is also expected to come up for discussion.

With Pilot losing support, no early Cabinet expansion in Rajasthan

Several MLAs have expressed faith in CM Ashok Gehlot's leadership

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

With former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot losing his grip on the MLAs who sided with him during the last year's political crisis, the Cabinet expansion and political appointments in Rajasthan are likely to get delayed.

Several of the MLAs considered loyal to Mr. Pilot have expressed faith in CM Ashok Gehlot's leadership.

Sardarshahar MLA Bhanwarlal Sharma, oldest legislator in the Assembly at 76, said here on Tuesday though he considered Mr. Pilot his leader, Mr. Gehlot was above him in his capacity as the CM.

"Even Mr. Pilot will have to respect him as his leader," Mr. Sharma, who had stayed with the former Deputy CM during his rebellion, told reporters here.

Mr. Sharma said he had camped along with Mr. Pilot outside Rajasthan during the rebellion because the public works in his constituency were not being done by the State government. "I have no complaints against the government now... The issue of resentment in Congress is being exaggerated."

Future moves

The septuagenarian Congress leader is the third Pilot loyalist, after Viratnagar MLA Indraj Gujjar and Todabhim MLA P.R. Meena, to praise Mr. Gehlot for the works done in their constituencies in the recent days. Deep-Kumher MLA Vishvendra Singh, who was sacked as the Tourism Minister during the turmoil, also met Mr. Gehlot recently, triggering speculation about his future moves.

Mr. Gehlot has given enough indications that the Cabinet reshuffle and expansion would not be carried out under pressure from the Pilot camp.

The Chief Minister's Office said in a statement released on Monday that Mr. Gehlot would not meet anyone in person for the next one to two months as a precaution in view of his condition following his recovery from the COVID-19 infection.

The sources in the Congress said this situation would automatically result in the Cabinet expansion being deferred by a couple of months.

"This is an astute move by Mr. Gehlot. He has tactfully conveyed to both Mr. Pilot and the AICC committee that he is not going to bow under their pressure," Sikar-based political analyst Ashfaq Kayamkhani remarked.

Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation

(A Government of Rajasthan Enterprise)

ई.एम.आर. परिवर्तन संस्थानिक ट्रैनिंग प्रयोगशाला (राजस्थान)

EMI Campus, J-8-A, Jhalana Institutional Area, Jaipur-302004 (Rajasthan)

F(No. RSLDC/PMKVY 3.0/2021-22/33847 Dated: 15.06.2021

Corrigendum

Subject :- Extension of last date of EoI under PMKVY-CCSM 3.0. (2021-26).

Reference :- RSLDC/PMKVY3.0/2020-21/33147 Dated: 13.05.2021

In reference to above subject, it is informed that the last date for submission of online proposals for EoI under PMKVY-CCSM 3.0. (2021-26) is extended till 22nd June-21. The online portal will be accepting proposals till 5.00 pm on 22nd June-21.

Further, timeliness for submission of hardcopy is also being extended till 30 June-21.

Managing Director

Raj.Samwad/C/21/2243

The detailed Request for Bids (RFB) Notice, Bidding Document along with other necessary information will be available on <http://htenders.gov.in> from 15th June, 2021 at 3:00 PM.

Note:- Any further addendum/Corrigendum to this Request for Bids (RFB) Notice shall be available to all the interested bidder on <http://htenders.gov.in>

Chief Engineer-cum-Project Director, State Roads Project, HPRIDCL, Nirman Bhawan, Nigam Vihar Shimla-171002, Himachal Pradesh India invites the online Bids for the Construction of Tunnel as mentioned below:-

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Cost of Document
1.	Construction of 2 Lane Road Tunnel parallel to the existing Dhalli Tunnel including all relevant E&M Works. Reconstruction of existing Approach Road and Maintenance at Shimla, Himachal Pradesh under Shimla Smart City Mission on Engineering, Procurement & Construction (EPC) Mode	Rs. 10,000/-

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Facsimile: +91-177-262663; Tel: +91-177-2627602;

HP/0153/2021-2022

कार्यालय आयुक्त विधिका शिक्षा

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ई-मेल: dme12001@yahoo.com, वेबसाइट: www.medicaleducation.mp.gov.in

क्रमांक: 912/नरसिंग/संचयिता 2021 वोपाल, दिनांक: 11/06/2021

विज्ञप्ति

बीएससी नरसिंग पाठ्यपत्रम् में प्रवेश हेतु काउंसिलिंग संबंधी सूचना

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States hit by unequal supply of vaccines

T.N., U.P. and Bihar get fewer doses from Centre despite high utilisation, show data from RTI query

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

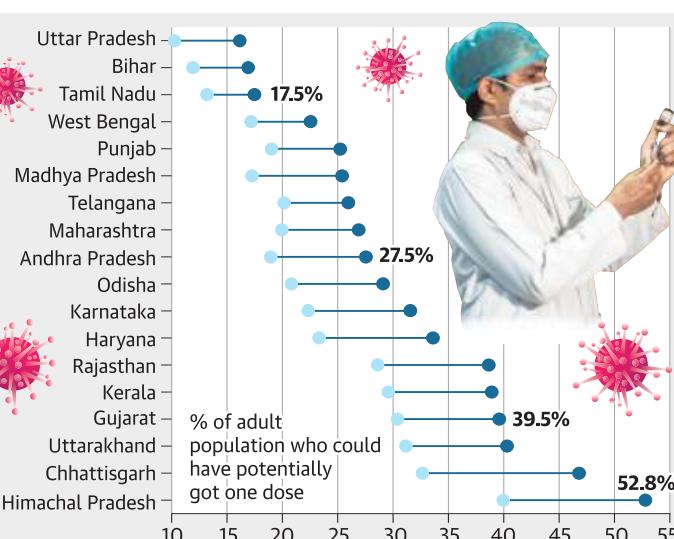
CHENNAI
The States such as Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar continue to experience a crunch in their COVID-19 vaccine supply, while those such as Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat are enjoying a relatively better stock position, data from an RTI query reply reveal.

Till June 9, nearly 25 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been supplied to the States and the Union Territories by the Centre and through the direct State procurement channel, the RTI reply reveals. This was about seven crore doses more than what was supplied about a month back on May 11.

A state-wise analysis of the doses received on both these dates relative to the adult population shows that supply to some States continues

States of doses

The graph shows the % of adult population who could have potentially received one dose of COVID-19 vaccines on May 11 (●) and June 9 (○). Data for May 11 was sourced from the PIB while the figures for June 9 were ascertained through RTI



to increase at a higher rate than others. For instance, with the number of doses supplied till May 11, Tamil Nadu could have potentially given one dose of the vaccine

to 13.2% of its adult population. A month later, as on June 9, the share of such adults has barely improved to 17.5%. In West Bengal, the share has slightly improved

from 17.2% to 22.5% in the considered period.

On the other hand, in Himachal Pradesh, the share of adults who could have potentially got a dose in the consider-

IICT inks pact with pharma firm for 2-DG

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology Hyderabad (IICT) and Anthem Biosciences Pvt. Ltd., a Bengaluru-based integrated biopharmaceutical company, signed an agreement for technology transfer and manufacture of the anti-COVID drug 2-DG or 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose on Tues-

Jabs help against hospitalisation'

2 doses of AstraZeneca or Pfizer vaccines effective against delta variant: study

R. PRASAD CHENNAI



The AstraZeneca vaccine is known as Covishield in India.

as a preprint. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed.

Public Health England had earlier found that despite modest reductions, vaccines remain effective against the delta variant. It found that full vaccination offered good protection against symptomatic disease.

Vaccine effectiveness

against symptomatic disease was 67% in the case of AstraZeneca and 88% with Pfizer.

Single dose

Effectiveness against hospitalisation was high even with one dose of AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccine. In the case of delta variant, one dose of AstraZeneca vaccine offered 71% protection, while two doses offered 92% protection. In the case of Pfizer vaccine, the protection was 94% after one dose and 96% after two doses.

"This is reassuring data for India. In order to choose our way forward, I think we should use modelling approaches that lay out diffe-

rent implementation strategies and compare their impact at different stages of the pandemic," says Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC Vellore.

Another study posted as a preprint on May 24 found that protection against all symptomatic infections after a single dose of AstraZeneca was only 33.5% against the delta variant and 51.1% against the beta (B.1.1.7) variant. After the second dose, the protection against all symptomatic infections increased to 59.8% in the case of the delta variant and 87.9% against the beta variant.

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Odisha records sharp decline in daily COVID-19 cases

State govt. is contemplating easing lockdown restrictions

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

bile improvement has been noticed in the past fortnight.

As per State government's audited death report, 42 persons were reported to have succumbed to COVID-19 taking the toll to 3,388 on Tuesday.

Active cases

Only five of the 30 districts have active cases higher than 2,500 while 12 other districts have active cases between 1,000 and 2,500. Active cases have fallen below 1,000 in 13 districts.

Western Odisha districts such as Nuapada, Balangir, Kalahandi, Sambalpur, Baragarh, Jharsuguda and Sunargarh where cases were

rising rapidly initially in the second wave are returning to normality.

The situation continued to be grim in the coastal region where Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Cuttack and Khordha have been reporting a high number of daily cases.

Khordha on Monday reported 500 cases followed by Jajpur with 391.

In view of the steady improvement, the government is contemplating to ease lockdown restrictions. As the lockdown ends on Wednesday, there would be gradual relaxation which would differ from district to district, according to sources

Maharashtra adds big backlog of deaths

12,909 fatalities updated in June's fatality figures

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

India recorded 62,265 new COVID-19 cases and 2,520 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,96,32,350 cases and 3,76,849 deaths.

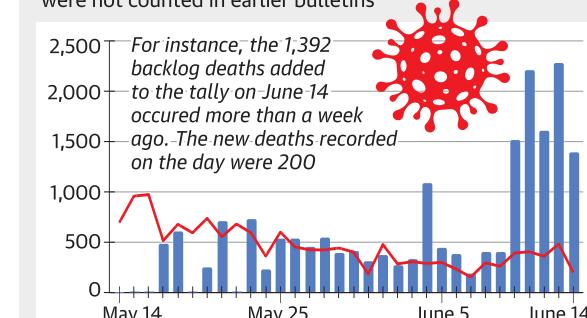
Kerala reported 12,246 new infections, followed by Tamil Nadu (11,805) and Maharashtra (9,350). Maharashtra recorded 1,458 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (267) and Kerala (166).

Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Aru-

Adding to the count

The chart shows the number of new fatalities (red line) and the number of backlog COVID-19 deaths (blue bars) added to the tally in Maharashtra between May 14 and June 14. Backlog deaths are those that occurred more than a week ago but were not counted in earlier bulletins.



nachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Between June 1 and June 14, Maharashtra has added 12,909 backlog deaths to its

total death toll. Backlog deaths are those that occurred more than a week before the day they were recorded but were not counted in the earlier bulletins.

The State had recorded a total of 1,12,696 fatalities due

to the virus until June 14.

Around 17.51 lakh samples were tested in the country on Monday (the results for which were made available on Tuesday).

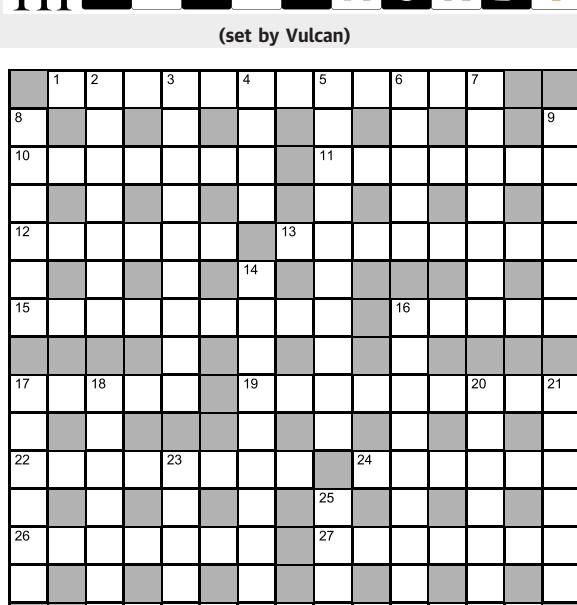
Vaccine doses

As many as 39.27 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Tuesday. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.11 lakh on June 14, which is more than the 27.8 lakh recorded a week before (June 7). About 22.4% of adults in India, 42.8% of those aged above 45, and 46.4% of people aged above 60, have been administered with at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Tuesday. Only 3.5% of India's total population is fully vaccinated.

TH CROSSWORD + 13275

(set by Vulcan)

Never go off the grid.
We are digital now. Come solve online.
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ACROSS

- A certain old head of state making announcements (12)
- Got even with one very English editor (7)
- Well-organised attendant (7)
- Highlight anxiety (6)
- Old boy, one who works in restaurant as supervisor (8)
- Warned UP political leader – got exposed (9)

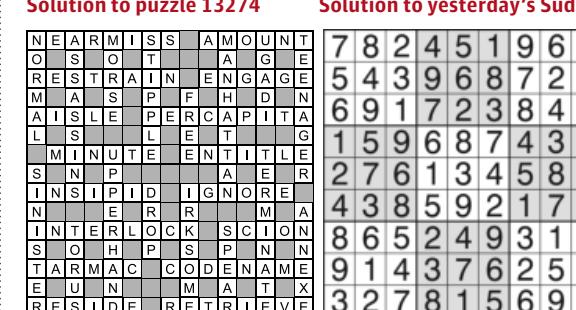
- 16 Day passed, I basically did nothing (5)
17 Man owning power plant (5)
19 Abrupt measure to stop commencement of operations in open space (9)
22 To retreat with difficulty (8)
24 One who sells revolutionary communist paintings (6)
26 Adventurer/mountaineer runs off road (7)
27 Evil guy popular round America (7)
28 With governor replaced, bringing downfall (12)
- DOWN
- 2 I heard it's black line – one on face (7)
3 Member is not around anymore to make laws (9)
4 Regretted, say, being offensive (4)
5 Tour made terrible by our singer (10)
6 Veteran, Tommy Sr., gone (5)
7 Silence on competitor losing area for energy contract (7)
8 City with saunas all over (6)
9 Cross empty highway and start to breathe free (6)
14 Someone accepted as eccentric (5,5)
16 Question football team's attitude (9)
17 Simple course – tacos for starters (6)
18 Remember this smell? It has no real effect (7)
20 Shortly after ending in Montana, North Dakota etc. (3,4)
21 Garment houses primarily under pressure (6)
23 Criticise Bishop's game (5)
25 I fell off seat having fish (4)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13274



U.S. moves to tackle domestic terrorism

It announces a national strategy that focuses on 'prevention, interruption and dissuasion'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

The U.S. government on Tuesday unveiled its "national strategy" to fight domestic terrorism, an issue that is a priority for President Joe Biden after the assault on Congress in January and the rise of white nationalist extremists.

"Domestic violent extremists motivated by a range of ideologies pose an elevated threat to our country in 2021," a senior administration official told mediapersons, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Racially or ethnically motivated violent extremists, and specifically those who espouse the superiority of the white race and anti-government militia violent extremists, [pose] the most



Big steps: The U.S. on January 6 saw a deadly attack on Congress by Trump supporters. ■ FILE PHOTO

lethal threat," the official said.

The government's plan is, however, "ideologically neutral" and consists of four pillars that focus on "prevention, interruption and dissuasion", while preserving individual freedoms.

The Biden administration

wants first to improve information sharing on extremist groups or individuals at the federal and local level. For this, the Justice Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have set up a nationwide system for reporting terrorism-related cases.

The government also

wants to thwart the recruitment of violent extremists and calls for violence in collaboration with large technology platforms and social media networks. Washington announced in May that it was joining the Christchurch Call, an international movement against the online dissemination of extremist content, which former president Donald Trump had refused to join.

The government will also improve the system for prosecuting extremists by recruiting analysts, investigators and prosecutors.

The fourth pillar is based on countering "long-term drivers and enablers of domestic terrorism, including economic inequality, those who feel left behind by the 21st-century economy, struc-

tural racism and the proliferation of guns," the official said.

Mr. Biden promised in his January 20 inauguration speech that the country would confront and defeat "the rise of political extremism, white supremacy, domestic terrorism" after a string of deadly racist attacks in recent years. In March, FBI chief Christopher Wray told Congress that the number of federal investigations working on "domestic terrorism" had doubled from 1,000 to 2,000 since he took office.

The U.S. was shocked by the deadly January 6 assault on Congress by Trump supporters. Nearly 500 people have been arrested for their roles in the attack, according to the FBI.

'Trump pressed Justice Dept. to probe poll fraud claims'

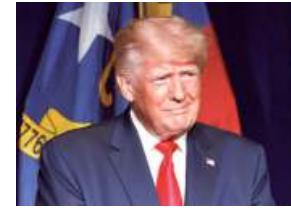
Emails show he sought DoJ support for his legal efforts

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON

During the last weeks of his presidency, Donald Trump and his allies pressured the Department of Justice (DoJ) to investigate unsubstantiated claims of widespread 2020 election fraud, despite his former Attorney-General declaring there was no evidence of it, newly released emails show.

The emails, released Tuesday by the House Oversight Committee, reveal in new detail how Mr. Trump, his White House chief of staff and other allies pressured members of the U.S. government to challenge the 2020 election over false claims, even though officials at Ho-



Donald Trump

Attorney General Jeffrey Rosen in his campaign's failing legal efforts to challenge the election result, including suggesting filing a brief with the U.S. Supreme Court.

The ones sent to Mr. Rosen include debunked conspiracy theories and false information about voter fraud.

Mr. Trump's chief of staff, Mark Meadows, asked about investigating allegations of voter fraud caused by satellites from Italy. Mr. Meadows tried to have Mr. Rosen investigate the conspiracy theories and pushed the acting Attorney General to meet with an ally of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani who was pitching unfounded election conspiracies.

U.S.-Russia ties are at an impasse: Kremlin official

Biden and Putin will meet today

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MOSCOW

A top aide to Vladimir Putin said U.S.-Russia relations are at an "impasse" but this week's summit with Joe Biden in Switzerland could help ease tensions.

Mr. Putin and Mr. Biden are to meet at a villa in Geneva on Wednesday with tensions high over a long list of disputes, from cyberattacks and election meddling to human rights violations.

"Russian-U.S. relations are now at an impasse, the situation is close to critical. Something needs to be done," Yuri Ushakov, Mr. Putin's foreign affairs adviser, told mediapersons ahead

Statement by NATO is slander: China

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

The Chinese mission to the European Union denounced a NATO statement that declared Beijing a "security challenge", saying China is a force for peace but will defend itself if threatened.

The Chinese news release said the NATO statement was a "slander on China's peaceful development, a misjudgment of the international situation and [NATO's] own role, and a continuation of the Cold War mentality".

Mr. Ushakov said the two leaders would discuss cybersecurity, climate change, the Arctic and regional conflicts, among other issues.

Taiwan reports 'largest' incursion by Chinese forces

'28 aircraft entered the air defence identification zone'

REUTERS
TAIPEI

As many as 28 Chinese air force aircraft, including fighters and nuclear-capable bombers, entered Taiwan's air defence identification zone (ADIZ) on Tuesday, the island's government said. It is the largest reported incursion to date.

While there was no immediate comment from Beijing, the news comes after the Group of Seven leaders issued a joint statement on Sunday scolding China and underscored the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.



The incursion involved J-16 and J-11 fighters, as well as H-6 bombers.

Taiwan has complained over the last few months of repeated missions by China's air force near the self-ruled island, concentrated in the southwestern part of its air defence zone near the Taiwan-controlled Pratas Islands.

The latest Chinese mission involved 14 J-16 and six J-11 fighters, as well as four H-6 bombers, which can carry nuclear weapons, and anti-submarine, electronic warfare and early warning aircraft, said Taiwan's Defense Ministry. It was the largest daily incursion since the Ministry began regularly reporting Chinese Air Force activities in Taiwan's ADIZ last year.

The Ministry said Taiwanese combat aircraft were dispatched to intercept the Chinese aircraft and missile systems were also deployed to monitor them.



Tragic attack: A soldier injured in a suicide bombing at a military base in Mogadishu leaving a hospital. ■ REUTERS

At least 15 killed in Somalia suicide attack

The bombing was at an army camp

REUTERS
MOGADISHU

At least 15 people were killed on Tuesday in a suicide bombing at an army camp in the Somali capital Mogadishu, a Reuters witness who counted the bodies at Madina Hospital said.

Officials at the hospital confirmed that the deceased were victims of an attack earlier in the day at an army camp.

There was no immediate

claim of responsibility. Islamist group al Shabaab frequently carries out bombings in the Horn of Africa country.

A Somali military officer, Odawaa Yusuf Rage, told state media earlier on Tuesday that 10 new recruits had been killed and 20 others wounded, when a suicide bomber detonated explosives at a checkpoint outside of General Degaban military training camp in the capital.

Far-right Israeli groups to march in East Jerusalem

Palestinian factions slam the decision

REUTERS

JERUSALEM

Far-right Israeli groups will march in and around East Jerusalem's Old City on Tuesday in a flag-waving procession that risks igniting tensions with Palestinians in the contested city and rekindling violence between Israel and Gaza militants.

Assailing the march as a "provocation", Palestinian factions have called for a 'Day of Rage' in Gaza and the Israeli-occupied West Bank. Gaza's Islamist rulers Hamas have warned of renewed hostilities if it goes ahead.



Israeli border police blocking a main road ahead of the march.

"We warn of the dangerous repercussions that may result from the occupying power's intention to allow extremist Israeli settlers to carry out the Flag March in occupied Jerusalem tomorrow," Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh said on Twitter.

An original march

China scientist denies Wuhan lab leak theory

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The Chinese scientist at the centre of theories that COVID-19 originated with a leak from her specialised lab in the city of Wuhan has denied that her institution was to blame for the pandemic.

"How on earth can I offer up evidence for something where there is no evidence?" Dr. Shi Zhengli told *The New York Times*.

"I don't know how the world has come to this, constantly pouring filth on an innocent scientist."

Dr. Shi is an expert in bat coronaviruses, and some scientists have said she could have been leading so-called gain-of-function experiments, in which scientists increase the strength of a virus to better study its effects on hosts.

'COVID-19 feeding extremism in Germany'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

Germany's far-right has grown more radical during the COVID-19 pandemic, Interior Mi-

nister Horst Seehofer said on Tuesday while presenting a report. The 2020 report from the Office for the Protection of the Constitu-

tion found a 3.8% rise in the number of people considered right-wing extremists last year, to around 33,300 people.

TAMIL NADU SLUM CLEARANCE BOARD MADURAI CIRCLE NOTICE INVITING TENDER FORM OF CONTRACT - "LUMPSUM" (TWO COVER SYSTEM)				
Tender Notice No.SCB/071/2021				
For and on behalf of Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, sealed tenders consisting of two separate seal covers one for Pre-qualification with EMD to be enclosed in 'A' cover and another for price schedule with name of work duly superscribed to be enclosed in 'B' cover, are invited from the registered contractors under Class-I and above in TNSCB / Government Departments / Government undertakings by the Superintendent Engineer, Madurai Circle, Tamil Nadu Slum Clearance Board, 169 K.K.Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 to 3.00 PM on 20.07.2021 and the same will be opened at 3.15 PM on the same day in the presence of the Tender Scrutiny Committee.				
S. No	Name of Work	Tender Value Period of contract EMD Rs in Lakh		
1	Construction of 252 nos of Slum tenements adopting T.D.3/2018 including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Pottakkalam Phase-II, Allinagaram Municipality in Theni District under HFA, Vertical-III (AHP) of PMAY. CER-Madurai No.12/HFA/2020-21	2424.35 12 Months		
2	Construction of 264 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.3/2018 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Thoppukuppam in Palani Taluk of Dindigul District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.14/HFA/2020-21	2387.24 12 Months		
3	Construction of 280 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.23/2020 (G+4) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Subramanipuram Scavengers Colony of Madurai District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.15/HFA/2020-21	3747.31 15 Months		
4	Construction of 240 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.3/2017 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at Pappankulam in Ambasamudram Taluk of Tirunelveli District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.16/HFA/2020-21	1985.10 12 Months		
5	Construction of 528 nos of slum tenements adopting T.D.3/2017 (G+2) including internal water supply, sanitary and electrification arrangements including development works at VOC Nagar in Thoothukudi District under HFA. CER-Madurai No.17/HFA/2020-21	4748.25 12 Months		
The cost of tender schedule, EMD should be drawn as Demand Draft or Banker's Cheque from Nationalised / Scheduled Bank payable in favour of the Executive Engineer, Madurai Division, TNSCB, payable at Madurai for Rs. 4 & 1/3 in favour of the Executive Engineer, Tirunelveli Division, TNSCB, payable at Tirunelveli for Rs. 4 & 5. The tender documents may be obtained from the office of the Superintendent Engineer, Madurai Circle, TNSCB, 169 K.K. Nagar Main Road, Madurai - 20 on written requisition along with cost of the tender document to a value of Rs. 17,700/- (Non refundable) upto 3.00 PM on 19.07.2021				
Conditions for participating in the tenders may be obtained from the website www.tenders.in.gov.in. The undersigned reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof.				
Superintendent Engineer, Madurai Circle.				

PURABI DAIRY The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Ltd. Ref No. MD/PC/APART-E-Tender/2021-22/02 Dated : 16th June, 2021 E-procurement Tender Notice			
The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL) is an implementing agency of World Bank Financed Assam Agriculture and Rural Transformation Project (APART) and now intends to purchase the following item from the eligible bidder as mentioned below:			
S. No	Category	Date of publishing tender	Last date of submission of Quotations
1	Frozen Semen Dose	17.06.2021	17.07.2021

TNPL TAMILNADU NEWSPRINT AND PAPERS LIMITED Unit-1: Kaghithapuram - 639 136, KARUR Dist. Tamil Nadu Ph. : 04324 - 277001 (10 Lines)			
Unit-2: Mondipatti - 621 306, TRICHY Dist. Tamil Nadu Ph. : 04322 - 261600			
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS			
Tender No	Description	Date Due	
212213 001348	Transportation of Paper Reels / Bundles / Boxes from TNPL Unit-I at Kaghithapuram to various branches / destinations throughout India.	30.06.2021	

MARKET WATCH

	15-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,773	0.42
US Dollar	73.31	0.00
Gold	47,853	0.31
Brent oil	73.67	0.38

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	761.85	-6.60
Asian Paints	3042.20	92.30
Axis Bank	750.90	14.65
Bajaj Auto	4138.10	-8.40
Bajaj Finserv	11798.70	-127.45
Bajaj Finance	6161.15	-32.00
Bharti Airtel	542.50	3.15
BPCL	481.90	-1.80
Britannia Ind	3631.85	40.60
Cipla	969.70	-6.45
Coal India	157.15	-2.20
Divis Lab	4313.05	-75.00
Dr Reddys Lab	5410.85	-50.50
Eicher Motors	2763.50	18.55
Grasim Ind	1495.25	2.25
HCL Tech	985.45	1.25
HDFC	2545.10	5.90
HDFC Bank	1490.25	10.80
HDFC Life	692.55	10.85
Hero MotoCorp	3007.05	21.40
Hindalco	390.85	-3.95
Hind Unilever	2391.95	27.35
ICICI Bank	645.30	10.15
IndusInd Bank	1034.45	10.15
Infosys	1473.90	12.10
Indian Oil Corp	115.75	1.00
ITC	207.05	-0.25
JSW Steel	725.10	-4.05
Kotak Bank	1770.90	2.85
L&T	1510.80	-4.95
M&M	808.60	1.15
Maruti Suzuki	7166.25	-11.60
Nestle India Ltd.	17684.80	107.30
NTPC	117.80	-0.40
ONGC	125.35	0.55
PowerGrid Corp	247.60	-1.10
Reliance Ind	2250.00	5.10
SBI Life	995.85	9.70
State Bank	429.50	-0.85
Shree Cement	28485.90	151.85
Sun Pharma	673.20	-3.90
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	719.50	4.75
Tata Motors	352.70	-3.25
Tata Steel	1174.30	9.50
TCS	3262.75	-13.60
Tech Mahindra	1066.85	-2.40
Titan	1723.40	-11.40
UltraTech Cement	6668.30	-10.20
UPL	841.80	7.20
Wipro	557.90	-3.70

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 15		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.11	73.43
Euro	88.66	89.05
British Pound	102.95	103.41
Japanese Yen (100)	66.45	66.74
Chinese Yuan	11.42	11.47
Swiss Franc	81.39	81.75
Singapore Dollar	55.10	55.35
Canadian Dollar	60.01	60.28
Malaysian Ringgit	17.74	17.83

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



TVS cuts price of iQube e-scooter by ₹11,250

CHENNAI TVS Motor Company has reduced the prices of its electric scooter TVS iQube Electric by ₹11,250. The new pricing is in line with the revision in subsidy under FAME II scheme. The incentive would increase the reach of electric two-wheelers in the country, the company said. The revised price of iQube Electric in New Delhi will be ₹1,00,777 and Bengaluru ₹1,10,506.

Ashok Leyland arm buys out EV-maker SMAL

CHENNAI Ashok Leyland's subsidiary Switch Mobility Ltd. of U.K. has acquired the entire shareholding in EV maker Switch Mobility Automotive Ltd. India (SMAL) on Monday, resulting in the latter becoming a step-down subsidiary of the company. SMAL was incorporated in December last year with a paid up capital of ₹1 crore to manufacture and sell electric vehicles (EVs).

AIRA to aid development of debt market

MUMBAI Two credit rating agencies (CRAs) have established 'Association of Indian Rating Agencies' (AIRA). AIRA is expected to work closely with the regulator and government for debt-market development, the agencies said. While Care Ratings Ltd. and Acuité Ratings & Research Ltd. are the founding members, two more CRAs may join soon, Care and Acuite officials said.

NBFC Authum set to buy Reliance Home Finance

NEW DELHI Authum Investment and Infrastructure Ltd. has emerged as the highest bidder for Reliance Home Finance, a group company of the debt-ridden Anil Ambani-promoted Reliance Group, with ₹2,887 crore offer. Sources said lenders led by Bank of Baroda would receive ₹2,887 crore of which ₹2,587 crore, or 90%, would be paid upfront and ₹300 crore within a year. PTI

Inflation spurs spike in bond yield; rupee hits 1-month low

Latest data would make RBI wary of continuing to boost liquidity, says economist

REUTERS

MUMBAI

India's benchmark 10-year bond yield closed at its highest level in more than six weeks while the rupee ended at a one-month low on the back of a larger-than-expected surge in retail inflation.

The benchmark 10-year bond yield ended at 6.04%, after touching 6.05%, its highest since April 30 and up 4 basis points on the day.

Retail inflation rate rose 6.3% year-on-year in May, from 4.29% in April and sharply above analysts' estimate of 5.3%. The wholesale price inflation rate rose 12.9%, its highest in at least two decades.

Traders are worried the



Tight spot: Traders are worried the spike in inflation beyond RBI's target band could force it to act sooner. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

spike in inflation beyond the RBI's mandated target band of 2%-6% could force it to act sooner on inflation, but two senior sources said the growth focus will continue for the time being.

"The latest data would make RBI wary of continuing to boost liquidity in a big way, and whether RBI stops unwinding its forwards book, or limits bond market intervention to announced

G-SAP will be closely eyed," Abhishek Upadhyay, economist at ICICI Securities Primark Dealership said in a note.

The G-SAP or government securities acquisition programme of the RBI has been crucial in ensuring the government's massive ₹2.06 trillion borrowing programme goes smoothly, and more measures may be needed to support markets.

The rupee closed at 73.3125 per dollar after touching 73.32, its weakest since May 14.

Traders said inflation and demand for dollars by importers weighed on the local unit and they would keenly watch out for the outcome of the upcoming Fed meeting.

Canara Bank to buy 12% stake in bad bank

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Canara Bank said it will be the lead sponsor of National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd. (NARCL), or bad bank, with a 12% stake in the entity.

Bad bank refers to a financial institution that takes over bad assets of lenders and undertakes resolution.

"The board of Canara Bank has given in-principle approval for taking stake in NARCL," Canara Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Following the board nod, the bank has sought the approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for participating in NARCL as a sponsor contributing 12% stake.

Move precedes nod for Piramal buyout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has revoked the deposit-taking status of Dewan Housing Finance (DHFL), the first financial services firm to go for bankruptcy proceedings.

The central bank had reclassified DHFL as a non-deposit-taking housing finance company, before approving the Piramal Group's bid to take over it towards the end of the resolution process.

This was revealed in the June 7 order of the NCLT Mumbai approving the ₹35,250-crore bid by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance, forcing a more than 65% haircut on creditors and just ₹1 to NCD holders to



whom the firm owes more than ₹45,000 crore.

The changes were made in February 2021, after the banking regulator gave a no objection to the January 25, 2021 application by R. Subramaniamkumar, the DHFL administrator, citing Rule 5 of its FSP (financial services providers) Rules.

U.S. arbitrator tells DRL unit to pay \$46.25 mn

Ruling backs Australia's Hatchtech Pty



Govt., Infosys to discuss I-T portal glitches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) on Tuesday said one of its subsidiaries had been asked to pay \$46.25 million, under an arbitration award, to Hatchtech Pty Ltd., the Australian firm with whom it had entered into an asset purchase pact in 2015.

Stating that the award was issued by the International Centre for Dispute Resolution, U.S., the pharmaceuticals company said it was exploring all legal options to challenge the award.

The subsidiary had been asked to make the payment towards milestones, interest and fees to Hatchtech in connection with the asset purchase agreement, DRL said in a regulatory filing.

Also, the sum had been already accounted for and charged off in the company's financial statements for 2020-21, Dr. Reddy's Laboratories said in the filing to the stock exchanges.

Higher price in private markets needed to offset costs



Observing that less than 10% of the Covaxin output had been supplied to private hospitals, the company said the weighted average price of Covaxin for all supplies realised by it was less than ₹250 per dose.

Unlike most medicines, vaccines were provided free of cost by the Centre to all eligible citizens. Hence, procurement of vaccines by private hospitals was optional and not mandatory, the company contended.

"In our view, the question of product pricing is only of extraneous interest to all concerned, especially when the same vaccine is made available free of cost," Bharat Biotech said.

Exports surge 69%, trade deficit widens

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

India's exports rose by 69% to \$32.3 billion in May, driven by healthy growth in sectors such as engineering, petroleum products and gems and jewellery, even as the trade deficit widened to \$6.3 billion, according to government data released on Tuesday.

Imports grew by almost 74% to \$38.6 billion – leaving a trade deficit for the month at \$6.3 billion.

Exports during April-May this year jumped to \$62.9 billion, from \$29.4 billion in the year-earlier period. Imports were recorded at \$84.3 billion, an increase from \$39.3 billion in the same two months of 2020. The trade deficit came in at \$21.4 billion, as against \$9.9 billion.

Retail sales decline 79% from two years earlier

Need government support, says RAI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Retail sales in India slipped 79% in May compared with pre-COVID sales in the same month in 2019, as businesses across States were closed due to the second wave of the pandemic, a survey by Retailers Association of India (RAI) showed.

The decline in sales was the steepest in West and North India, which witnessed an 83% dip last month as compared with April 2019, RAI said in a statement.

"Retailers are looking forward to some improvement in June with gradual unlocking. However, the industry needs the collective support of various government bodies to tide over the present situation," RAI CEO Kumar Rajagopal said.

Eastern region saw a decline of 75%, while South was relatively better with a contraction of 73% as compared to the same month in 2019. On a sequential basis, the decline in May was much steeper compared to

the previous month, when overall sales across India were down 49% as compared with April 2019, the survey showed.

"Retailers are looking forward to some improvement in June with gradual unlocking. However, the industry needs the collective support of various government bodies to tide over the present situation," RAI

Indian women return to the Test arena today

Mithali & Co. short on practice but high on confidence as they meet England

INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BRISTOL

A favourable record in England and a "positive mindset" despite inadequate time for preparation will spur the Indian women's team when it takes on England in its first Test engagement in nearly seven years here from Wednesday.

After multiple quarantines in India and the UK, the Mithali Raj-led squad got little over a week, that too only in the nets, to prepare for its first red-ball game since November 2014.

Mithali is among the seven players who were part of that victorious XI against South Africa in Mysuru.

Seventeen-year-old Shafali Verma is expected to make her debut and open the innings with Smriti Mandhana. The experienced trio of Mithali, Harmanpreet and Punam Raut follow.



What a finish! The Indian players are on cloud nine after the Test victory against England at Wormsley in 2014. ■ FILE PHOTO

On the bowling front, veteran pacers Jhulan Goswami and Shikha Pandey will have to shake off the rust of the long hiatus.

The spinners, who had a forgettable time at home in the limited-overs series

against South Africa, will be itching to make amends. In England, India has not lost in eight Tests and won two.

The squads: India: Mithali Raj (Capt.), Smriti Mandhana, Harmanpreet Kaur (Vice-Capt.), Punam Raut, Priya Punia, Deep-

ti Sharma, Jemimah Rodrigues, Shafali Verma, Sneh Rana, Tanya Bhattrai (wk), Indrani Roy, Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey, Pooja Vastrakar, Arundhati Reddy, Poonam Yadav, Ekta Bisht and Radha Yadav.

England: Heather Knight (Capt.), Nat Sciver (Vice-Capt.),

India has played 36 Tests, won five, lost six, drawn 25

■ India's last Test was against South Africa in 2014 at Mysuru. The host won by an innings and 34 runs

■ The victory helped India equal Australia's record of most successive Test wins (three)

■ India's final Test against England was played at Wormsley in 2014, where it won by six wickets

■ In bilateral Tests between India and England, Mithali tops the charts with 505 runs (avg. 63.12). Jhulan is the leading bowler with 29 wickets (avg. 14.93).

Emily Arlott, Tammy Beaumont, Katherine Brunt, Kate Cross, Freya Davies, Sophia Dunkley, Sophie Ecclestone, Georgia Elwiss, Tash Farrant, Sarah Glenn, Amy Jones, Anya Shrubsole, and Mady Villiers, Fran Wilson and Lauren Winfield-Hill.

Match starts at 3.30 p.m.

Players want to figure in longer format'

Mithali says priority is to take the field in right frame of mind



larly challenging.

"You don't want to burden them with expectations and responsibilities," said Mithali. "As a team we would support them on the field and they should just enjoy playing this format."

She hopes the current tour could be a new beginning as far as women's Test cricket is concerned. "This – and the pink-ball Test in Australia later on – opens the channel to have a three-format bilateral series," the skipper said.

"Cricketers still want to play the longer format. Because... that is the format that tests the skills of the players. Maybe in the coming years, it might also lead to a World Test championship."

After making her Test debut in 2002, she has played only nine more. None of those Tests had attracted as much attention as the one that is about to get underway as it will be telecast live.

Lack of match practice a disadvantage, but we are ready: Pujara

Maybe a few extra days of preparation would have helped, but we can't complain, says India's batting mainstay

WTC FINAL

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Cheteshwar Pujara, the senior batsman, has admitted that lack of a warm-up fixture ahead of India's inaugural World Test Championship (WTC) final versus New Zealand is a bit of a disadvantage.

"It is (a disadvantage), but this is something we can't control. These are challenging times in the world because of the pandemic, and you can't have the luxury of extra preparation time. But the most important part is the game is still going on and that we're playing a final," Pujara said from Southampton in a virtual media interaction on Tuesday.

"Yes, preparation time is a bit of a disadvantage maybe, but if you are ready for the

challenge, even if circumstances aren't favourable, you would do well. We are confident as a team. Maybe a few extra days of preparation would have helped, but we can't complain. We are ready."

India will face New Zealand at The Ageas Bowl from Friday. While New Zealand will enter the game having defeated England in a two-Test series, India has had to make do with intra-squad match besides net sessions after serving mandatory quarantine in Southampton.

Pujara insisted that India had made the most of the "centre-wicket simulation", with batsmen trying to "spend time in the middle" and bowlers "getting used to workload".

The veteran batsman, who is one of the leading Test-match specialists for India, stressed the WTC final is as



Historic moment: Pujara says the WTC final is like a World Cup final for him. ■ INSTAGRAM/CHETESHWAR_PUJARA

big as a World Cup final for him.

"Personally, it means a lot to me. This is the first time we are in a WTC final. We have worked hard over a pe-

riod of time. It's just like playing in a 50-over or T20 World Cup final," he said.

"Test cricket needs to survive, and a WTC format helps where every Test, every se-

ries is important. If we win, then many youngsters would want to play the Test format and be part of the final when the next cycle comes around."

It was an ideal preparation to play two Test matches with guys getting match preparation. I couldn't think of anything better.

ROSS TAYLOR

Meanwhile, India has omitted Shardul Thakur from the 15-member squad for the WTC final. The pruned squad was announced on Tuesday as per the ICC regulations.

The team management has preferred the experience of Umesh Yadav ahead of the Mumbai pacer.

The squad:

Virat Kohli (Capt.), Ajinkya Rahane (Vice-capt.), Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Cheteshwar Pujara, Rishabh Pant (wk), Ravindra Jadeja, Hanuma Vihari, Umesh Yadav, Ravichandran Ashwin, Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma, Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Siraj, Wriddhiman Saha (wk).

Williamson cleared to play, will lead the Kiwis

REUTERS
SOUTHAMPTON

New Zealand has cleared captain Kane Williamson and wicketkeeper BJ Watling to play in the inaugural World Test Championship final against India, while retaining Ajaz Patel as a specialist spinner in the 15-man squad.

Doug Bracewell, Jacob Duffy, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra and Mitchell Santner will miss out after being part of the original 20-player touring squad.

"Kane and BJ have certainly benefited from their week of rest and rehabilitation and we expect them to be fit and available for the final," New Zealand coach Gary Stead said on Tuesday.

"We've gone with Ajaz as our specialist spinner after an impressive outing at Edgbaston (against England) and we believe he could be a



Williamson. ■ REUTERS
factor at the Ageas Bowl," added Stead.

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

Dravid confirmed as coach



Rahul Dravid. ■ FILE PHOTO

INDIA IN SL

ANI
NEW DELHI

Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah has confirmed that former India skipper Rahul Dravid will coach the team for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka.

The Shikhar Dhawan-led team will play three ODIs and three T20Is at the R. Premadasa International Cricket Stadium in Colombo.

"Rahul will be coaching the team for the Sri Lanka series," Shah said.

The team assembled on Monday and is undergoing seven days of hard quarantine.

Medvedev ousted

HALLE OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

World No. 2 Daniil Medvedev, the top seed here, was a first-round casualty at the ATP grass court tournament in Halle on Tuesday as he suffered a shock 7-6 (6), 6-3 defeat to Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff.

Fourth seed Andrey Rublev beat his doubles partner Karen Khachanov 6-3, 7-6(5) in the first round.

Boult was swinging the ball, hitting Rohit on the pads, and telling him,

Consistent India starts favourite, says Laxman

ASHWIN ACHAL
BENGALURU



Shubman Gill. ■ FILE PHOTO

'It would've been nice to represent the country in WTC'

However, for the spectators it would be difficult to follow multiple series in between: Tendulkar

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Sachin Tendulkar, former India captain, is excited ahead of the inaugural WTC final. He shared his views ahead of the contest in a brief conversation. Excerpts:

What would your preferred bowling combination be for India?

It depends on the surface and I am sure the groundsmen will be watering it till the 17th. I haven't had a look at the wicket but I know there are three options. One

is to play with seven batters, three seamers and one spinner. The second option is to play with four seamers and one spinner. And the last is to play three seamers and two spinners. It's too early to figure out the combination. The advantage with India is both the spinners can bat.

What do you make of the contrasting preparation for both the sides?

It is actually a coincidence that New Zealand and England have played a series just before the WTC final.

But they obviously have that advantage of having played two practice matches in the form of Tests. We haven't had that advantage but I would much rather focus on having done whatever best we could, given the circumstances. It is important to think of the next step rather than the last one. The next step matters and that's where the focus should be.

Would you have liked to be a part of a concept like WTC?

It would have obviously been nice to be representing the

country in the Test Championship final. As a player, yes. But am not too sure as a spectator. It's too spaced out, I feel.

There were multiple series happening in between, so it was difficult to follow. But as a player, it would have been exciting. The gaps in series make it difficult to follow.

For instance, we played New Zealand early in 2020 and now after 16 months, we'll be playing them in the final. It's a long time.



Sachin Tendulkar. ■ FILE PHOTO

India advances to next round

FOOTBALL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DOHA

TODAY'S MATCHES

GROUP B

Finland vs Russia
6.30 p.m.

GROUP A

Turkey vs Wales
9.30 p.m.

Italy vs Switzerland

12.30 a.m. (Thursday)

Live on Sony Ten 2, 3 &

Sony Six (SD & HD)

Spain ran out of steam in the second half before rallying again late on but still failed to beat Sweden keeper Robin Olsen, who thwarted substitute Gerard Moreno in stoppage time.

The lively Dani Olmo created three promising chances in the first half but the best chance fell to Morata, who failed to cash in on a lapse of concentration by Sweden's Marcus Danielsson but slotted wide of goal with only Olsen to beat.

The results: Group E: Spain 0 drew with Sweden 0.

Group F: Hungary 0 lost to Portugal 3 (Guerreiro 84, Ronaldo 87-pen, 90+2).

It was an open and fast-paced game with the Afghans playing a more physical game in a contest which witnessed several fouls.

With seven points from eight matches, India finished third in Group E behind toppers Qatar and Oman, and ahead of Afghanistan (fourth with six points from eight matches).



On a high: Ronaldo overtook Platini to become the highest scorer in Euro history. ■ POOL VIA REUTERS

Marcus Berg. Alvaro Morata spurned Spain's best opportunity in a dominant first half display from Luis Enrique's side on a scorching evening at Seville's La Cartuja stadium in Group E when he missed the target from inside the area after a defensive slip.

But Sweden's Berg was equally wasteful when he somehow missed the target after a sensational piece of skill and cross from fellow forward Alexander Isak, who had manoeuvred his way past four Spain defenders to put the chance on a plate.

TV PICKS

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

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

IN BRIEF



CONMEBOL's tribute to Maradona

RIO DE JANEIRO
Diego Maradona's life was honoured in a tribute featuring lights and projections onto the pitch before Argentina's Copa America opener against Chile. It was organised by South American soccer body CONMEBOL. Maradona died at age 60 last November. AP

Anand wants closure to controversy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOZHIKODE

"It's time to move on and get closure on this." That is the quote from five-time World champion Viswanathan Anand, referring to the controversy following his online simultaneous chess games against celebrities on Sunday. It had become obvious that some players had used the aid of the computer during their matches.

The organiser of the COVID-19 fund-raiser event, chess.com, had closed the account of three players for unfair practices. On Tuesday, however, it reopened those accounts because of – according to chess.com – "...the forthcoming cooperation of the players and the clarification that not all the rules were properly understood...Anand...has expressed no interest in further pursuing the matter."

"While he wants clearly expressed that he does not endorse the use of the non-approved assistance in chess, he agrees fully that the games were played in good faith..."

Ankeet Chavan cleared to play

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Ankeet Chavan, the left-arm spinner from Mumbai who was involved in the 2013 IPL corruption scandal, has been formally cleared by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to resume competitive cricket. The life ban, imposed in September 2013, had been converted into a seven-year suspension by the BCCI ethics officer last month.

"It's a huge sigh of relief for me and everyone in the family to have finally got the formal communication," the former Rajasthan Royals bowler told *The Hindu* on Tuesday.

"I am thankful to the BCCI and my parent body, Mumbai Cricket Association."

Messi is brilliant, Argentina is not

Romeros on song as Paraguay romps past Bolivia

COPA AMERICA

ASSOCIATED PRESS
RIO DE JANEIRO

Lionel Messi scored a stunning free kick, repeatedly dribbled through the Chilean defence and created opportunities regularly for his Argentina teammates.

Despite Messi's intense performance, Argentina was held 1-1 by Chile in its Copa America opener.

Coach Lionel Scaloni's line-up wasted three clear opportunities between the 16th and 18th minutes, one from Lautaro Martinez and two for Nicolas Gonzalez.

And then Messi opened the scoring in the 33rd after a free kick that Chilean goalkeeper Claudio Bravo couldn't stop despite getting a touch on the ball to his left.

Transformation

But Chile transformed into a more attacking team in the second half and earned a penalty after video review. Arturo Vidal's shot from the



Up and over: Lionel Messi, No. 10, sees his effort beat the Chilean wall for Argentina's opener. ■ AP

spot was stopped, but Eduardo Vargas nodded into the empty goal to level the scores in the 57th.

Messi continued to create opportunities until the end of the match, but his team-

mates showed the same difficulty to deliver goals as they did in the 2-2 draw at Colombia in a World Cup qualifier in Barranquilla last week.

Meanwhile, Paraguay leads group A after a 3-1 win

over Bolivia at the Olímpico stadium in Goiânia.

Bolivia scored first via Erwin Saavedra's first-half penalty, but Paraguay changed its fortunes after the break with goals by Alejandro

By The Numbers

■ 1 - Messi scored off a direct free kick for Argentina after 1672 days after the one against Colombia, on 15 November 2016, in the WC Qualifiers

■ 2 - Angel Romero is the first Paraguayan to score a brace in the Copa America since the 2007 edition

■ 10 - The goal chances created by Romero Gamarra, a record in a Copa America match since 2007

Romero and a brace by Ángel Romero.

Argentina's next match is against Uruguay on Friday. Chile will face Bolivia on the same day. Paraguay returns to action next Monday against Argentina.

The results:

Group A: Argentina 1 (Messi 33) drew with Chile 1 (Vargas 57); Paraguay 3 (Romero Gamarra 62, Angel Romero 65, 80) bt Bolivia 1 (Saavedra 10-pen).

Violators of safety rules could be disqualified

TOKYO OLYMPICS

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TOKYO

exclusion from the Games, deportation and fines.

In the media briefing, the IOC also mentioned that an additional 20,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses will be available for people who are involved in the Games.

The organisers said that 70%-80% of the media covering the Games to be vaccinated.

The organisers also said every sports delegation arriving in Japan will have a COVID liaison officer coordinating with the organisers on the implementation of the measures to stop the spread of the virus at the event due to start on July 23.

Bhagyashree and Pranesh claim titles



Bhagyashree Patil.



M. Pranesh.

CHESS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

After 10th-round leaders Delhi's Khuanna Kapoor and Gujarat's Riddhi Patel drew quickly on the top board, Bhagyashree, playing black, defeated Statemate Aahana Pachchigar to reach nine points. As it turned out, Bhagyashree's tie-break was superior to those of Khuanna and Riddhi.

The three-day National under-14 championship begins on Wednesday.

Final standings (after 11 rounds):

Open: 1-2. M. Pranesh (TN), Aaryan Varshney (Del) (9.5 each); 3-5. Manish Kumar (Odi), Jimmy Jubin (Ker) and Akshay Posina (Tel) (9 each).

Girls: 1-3. Bhagyashree Patil (Mah), Khuanna Kapoor (Del), Riddhi Patel (Guj) (9 each); 4-5. Dhyani Patel (Guj) and K. Ratnapriya (TN) (8.5 each).

NRAI achieves its primary objective

Shooters preparing as a team in a professional and safe environment

SHOOTING

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) has achieved its primary objective of preparing 15 shooters as a team in a professional and safe environment as they get ready to compete in the Tokyo Olympics.

It has already been well documented the way 13 rifle and pistol shooters, along with coaches and support staff were sent in a chartered aircraft to be based in Zagreb in the run-up to the Games.

Angad Vir Singh Bajwa had set the tone by reaching Italy immediately after the World Cup here in March.

Much later, Mairaj Ahmad Khan moved to Italy for a sanctioned training stint with coach Ennio Falco.

The NRAI was able to draft Angad into the camp, even though he had different plans of preparation with coach Tore Brovold.

While Angad had planned



Working hard: Mairaj, Angad and coach Falco during training in Italy. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to shoot at the World Cup in Osijek, Croatia, from June 24, Mairaj had left it to the coach to take a call.

Falco decided that the two Indian shooters would skip the World Cup so as to prepare better and reach their

peak in Tokyo.

"I have been training in the camp at Ennio's range with Mairaj for about a month now. The coach decided that we would not shoot in the World Cup as it will be close to the Olympics," said Angad.

There were other factors that led to the decision.

"Safety is also an issue. Owing to COVID-19, we had to keep in mind a secure environment and not take a chance. Also, competing in Croatia would have meant two days of travel. That apart, many days of training would be disrupted if we compete in the World Cup," reasoned Angad, who keeps in touch with coach Brovold as well.

Flexible

Despite being firm with its plans of preparation and stressing on the sense of solidarity as a team, NRAI has been flexible in allowing the coaches, to a great extent, to decide the best way forward.

Peak performance

Despite being firm with its plans of preparation and stressing on the sense of solidarity as a team, NRAI has been flexible in allowing the coaches, to a great extent, to decide the best way forward.

Despite reaching the quarterfinals at Roland-Garros, Bopanna could only improve his ranking from 40 to 38. There was no remarkable slip for Diivj, who moved from 73 to 75.

The International Tennis Federation (ITF) will first work on the list of 56 direct entrants in singles for men

and women. It will also award the final eight ITF qualification places to the eligible continental performers.

The ITF is scheduled to inform the respective national federations about their eligible singles players by Wednesday.

Thereafter, the process will continue for the doubles teams.

For a draw of 32, there will be 31 direct acceptances,

on the basis of combined world rank of singles or doubles, of the two

players in each team.

Doubles players ranked in the top-10 will have automatic entry into the Olympics, as long as their partners have a

top-300 rank.

Each country can enter a maximum of 6 men and 6 women players. There will be a restriction of a maximum of four singles players,

and two doubles teams each,

for the men's and women's events.

The mixed doubles teams will be accepted on site in Tokyo on July 27 with an II



Longer wait: Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan will have to wait for the ITF to finalise the singles list first. ■ AP

and women on tour can afford to take his place for granted.

Whatever it is, the manner in which teams have made huge changes from match to match, and still succeeded, is an interesting development. Not yet a trend, but it might graduate into one.

Changes are made for a second reason too, and there might be issues with that. Again, owing to the pandemic, teams have had to rotate their players, ensuring they get sufficient rest and are fresh for each match.

England have made a fetish of this, resting Moeen, Bairstow, Buttler, Curran, and Woakes for the New Zealand series. Woakes had bowled just 21 overs in competition in nine months previously, so 'rest' was hardly what he

had in mind.

The rotation policy is lauded as a masterstroke when the team wins, but seen as foolish and counter-productive when it loses.

England's problem was

their inflexibility, the refusal to change plans when the IPL was shortened and players flew home, giving themselves more rest than they originally expected to have.

Team priorities

Teams have different priorities too, and the selections are made accordingly. For England, it is the Ashes series at the top followed by International Cricket Council tournaments like the World Cups. The suspicion that they used the New Zealand series as 'nets' before the Ashes cannot be shaken away. That is hardly fair to the No. 1 Test team in the world. New Zealand have the right to expect the best team to take them on, for beating a second XI is deeply unsatisfying. But you can only beat the team that turns up.

When Roger Federer pulled out in the middle of the French Open, it seemed as if he was merely testing the

waters ahead of Wimbledon to see if his knees could take the strain after surgeries. Federer's largely unblemished record meant he was given the benefit of the doubt; in any case, the stakes are different in individual sport.

Both New Zealand and India should, and probably will, play their best teams in the WTC final commencing on Friday. A final cannot be a stepping stone to something else.

Lessons from history

History has shown that after India won the 1983 World Cup (50-over), that format got a huge shot in the arm, and drew more people to the game. Similarly post-2007 when India won the World T20, the IPL was born, and the format threatened to take over the game.

If India win the inaugural WTC, perhaps something similar will happen with Test cricket. No pressure at all, Virat Kohli!

The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

When do you play your best team in a series? It's a question modern captains and coaches have to answer. This, just after they have answered a more important one: Which is your best team?

Two recent series victories, India's in Australia, and New Zealand's in England have shown that the World Test Championship (WTC) final this week will be played between the two best teams in the world. And that's as it should be.

Test cricket is a funny beast, howev-

er. How do you decide which is the best team in the world when it is difficult to tell which is the best team a country possesses? New Zealand won the final Test and the series after making six changes. Some owing to injury, and some for a reason we shall come to shortly.

Captain and best batsman Kane Williamson decided to rest his elbow and not aggravate the injury ahead of the WTC final. So New Zealand won comfortably with their next-best team.

In Australia earlier, only two Indians, Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara, played all four Tests. India's bowling attack in the final Test was possibly their weakest of the series. It wasn't even their next-best team. Their best batsmen and captain Virat Kohli had flown back home after the first Test.

Predicting victories in cricket –

fraught at the best of times – has just got more difficult. The race is not always to the swift, nor battle to the strong.

New Zealand might think they are strengthening their team for the WTC final with the return of Williamson, B.J. Watling, Tim Southee, and others, but are they really? England might believe that once Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler, Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes, and Sam Curran make the eleven against India, they have a superior team. But will they?

The pandemic, and possibly the bubble associated with it, is causing us to reassess the apparently obvious. An X-factor has entered the calculations, making it all very exciting. Bench strength is vital.

Teams travel now with 24 or more

players. They carry their own 'net' bowlers (one of them, T. Natarajan made his debut in all three formats in Australia). The competition is tougher,

and player on tour can afford to take his place for granted.

Whatever it is, the manner in which teams have made huge changes from match to match, and still succeeded