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## NEARBY



Laws won't help to check population growth: Nitish

PATNA  
Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar asserted on Monday that it was not possible to ensure population control through laws. He was reacting to Union Rural Development Minister and senior BJP leader Giriraj Singh's call for a policy on population control in Bihar, similar to the one launched by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

NEWS • PAGE 9

## Nature's fury



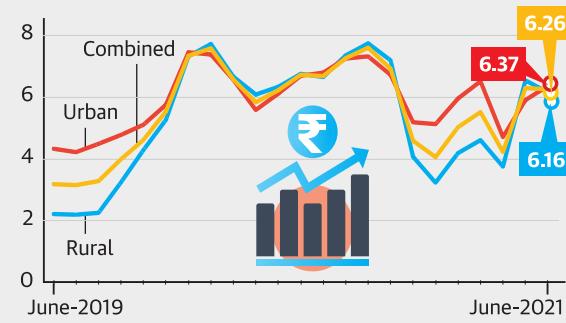
Caught unawares: Floodwaters surging through a street in Mcleodganj, Himachal Pradesh, following a cloudburst on Monday. The raging torrents damaged cars and buildings. ■ PTI

## Inflation remains above 6% in June

Fuel and light inflation touches 12.7%, oils, fats and eggs lead food price spike

### On a high

Retail inflation eased slightly to 6.26% in June 2021, against the 6.3% recorded in May, but remained above the RBI's upper limit of 6% for the second consecutive month



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

After touching a six-month high in May, retail inflation remained virtually unchanged in June at about 6.3%, staying out of the central bank's comfort zone for the second month in a row.

Economists expect the Reserve Bank of India to revisit its inflation estimate of 5.1% for 2021-22 and stressed that the lack of fiscal policy action to cool prices could precipitate a faster unwinding of RBI's growth-supporting approach to interest rates.

With petroleum product prices continuing to soar, fuel and light inflation hit 12.7% in June from 11.9% in May. Food inflation, which had flared up from just 2% in April to 5% in May, rose further, led by a 34.8% inflation rate for oils and fats and 19.4% for eggs. Inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index declined by just four basis points from May's 6.30%, as per the National Statistical Office. One basis point equals 0.01%.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Nepali Congress veteran Mr. Deuba, 74, has served as the Prime Minister on four occasions; first from 1995 to 1997, then from 2001 to 2002, again from 2004 to 2005, and from 2017 to 2018. Currently, he is the Leader of the Opposition in the House. The court also ordered summoning a new session of the House of Representatives at 5 p.m. on July 18.

Chief Justice Rana said the Bench has concluded that party whip does not apply when lawmakers take part in

### Twists and turns

K.P. Sharma Oli, who dissolved Parliament twice in the past 8 months, suffered a setback on Monday when the Supreme Court ordered to reinstate the legislature and appoint a new PM. A brief timeline of the events in the Himalayan nation:

Dec. 20, 2020: Following a rift in the ruling Nepal Communist Party, Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli recommends dissolution of Parliament. President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolves Parliament

Feb. 23, 2021: Supreme Court reverses the decision of the President

May 10: Oli loses confidence vote after Parliament is reconstituted

■ He again advises the President to dissolve Parliament and hold new elections

■ July 12: Supreme Court orders Parliament be reconvened and Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba be appointed as PM

Up in arms: Police standing guard as supporters of K.P. Sharma Oli chant slogans against the Supreme Court's decision in Kathmandu on Monday. ■ AFP

elections, saying no party had a majority to form a new government

■ He remains caretaker Prime Minister

■ May 24: Opposition moves the Supreme Court again

July 12: Supreme Court orders Parliament be reconvened and Opposition leader Sher Bahadur Deuba be appointed as PM



Prime Minister, we have no role to play now."

Under Mr. Madhav Nepal's leadership, 23 lawmakers of the UML had put their signature in favour of Mr. Deuba's claim to the prime ministership.

"Parliament has been reinstated. We will now go to Parliament," he said. "The court's verdict has also raised moral questions on Oli's actions."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Panel studying trial data of new COVID-19 vaccine, say officials

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN  
NEW DELHI

The green signal for the emergency use approval of Zydov-D, the COVID-19 vaccine by Zydus Cadila for those aged 12 and above, will take a few more days, Union

Health Ministry officials said on Monday.

The vaccine had shown good results in the Phase-1 and Phase-2 trials, and the data for the Phase-3 trials, conducted in more than 28,000 volunteers, were being examined by the Subject Expert Committee, they said.

NITI Aayog member (Health) V.K. Paul had recently said, "If all goes well, this vaccine's supply will begin in August-September."

ZyCoV-D is a three-dose in-

tradermal vaccine, which is to be administered using the Pharmajet needle-free system. The second and third doses are to be administered on the 28th and the 56th days respectively. The Ministry refuted claims by the Delhi go-

vernment and several States of shortage of vaccines.

It said more than 38.86 crore (38,86,09,790) doses had been provided to the States and the Union Territories so far through all sources and a further 63,84,230 dos-

es were in the pipeline. "Of this, the total consumption, including wastages, is 37,31,88,834 doses [as per data available at 8 a.m. on Monday]," it noted.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Initiate contempt proceedings against Haryana: DJB to SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Jal Board has asked the Supreme Court to initiate contempt proceedings against two Haryana officials for "wilfully" disobey-

ing a court order to maintain the water level at the Wazirabad reservoir at full capacity to serve the drinking water needs of the Capital.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 2

## Thousands of Cubans rally against govt.

They call for President to step down



A police car seen overturned after a protest against Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel in Havana on Monday. ■ AFP

REUTERS  
Havana

Chanting "freedom" and calling for President Miguel Diaz-Canel to step down, thousands of Cubans joined street protests from Havana to Santiago on Sunday in the biggest anti-government demonstrations on the Communist-run island in decades.

The protests erupted amid Cuba's worst economic crisis since the fall of the Soviet Union, its former ally, and a surge in coronavirus infections, with people voicing anger over shortages of basic goods, curbs on civil liberties and the authorities' handling of the pandemic.

Thousands gathered in downtown Havana and along parts of the seaside drive, their shouts of "Diaz-Canel step down" drowning out groups of government supporters brandishing the Cuban flag and chanting "Fidel". Special forces vehicles, with machine guns mounted on the back were seen throughout the capital, Havana, and the police pre-

ssence was heavy long after protesters had gone home.

Mr. Diaz-Canel, who also heads the Communist Party, in a televised speech on Sunday afternoon, blamed the unrest on old Cold War foes, the U.S., which in recent years tightened its decades-old trade embargo on the island. He said many protesters were sincere but manipulated by U.S.-orchestrated social media campaigns and "mercenaries" on the ground, and warned that further "provocations" would not be tolerated, calling on supporters to confront such "provocations".

President Joe Biden said the U.S. stands with the people of Cuba. "We stand with the Cuban people and their clarion call for freedom and relief from the tragic grip of the pandemic and from the decades of repression and economic suffering to which they have been subjected by Cuba's authoritarian regime," he said in a statement.

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Sky gazers in for a celestial treat today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Sky gazers are in for a celestial treat as mars, venus and the moon are set to line up for a "triple conjunction" that can be viewed with the naked eye today.

Nehru Planetarium will be organising a talk on its YouTube channel starting at 6.30 p.m. on Tuesday for students and space enthusiasts to join a discussion and understand the science behind this phenomenon.

"This rare celestial treat will give a chance to all sky gazers to watch these planets with naked eyes after the sunset in the western sky. Mars and venus will appear to be just 0.5° from each other from earth," the planetarium said.

## DJB asks SC to initiate contempt proceedings against Haryana

It is acting in violation of the 1996 court order on Wazirabad reservoir water level'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



The Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has asked the Supreme Court to initiate contempt proceedings against Haryana Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan and the Additional Chief Secretary, Irrigation and Water Resources Department, Devennder Singh, for 'wilfully' disobeying a February 1996 order of the court to maintain the water level at the Wazirabad reservoir at full capacity to serve the drinking water needs of the Capital.

"Due to non-supply of adequate water by Haryana, the water level in the Wazirabad reservoir is only 31% full. This has a possibility of triggering a severe water crisis in

Delhi. The petitioner already had to curtail water for several areas in Delhi, including the President's Estate, the Parliament House and other institutional and diplomatic buildings as well as many residential areas," the DJB submitted.

Seeking an urgent hearing, it said Haryana was act-

ing in clear violation of the court order in the Delhi Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Undertaking versus State of Haryana case.

"This court had directed that the water level at Wazirabad reservoir has to be kept full to its capacity by Haryana in order to meet the drinking water needs of Delhi," it stated.

**Discharge of pollutants**  
The DJB had approached the court to "immediately stop" Haryana from discharging pollutants into the Yamuna.

The increased ammonia levels had impaired functioning of water treatment plants, and drinking water and health crises loomed

large in Delhi, it noted.

The DJB had also, in that case, accused Haryana of not releasing the full quantity of water entitled to Delhi at Wazirabad. In a petition in that case, it alleged that the actions/inactions constituted a violation of the principle of cooperative federalism. It amounted to an upper riparian State taking undue advantage of a shared river for irrigation and industrial purposes while effectively not allowing a lower riparian State to access water for drinking".

Haryana had denied the charges. An offshoot of the case had been the decision of the court to examine the issue of river pollution, starting with the Yamuna.

## 'Lutyens' Delhi may face water crisis as Haryana not releasing fair share'

Lowest water level at Wazirabad barrage since 1965: Chadha

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI



Raghav Chadha

tyens areas may see a water crisis soon," Mr. Chadha said.

He claimed that Haryana has withheld at least 120 MGD (million gallons per day) of water that belongs to Delhi and this has caused a "huge water crisis" in Delhi.

"Today, the Haryana government has impeded the rights of the people of Delhi, it has hindered the rightful

water supply of the citizens of Delhi. They are not giving us our rightful share of water. They have stopped the water in such a manner that since 1965, this is the first time that water levels have been so low at the Wazirabad barrage," Mr. Chadha said.

After inspecting the Wazirabad pond, the DJB V-C said, "At the Wazirabad water treatment plant, intake of water is managed by taking water directly from the Yamuna, this water is released by Haryana towards the Wazirabad barrage. The water is then treated and supplied to the homes of the people of Delhi. Normally, this river is completely full. Today we can see the river has dried up, it looks like a field."

## Kejriwal's water connection will be cut if crisis not resolved: BJP

Party workers protest outside DJB Chairman's residence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Several BJP cadres on Monday staged a protest outside the residence of Delhi Jal Board (DJB) Chairman Satyendar Jain where they announced that Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's water connection would be cut if the water crisis in the Capital did not end in 48 hours.

Protesting BJP workers accused the Aam Aadmi Party government of earning money by selling water and demanded the resignations of Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Jain.

The police lathicharged the protesters and tried to disperse them with water cannons in which several

BJP workers, including State BJP Yuva Morcha president Vasu Rukhada sustained injuries, the party stated.

"The BJP will cut the water connection of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's house if the water system in Delhi is not corrected in the next 48 hours," Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said.

### Playing blame game

"According to the agreement reached with Haryana, it is to provide 500 MGD of water every month, but even though the Haryana government is providing 640 MGD of water per month, Raghav Chadha and [Mr.] Kejriwal are blaming the Haryana go-

vernment in order to hide their shortcomings," he alleged.

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged that due to the "wrong and corrupt" policies of the Kejriwal government, the DJB, which was once running in profit of ₹800 crore, had been brought to the brink of pauperisation.

"The Delhi government has given ₹57,000 crore to the board in the last years, but out of this, no account of ₹26,000 crore is available. Not only this, the board is running at a loss of ₹2,000 crore every year," Mr. Bidhuri alleged.

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Delhi is a landlocked city and receives raw water from neighbouring States. The water is treated at various water treatment plants (WTPs) before being supplied to the residents of the Capital.

Delhi receives water from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, and Haryana. The largest share of water comes from Haryana via the Yamuna through three different channels.

When there is a fall in the amount of raw water Delhi gets from these three States, it affects the water supply in the national capital.

### What is the problem?

Since Delhi gets the largest share of water from the Yamuna, it has been a contentious issue for a long time between Delhi and Haryana.

(MoU) was signed by the five basin States of the Yamuna, including Delhi and Haryana, for sharing of water of upper Yamuna. In 1995, the Centre formed the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) to regulate allocation of Yamuna water which flows through these States.

However, Delhi and Ha-

ryana have been at loggerheads over the allocation of Yamuna water – especially during summers – with Del-

hi complaining that it is getting less water from Haryana and the latter denying it most times.

### Current issue

During the past one week, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), which manages water supply in Delhi, has been complaining that it has been getting about 120 Million Gallons per Day (MGD) less raw water from Haryana for the past many days.

DJB Vice Chairperson Raghav Chadha claimed the water released by Haryana is so less that water levels at Wazirabad Barrage, a point

along the flow of the Yamuna in Delhi, is the lowest since 1965.

As per the DJB, due to shortage of water, the capacity of Chandrawal WTP has come down to 55 MGD from 90 MGD; Wazirabad WTP to 80 MGD from 135 MGD; and Okhla WTP to 12 MGD from 20 MGD.

### What now?

The issue is expected to be settled shortly as Haryana has released about 1800 cusecs of water for 24 hours on Sunday, as per DJB officials.

It takes about two to three days for this water to reach Delhi and it is expected to solve the current water issue.

On Sunday, Haryana released more water and the shortfall in Delhi's share has dropped to 65 MGD from 120 MGD, as per DJB officials.

## A city dependent on its neighbours for water



Residents of Sanjay Camp fill water from a tanker. ■ FILE PHOTO

PLAYING BLAME GAME

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On Sunday, Haryana released more water and the shortfall in Delhi's share has dropped to 65 MGD from 120 MGD, as per DJB officials.

DJB was "shirking its responsibility" to control the "bad odour" emanating from the STP.

"We do not understand why the DJB is now shirking its responsibility and taking a contra stand that small steps taken are enough and no odour control system is required. This stand is against public interest and non-compliance of order of this tribunal," it said.

The Bench observed, "It is

clear that the DJB has failed to perform its obligation of preventing odour at the STP and only superficial steps have been taken to claim that odour has been controlled. The problem has been persisting for long but plea of pandemic is being taken to justify inaction. Contrary to earlier commitment of installing an effective system, it is now stated that the odour has been controlled by spray..."

Stating that the DJB was liable to pay a cost of ₹5 lakh per month, from June 1 till compliance of orders, the tribunal specified that DJB CEO would be personally responsible for compliance.

The directions came when the panel was hearing a plea moved by a residents' welfare association which alleged that a foul smell was emanating from the STP, as it was not being operated in accordance to norms.

Ministry, suspending its registration for 180 days.

Senior advocate Arvind Datar, representing CHRI, said the suspension of NGO's registration was disproportionate to the alleged violations of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act of 2010 (FCRA Act).

CHRI has said that the suspension order was "unreasonable, manifestly arbitrary, excessive and disproportionate, on the face of it being based on wholly incorrect facts and for violating basic principles

of natural justice". It said the suspension order has "completely paralysed" its functioning, "threatens the livelihood of its employees and casts a stigma on its reputation".

### Drastic measure

"A 180-day suspension is a drastic measure that threatens the very existence of the petitioner (CHRI), apart from causing great harm to its reputation built painstakingly over three decades. The consequent freezing of petitioner's receipt and utilisation bank accounts have severely restricted its planned programme activities," its petition said.

CHRI said it was not in a position to pay salaries to its 40 staff members and consultants, whose livelihoods depend on it, especially in these difficult times precipitated by the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the Capital reported 45 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 14,35,128 on Monday.

Three fatalities were also reported, pushing the death toll to 25,018.

A total of 55,019 tests were done in a day and the test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.08%. Of the total cases, 14,09,417 people have recovered and there are only 693 active cases.

A total of 10,852 doses of vaccines were administered in the city on Sunday and the vaccine stock will last for less than a day, as per a vaccination bulletin by the Delhi government.

On April 20, the city had reported a record 28,395 cases. On April 22, the case positivity rate was 36.2%.

## HC to hear pleas against annual school fee order

Court asks Delhi govt. for response

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday posted the pleas challenging its order allowing private unaided schools to collect annual and development charges from students for the period after the lockdown ended in the Capital last year to July 14.

The HC Bench asked the Delhi government and other parties concerned to give their respective response on the issue.

On June 7, the court had

sought responses of the Action Committee Unaided Recognised Private Schools, which represents over 450 schools, on the appeals of Delhi government, students and NGO, 'Justice for All', challenging the court's May 31 order.

The court had earlier declined to put on hold the May 31 order allowing private unaided schools to collect annual and development charges from students for the period after the lockdown ended.

## 'Universities should charge only tuition fee'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National Students' Union of India on Monday demanded that universities should charge only tuition fees from students as they continue to function in online mode. It demanded a reduction to provide relief to students during the pandemic.

NSUI national secretary Nitish Gaur said that several universities are asking to pay undue funds which is nothing but exploitation.

## L-G committee points to grave lapses in DTC deal

BJP writes to Baijal, seeks CBI inquiry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The BJP on Monday wrote to Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal demanding a CBI inquiry into the alleged DTC bus scam, worth ₹5,000 crore, highlighting some of the "grave observations"

**Timings**

DELHI
TUESDAY, JUL. 13
RISE 05:33 SET 19:22
RISE 08:22 SET 21:59
WEDNESDAY, JUL. 14
RISE 05:33 SET 19:22
RISE 09:22 SET 22:34
THURSDAY, JUL. 15
RISE 05:34 SET 19:21
RISE 10:22 SET 23:08

**Delhi Weather**

max min

Delhi City 38 27

Safdarjung 38 27

Palam 37 27

Delhi Palam Today

34°C Light rain and thunder-shower likely at some places with cloudy sky and gusty winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

34°C A spells of rain and thunder-shower likely at some places with mainly cloudy sky. A warm and humid day would prevail.

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**Teen critical after being hit with axe**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A day prior to her birthday, a 16-year-old girl was attacked with an axe on Monday near south Moti Bagh jhuggi in the city, the police said.

They received a PCR call at South Campus police station regarding the incident at 1.20 p.m. The police found that the teenager was hit by a man named Praveen alias Pradeep with an axe. Pradeep, who is in his early 20s, is a resident of the same area.

The girl, who had injuries on her eyebrows, was rushed to Safdarjung hospital where she is undergoing treatment. "Her condition is serious," said an officer. A case under the relevant section has been registered and a manhunt is on for the accused.

The victim is a student of Class XI. Her father works as a security guard, the officer said, adding that it appears to be one-sided love affair.

**CBI unearths racket in allotment of DDA plots**

Over 80 unauthorised deals detected

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

The CBI has unearthed a major racket in unauthorised allotment of Delhi Development Authority (DDA) plots in Madanpur Khadar by its officials in connivance with touts and brokers.

The agency has so far detected 85 unauthorised entries of plots in the land-management records.

Among those named as accused are then DDA Land Management Branch's Assistant Director, Sudhanshu Ranjan, then Senior Secretariat Assistant, Ajeept Kumar Bhardwaj, and former security guard Darwan Singh, besides Iqbal Hussain, Sunil Kumar Meena, Sapan Kumar, Jamaluddin, Rajwant Singh and Shakuntla Devi.

In August last year, the agency had arrested Mr. Ranjan and the other two DDA officials for allegedly receiving ₹1 lakh in bribe from a person buying a plot. The latest case is an out-

come of the probe into the earlier one. It is alleged that Mr. Ranjan and the other DDA employees under scrutiny took bribes from brokers and touts to show allotment of plots in Madanpur Khadar in the office records.

A private person named Sapan Kumar was roped in to make the entries in the land-management registers.

He would also put his thumb impression, projecting himself as an allottee.

The agency has extracted a recorded conversation from Mr. Ranjan's mobile phone in which he, while talking to a DDA data entry operator on May 6, 2020, allegedly confessed to having committed the offence.

The bribe amount would be decided by him and at his instance, the other two accused DDA employees would receive it. In order to evade detection and any liability in the future, the accused officials would create backdated records.

The area was full of hotels and all of them were examined. One hotel informed that Suraj and his family had checked in but had left. CCTV

**Third accused held from M.P. in Kitty murder case**

Accused blaming each other during separate questioning: DCP

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

The police on Sunday arrested the third accused in Kitty Kumaramangalam murder case and recovered jewellery worth ₹50 lakh from the accused, said officials on Monday.

DCP (South-West) Ingit Pratap Singh said the accused – Suraj Budhe (36), a resident of Mahipalpur – has been arrested from Madhya Pradesh's (M.P.) Tikamgarh.

Technical surveillance was mounted on the mobile phone that Suraj was using and its last location was found to be in Jaipur after which the device was switched off, said an officer. Under the supervision of Assistant Commissioner of Police Rakesh Dixit, a team reached Jaipur.

"The area was full of hotels and all of them were examined. One hotel informed that Suraj and his family had checked in but had left. CCTV



Police near the victim's residence in Vasant Vihar. • FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPKAR

footage was examined and a taxi driver was found along with Suraj," said the officer.

**Accused buys new phone**

The police then tracked the driver who said Suraj had bought a new mobile phone. Details of the phone were then obtained, and technical surveillance was mounted on it, the officer said. Initially, there was no movement on the phone, but it was eventually used and immediately tracked to M.P.

A team then rushed to Tikamgarh and with the help of

M.P. Police, they raided the suspected hideout and found Suraj with his wife and children at his brother-in-law Chhotu Adiwasi's house. There were arguments with locals when police tried to make the arrest, but the M.P. Police soon helped pacify the situation.

Mr. Singh said 520g gold with diamonds, 400g silver, ₹9,020 cash and a phone have been recovered from his possession.

"The accused said they had thought that house help Mithila had been killed before they fled. When questioned separately, they are all blaming each other," Mr. Singh said.

Kitty was found dead at her residence on the night of July 6 when she and Mithila were at home. On Mithila's statement, the police registered a case and arrested Kitty's washerman Raju and his accomplice Rakesh Raj.

**Dog dies after being shot with airgun**STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A dog died after it was allegedly shot at with an airgun in south-east Delhi's Nizamuddin, the police said on Monday.

DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena said a case has been registered under Section 428 (whoever commits mischief by killing, poisoning, maiming, or rendering useless any animal) of the Indian Penal Code and under relevant sections of Cruelty to Animal Act.

"Post-mortem of the dog has been conducted and further investigation is under way," Mr. Meena said.

A senior officer said they received a complaint about the incident from one Shobha Malhotra – animal welfare volunteer.

The incident happened 10 days ago.

"Three lead pellets were found in the dog, Browne's spine, stomach and chest area," the complainant told police.

**Man found dead on rail tracks, family claims custodial death**

He had been picked up for questioning earlier in the day

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

A 50-year-old man was found dead at railway tracks after he was picked up for questioning in south-east Delhi's Ambedkar Nagar, the police said on Monday. His family has alleged custodial death.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said Yogesh Gupta from Mandangir was "asked to join investigation" in a complaint lodged against him.

A man named Neeraj Pahadia complained that Gupta was running a committee in which he invested ₹12.23 lakh. But now Gupta closed the committee without returning the money to members, Pahadia complained.

**'Settle the matter'**  
The police said the inquiry was entrusted to an officer. During inquiry, the complainant and the accused had as-

**The SI had picked up my father without a warrant and he had been troubling him for a month now**

SHIVAM  
Victim's son

sured to settle the matter amicably. "On July 11, the complainant and the accused joined the enquiry again at the police station. After enquiry, Gupta left the police station at 8 p.m.," Mr. Thakur said. The police said Gupta's family approached the police station at 10.30 p.m., saying that he had not reached home after which a missing report was registered on Monday.

The police then started a search launch following which they were informed by GRP Faridabad that Gupta had allegedly taken his life by

Mr. Thakur said: "Enquiry into the matter is ongoing."

**Two accused of damaging Red Fort granted bail****PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday granted bail to two men arrested in a case filed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) alleging their complicity in damaging Red Fort during the Republic Day violence this year.

Accused Boota Singh and Gurjot Singh were arrested on July 8. The arrest was made on the day Boota was granted bail in another matter related to the violence. Gurjot was admitted on bail in the same matter a day after his arrest in the ASI case.

While granting relief, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (CMM) Gajender Singh Nagar said the duo has been made accused in both cases on the basis of the same act and no specific role is attributed to them.

**Deep Sidhu**

Actor-activist Deep Sidhu, who is accused of being the key conspirator of the violence, was also arrested in this case moments after being released from jail in another case related to the incident.

He and several other accused appeared before CMM Nagar via video conference on Monday.

The CMM directed the police to supply chargesheet to all the accused and listed the matter for further hearing on July 22.

**Is it wrong to have political affiliation, asks Ishrat Jahan**

Ex-councillor seeks bail in riots case

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

Former Congress councillor Ishrat Jahan – arrested under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) – on Monday sought bail in the north-east Delhi riots conspiracy case, asking before a court here whether it was wrong to have a political affiliation.

"There is no evidence. Is it wrong to have a political affiliation? What wrong have I committed? Stifling voices were the reason behind imposing UAPA. UAPA must be scrutinised," said advocate Pradeep Teotia, appearing for Ishrat Jahan before Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat.

Ms. Jahan has served as Congress councillor from 2012-17 and has been a

member of the AICC, according to her sister Sarwer Jahan.

Mr. Teotia argued bail plea for her on the grounds that there is no evidence to show her connection with the co-accused and that the witnesses are planted.

During the course of proceedings, the advocate objected to the prosecution's allegations that Ishrat Jahan helped in financing the protest and violence, saying that they have just weaved a story and that there was no change in the pattern of her expenditure before and during the violence.

Meanwhile, Special Public Prosecutor Amit Prasad asked for the supply of the video relied upon by the counsels of the accused. Next hearing on July 23.

**6 men held for duping people by promising 'negative COVID report'**

Accused used to target labourers coming from Gulf countries

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

Six men have been arrested in Central Delhi for allegedly robbing labourers coming from Gulf countries on the pretext of providing them with COVID-19 negative reports, the police said on Monday.

The accused – Vijay Bhan Pandey, Deepak, Sanjeev Kumar, Harish Singh, Raju Shah and Sunder – told the victims that to travel by train, they need a COVID negative report and the one provided by the Delhi airport was invalid.

Complainant Mohammad Wahi Vasi, a labourer in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Friday had returned to India to visit his hometown in West Bengal (W.B.) along with four others. After landing at Delhi airport,

they headed towards New Delhi Railway Station.

At the station, they were approached by a man who told them that to travel by train, they require a negative COVID report. To this, Mr. Vasi told them that they already had the one provided at the Delhi airport. The accused then told him that the airport report was not valid for train travel.

The victims were then taken to an office in Paharganj where they were informed that their reports will be ready by next day. They were also told that their train to Kolkata will depart at 12.30 p.m. and they can collect their reports by 11.30 a.m. from the office. The accused had also arranged night accommodation for them.

It was revealed that the accused had robbed hundreds of people coming from the Gulf with similar modus operandi in the past year.

Advocate Tanya Agarwal, representing the woman, said that she had converted

On Saturday at 11.30 a.m., the victims reached the office where six persons were present.

They were shown their reports and asked to pay ₹897 Saudi Riyal. When they refused to pay, one of the accused took out a country-made pistol while another took out a knife. The complainants were made hostages and beaten up.

The accused robbed them of their 3,500 Saudi Riyal and ₹17,970 along with other valuables.

The accused later threatened the complainants with dire consequences and snatching of their passports if they approach the police.

It was revealed that the accused had robbed hundreds of people coming from the Gulf with similar modus operandi in the past year.

Advocate Tanya Agarwal, representing the woman, said that she had converted

**Faith conversion: petition seeks privacy for woman**

'Remove news reports revealing name'

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday asked the News Broadcasting Standards Authority to respond to a petition claiming publication of malicious content over a 32-year-old woman from Uttar Pradesh converting from Hinduism to Islam.

Justice Rekha Palli also sought response from Zee Media and Navbharat Times on the petition.

The court also took on record the assurance provided by Delhi Police that protection would be extended to the woman, currently residing in Delhi, following her apprehension of being taken away to U.P. by its agencies.

Advocate Tanya Agarwal, representing the woman, said that she had converted

to Islam on her own free will. After she received her conversion certificate and published an advertisement in newspapers regarding change of name and religion, she started receiving threats. Media reports were also published revealing her name and identity, she said.

Her petition stated that "several news reports appeared in newspapers and news portals in U.P. with regard to the conversion of the petitioner, giving absurd and imaginary details".

The plea sought that the reports be taken down immediately for the protection of her privacy and dignity.

The court, however, clarified that it was not inclined to issue notice to the U.P. government and its police at this stage.

**BJP leaders 'released' after HC order**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

Around a dozen BJP leaders 'detained' for nearly 12 hours by protesting farmers at a house in Patiala's Rajpura were released early Monday following a Punjab and Haryana High Court order, officials said.

Scores of protesting farmers had on Sunday laid siege to a BJP worker's house where several party leaders, including Punjab unit general secretary Subhash Sharma and Patiala in-charge Bhupesh Aggarwal, were also present.

The BJP leaders petitioned the Punjab and Haryana High Court, saying they were illegally 'detained' by a mob at a house in Rajpura. The court directed the police to ensure the petitioners are provided a safe exit.

"On Saturday, it was the Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technol-

## 'BJP misusing varsity campuses'

Party meetings being held in them in Haryana to escape boycott: farmers' body

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), a joint coalition of farmer unions, strongly condemned the "misuse" of university campuses in Haryana for political activities by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, said Inderjit Singh, vice-president, All-India Kisan Sabha, Haryana, on Monday.

Speaking at the Tikri border, Mr. Singh said the BJP had found a safe resort in various university campuses for party meetings after having boycotted by the people. He called upon the entire university community to raise its voice against the attempts of the BJP to "take over and saffronise centres of higher education".

"On Saturday, it was the Guru Jambheshwar University of Science and Technol-



Farmers protesting against the Centre's new farm laws at the Delhi-Haryana border. ■ FILE PHOTO: AP

ogy in Hisar, while they held a party district executive meeting at Chaudhary Devi Lal University campus at Sirsa on Sunday, where they had to face stiff resistance from protesting farmers," said Mr. Singh.

He also condemned in

strongest terms the criminal conduct of a man allegedly making obscene gestures towards protesting women farmers at the GJU Hisar Gate number 3 from a car allegedly occupied by Hansi MLA Vinod Bhayana and former Minister Manish

Grover. "However, no case under relevant sections of indecent and obscene gestures has been so far registered by Hisar police despite a written complaint filed by farmers," said Mr. Singh.

### Abuse of institutions'

He said that the SKM wanted to make it clear that it would not allow university campuses to be transformed into party fiefdom of the BJP and organise peaceful protests to stop them from going on with this 'abuse' of academic institutions.

He added that the SKM had also taken serious note of Haryana being converted into a police state to suppress the farmers movement while the law and order situation is turning from bad to worse every passing day.

## Bihar educational institutions open

They were closed since April 5 due to the lockdown

AMARNATH TEWARY  
PATNA

Educational institutions in Bihar opened on Monday and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar attended 'janata durbar' (people's court) after five years, adhering to COVID-19 guidelines and protocols.

All necessary arrangements for opening colleges, universities and schools for Class XI and XII were made on Sunday across the State with 50% strength.

Earlier on July 6, the State Education Department allowed the reopening of educational institutions phase-wise from July 12 following COVID-19 guidelines and safety protocols.

All educational institutions were closed since April 5 this year due to the lockdown imposed to curb the



Students attend a class in Patna on Monday. ■ PTI

pandemic.

"Following COVID-19 SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures), colleges and varsities premises were completely sanitised and we have also requested the central dispensary for setting up a vaccination camp for inoculating students above 18 years. A majority of the staff has already been vaccinated at a camp set up last month," said Anil Kumar, dean of Patna University students' wel-

fare.

Principal of Baldwin Academy School Rajiv Ranjan Sinha said, "both online and offline classes were held today for Class XI and XII following COVID-19 guidelines". Some schools in State capital Patna had conducted a mock drill on Saturday for the reopening.

However, all the missionary schools in the capital are likely to reopen from next week.

## CBI probe into mysterious deposit

₹5 lakh transferred to Haryana villager's KCC account

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has initiated a probe into an case in which a Haryana villager last year discovered that ₹5 lakh had been transferred to his Kisan Credit Card (KCC) account from an unknown source.

The account holder, who sought the probe, was later found lodged in a Hisar jail in another case instituted by the local police.

In his complaint, Ajaib Singh – a resident of Musa Khera village in Haryana's Fatehabad – said that the amount was credited to his KCC account with the Tohana branch of Allahabad Bank (now merged with the Indian Bank) on August 25,

2020. Six days later, he withdrew ₹4.90 lakh.

As alleged, a person then turned up at Ajaib Singh's residence on September 8, 2020, and told him that the amount was credited to his account at the instance of the branch manager, Amit Sharma, and that he should return it.

The complaint was handed over to a CBI Sub-Inspector for verification.

The CBI officer tried to contact Ajaib Singh, but his mobile phone was switched off.

Therefore, the agency reached out to his relatives.

The complainant's brother informed the officer that Ajaib Singh was lodged in Hisar Jail in a case registered at the Jakhal police station under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

Therefore, the agency reached out to his relatives.

The complainant's brother informed the officer that Ajaib Singh was lodged in Hisar Jail in a case registered at the Jakhal police station under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

Ajaib Singh alleged that he was threatened with a legal case and made to pay ₹3.50 lakh to the manager at the police station on September 8, and he had to

## Fair game



People flout social distancing norms as they visit an annual fair in Agra on Monday. ■ PTI

dian state".

The arrested youth were identified as Umar Nisar from Magray Mohalla, Tanveer Ahmad Bhat from Gori Mohalla and Rameez Ahmad Lone from Chak Achabal (all in Anantnag).

**Materials seized'**  
"Examination of the seized material and examination of the accused persons revealed that they are active cadres of the IS and have been using the cyberspace to propagate inciting material by the online magazine, Voice of Hind (VOH)," a NIA spokesman said.

At least seven locations were raided in the Valley on Sunday in a case pertaining to "the conspiracy of the IS to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth to wage violent jihad against the Indian state".

The NIA on Sunday claimed it recovered a large number of incriminating documents, digital devices and T-shirts with IS logo during the raids in the Valley.

## Three IS members held in Kashmir, says NIA

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Three members of the IS were arrested in the Kashmir valley, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said on Monday.

"Preliminary examination of the seized material and examination of the accused persons revealed that they are active cadres of the IS and have been using the cyberspace to propagate inciting material by the online magazine, Voice of Hind (VOH)," a NIA spokesman said.

At least seven locations were raided in the Valley on Sunday in a case pertaining to "the conspiracy of the IS to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth to wage violent jihad against the Indian state".

## Malaria camps in Tripura after spurt in cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AGARTALA

The health department and the National Health Mission have started setting up camps in remote areas of the State to detect malaria. The authorities swung into action after deaths, especially of children, in Khowai and Dhalai districts in recent weeks.

A large part of the tribal population in the interiors have inadequate access to health care.

A health department official said on Monday that the camps are being set up where the disease poses a threat.

He said a malaria detection camp was recently organised at Nirajan Para in Mungiajami of Khowai district. Screening of 47 people were done and six of them were diagnosed with malaria.

A similar screening camp was held at Mashdar Para in Dhalai district of the State.

## Drive for growing medicinal plants at home

Task forces formed for distributing saplings with message for increasing immunity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

A drive for growing medicinal plants at home amid the COVID-19 pandemic has been launched in Rajasthan, with the task forces appointed for distributing saplings to all households along with the message for increasing natural immunity to the fight the infection.

The medicinal plants of tulsi, giloy, ashwagandha and kalmegh, prepared by the State government's Forest Department, would enable the people to develop

"natural strength", Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Development) Deep Narayan Pandey said here on Monday.

**Experts consulted'**  
Mr. Pandey said the 'Ghar Ghar Aushadhi' (medicine in each household) scheme had been started after the getting the opinion of experts based on research in traditional medicine.

He said the children would be encouraged to plant the saplings and take care of their growth, while



Each Rajasthan household will get 8 medicinal plants.  
■ FILE PHOTO

## 11 killed in Jaipur lightning strike

They were atop a watch tower near Amber Fort when hit

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

Eleven persons perched on a watch tower near the Amber Fort in Jaipur amid the rains were among the 20 killed in incidents related to lightning strikes reported from various places across Rajasthan on Sunday.

Twenty-one persons, including six children, were also injured in the incidents which took place in Kota, Jhalawar, Baran and Dholpur districts, besides Jaipur.

A large number of people, including tourists and city residents, were present on the watch tower built on a hill at the ramparts of the historic Amber Fort, when the lightning struck during the first spell of monsoon rains in the evening. Many of them were injured as they jumped off the watch tower in panic.

Teams of the State Disaster Response Force rushed to the spot and sent the injured people lying unconscious to the Sawai Man Singh Government Hospital



A commuter crosses a road during a lightning strike in Jaipur on Sunday. ■ PTI

here. The police personnel also joined the search in the hilly terrain in the darkness to look for the injured and the dead.

Elsewhere in the State, four persons died on the spot in Kota's Garda village after lightning struck a tree under which they had taken shelter with their cattle.

Ten goats and a cow were also killed in the incident. A shepherd was killed in a similar incident in Jhalawar's Lalgaon village and one per-

son died in Baran's Bahroli village. Three children were killed after the lightning struck them in Dholpur district's Kudinna village.

**CM announces ex gratia**  
Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot expressed grief over the deaths and announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also condoled the deaths in a tweet.

### OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

#### DEATH

#### OBITUARY

**Smt Visalakshi Nagarajan (86)**

W/o. Late Sri A.S. Nagarajan attained Shiva Loka Prapatti on 10.07.2021

Deceased Mother of Jayanth & Family

A.N. Ganesh & Family (995261810)

A.N. Shankar & Family & Grand Children

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## UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that one male Namely: Unknown S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown was found dead body at KM Pole No. L-26 to L-27, near Subway Ramp Delhi Side PF. No. 2 & 3 AVNT, Delhi on 08.07.2021. in the area of P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. The body has been preserved in Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital's Mortuary, Delhi for 72 hours. In this regard a case has been lodged vide DD No. 24 A U/s 174 Cr.P.C dated 08.07.2021 at P.S. Anand Vihar Railway Station, Delhi. The description of the dead male is as under:-

**Age:** Approx. 70-75 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Oval, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Hair:** White hair and small beard and moustache, **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** White colour half sleeve kurta & towel and bare feet. If any one having any information about this dead male please inform undersigned.

SHO  
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi  
Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346,  
DP/718/SW/2021



General public is hereby informed that one male, (depicted in the photo), Namely: Monu, S/o: Mahaveer Singh, R/o: H.No. A/297, Gali No. 02/02, Ambika Vihar, Karawal Nagar, Delhi, Aged: about 36 years, has been missing from his house since 21.06.2021. In this regard a case vide DD No. 93-A, Dated 25.06.2021, has been registered at P.S. Karawal Nagar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:  
**Height:** 5'5" Feet, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Built:** Thin, **Clothing:** Full Sleeve T-Shirt, Blue Colour Paj

IN BRIEF



Red sanders worth ₹6.2 crore seized, 1 held

CHITTOOR  
The Andhra Pradesh police raided a red sanders dump in Tamil Nadu on Sunday night and seized 8.4 tonnes of logs worth about ₹6.2 crore and arrested a key accused. The godown was on the outskirts of Bommanapalle village in Krishnagiri district. The accused was identified as Dashagiri Imran Khan.

Wild tusker enters Chikkamagaluru town

HASSAN  
People of Chikkamagaluru in Karnataka were in for a shock on Monday morning as a wild tusker, separated from its herd, was spotted in the middle of the town. It later entered the premises of the global unit of Coffee Day, Forest Department officials burst crackers and drove the elephant to the Mattavara forest area.

Release pregnant woman held under PD Act: HC

HYDERABAD  
Observing that the police or State cannot obstruct the rights of an unborn child, the Telangana High Court on Monday ordered the release of a pregnant woman jailed under the Preventive Detention (PD) Act. The Nalgonda district police invoked clauses of the PD Act against the 33-year-old, allegedly involved in cheating cases.

NDRF retrieves 4 bodies from quarry in A.P.

VIJAYAWADA  
The bodies of four persons, who accidentally fell in a quarry in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, were retrieved by a team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) 10th Battalion on Monday. The four were petty vendors and had gone to the quarry at Parvathipuram on Sunday evening, along with two others.

# Losses forced closure of dairy farms, Lakshadweep tells HC

In an affidavit, administration defends reforms proposed in the islands

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHE

The Lakshadweep administration has told the Kerala High Court that after a detailed analysis, it was felt imprudent to continue the dairy farms, suffering a huge loss of more than ₹90 lakh per year. The decision to shut them had no relation to the proposed Animal Preservation Regulation, the administration informed the court in an affidavit.

The affidavit was filed in response to a public interest litigation petition challenging the decision to shut the dairy farms on the islands.

The new regulations proposed by the Lakshadweep Administrator had evoked criticism from various quarters.



A recent protest in front of the Lakshadweep Administration office in Kochi against the reforms. ■ H. VIBHU

In the affidavit, the administration said it had decided to increase shipping operations from Mangaluru as the port is closer to several islands of Lakshadweep compared to Beypore in Kerala. The Mangaluru port had better facilities as well.

The affidavit denied the

allegation of the petitioner that the ban on liquor had been lifted. In fact, the Lakshadweep Prohibition Regulation provides for granting of licences for consumption and sale of alcohol. Recently, licences were issued to the Tourism Promotion Society under the

administration to serve liquor to non-islanders at three of its resorts on three islands. This was done to cater to the needs of tourists.

The affidavit said the decision to disengage excess casual employees from various establishments was to prevent loss to the exchequer.

As for removing non-vegetarian food from the midday meal, the administration said meat was part of the regular menu in almost all families, but consumption of fruits and dry fruits was very less among them. Hence their inclusion was perfectly in tune with the objective of the mid-day meal scheme.

The draft regulations had been forwarded to the Home Ministry with the feedback received, the affidavit added.

## Karnataka HC gives go-ahead for SSLC exam

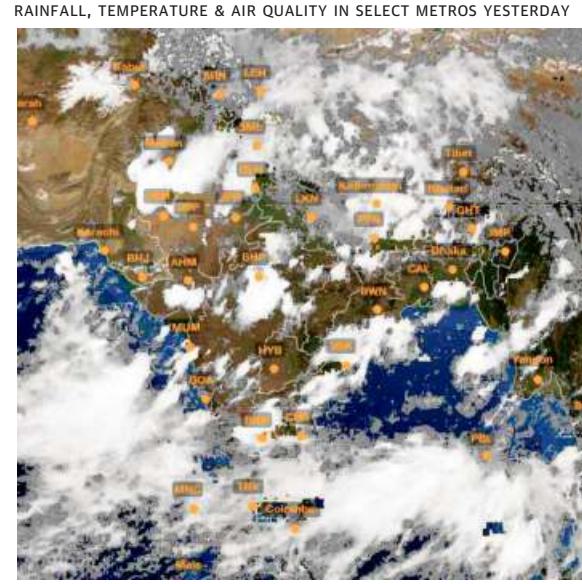
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Taking note of the declining COVID-19 cases in the State, the High Court of Karnataka on Monday refused to interfere with the State government's decision to hold an abridged version of SSLC examination on July 19 and 22 for the academic year 2020-21.

"The conduct of examination is in the interest of students, besides being beneficial for their future," the court said while noting that the State had taken adequate safety measures.

While declining to entertain a petition seeking cancellation of exams, the court however, noted that it would be the "collective decision" of parents and children to attend the exam as the government could not compel them to write the exam.

## WEATHER WATCH



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Heavy/heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Tripura, Telangana, Karnataka, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rayalseema and Yanam

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	2...35.4...	26.2	12...28.0...	Kozhikode	12...28.0...	23.6	...
Ahmedabad	2.8...35.0...	25.1	...	Kurnool	...	31.3...	25.3
Aizawl	...	29.2...	21.5	Lucknow	...	36.1...	27.5
Altahabur	...	36.7...	28.6	Madurai	...	35.7...	25.0
Bengaluru	...	27.0...	20.2	Mangaluru	47.3...	27.2...	21.8
Bhopal	4.2...33.3...	24.8	...	Mumbai	3...31.5...	25.8	...
Bhubaneswar	0.2...33.3...	25.8	...	Mysuru	...	27.8...	20.0
Chandigarh	...	29.4...	24.8	New Delhi	...	30.4...	27.0
Chennai	0.4...33.3...	27.0	...	Patna	8...35.6...	27.2	...
Coimbatore	0.2...30.7...	25.3	...	Puducherry	...	33.7...	24.4
Gangtok	28...34.1...	18.3	...	Pune	...	31.9...	23.2
Goa	124.4...28.0...	24.0	...	Raipur	0.1...34.0...	25.4	...
Guwahati	3...36.6...	25.8	...	Ranchi	6...30.4...	23.0	...
Hubballi	...	23.0...	22.0	Shillong	1...26.2...	18.8	...
Hyderabad	7...29.2...	23.3	...	Shimla	11...19.8...	17.0	...
Imphal	...	30.6...	21.5	Srinagar	...	30.5...	18.4
Jaipur	70...34.8...	24.4	...	Thiruvananthapuram	7...30.4...	23.5	...
Kochi	13...30.0...	23.6	...	Tiruchi	...	33.5...	25.9
Kohima	1...28.0...	18.7	...	Vijayawada	10...30.6...	26.4	...
Kolkata	...	31.8...	27.8	Visakhapatnam	3...31.4...	26.2	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	6	16	123	95	76	...
Bengaluru	9	28	73	—	75	...
Chennai	6	33	84	26	45	...
Delhi	9	17	85	91	177	...
Hyderabad	...	64	16	15	20	...
Kolkata	11	18	16	20	37	...
Lucknow	9	39	41	74	94	...
Mumbai	6	10	—	63	103	...
Pune	132	178	111	60	55	...
Visakhapatnam	15	11	36	10	19	...

Yesterday

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

**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

## EAST & WEST

### Bombay HC rejects Sanatan Sanstha plea to restore FB page

No case made out for grant of any declaratory relief, says court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court in Goa on Monday refused to grant relief to the Hindu group Sanatan Sanstha that wanted an order to restore its Facebook page that was

taken down by the company.

A Division Bench of Justices M.S. Sonak and M.S. Jawalkar was hearing an appeal filed by the group accused of killing rationalists Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgi and journalist Gauri Lankesh. The appeal said by blocking its page, Facebook was being high-handed, arbitrary and violating a constitutional right.

It said its Facebook pages were used to spread the es-

sence of their spirituality and allied matters. Facebook's action prevented it from communicating or propagating its philosophy, and its followers from accessing information that it posted.

The Bench, however, was not convinced. "The dispute regarding blocking or unblocking of the petitioner's Facebook pages appears to be governed by the contractual relationship between the petitioner and respon-

dents [Facebook] and, normally, purely contractual disputes between private parties cannot be adjudicated in proceedings under Article 226 [power of the high court] of the Constitution of India," it said.

The court said there was no case made out for grant of any declaratory relief. "Even the advocate for Sanatan Sanstha was unable to point out any provision under the Information Technology Act,

based on which the petitioner could insist on maintaining a Facebook page on the platform provided without agreeing to be bound by the contractual terms that may have been proposed."

The high court said that if there was some breach of contractual relationship involved in the blocking of the Facebook page, they could take appropriate steps before an appropriate forum to secure redress.

### 'Repeal UAPA, free accused in Bhima-Koregaon case'

Progressive outfits stage protest in Pune

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

clashes – Hindutva leaders Milind Ekbote and Sambhaji Bhide 'Guruji' – be prosecuted.

"It is a cruel and bitter irony that Malegaon blast accused Pragya Singh Thakur, who is known for her divisive remarks, had no difficulty in getting bail from the Bombay High Court, while Father Swamy, the 84-year-old tribal social worker, who had given his entire life fighting constitutional battles for the upliftment and protection of tribals, was given a hard time by the courts in obtaining a straw as he had difficulty holding his glass owing to his ill health... his death is a shameful blot on the tenure of the BJP government," said Anjum Inamdar, founder behind the Bhima-Koregaon

The protesters demanded that all activists and intellectuals arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in connection with the Bhima-Koregaon case be released immediately.

The protesters also demanded that the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) be repealed and the 'real' perpetrators behind the Bhima-Koregaon

case be brought to justice.

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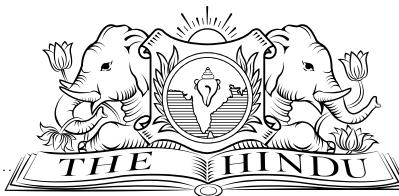
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Koregaon case be brought to justice.

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## The power of scrutiny

SC has struck a blow for inquisitorial powers of legislatures against social media companies

The Supreme Court of India's verdict last week, upholding the authority of a committee of the Delhi Assembly to summon a senior official of Facebook, is an extremely nuanced recognition of the extent of powers of State Assemblies in matters regulated by an Act of Parliament. The question mark about the powers arose in the first place because Facebook, whose India vice-president Ajit Mohan was repeatedly summoned by Delhi Assembly's Committee on Peace and Harmony on the subject of the Delhi riots of 2020, argued before the Supreme Court that this was a case of overreach; and that Delhi's law and order came under the central government. This was also the position taken by the central government, which argued that the Delhi Assembly had no jurisdiction in this matter. The social media platform also pointed out that it was governed by the IT Act of Parliament, and this is not therefore something that any State government can be concerned with. The Court, in upholding the summons, did not go merely by the legislative powers of a House. It rightly said, "The Assembly does not only perform the function of legislating; there are many other aspects of governance which can form part of the essential functions of the Legislative Assembly and consequently the committee." Its point was that the "inquisitorial" and "recommendatory" powers of a House can be used for better governance. But it also cautioned the committee from "transgressing into any fields reserved for the Union Government".

Significantly, the verdict comes amid a long phase of discordance over legislative turf between the central government and the Delhi government, something that the Bench led by Justice S.K. Kaul did note amid discussions about the spirit of federalism. Not just that. It also comes at a time when social media intermediaries are legally fighting some aspects of the new IT rules that govern them. Their responsibility toward the many legislatures will only become more heightened because of this verdict. The Court refused to buy the argument that social media intermediaries are "merely a platform for exchange of ideas without performing any significant role themselves". It then linked what happens in these platforms to the real world. Misinformation on social media, the Court said, has had "a direct impact on vast areas of subject matter which ultimately affect the governance of States". Given the constraints of the powers of the Delhi Assembly *vis-à-vis* law and order, the very fact that the Court found that its committee still could summon the Facebook India official without encroaching upon the turf of the Centre now opens the gates for scrutiny of social media platforms by other States, which however have significantly more powers with respect to law and order. The stage is set for more scrutiny.

## Tie at the top

Djokovic is in pursuit of history, not just tournament titles

Using Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal as measuring sticks to assess one's tennis credentials is a harsh and, ultimately, a futile exercise. That Novak Djokovic comes through this most searing of examinations with flying colours is a testament to his genius. On Sunday, the Serb laid down the most definitive marker yet of his dazzling brilliance by pulling level with the celebrated duo on 20 Grand Slam singles titles. A tense four-set victory over Italy's Matteo Berrettini also gave Djokovic his third straight title at the All England club (sixth overall) and helped complete the French Open-Wimbledon double, one of sport's toughest achievements. Djokovic's record-equalising feat had seemed improbable as recently as the summer of 2018. As a 31-year-old, he entered that year's Wimbledon as the 12th seed after having spent two years on the fringes. Federer and Nadal, gaining second winds, had swept the previous six Slams and were already on 20 and 17 respectively. But Djokovic rediscovered his mojo and has since won eight of 12 Majors, the most dominant streak of his career. He has conquered Federer on grass and Nadal on clay, and snuffed out rebellions from the game's 'Next Gen' of Dominic Thiem, Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas and Berrettini, beating them for his last four Slam trophies. So much so that he now feels the "most complete" he has ever been as a player.

The accomplishments have inevitably reignited the debate on who the greatest men's player of all time is. While comparisons between eras are often limited and come with caveats – think the great Pancho Gonzales being denied chances to compete in Majors in the 1950s because he had turned professional – Djokovic is without doubt the best of his generation. This week will be his record 329th as World No.1 and he is the only man to have won all four Slams, all nine ATP Masters 1000s and the year-ending ATP Finals, twice. No other statistic better represents his relentless pursuit of excellence, across surfaces, continents and seasons. At the US Open starting next month, he has a shot at sporting immortality, as he can become the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Majors in a single year. Ashleigh Barty may be a long way from such monumental successes, but like Djokovic, she has proved adept at mastering the game's natural surfaces by adding the Wimbledon crown to the French title she won in 2019. The 25-year-old Aussie's craft and guile was fully on display as she felled opponents as chalk and cheese as Angelique Kerber (counter-puncher) and Karolina Pliskova (all-out attacker). With modesty in her bones, she oozes an enviably understated elegance, something the tennis world is sure to see more and more of.

# Decoding the political battle for Uttar Pradesh

If the underpinnings of the BJP's 2017 mandate were contextual rather than absolute, the party could be dislodged



ASIM ALI

**A**ny analysis of the upcoming Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, in 2022, needs to begin with a note of humility. In all the last three elections in the State (2017, 2012, 2007), most reporters and analysts were incorrect in predicting a tantalisingly close fight. The results, on the other hand, revealed a clear single-party majority each time, including the biggest wave in almost four decades in the last election.

At the outset, we must account for this repeated failure to foresee emerging trends in Uttar Pradesh politics. A large part of the blame can be laid on the obsessive focus on caste arithmetic, heuristic categories frozen from the 1990s, that often blurs the larger picture. The big lesson from the last 15 years is that the State of Uttar Pradesh has moved from a rigid identity politics of caste and community to a focus on identity plus governance. A large floating voter population has gradually emerged, spanning across demography, which is fiercely calculative, and driven by aspirations for a better life.

### State's transition

This has powered the transition of Uttar Pradesh, from the messy fragmentation of the coalition era of the 1990s and early 2000s, to the era of stable, single party majorities. Although caste and community identities remain important, Uttar Pradesh voters, like elsewhere, have little patience for misgovernance – they have thrown out every incumbent government since 1989.

But the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government has reasons to be confident of bucking the trend. The sheer scale of its victory in 2017 provides it with a formidable cushion. It received a vote share of almost 40% in the last election,

with an average constituency-level winning margin of an incredible 15%.

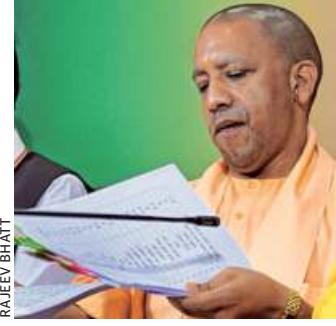
It is quite conceivable for the party to lose a significant chunk of its vote in the next elections, and still emerge with a majority. In comparison, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Samajwadi Party (SP) received a majority, with 30% and 29% of the vote share, respectively.

### Factors behind the mandates

There are two ways of reading the massive 2017 mandate of the BJP. The first is to read it as a historical break where the BJP's ideological triumph fundamentally re-configured the caste-community voting patterns of the State. The second is to read it in the context of the last 15 years, where a large floating voter population, frustrated with the incumbent, flocked behind the clearest alternative. In this framework, just as the 2007 and 2012 majorities did not reflect a long-term realignment in favour of Bahujan (or 'sarvajan') politics or Lohiaite socialism, the enormous mandate received by the BJP in 2017 was also not exclusively a function of Hindutva.

In all three cases, the success of the social engineering or ideological messaging crafted by the eventual winner was contingent on their party becoming the vehicle for the electorate's accumulated resentments and aspirations, shaped by the specific failures of the incumbent. Under the rubric of Hindu identity, and the leadership of Narendra Modi, the BJP became the vehicle for an electorate angry with the crime, corruption and Yadav favouritism under the Samajwadi Party government. The backdrop of communal riots and the increased presence of Muslims in the local power elite, added to this glue of this Hindu consolidation.

However, as the ascension of BJP from 1991-98 in the State, and the subsequent decline for two decades demonstrated, Hindu consolidation in a State like Uttar Pradesh could be an ephemeral phenomenon.



### Incumbent and prospects

If the underpinnings of the BJP mandate of 2017 were indeed contextual rather than absolute, the BJP can indeed be dislodged from power in the State, provided there are two conditions: one, the presence of strong anti-incumbency; and two, the emergence of a clear alternative that transforms the election from a multi-polar to a largely bi-polar contest.

Let us come to the first question: is there a high level of anti-incumbency against the Yogi Adityanath government that can hurt its prospects?

In choosing Mr. Adityanath, a relative lightweight outside of his bastion in Gorakhpur, to lead the State government, the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah team made two bets, informed by the party's previous experience in the State.

First, only hardline Hindutva could contain caste contradictions and lead to a durable Hindu coalition. In the wake of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the BJP had assembled a powerful coalition of upper castes, upwardly mobile castes such as Jats and Gujjars, and Other Backward Classes (OBC) such as Kurmis and Lodhs. This Hindutva coalition, however, soon came apart from internal strife between the upper caste and the OBC factions, culminating in the expulsion of the OBC Kalyan Singh from the party in 1999.

Second, only an authoritative style of leadership could maintain Hindu unity and also create a governance constituency. The largely collective leadership of the 1990s and early 2000s – in which the BJP installed three different Chief Ministers – had provided a

confused and disunited front, and consequently failed to compete with Mayawati and Mulayam Singh Yadav.

Both of these bets, have, arguably, not paid off for the BJP. One, as a political outsider to Lucknow, the first thing Mr. Adityanath did was build his own political support base on his Thakur identity. Much like previous leaders, Mr. Adityanath filled State institutions, be it zilla parishads, civil servants or station house officers, with his own caste men to wield direct power over the administration. The frequent allegations of 'Thakurvaad' or Thakur domination against his administration suggests that Mr. Adityanath has not so far proved to be a leader with a pan-Hindu appeal in the mould of Mr. Modi.

Two, the authoritative style of governance has provided indifferent results. While Mr. Adityanath does possess some governance appeal – having a relatively clean and "tough on crime" image – he has largely been unable to associate himself with either a social welfare constituency or marquee developmental projects. On top of it, the novel coronavirus pandemic has severely diminished his governance credentials: any improvement in the ease of business index pales in comparison to images of bodies floating in the Ganga. The dramatic State failure during the second wave of the pandemic also threatens to become a coalescing point for all the material anxieties persisting under the surface, such as unemployment, sluggish growth and farmer distress.

The aspirations of the floating voters who deserted Ms. Mayawati in 2012, and Akhilesh Yadav in 2017, has, arguably, remained unfulfilled under Mr. Adityanath's regime.

**Where the Opposition stands**  
This brings us to the second question: is there a clear alternative that transforms the election from a multi-polar to a largely bi-polar contest?

A quick scan of the Opposition

ranks indicates that only the SP presently possesses the strength to challenge the BJP.

The BSP under Ms. Mayawati has been in constant decline in the State from 2012. The party has lost touch with its roots in political activism for a long time now, and its organisation has withered away under an insular leadership. The steady desertion of leaders gives further evidence of a party in a death spiral. Similarly, there are little signs of a Congress revival, the latest indications being its disastrous returns in the panchayat elections.

All of this plays well into the SP's strategy of making this electoral contest into a largely bipolar race. A perception of a straight fight between the SP and the BJP might well consolidate local elites, and a disgruntled electorate, behind the party symbol. But there are reasonable grounds to doubt whether the SP can defeat the BJP in a bipolar race. For one, the party has never crossed the 30% vote share mark in State elections.

In order to defeat the BJP, the SP party would need to go well beyond plebeian caste consolidation and minority insecurity, and court floating voters with a broad-based, positive message of development. In this regard, Akhilesh Yadav can borrow from his own template of 2012, where he ran a successful campaign focused on employment, electricity and education.

The choice of Mr. Adityanath was essentially informed more through the lenses of ideologically cementing the Hindu vote rather than the fulfilment of the governance aspirations of the floating voter. If the BJP manages to fritter away its enormous mandate, it would derive from the same source of hubris that felled previous incumbents: overly reading into the mandate its own ingenious social engineering or sweeping ideological triumph rather than the contextual aspirations and resentments that underlie it.

Asim Ali is a Research Associate with the Centre for Policy Research, Delhi

## Prioritising school reopening on the road to recovery +

Children have long borne the costs of school closure and evidence-based decisions toward reopening are a necessity



BHASKARAN RAMAN &  
OM DAMANI

**M**ost schools in India have been closed since the national lockdown started in March 2020. What are the costs of keeping schools closed? How do these costs compare against the risks of school reopening? We delve into these questions, as concerned parents with school-age children, as experienced teachers, and also as practising scientists who have followed data and publications on this topic over the last 15 months.

Interestingly, various regions around the world which have been worse hit by the novel coronavirus pandemic than India, have kept their schools, especially primary schools, mostly open. This includes various European countries such as Portugal, France, the Netherlands, etc. The State of Florida (United States) opened schools for in-person classes in late September 2020, and they stayed open through their second wave. On the other hand in India, schools have mostly been shut even as other businesses have opened.

### Impact of school closure

The costs of school closure are immense. People make considerable investments in their children's education, as a way toward a better future and a better living standard. Even prior to the pandemic, there was a huge attainment gap

across students, especially in higher grades. The bottom half of children passing Class 10 are about two years behind in terms of skills. Prolonged school closure has already widened this gap. What will this do to their future? Does it not push the next generation deeper into poverty? Ironically, the poorest families living in dense urban slums, who bore the brunt of the first wave, and are now largely immune from the virus itself (as shown by serosurveys), are the ones suffering the most from school closures.

A survey (<https://bit.ly/3xzZ7mx>) across 10 States in India in November 2020 estimated that nearly two-thirds of children in rural India may drop out of school, a staggering statistic which is likely to have worsened with continuing closure. Haryana has reported (<https://bit.ly/3r64dV5>) a 42% drop in student enrolment in private schools. Prolonged school shutdown has severely set back India's fight against ill such as child labour (<https://bit.ly/3e9H7HE>) and child marriage (<https://bit.ly/36AevTK>). Due to the shutdown of schools, mid-day meal schemes have been disrupted; even as early as June 2020, it was estimated (<https://bit.ly/3r2AfkG>) that about 800,000 additional children would face underweight and wasting.

**Health, well-being concerns**  
Even in well-off urban India and in developed nations, extended school closure is having a severe impact on children's mental health. In Las Vegas, U.S., a surge of student suicides (<https://tinyurl.com/2UIJYpb>) forced schools to reopen in January 2021. The United Kingdom reported (<https://bit.ly/2Vq94oa>) among the nearly two million children in Sweden (where schools have been open throughout), found that there was not a single child death due to COVID-19. As per Mumbai's dashboard data, the COVID-19 IFR (Infection Fatality Rate) for under-19 is minuscule: about 0.003%. In comparison, the

infant mortality rate in India is about 3% (1,000 times greater) and the infant mortality rate in Japan (one of the lowest) is 0.18% (60 times greater). In other words, school-age children are at a negligibly lower risk from COVID-19 when compared to other threats which we consider normal.

There has been a concern that a possible third wave involving newer variants could affect children. But a careful look at the data (<https://bit.ly/3xEm7Q>) tells that the age-profiles of those affected in the second and first waves are similar. There is no scientific basis for this fear. Further, Public Health England's June 2021 report (<https://bit.ly/3B3ALnp>) shows that the newer variant Delta is much less dangerous (case fatality rate 0.1%) than the original (case fatality rate 1.9%), which is the expected evolutionary path of a virus.

**Assessing the risk factor**  
First, we must realise, and be grateful that the risk of COVID-19 for children is much lower than for adults, and is also much lower than other (already small) risks children face in daily life anyway. Based on a study of 137 million school-age children in the U.S. and Europe, Prof. Raj S. Bhopal (University of Edinburgh, U.K.) has observed (<https://bit.ly/3wz3h6>) that COVID-19 in this age group is less than half as risky as seasonal influenza, and over 20 times less risky than death by "unintentional injury".

A study (<https://bit.ly/2Vq94oa>) among the nearly two million children in Sweden (where schools have been open throughout), found that there was not a single child death due to COVID-19. As per Mumbai's dashboard data, the COVID-19 IFR (Infection Fatality Rate) for under-19 is minuscule: about 0.003%. In comparison, the

resources, whose parents have to go out to work every day, in-person schooling is paramount. Parents who can afford to work from home have sufficient resources for their children and may choose to continue with partially or fully online classes for a few more months. It is high time to implement such differentiated options.

### Vaccines for children

There has recently been talk about tying school reopening to vaccines for children. Any medical intervention, especially for children, must be based on a careful risk-benefit analysis. It is pertinent to note that there are growing concerns (<https://cnn.it/3r8MnAH>) in the U.S. of a potential link between heart inflammation and the mRNA vaccine, among adolescents. Further, scientists writing in *The British Medical Journal* (May 2021) note (<https://bit.ly/36xCpP>): "the rarity of severe Covid-19 outcomes for children means that trials cannot demonstrate that the balance of the benefits of vaccination against the potential adverse effects are favourable...". It will likely take several years to establish such a balance. We cannot let our children suffer for that long, by further prolonging school closures.

More than the virus, fear stands between our children and their education and normal life. Policy-makers must make evidence-based decisions toward school reopening. This is the least the working class and the children of India deserve.

Bhaskaran Raman and Om Damani are faculty members at the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, IIT Bombay. The views expressed are personal



## 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.

### Advancing Taliban

If the Taliban's claim that they control over 80% of Afghanistan is true, then their final assault on Kabul could come any time soon. Despite its long presence in Afghanistan, the U.S. has not been able to understand the true political dynamics between various tribal factions. With the Taliban's resurgence

raising terror fears, from Moscow to China, New Delhi should be wary of a boost to armed insurgency in Kashmir.

KANGAYAM R. NARASIMHAN,  
Chennai

### 'Bifurcation' plan

The Bharatiya Janata Party leadership in Tamil Nadu is attempting to stir up a hornet's nest in the State

with the "Centre's plan" of converting the western districts into a "Kongu Nadu Union Territory". By attempting to whip up such parochial regional passions, the BJP is travelling on a dangerous path. Even though tall Dravidian leaders in the State were strong advocates of a 'Dravida Nadu', they never compromised on the unity

# Tracing the decline of U.S. power

The U.S. made a major mistake in abandoning realist pragmatism and switching to liberal idealism



KISHORE MAHBUBANI

*In A New Cold War: Henry Kissinger and the Rise of China, edited by Sanjaya Baru and Rahul Sharma, academic and diplomat Kishore Mahbubani explains America's place in the world in his essay 'Evil Liberalism versus Moral Pragmatism'. He asserts that by abandoning Kissinger's realist pragmatism, the U.S. has become 'severely weakened both domestically and externally'. An excerpt:*

The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of Henry Kissinger's famous visit to China in July 1971. It also marks, more or less, the 30th anniversary of the end of the Cold War. With some risk of being accused of over-simplification, one can say in the 20 years after Kissinger's visit to China, U.S. foreign policy was guided by the philosophy of realist pragmatism. By contrast, in the 30 years after the end of the Cold War, it was guided by the philosophy of liberal idealism. The results are clear. Realist pragmatism delivered the greatest victory of American foreign policy: a victory over the mighty Soviet Union without the U.S. firing a shot at Soviet armed forces. By contrast, the past 30 years have generated a lot of evil.

**Collateral damage**  
Between 2004 and 2019, the U.S. Air Force dropped 175,842 bombs on several countries, according to the U.S. Air Forces Central Command. Bombs dropped from the air are often not accurate. Hence, many innocent people were killed. The Brown University Watsons Institute's Cost of War Project estimates the total casualties from all post-9/11 wars at 770,000 to 801,000 casualties. The results are clear: when ethical do-gooders take over the U.S. foreign policy, evil is generated: \$5.1 trillion wasted; almost 800,000 lives lost.

Yet, the biggest damage done by the abandonment of Kissingerian realist pragmatism is that the U.S. has become severely weakened both domestically and externally. Internally, the 30-year period of liberal-idealistic domination of the U.S. fo-



U.S. Presidential Adviser Henry Kissinger (left) with Chinese Premier Zhou Enlai in Peking in 1971. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

reign policy has coincided with a 30-year period of stagnation of working class incomes. Externally, the U.S. literally fell asleep at the wheel while China rose dramatically. In 1980, in purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, China's gross national product (GNP) was 10% of that of the U.S. By 2014, it had become bigger. Now there is no doubt that the biggest foreign policy challenge the U.S. faces in the next three decades is China.

So, how should the U.S. manage China? The main argument of this essay is that the U.S. needs to engage in deep reflection on what went drastically wrong. The U.S. made a major mistake in abandoning realist pragmatism and switching to liberal idealism. A return to Kissingerian realist pragmatism would be the best way to manage a rising China.

Kissinger's celebrated 'secret' visit to Beijing in July 1971 is widely and justifiably regarded as a major move that swung the 'correlation of forces' in America's favour and led to the ultimate victory over the Soviet Union. What was remarkable about the widespread applause that this visit received, including from *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, is that so few Americans mentioned that the U.S. was embracing a regime in China led by Mao Zedong, which had only recently created havoc in the country, leading to enormous human pain and suffering through the disastrous policies of the Great Leap Forward (1958-61) and the Cultural Revolution (1966-76).

In short, human rights were a secondary consideration when realist pragmatism reigned. Indeed, at the International Conference on Kampuchea of July 13-17, 1981, the U.S. dele-



gation, led by Alexander Haig, actually supported China against the ASEAN countries, when China said that the Khmer Rouge should be allowed to return to power in Phnom Penh after the Vietnamese withdrawal. I was personally present and shocked when this happened. Yet the same Reagan administration, in a more 'liberal' move, supported the removal of the dictator [Ferdinand] Marcos from the Philippines. In short, even in the realist-pragmatic era, there were liberal elements.

Kissinger wasn't the only major figure advocating realist pragmatism. Other major thinkers of that era did so, including George Kennan and Zbigniew Brzezinski. While Kennan is often associated with the harsh policy of 'containment' of the Soviet Union, John Mearsheimer reminds us that Kennan was a shrewd and sophisticated thinker. Firstly, he emphasised that the outcome of the Cold War would not be determined by the size of their respective armed forces. Instead, it would depend on the 'spiritual vitality' of their domestic societies. This is what he had said: 'It is rather a question of the degree to which the U.S. can create among the peoples of the world generally the impression of a country which

knows what it wants, which is coping successfully with the problems of its internal life and with the responsibilities of a World Power, and which has a spiritual vitality capable of holding its own among the major ideological currents of the time.' He also called for 'greater humility in our national outlook.' According to Mearsheimer, his call for humility was in response to a strong claim made by then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in February 1998, when she had said, 'If we have to use force, it is because we are America; we are the indispensable nation. We stand tall and we see further than other countries into the future, and we see the danger here to all of us.'

Kennan lived to the ripe old age of 101 and died in 2005. Hence, he lived through the first 15 years of the post-Cold War era. Significantly, he also disapproved of the many key moves when the U.S. switched from realist pragmatism to liberal idealism. He disapproved of the expansion of NATO into the former Soviet bloc. Kennan also disapproved of the invasion of Iraq.

#### Delusions of superiority'

Dick Cheney confidently asserted that U.S. troops would be welcomed in Iraq. He said, 'I really do believe that we will be greeted as liberators.' Mearsheimer observes that in contrast to such beliefs that the U.S. was morally superior, Kennan did not believe that the U.S. was more virtuous in any meaningful way. Indeed, Kennan observed that Americans were suffering from 'delusions of superiority'. Kennan strongly argued against the U.S. taking a 'paternalistic' responsibility to anyone, be it even in the form of military occupation'.

Many of the points raised here will be disputed. Yet, there is no doubt that the policies of restraint and pragmatism, advocated by people like Kissinger and Kennan in the Cold War era, contrast significantly with the liberal idealism of the post-Cold War era, as demonstrated by the statement of Democrats like Albright and Republicans like George W. Bush. These contrasting approaches also explain American success of the Cold War era and the failures of the post-Cold War era.

Excerpted with permission from HarperCollins

# Dialogue over discord

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's speech has ushered in a ray of hope for harmony



TARIQ MANSOOR

There have been a lot of deliberations on Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat's speech on July 5 during a book launch function in Ghaziabad. The speech carries many firsts and sends a message to both Hindus and Muslims. Discussions in the media and in social and political groups may be taking place on the content of the speech, but there is no denying that it has ushered in a ray of hope for harmony.

#### A bold speech

Mr. Bhagwat stressed on two major issues, peaceful coexistence and initiating a dialogue for a composite culture, to be attained by safeguarding and following our own religious practices, cultures, and attire. Nothing is left for a tussle when the two communities share a motherland, culture, and ancestors.

Mr. Bhagwat's speech has to be viewed in its entirety. The time has come for a new beginning. His bold outreach needs to be reciprocated. There may be issues, concerns, and even irritants during this journey but we have to overcome all this. Treading a peaceful path is the need of the hour.

There are many points in Mr. Bhagwat's speech which we have to agree with without discussion. India is the motherland for both the communities. He has shunned the apprehension regarding his remarks – there is no need for confrontation. The fact that such a statement comes from the RSS chief itself denotes that Muslims should not live with any fear psychosis. When Mr. Bhagwat said that the DNA of Hindus and Muslims is the same and they have the same ancestors, it shows that proving one's Muslim identity does not hold much ground.

It is true that incidents of mob lynching of Muslims are a matter of concern as they have endangered the life and security of the community. Mr. Bhagwat categorically condemned all such lynching incidents. He said that those who indulge in lynching are against Hindutva. The law should take its own course against such people without any partiality.

Mr. Bhagwat said Muslims should not live in a cycle of fear. This could instill confidence in the community. It is a fact that there is fear and apprehension in the community. There is no space for firebrand sloganizing that Islam is in danger, Muslims will be evict-

ed, etc. Mr. Bhagwat himself candidly admitted that he can become popular with such rhetoric speeches but Hindus will themselves not support him.

The message from Mr. Bhagwat's speech is also for the majority community. The fringe elements need to learn lessons from it. The sensationalisation of statements, such as 'no Muslims will live here', may get space in the media, but the majority community does not approve of such an attitude. The RSS chief has highlighted the fact that there may have been some mistakes and excesses in the past, but we have to move forward. He has also drawn a line for the political situation in the country. Unity emanates from camaraderie, not from politics. It will come from the continuous efforts of enlightened people, not through politics.

#### Emphasising unity

Not long before Mr. Bhagwat's speech, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered an important speech to the Muslim community at the centenary celebrations of the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) in 2020. His speech was appreciated in India and abroad for emphasising unity while achieving common national goals such as Aatmanirbharta, women's education, preservation of cultural heritage and equality of opportunity, while de-emphasising political and ideological differences.

It is within this framework that the speeches of both Mr. Modi and Mr. Bhagwat have to be appreciated. These are genuine attempts to engage with the community. More importantly, it is crucial that this be reciprocated by the Muslim community through dialogue. AMU can play an important role in facilitating this dialogue. Section 5(2)(b) of the AMU Act confers the university with the mission to promote the study of the religions, culture and civilisation of India. Towards this, the AMU, in its centenary year, established the Dara Shikoh Centre for Interfaith Dialogue. Dara Shikoh, a Mughal prince, was the founder of the academic movement for Hindu-Muslim dialogue.

For centuries, the two communities have lived in unity sharing a motherland, culture, and ancestors. Throughout the course of history, our rulers were different, but the country has remained one. This is what makes our Bharat unique. This is the message from this ancient land to the entire world. Any dialogue must take lessons from the past, live in the present and chart a peaceful path for the future. Let us move ahead with open hearts and minds.

Tariq Mansoor is Vice-Chancellor, Aligarh Muslim University

## Ethiopia's political tug of war

The conflict between PM Abiy Ahmed's party and the Tigray People's Liberation Front is escalating

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed believes he is a man of destiny. As a child, his mother had prophesied that her son would become a great ruler one day. The Prosperity Party the former intelligence officer launched, disbanding the multi-party coalition that brought him to power, is said to derive its name from an evangelical faith. Whatever his predilections, the Ethiopian leader has, since being catapulted to premiership in April 2018, stumbled from one crisis to another, imperilling the country's recent economic record.

**Use of force**  
When Mr. Abiy commanded a military offensive in November in retaliation against a Tigray rebel attack on federal army barracks, his reputation as a reformer and peacemaker already lay in ruins. He dismissed opposition to the use of force, insisting that the law-and-order operation would be wound up within weeks. For months, he denied the involvement of neighbouring Eritrean forces in the conflict. In March, Mr. Abiy likened Tigrayan fighters to 'flour dispersed by the wind.'

But events on the ground tell another story. Thousands of civilians have been killed by Ethiopian and Eritrean forces and Tigrayan militias. Addis Ababa stands accused by the United Nations and Amnesty International of war crimes, ethnic cleansing and the resort to rape and hunger as weapons of war.

The unilateral ceasefire Mr. Abiy declared on June 28, purportedly on humanitarian grounds, carries little credibility, as Tigray continues to remain crippled by a blockade of essential supplies and communication and electricity blackouts. The U.S., Ethiopia's long-standing military ally, has imposed sanctions on several top officials and the European Union has demanded millions of dollars in aid.

Meanwhile, after recapturing the regional capital Mekelle in late June, the rebel Tigray Defense Forces have taken thousands of Ethiopian troops as prisoners of war. They have demanded the withdrawal of all federal forces loyal to Mr. Abiy, besides an independent investigation into Ethiopia

Eritrean atrocities. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), the dominant party in the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF)'s autocratic rule until 2018, is resurgent. The organisation, which Mr. Abiy has dubbed a "criminal clique," has stayed outside his Prosperity Party.

Debretion Gebremichael, the President of TPLF, has raised the spectre of the territory asserting its right to self-determination under the 1995 constitution in view of its deepening distrust with Addis Ababa. Mr. Debretion has also not ruled out TPLF retaliation against Eritrean atrocities in the ongoing conflict. Eritrea's strongman President Isaias Afwerki, who signed the landmark 2018 peace deal with Mr. Abiy, has now allied with him, possibly to avenge his country's bloody defeat against a TPLF-led Ethiopian government in the 1998-2000 border war.

**Growing resentment**  
The volatile atmosphere is a far cry from the euphoria in 2018 when Mr. Abiy released political prisoners, lifted the ban on opposition parties and welcomed exiles home. An Oromo, the ethnic community that constitutes more than a third of Ethiopia's population, Mr. Abiy's elevation symbolised the redressal of the country's political imbalance. Tigrayans, who form less than 10% of the populace, had wielded power disproportionate to their strength for 28 years under the EPRDF coalition. In the event, the Oromos' enthusiasm to assert their new-found freedom proved unsustainable and the Tigrayans began to resent the erosion of political influence.

Matters reached a head when Tigray held provincial polls in September 2020, defying Addis Ababa's decision to defer general elections nationally in view of the pandemic. The ballot was eventually held on June 21, but not in at least 100 constituencies. Although Mr. Abiy has predictably won the election, the second most populated nation in Africa is at a crossroads.

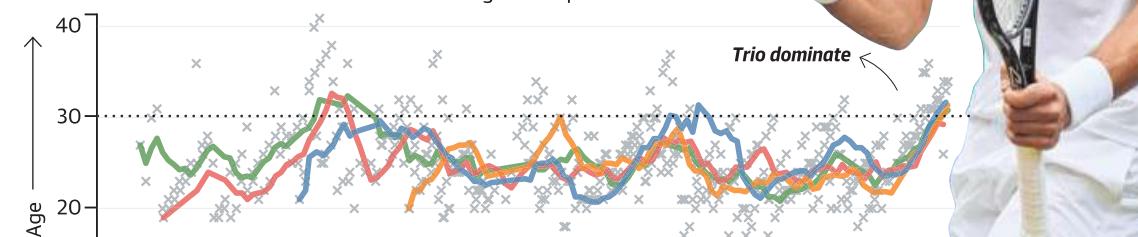
*Garimella Subramaniam is Director - Strategic Initiatives, AgroShin Technologies Pvt Ltd*

#### DATA POINT

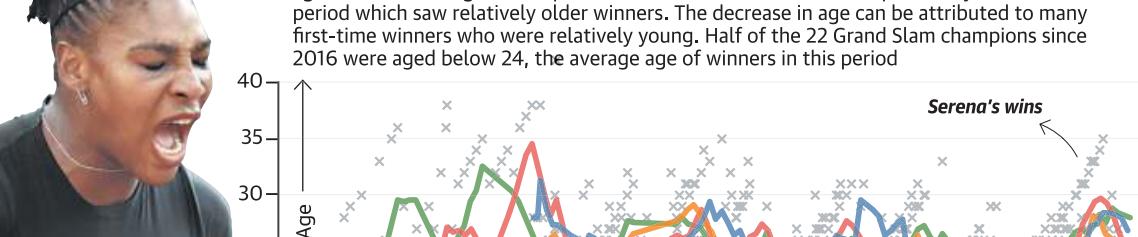
## Nowhere near breaking point

On Sunday, Novak Djokovic became the third male singles player to win 20 Grand Slam titles after Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. The trio have won 60 of the 72 Majors played since Wimbledon 2003, Federer's first Slam title. Their sheer dominance has pushed the average age of men Slam winners above 30, with breakthrough wins – when a player wins their first Major – becoming a rarity. However, it's a different story in the women's singles event. After Serena Williams' dominance waned, new and younger champions have burst onto the scene. Twelve of the last 22 wins were breakthroughs and most of the players were relatively young, pushing down the average age of women champions since 2016. By Suman Sen and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

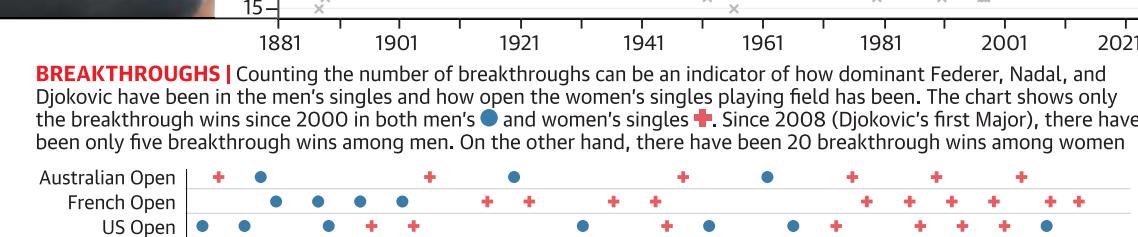
**AGEING LIKE FINE WINE |** The chart depicts the age of men's singles Grand Slam winners (x) and the average age of champions at the Australian Open (blue), French Open (orange), Wimbledon (green) and the U.S. Open (red). Since 2010, the average age of champions has consistently moved upwards across all four Majors. In the past, there were instances when the average age of winners was relatively high. But such a high average age was neither seen in four consecutive Grand Slam tournaments nor did it sustain for a significant period of time.



**AN OPEN FIELD |** The chart depicts the age of women's singles Grand Slam winners (x) and the average age of champions at various Slams. Contrary to the men's singles, the average age of women's singles champions has trended downwards in the past few years after a period which saw relatively older winners. The decrease in age can be attributed to many first-time winners who were relatively young. Half of the 22 Grand Slam champions since 2016 were aged below 24, the average age of winners in this period.



**BREAKTHROUGHS |** Counting the number of breakthroughs can be an indicator of how dominant Federer, Nadal, and Djokovic have been in the men's singles and how open the women's singles playing field has been. The chart shows only the breakthrough wins since 2000 in both men's (blue) and women's singles (red). Since 2008 (Djokovic's first Major), there have been only five breakthrough wins among men. On the other hand, there have been 20 breakthrough wins among women.



## FROM PAGE ONE

## Nepal SC directs Deuba to be appointed PM

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Oli's supporters, including youths and students affiliated to the ruling CPN-UML, took to streets here to protest against the top court's verdict against the 69-year-old Communist leader.

Cadres of the National Youth Force affiliated to the CPN-UML gathered in Mai-tighar Mandal near the court premises chanting slogans against the verdict.

"We are not bound to accept all the orders passed by the Supreme Court, beware!" read a banner carried by the demonstrators.

Mr. Oli's confidant and former Minister Mahesh Basnet was also present at the protests, according to media reports.

As many as 30 petitions were filed against the dissolution of the House by the President. One of the petitions was filed by the Opposition parties' alliance with the signature of 146 lawmakers, demanding reinstatement of the Lower House of Parliament and appointment of Mr. Deuba as the Prime Minister.

## Inflation remains above 6% for second month

Growth impulses remained fragile with the second COVID-19 wave hurting the recovery momentum, according to quick estimates of industrial output for May, with output levels 8% lower than April.

Manufacturing output tanked 9.5% month-on-month, electricity production fell nearly 7%, although mining moved up marginally by 0.6% in May.

Headline factory output increased 29.3% over an incomparable May 2020, when industrial production had collapsed over 33% in the midst of a national lockdown.

However, this was 13.9% below the pre-pandemic levels of May 2019.

"Consumer durables and capital goods stood out as the worst affected sectors in May, trailing the pre-COVID levels by 41.2% and 36.9%, respectively," noted Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA.

DBS Group Research economist Radhika Rao said Monetary Policy Committee members may retain a growth focus but are likely to express discomfort on

## Panel studying trial data of new vaccine: govt.

More than 1.54 crore (1,54,20,956) balance and unutilised doses were still available with the States/UTs and private hospitals, it added.

In a related development, doctors across the country have been reporting increased cases of Long COVID.

"There is proven research that it is common for COVID-19 to last for five months or more and there are reports of it lasting 12 months also," she said.

## Dalit man thrashed on suspicion of goat theft

A Dalit man was tied to a tree and thrashed by a group of people in Mohan-pura village of Rajasthan's Bhilwara district on the suspicion that he had stolen a goat from a house. The incident, which took place on Friday last week, came to light when its video clip went viral on social media.

Similar thefts were earlier reported in the village, but there was no trace of the thief. Some villagers suspected that Dalit youth Ra-

mash Balai was the culprit, as he was allegedly seen roaming around the spot. Some villagers forcibly took Ramesh from Mali Khe-dha roundabout near Mohan-pura and tied him to a tree. The youth was beaten mercilessly though he pleaded innocence and said he did not know anything about the goats.

A villager shot a video of the incident and posted it on the social media groups. Alerted by the video, the police swung into action and launched a probe.

## Don't permit Mekedatu project: all-party meet

The resolution said no construction must be undertaken at Mekedatu without the permission of the downstream States as per the Supreme Court's ruling. "Yet, Karnataka is making efforts to construct a dam at Mekedatu. This is highly condemnable," it said.

The parties observed that the project would affect water supply for the farmers of Tamil Nadu. The meeting was convened by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at the Secretariat.

## 68 killed in lightning strikes in 3 States; experts issue warning

Rise in such incidents is partly due to cascading effects of global warming'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

With the monsoon making a slow revival over several parts of India, except the northwest region, there is a rise in lightning-linked deaths.

Nearly 68 were reportedly struck dead by lightning on a single day in Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, according to reports from the States on Sunday. Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex gratia of ₹2 lakh each for the next of kin of those killed in the lightning strikes in all the three States and ₹50,000 for the injured.

Over the years, the Home Ministry's statistics consistently cited lightning as the biggest natural disaster-linked killer in India.

In 2019, an analysis by private weather company Skymet reported that five States accounted for half the lightning strikes that year, led by Odisha with 9,37,462 strikes or about 16% of the cloud-to-ground strikes.

There were 20 million lightning strikes in that period with over 72% of them



**In a flash:** State Disaster Response Force personnel searching for bodies in the Amber Fort in Jaipur where 11 people were killed after being struck by lightning on Sunday. ■AP

being instances of "in-cloud" lightning.

The most recent statistics from the National Crime Records Bureau, from 2019, said that year, there were 8,145 deaths in the country attributable to forces of nature.

ture. Of these, 35.3% deaths were reported due to 'lightning', 15.6% deaths due to 'heat/sun stroke' and 11.6% deaths due to 'flood'. Most of those who died due to accidents caused by forces of nature were reported to be be-

longing to the age-group of 30-45 (25.3%) and 45-60 (24.9%) together.

Under 'lightning', Bihar (400), Madhya Pradesh (400), Jharkhand (334) and Uttar Pradesh (321) reported the maximum number of victims.

Experts have warned of a rise in lightning disaster partly due to the cascading effects of global warming. At a seminar last month, S.D. Pawar, scientist at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, stated that annual lightning deaths had risen nearly two and a half times from the late 1960s to 2019 and were directly linked to the climate crisis, that increased moisture over land due to warming.

## Open fields

Several weather agencies now issue lightning-related warnings and there are apps that generate customised forecasts. However a large proportion of deaths are in rural areas with open fields and people, in a bid to take shelter from the rain, choose to stay under trees that are frequently struck by lightning.

## Monsoon eludes Delhi despite fair conditions

It is only a matter of time, says IMD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

While the conditions for the monsoon's onset over Delhi are in place, meteorologists are unable to set a precise date.

For well over a week now, the monsoon – that was to have reached Delhi on June 27-29 – has been on the threshold of the region with its northernmost limit over a stretch that spans Barmer, Aligarh, Meerut, Ambala and Amritsar.

"Conditions are ripe for the monsoon in Delhi and it is only a matter of time," M. Mohapatra, Director-General, IMD, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

The latest forecasts, as of Monday morning, indicate no significant rain over the region for the next 24 hours and only chances of a "light drizzle" for the early part of the week.

**'Unprecedented failure'** With questions swirling on IMD's failure to predict the monsoon in Delhi, the agency issued a statement late Monday arguing that the failure of their model was unprecedented.

"Such type of failure by numerical models in predic-

tion of monsoon advance over Delhi is rare and uncommon. It is needless to mention that the IMD has predicted well with high accuracy about the advance of monsoon over Delhi in the recent past years and also the advance of monsoon over different parts of the country during the monsoon-2021 accurately about four to five days ahead. The IMD is monitoring the situation continuously and will provide the regular updates on advance of monsoon into remaining parts of north-west India including Delhi."

After the monsoon made its onset over Kerala on June 3, its southwest branch made a rapid journey upwards, prompting the IMD to forecast that it could arrive by June 15.

"We made a mistake with that. However after July 1, the IMD's position has been that the monsoon would set in around July 10. We are seeing the setting in of the characteristic monsoon winds as well as low humidity and the clouds are there too. The rain is soon inevitable," said Mr. Mohapatra.

The overall monsoon rainfall from a surplus has turned to an 8% deficit.

## India faces danger of narco-terror: Amit Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

transfer the cases pending against it from various High Courts to it. On July 9, a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna tagged the government's transfer plea to a pending special leave petition titled 'Justice for Rights Foundation versus Union of India'.

The Justice Khanwilkar Bench had said the case would be listed before an appropriate Bench on July 16.

The government's transfer petition is likely to come up before a Bench led by Justice D.Y. Chandrachud on July 16.

The 'Justice for Rights Foundation' case is pending before this Bench and primarily concerns the regulation of content shown on over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

Already, the different aspects of the new Rules are under judicial scanner. The government has recently moved the apex court to

the Centre of Excellence for Research and Analysis of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances at the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU) in Gandhinagar.

"The Centre has decided

that we will not let narcotics enter our country and not let India become its pathway. It is important to stop this menace," he said.

## IT Rules: SC gives petitioner a week's time

He can check whether it addresses the issue of communally sensitive content on social media

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday gave a week's time for a petitioner to study the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules of 2021 to verify whether it addresses the issue of communally sensitive content posted on social media platforms.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) N.V. Rama-na even suggested that the petitioner, advocate Khaja Ajiazuddin, could approach the government.

Mr. Ajiazuddin said he had moved the apex court on the suggestion of the Telangana High Court. He sought directions to the government to restrain social media platforms from carrying Islamophobic content on

their timelines and to direct a CBI or NIA probe against Twitter and its users involved in putting out "inflammatory posts".

The petition referred to how "massive publicity was given by the media that many of the positive cases of symptoms of coronavirus were found from Tablighi Jamaat at Nizamuddin in Delhi".

The petition contended

"there was a massive trend-

ing of tweets on Twitter at-

taching the Muslim religion

to the cause of spread of co-

ronavirus".

He said he was "aggrieved

with trending on Twitter un-

der the name and styled #Is-

lamiccoronavirusjihad, etc".

It amounted to promoting

hatred against a particular

religion, which is a criminal

offence both under the In-

dian Penal Code and the In-

formation Technology Act of

2000.

The petition, filed in May, asked the court to direct the government to frame specific guidelines under the Information Technology Act of 2000. It regulates social intermediaries, content on digital media and ad-

dress cyber-crime. It comes in place of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules of 2011.

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**Remembering the past:** Union Culture Minister G. Kishan Reddy visiting the National Archives in New Delhi on Monday. Minister of State Meenakshi Lekhi is seen. ■PTI

## Records of freedom fighters to be digitised

Bid to mark 75 years of Independence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Mahotsav," he said, referring to the year-long series of activities leading up to Independence Day 2022.

Mr. Reddy said he would review the digitisation project in general and that of the freedom fighters in par-

ticular soon to speed up the work.

## Safety precautions

Asked about the safety of the records during the proposed demolition of the an-

nex building as part of the Central Vista redevelopment project, Mr. Reddy said "precaution will be taken for each page".

To a question about crowds gathering at tourist hotspots after the second wave of the pandemic abated, Mr. Reddy said it was the "State governments' responsibility" to impose the protocol. He appealed to the public to cooperate.

## Jamia shooter held for hate speech at Haryana event

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Gopal Sharma alias Ram Bhakt Gopal, 19, accused of shooting at a Jamia student last year during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests, was arrested by the Gurugram Police on Monday in connection with his hate speech at a mahapanchayat in Pataudi earlier this month. He has been charged with outraging religious feelings and promoting enmity between different groups.

Sharma was arrested at Si-

kanderpur Badha village, said the police. The arrest came following the registration of an FIR against him late on Sunday night on a complaint by a resi-

dent of Jamupur village.

The case was registered at Pataudi police station under Section 153A (Promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion etc.) and 295A (Deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs).

The complainant, in the FIR, said the teenager gave a provocative speech at mahapanchayat organised at Ramlila Ground in Pataudi on July 4. He further ad-

ded that the speech could instigate riots and create law and order situation.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

A meeting of all legislature parties in Tamil Nadu, including the BJP, unanimously passed a resolution on Monday, urging the Union government not to accord permission to Karnataka for building a dam across the Cauvery at Mekedatu. The meeting was convened by Chief Minister M.K. Stalin at the Secretariat.

Similar thefts were

## Assam CM tables cattle protection Bill

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday tabled the Assam Cattle Preservation Bill, 2021, on the first day of the Assembly's Budget session.

The State Cabinet had a week ago approved the Bill seeking to ban the transport of cattle within as well as to and from Assam.

The Bill would replace the existing Assam Cattle Preservation Act, 1950, which allowed the slaughter of cattle above the age of 14 after approval from local veterinary officers.

"No person shall transport or offer for transport or cause to be transported any cattle without a valid permit from any place of another State through Assam to any place outside the State of Assam, any place within the State of Assam or the State of Assam where the slaughter of cattle is not regulated by law," the Bill said.

## Choksi gets bail, can return to Antigua

Dominica HC nod for medical care

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Dominica High Court has granted bail to fugitive diamantaire Mehul Choksi, allowing him to travel to Antigua and Barbuda for treatment of his neurological condition, local media there reported.

The court has granted a consent order by Choksi's legal team permitting him to go to Antigua, where he has been staying as a citizen since 2018 after he left India, after depositing 10,000 Eastern Caribbean dollars (approximately ₹2.75 lakh) as bail money to seek medical attention from a specialised neurologist, *Nature Isle News* reported.

The court has also stayed the ongoing trial before a magistrate for his alleged illegal entry into Dominica on May 23, till his return, it said.

## VHP flays U.P.'s population Bill

'Imbalance between communities due to different response to family planning'

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has objected to incentivising public servants and others to follow the "one-child norm" mentioned in certain sections of the proposed Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021.

The objection pertains to just the fact that China has had to reverse its one-child policy because of its negative impact of the availability of a working population, but because of what the VHP termed an "imbalance between different communities because they are known to respond differently to the incentives and disincentives related to family planning and contraception".

ALOK KUMAR  
VHP'S ACTING PRESIDENT

moting it as a desired policy aim of his government.

### China as example

VHP's acting president Alok Kumar has written to the Law Commission formalising its objection, citing the example of China and its government's recent relaxation of the one-child norm followed earlier to illustrate his point.

He asked that Section 5, 6(2) and 7 of the Bill "go well beyond" the Bill's objectives, which aimed to stabilise the population and promote the two-child norm.

"The Sections 5, 6(2) and 7 of the Bill, which incentiv-

ise public servants and others to have only one child in the family, go well beyond the said objects of the Bill in the Preamble," Mr. Kumar said.

"In a contracting population, the ratio between the working age and dependent population gets disrupted," the letter said.

"In an extreme case, the one-child policy would lead to a situation where there is only one working age adult to look after two parents and four grandparents. In China, which adopted the one-child policy in 1980, it was called the 1-2-4 phenomenon. To get over it, China had to re-

lax its one-child policy," it added.

### Further imbalance

"In the case of Uttar Pradesh, the one-child policy is likely to lead to further imbalance between different communities because they are known to respond differently to the incentives and disincentives related to family planning and contraception," Mr. Kumar noted, citing examples of Assam and Kerala where, he stated, the TFR of Hindus was far below the replacement rate of 2.1, but that of Muslims was 3.16 in Assam and 2.33 in Kerala. "In these States, one of the communities has thus entered the contraction phase, while the other is still expanding," he observed.

Many States have some type of incentive programme for population control, including Assam, with Uttar Pradesh, less than a year away from Assembly election, bringing in a draft law that promises to raise up to Class 12 helped in drastically reducing fertility

Adityanath actively pro-

posed a similar law in Bihar to check the exponential growth in population. "Overpopulation is a major obstacle to development and social harmony," he told presspersons in his Lok Sabha constituency of Begusarai on July 11.

The BJP MLA from the Bis



Nitish Kumar

rate," he said.

"Some people may believe that this can be done only by a law, but our thinking is clear. I'm not in favour of any law," said Mr. Kumar, who heads a National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in alliance with the BJP leaders' comments. "They are advocating this to polarise votes," said JD(U) leader Ghulam Gaus.

Opposition Congress MLC and senior State party leader Prem Chandra Mishra said his party "was also in favour of containing population growth, but not through force".

## Nitish says laws won't help to check population growth

Bihar CM says girls' education helped cut fertility rate in State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar asserted on Monday that it was not possible to ensure population control through laws.

He was reacting to Union Rural Development Minister and senior Bihar BJP leader Giriraj Singh's call for a policy on population control in Bihar similar to the one launched by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

"Look at China or, for that matter, any other example," Mr. Kumar told a select group of presspersons on the sidelines of his weekly *janata ke durbar mein mukhyamantri* (Chief Minister in people's court) programme that resumed on Monday after gap of nearly five years.

"It was eureka moment for my government when data showed that girls' education up to Class 12 helped in drastically reducing fertility

lar legislation in Bihar to check the exponential growth in population. "Overpopulation is a major obstacle to development and social harmony," he told presspersons in his Lok Sabha constituency of Begusarai on July 11.

The BJP MLA from the Bis

fi constituency in the State, too, echoed a similar sentiment. "A conspiracy is under way to turn India into an Islamic nation," he said.

The ruling alliance partner, Janata Dal (United), and the Opposition *mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance) leaders reacted strongly to the BJP leaders' comments.

"They are advocating this to polarise votes," said JD(U) leader Ghulam Gaus.

Opposition Congress MLC

and senior State party leader Prem Chandra Mishra said his party "was also in favour of containing population growth, but not through force".

## Pandemic upends dreams of Indian medicos in China

With no clear timeline for their return to campus, the students have turned to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for help

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
ANANTH KRISHNAN  
NEW DELHI

When Sandeep\* applied to the Nantong University on China's east coast in 2017, he hoped to gain a medical education of decent quality at a fraction of the cost charged by Indian private universities. Instead, ever since he returned home to Kota, Rajasthan, in January 2020, he has been restricted to online classes and video lectures in what should be hands-on clinical subjects.

"I'm about to start my final year. At this stage, we should be going to hospitals and dealing with actual patients and bodies. Instead, we are getting practicals on a screen. They record a surgery in the operation theatre and send us the video. I can find that on YouTube if I wanted to," says the 22-year-old, who did not want his real name to be used.

The court order has come as a major jolt to Indian efforts to bring back Choksi, wanted in the ₹13,500-crore scam in the Punjab National Bank, from Dominica, where he was held for illegal entry after his disappearance from Antigua and Barbuda.

Dominica courts finally upheld the rule of law and rights of a human to be treated in the medical facilities of his choice," Choksi's lawyer Vijay Aggarwal said.

The court has also stayed the ongoing trial before a magistrate for his alleged illegal entry into Dominica on May 23, till his return, it said.



On Monday, students intensified a Twitter campaign on their plight.

Forming a union via the Telegram messaging app, almost 3,000 students under the banner of "Indian Students in China" sent a letter through email to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 27. They urged Mr. Modi to take up their cause with Chinese authorities, seeking clarity on a possible date of return. "If our returning is not possible, then arrange some practical work for us in India so that we can continue

our studies," added the letter.

"We are not sure whether the National Medical Commission will recognise our degrees if we have online classes only," said Neel Bhatt, a final year student at the Guangxi University of Chinese Medicine.

Sandeep and Neel are also part of the wider China International Students Union, which includes representatives from 270 universities and multiple nationalities.

Their June 30 letter to Chinese President Xi Jinping raised questions during a Chinese Foreign Ministry briefing on July 9.

### High importance

"The Chinese government always attaches high importance to the issue of foreign students coming to China for their studies. On the basis of ensuring safety amid COVID-19, we will consider in a

coordinated manner arrangement for allowing foreign students to return to China for their studies," said spokesperson Wang Wenbin, without offering any timetable for the return of international students. During the same press conference, he hit out at the U.S. for refusing the visa applications of Chinese students, provoking accusations of hypocrisy from aggrieved Indian students.

The Indian Embassy in Beijing said in March that it "has continued to follow up closely with Chinese authorities, including the Ministry of Education, regarding the concerns of Indian students in China", but officials say there is little India can do, considering the sweeping restrictions in place, until China decides to open up and reconsider its "zero case" strategy, which appears unlikely.

(\*Sandeep and Asif are pseudonyms as those students were not willing to be named)

## Both Houses to function simultaneously

323 Lok Sabha, 205 Rajya Sabha members have received both doses of vaccine



Prepared for now: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla addressing presspersons in New Delhi on Monday • SANDEEP SAXENA

sons. In the Rajya Sabha, 205 members had got both the vaccine shots, 16 took the first dose and six could not take any of the shots due to medical reasons.

Mr. Birla said while the high percentage of fully vaccinated members was a relief, there would be no laxity in following COVID-19 protocols. All members would be

expected to wear masks both inside the House chamber and outside.

The only difference this time would be that the members would sit in their respective chambers. In the last two sessions, to maintain social distancing, the Rajya Sabha met in the morning and the Lok Sabha in the afternoon.

Mr. Birla said the new Parliament building, which was under construction as part of the Central Vista, would be in place in time. "The construction is about 10 days behind the schedule, but will be completed soon," he noted.

If the claims of the police

## 'Arrest created suspicion in public's mind'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Monday said the arrest of two persons in Lucknow by the Uttar Pradesh Police for allegedly plotting terror attacks months ahead of the Assembly election has created suspicion in the public's mind.

Mr. Birla said the new Parliament building, which was under construction as part of the Central Vista, would be in place in time. "The construction is about 10 days behind the schedule, but will be completed soon," he noted.

If the claims of the police

are true, then action should be taken, she said. The police on Sunday had arrested two persons on the suspicion that they were planning to carry out attacks in U.P. ahead of Independence Day.

## Speculation over Mitra resigning from W.B. govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

The Budget statement of the West Bengal government was printed on July 7 with Finance Minister Amit Mitra's name. It was, however, tabled in the Assembly by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Partha Chatterjee.

The absence of Dr. Mitra from Assembly proceedings has triggered speculation about him stepping down. Dr. Mitra did not contest the Assembly election. Sources in the Trinamool Congress said he had expressed his unwillingness to contest the bypolls.

The West Assam Milk Producers' Cooperative Union Limited (WAMUL) is an implementing agency of World Bank Financed (APART) Project and now intends to purchase the following item from the eligible bidder as mentioned below:

**E-procurement Tender Notice**

The details of the E-tender will be published and available at [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) as mentioned above.

Sd/- Managing Director, WAMUL

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

**Office of the Collector & District Magistrate, Krishna District Machilipatnam**

### OPEN TENDER NOTICE

Sealed Quotations along with detailed specifications of their proposals / Projects are invited from reputed Manufacturers / Agencies / Suppliers of Liquid Medical Oxygen plant in Krishna District by the Executive Engineer, APMSIDC Division, Krishna, Vijayawada (Cell: 8978680814), Plot No.18, Road No.6, Sector 4, Andhra Bank upstairs, Lotus Land Mark, Vijayawada-3 on or before 5 PM on 19.07.2021 for providing the following item.

"Establishment/Erection on turnkey Basis of Liquid Medical Oxygen Plant of 5 Tons per day capacity in and around Vijayawada in Krishna District. Required Land for Establishment of plant will be provided by the Government".

Sd/- J Nivas IAS  
Collector and District Magistrate  
Krishna

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH**

**Office of the Collector & District Magistrate, Krishna District Machilipatnam**

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"Annual Operation and Maintenance of Liquid Medical Oxygen Plant of capacity 5 Tons per day to be established in and around Vijayawada at Krishna District".

Vijayawada  
09.07.2021  
DIPR 239PP/CL, Dt.12.07.2021

Sd/- J Nivas IAS  
Collector and District Magistrate  
Krishna

## Dismissal of govt. workers arbitrary'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir parties, including the National Conference (NC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Hurriyat, on Monday described the termination of 11 government employees, including two sons of Hizbul-Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, under Article 311, as "arbitrary and unjust".

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti said, "It's inexplicable to punish sons for the deeds of the father." NC leader Imran Nabi Dar termed the termination a "measure blind to justice and arbitrary in nature".

"I have no information about it," Mr. Chowdhury told *The Hindu* last week.

official designation of the Leader of the Opposition. Mr. Chowdhury, however, has been functioning as the leader of the single largest Opposition party in the House.

For some time now, there has been a talk about replacing him with a more articulate speaker, but there is no official word yet. However, speculation is that the party may choose someone like Shashi Tharoor, Manish Tewari, Gaugav Gogoi or Ravneet Bittu to put across its views more effectively.

"I have no information about it," Mr. Chowdhury told *The Hindu* last week.

"I have no information about it," Mr. Chowdhury told *The Hindu* last week.

## Oxygen plants inaugurated in Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Cabinet recently approved a ₹23,000 crore package for COVID-19 emergency response, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya pointed out on Monday.

Virtually inaugurating two oxygen PSA (Pressure Swing Adsorption) plants at Sir Takhtasinhji Hospital at Bhavnagar in Gujarat, he said the government had made adequate provisions for paediatric care in all hospitals to provide the most effective healthcare for children, he said.

"We are also developing a system of buffer [oxygen] stock at the State and Central levels that can be used in case of any health crisis. Thus, a comprehensive plan and capacity-building in the next six months is being taken up through this COVID-19 package," he stated. Associated facilities such as a fire-fighting system and an automatic oxygen source changeover system were also inaugurated.

## Antibodies treatment found effective: BMC

Casirivimab and Imdevimab given

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

The treatment of COVID-19 patients with mild to moderate symptoms with an antibodies' cocktail of Casirivimab and Imdevimab has reduced the treatment period from between 13 and 14 days to five and six, and only one out of around 200 patients required oxygen supply, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said on Monday.

The civic body treated 200 patients with the cocktail at the SevenHills hospital in Andheri, and according to officials, the results were encouraging. The BMC said that only one (0.5%) patient required oxygen supply after this line of treatment and the death rate came down by 70%.

### Monitoring cases

A total of 212 patients were given the cocktail and the progress of 199 was studied. Out of these, 101 were from the 18 to 45 age group, 45 from the 45 to 59 age group and 53 above 60 years. A total of 74 patients had at least one comorbidity.

"This will also reduce the cost of the treatment and since hospital time is curtailed, it will ease the pressure on the medical system," the official noted.

According to the BMC, this treatment could be carried out on those above 12 years and with a weight of over 40 kg and with mild to moderate symptoms. Those who were not on oxygen but faced the possibility of health deterioration could get the treatment. It could also be done on patients with comorbidities, the BMC said.

## IMA urges Centre, States not to let the guard down on COVID

It sounds a note of caution against mass gatherings for tourism and pilgrimages

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Monday warned that a third wave of the pandemic was inevitable and imminent, and appealed to the Central and State governments not to let their guard down against COVID-19. It said mass gatherings in tourist and religious places along with flouting of safety norms spelt danger.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the IMA said that travel, tourism, pilgrimages and religious functions could wait for a few more months. Opening up travel and allowing people without vaccination to participate in such mass gatherings would create potential super-spreaders of a third wave.

Only if vaccination covers as much of the population as possible and COVID-appropriate behaviour is strictly followed, it is possible to face



**On the move:** Passengers waiting to board a train at the Anand Vihar railway station in New Delhi on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

the third wave with confidence and mitigate its impact, the IMA stated.

The medical association said it was painful to note that at a crucial stage when everyone needed to work for

the mitigation of a third wave, in many parts of the country, both the government and people were turning complacent.

IMA national president J.A. Jayalal said, "It is the du-

ty and responsibility of everyone at this moment to strictly enforce and follow the COVID-appropriate behaviour for minimum three more months and ensure everyone gets vaccinated."

## NEET to be conducted on September 12 in 198 cities

NTA to ensure staggered time slots during entry and exit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for undergraduate medical and dental programmes will be held on September 12, Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan announced on Monday. The examination was originally scheduled to be held on August 1.

The application process will begin at 5 p.m. on July 13 through the National Testing Agency website, the Minister.

"In order to ensure social distancing norms, number of cities where examination will be conducted has been increased from 155 to 198. The number of examination centres will also be increased from the 3,862 centres used in 2020," he said.

The Minister added that masks will be provided to all candidates at examination centres. The NTA will also ensure that staggered time



This is the second year when NEET is being held in September.

slots during entry and exit, contactless registration, proper sanitisation and seating with social distancing are implemented, in line with COVID safety protocols.

**16 lakh last year**  
NEET (UG), or National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (Undergraduate), is used for admission to MBBS and BDS courses as well as programmes for alternative or

traditional medicine and nursing. More than 16 lakh students appeared for the exam last year.

There is no clarity as yet on whether the NEET syllabus will be reduced or greater internal choice provided in the question paper, to take into account the fact that many school boards had reduced their syllabi by up to 30% due to the pandemic.

Last year, NEET was held in September, and then repeated in October to cater to those who missed the exam due to COVID. Some students had urged that multiple attempts be permitted this year as well, similar to engineering entrance examination JEE.

However, the NTA had earlier announced that NEET will revert to a single date in 2021. It will also be conducted in pen-and-paper mode, unlike JEE which is a computer-based test staggered across multiple sessions.

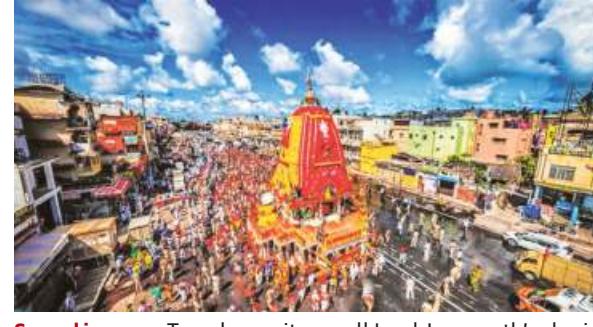
## Puri Rath Yatra under way without devotees

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

The world famous Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath got underway without devotees for the second year in a row in the coastal town of Puri on Monday due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Majestic chariots of sibling deities Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra were towed by 'sevayatas' (traditional priests).

Annually, three deities are taken out in a chariot procession called Rath Yatra covering 3 km along the Grand Road connecting the 12th century Shri Jagannath temple and the Mausi Maa temple. Servitors carried the huge wooden idols from the temple swaying them rhythmically in a ritual described as *pahandi*. Though devotees



**Sacred journey:** Temple servitors pull Lord Jagannath's chariot during the procession in Puri on Monday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

used to jostle for space to get a glimpse of the deities during *pahandi* in earlier years, millions of people watched the procession through live telecast this year.

Puri's titular king Dibyasingha Deb carried out symbolic sweeping of wooden floor of all chariots before

'sevayatas' began pulling the chariots.

Last year, the State government decided not to allow the festival, fearing that it would trigger the further spread of the disease. However, as per a Supreme Court order, the yatra was held without the participation of devotees.

## A scaled down procession

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

The 144th Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra was taken out from Lord Jagannath Temple in Ahmedabad early on Monday morning in the presence of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani and Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel.

To keep devotees off the Grand Road, the Puri district administration made sure hotels and lodges there were vacated. All lanes and bylanes leading to the Grand Road were guarded by police personnel. As many as 65 platoons, led by 10 Additional Superintendents of Police, 31 Deputy Superintendents

of Police and 64 inspectors, were deployed for the smooth conduct of the Rath Yatra. Chariots would remain parked outside the Mausi Maa temple for the next one week. On the ninth day, the deities would start their return journey towards their abode in the Jagannath temple.

Except the six districts of Cuttack, Sundargarh, Keonjhar, Sambalpur, Mayurbhanj and Nabarangpur, not even a single vaccination centre was operational in the rest of the districts.

Only 220 vaccination sites were operational on Monday. The State had in the past inoculated more than 4 lakh people in a single day by setting up 1,730 vaccination centres.

As vaccine stocks were not replenished against utilisation, the number of doses came down fast.

The Odisha government had earlier raised an alarm over vaccine shortage, saying the Covishield allocation for July was 25.31 lakh doses against requirement of 28.31 lakh doses for second dose in July. The next consignment of Covishield is to be made available to the State on July 15.

The Odisha government had requested additional allocation of 15 lakh doses of Covishield.

Wherever vaccines were available, people were seen queuing up before centres early from the morning, flouting physical distance norms. Police personnel were roped in to maintain order outside vaccination centres.

## Editors Guild condemns assault on U.P. journalist

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Editors Guild of India (EGI) has condemned the recent assault on local journalist Krishna Tiwari by the Chief Development Officer, Unnao, Divyanshu Patel, and demanded that the Uttar Pradesh government take action against him.

The Guild, in a statement on Monday, said the assault on Mr. Tiwari was a part of the continuing trend of heavy-handedness by the State authorities in dealing with the media. "This incident

has come against the backdrop of increased persecution of journalists in the State of U.P., as the administration has punished, penalised, and incarcerated journalists in an effort to intimidate them from freely reporting on crimes, state excesses, and the management of the pandemic," the Guild noted. "EGI demands that strict action be taken against the official and that concrete steps be taken to improve the environment for independent journalism in the State," it added.

## HC eases curbs for Goa residents to re-enter State

'No need for negative RT-PCR report if fully vaccinated'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court at Goa on Monday permitted fully vaccinated residents and those who work in Goa to enter the State without a COVID-19 negative report till August 5.

A Division Bench of Justices M.S. Sonak and M.S. Jawalkar allowed the work-force that includes people related to labour, construction and industries in Goa;

those who run businesses in the State and all Goa residents required to travel outside of the State for work or medical reasons.

People would have to produce verified certificates of receiving both shots of the COVID-19 vaccine before entering the State.

The Bench granted this relief till August 5 and will hear the matter again to decide if tourists who are fully

vaccinated can also enter Goa without negative reports.

The court passed the interim relief after its order on May 6 directed the authorities of Goa to not allow residents without a negative RT-PCR report done 72 hours before arrival.

The hearing was part of a bunch of public interest litigation pleas filed by the South Goa Advocates Association.

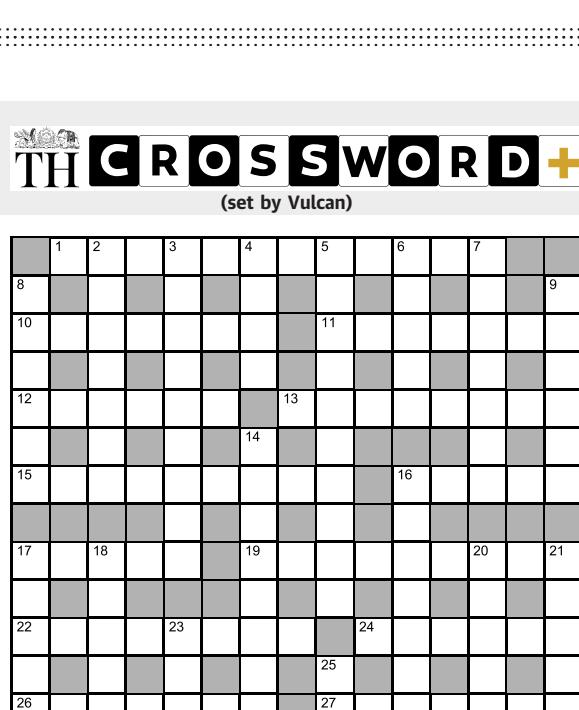
## FAITH

### Fulfilling His promise

In Srimad Bhagavatam, sage Suka gives a wonderful description of the newborn Krishna, said V.S. Karunakarachariar in a discourse. Krishna had lotus-like eyes, and four hands, which held His weapons. He had on His chest the characteristic mole known as Srivatsa. Lakshmi was seen on His chest. He was adorned with the Kaustubha gem. His diamond and gem studded crown and earrings dazzled. The child had a beautiful black hue, like rain-bearing clouds. He had thick hair. He was further adorned with a waist belt, bracelets and arm bands. No child had ever looked like this. He was an abdhutam balakam – a most unusual and unique child. And Vasudeva saw his amazing son, says Suka.

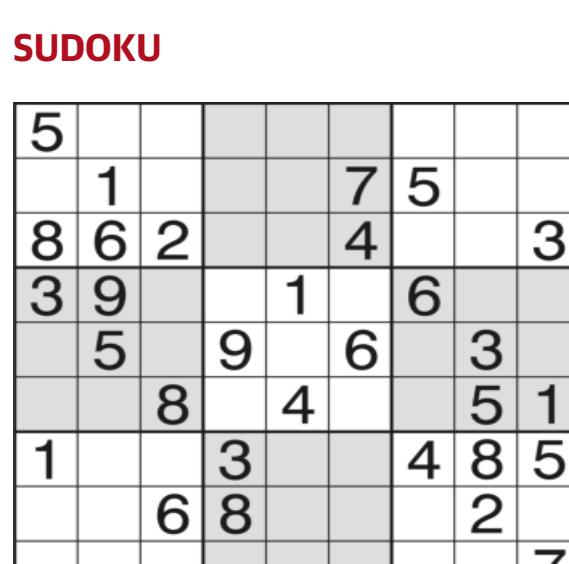
Devaki was alarmed, for Kamsa was sure to kill such a child. Why did Krishna take this form? Devaki was responsible for this. When Brahma created many couples, asking them to procreate, one couple was more inclined towards attaining moksha. They were Prisni and her husband Sutapas. They, therefore, did penance, and Lord Narayana appeared before them. Considering their desire for moksha, that is what they should have asked for. But the Lord's plans for them were different. So, when they saw the Lord, Prisni said she wanted a child like Him, and she said this three times. The Lord agreed to grant her what she wanted. But how could He find someone like Him? There is none equal to or superior to Him.

The only option was for Him to be born as her child. And since her prayer had been made three times, He had to do this thrice. The first time, He was born to her as Prisnigarba, the second time as Vamana. Now as Krishna, He had come revealing His form as Narayana, thus fulfilling His promise to Prisni, for it was Prisni who was born as Devaki.



- Display keystrokes of genius.  
Type your answers into our online grids.  
<https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn>
- ACROSS**
- 1 Twelve months of running and relay race (8,4)
  - 10 End of August – bad time for land preparation (7)
  - 11 Large area outside a Spanish town (7)
  - 12 Book to go around a place in South America (6)
  - 13 According to it, Y = Sharpness (8)
  - 15 Old and single? Classify as free! (9)
- DOWN**
- 2 Movement is legal or illegal! (7)
  - 3 Authorisation to serve people in hospital department (9)
  - 4 Document an achievement (4)
  - 5 Doctor greeted with "Sir" as said (10)
  - 6 Woman receives a notice, gets to escape (5)
  - 7 A notice basically regarding a pragmatic one (7)
  - 8 Small piece of furniture that's fixed (6)
  - 9 Counsellor's work in a film (6)
  - 14 There's no tourist spot after this (4,6)
  - 16 Time in Romania with a crazy lover (9)
  - 17 Unfinished road, say? (6)
  - 18 Edit one slip in letter (7)
  - 20 A step made with a leg on each side (7)
  - 21 Kind of music that's fresh and mellow (3,3)
  - 23 Spray from special equipment (5)
  - 25 Smile from embarrassment having dropped tea (4)

## SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13298      Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

P	A	S	T	R	A	M	I	E	S	C	A	P	E
O	C	E	E	U	L	N							
T	R	A	V	E	I	S	N	S	B	A			
E	P	V	S	O	S	B	A						
N	I	E	C	A	B	D	E	T					
T	G	G	D	R									
L	O	U	N	G									
F	A	T	I	G									
S	H	O	R	T									
T	U	I	N	T									
A	N	N	U	L									
O	C	T	I	X									
E	L	E	V	E</									

## Six dead in riots over Zuma's arrest

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JOHANNESBURG

Six people have been killed and 219 arrested amid escalating violence during rioting that broke out following the imprisonment of South Africa's former President Jacob Zuma, police said Monday.

Army soldiers will be deployed to help police quell the violence, the South African National Defence Force said. Police said shops and businesses have been looted and vandalised. Traffic has been disrupted by rioters barricading major roads with burning tires, and cars have been attacked.

The violence was triggered last week when Zuma began serving a 15-month sentence for contempt of court. He had defied a court order to testify before a state-backed inquiry probing allegations of corruption during his term as president from 2009 to 2018.

The Constitutional Court will hear Zuma's appeal against the sentence on Monday. The rioting started in Zuma's home region of KwaZulu-Natal province last week and over the weekend it spread to Gauteng province, which includes Johannesburg, South Africa's largest city.

# Top U.S. General in Afghanistan Scott Miller relinquishes post

He says relentless violence is making political settlement increasingly difficult

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KABUL

The top U.S. commander in Afghanistan relinquished his position at a ceremony in the capital Kabul on Monday, taking the U.S. a step closer to ending its 20-year war. The move came as Taliban insurgents continue to gain territory across the country.

Another four-star general will assume authority from his U.S.-based post to conduct possible airstrikes in defence of Afghan government forces, at least until the U.S. withdrawal concludes by August 31.

Gen. Scott Miller has served as America's top commander in Afghanistan since 2018. He handed over command of what has become known as America's "forever war" in its waning days to Marine Gen. Frank McKenzie, the head of U.S. Central Command. McKenzie will operate from Central Command headquarters in Tampa, Florida.

The handover took place in the heavily fortified Resolute Support headquarters in the heart of Kabul at a time of rapid territorial gains by Taliban insurgents across Afghanistan.

In a flag-passing ceremon-



**Power shift:** General Austin Scott Miller speaking at an official handover ceremony in Kabul on Monday. • AFP

ny, Gen. Miller remembered the U.S. and NATO troops killed in the nearly 20-year war as well as the thousands of Afghans who lost their lives. He warned that relentless violence across Afghanistan is making a political settlement increasingly difficult. The outgoing commander said he has told Taliban insurgents, "it's important that the military sides set the conditions for a peaceful and political settlement in Afghanistan... But we know that with that violence, it would be very difficult to achieve a political settlement."

The Afghanistan National Defense and Security Forces, mostly funded by the U.S.

and NATO, have put up resistance in some parts of the country, but overwhelmingly Afghan government troops appear to have abandoned the fight.

### Strategic districts

In recent weeks, the Taliban have gained several strategic districts, particularly along the borders with Iran, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

Afghanistan's National Security Adviser Hamdullah Mohib, who attended the handover, said the U.S. and NATO withdrawal has left a vacuum that resulted in Afghanistan's national security forces stranded on the battlefield without resupplies, sometimes running out of

food and ammunition.

In comments after the ceremony, Mr. Mohib said the greatest impact of the withdrawal is a lack of aircraft to resupply troops. Currently, the government is regrouping to retake strategic areas and defend its cities against Taliban advances.

The Taliban control more than one-third of Afghanistan's 421 districts and district centers. A Taliban claim that they control 85% of the districts is widely seen as exaggerated.

After Gen. Miller's departure, a two-star admiral based at the U.S. Embassy in Kabul will oversee the U.S. military's role in securing the American diplomatic presence in Kabul, including defending the Kabul airport.

Gen. Miller's departure does not reduce the scope of the U.S. military mission in Afghanistan, since Gen. McKenzie will assume the authorities now held by Gen. Miller to conduct airstrikes in defence of Afghan government forces under certain circumstances.

The conditions under which such strikes might be used are not clear, nor is it known for how long Gen. McKenzie will keep the strike authority.

# Russia, Mexico warn against 'outside interference' in Cuba

Mexican President offers to send medicines, vaccines

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
REUTERS  
MOSCOW/MEXICO CITY

Russia and Mexico on Monday warned against any "outside interference" in Cuba after thousands took part in rare protests against the Communist government on the island nation.

"We consider it unacceptable for there to be outside interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign state or any destructive actions that would encourage the destabilisation of the situation on the island," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakhrova said in a statement.

She did not explain who might be trying to interfere in Cuba, but the warning appeared directed at the U.S., which has urged Cuba not to target protesters and where thousands of Cuban-Americans have taken to the streets to support the demonstrations.

"We are closely following the development of the situation in and around Cuba," Ms. Zakhrova said.

"We are convinced that Cuban authorities are taking all necessary measures to restore public order in the interests of the country's citizens and within the framework of the Constitution."



**Keeping watch:** Policemen are seen near the Capitol building in Havana, a day after protests in Cuba, on Monday. • AP

Cuba was an important Cold War ally of the Soviet Union and Moscow has continued to have good diplomatic relations with Havana since the 1991 collapse of the USSR.

Mexico's President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador warned against an "interventionist" approach to the protests, and offered to send aid to the communist island. Mexico could "help with medicines, with (coronavirus) vaccines, with what is needed and with food because health and food are fundamental rights" that do not require "interventionist political management," he said.

He also said the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba should be ended to help its people.

### 'Suspend blockade'

"The truth is that if one wanted to help Cuba, the first thing that should be done is to suspend the blockade of Cuba as the majority of countries in the world are asking," Mr. Lopez Obrador told a news conference.

"That would be a truly humanitarian gesture," he added. "No country in the world should be fenced in, blockaded." Thousands of Cubans on Sunday joined demonstrations from Havana to Santiago calling for President Miguel Diaz-Canel to step down.

## Nepali Congress hails Supreme Court verdict

People given clear political alternative'

KALLO BHATTACHERJEE  
NEW DELHI

The verdict of the Supreme Court of Nepal to remove Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has revitalised the Nepali Congress and the constitutional democracy of Nepal, vice-president of the party Bimlendra Nidhi told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Following the Supreme Court's verdict, Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba will be sworn in as the new Prime Minister by Tuesday evening, Mr. Nidhi said.

"We welcome the verdict of the Honourable Supreme Court as it has given a clear political alternative before the people of Nepal ending the rule of PM Oli. It also shows that President Bidhya Devi Bhandari had erred by denying the opportunity of a floor test to the claim of Shri Deuba to form the government earlier after the reinstatement of the lower house of Parliament," Mr.

Nidhi said, speaking over the phone from Kathmandu.

### 'New direction'

Nepali politics, said Mr. Nidhi, had been stuck with the rule of Mr. Oli but now the clear verdict of the Supreme Court has given a new direction to the country. Following the verdict, Mr. Deuba will have to swear in as the Prime Minister of Nepal within a day. "Within 30 days, Mr. Deuba will have to prove the majority of his government in Parliament," Mr. Nidhi said.

The verdict was particularly critical of PM Oli and President Bhandari and held both of them guilty of violating constitutional norms while dealing with the political crisis that began last December 20 when President Bhandari dissolved the lower house of the Nepalese Parliament after being advised by PM Oli's Cabinet.

## Haitian man held in Moïse's assassination

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PORT-AU-PRINCE

The head of Haiti's national police announced on Sunday that officers arrested a Haitian man accused of flying into the country on a private jet and working with the masterminds and alleged assassins behind the killing of President Jovenel Moïse.

Police Chief Léon Charles identified the suspect as Christian Emmanuel Sanon, without giving any personal information about him, though it appears he has been living in Florida. The chief also gave no information on the purported masterminds.

Mr. Charles said the alleged killers were protecting Mr. Sanon as the supposed president of Haiti, adding that officers found several items at his house, including a hat emblazoned with the logo of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, 20 boxes of bullets and gun parts.

## Two former Jordan officials handed 15-year jail terms

They're convicted of conspiring to topple King Abdullah

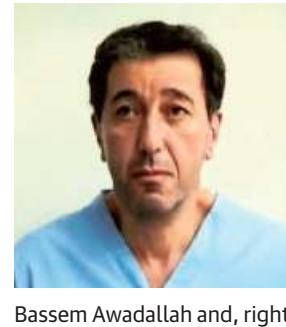
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
AMMAN

A Jordanian court on Monday sentenced two former officials to 15 years in jail after finding them guilty of a coup plot that sparked a rare crisis in a kingdom seen as a pillar of stability in the region.

Former royal court chief Bassem Awadallah and an ex-envoy to Saudi Arabia, Sharif Hassan bin Zaid, had been convicted of conspiring to topple King Abdullah II in favour of his half-brother Prince Hamzah.

The former Crown Prince himself was not charged in the trial, but the chargesheet said he was "determined to fulfil his personal ambition to rule, in violation of the Hashemite constitution and customs".

The trial took place behind closed doors at the State Security Court, a military tribunal that also in-



Bassem Awadallah and, right, Sharif Hassan bin Zaid were found guilty of sedition and incitement charges. • AP

cludes civilian judges.

But on Monday, journalists were allowed to watch footage of the ruling via video link from a tent set up outside the court.

Delivering the ruling, Judge Muwaffaq al-Masaid noted the men had been friends for 20 years and were close to Prince Hamzah. He said they had tried to put into action "ideas that are hostile to the existing political system in the kingdom and his majesty King

Abdullah".

The men had tried to create chaos, sedition and divisions within Jordanian society and spread hateful discourse towards the political system, threatening the safety and security" of the kingdom, he said.

Awadallah and Bin Zaid, who both have close ties to Saudi Arabia, were found guilty of "incitement against the ruling system" and "acts that could threaten society and create sedition".

## China says it 'drove away' U.S. warship

Stop provocative actions, says Beijing

REUTERS  
BEIJING

China's military said it "drove away" a U.S. warship that illegally entered Chinese waters near the Paracel Islands on Monday, the anniversary of an international court ruling that held Beijing had no claim over the South China Sea.

The USS Benfold entered the waters without China's approval, seriously violating its sovereignty and undermining the stability of the South China Sea, the southern theatre command of the People's Liberation Army said.

"We urge the United States to immediately stop such provocative actions," it said in a statement.

On July 12, 2016, the Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled that China had no historic title over the South China Sea, a ruling that Beijing said it would ignore.

The Benfold asserted na-

vigational rights and freedoms in the vicinity of the Paracel Islands consistent with international law, the U.S. Navy said in a statement on Monday.

The islands are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam, which require either permission or advance notification before a military vessel passes through.

"Under international law, the ships of all states enjoy the right of innocent passage through the territorial sea," the U.S. Navy added. "By engaging in innocent passage without giving prior notification, the U.S. challenged these unlawful restrictions imposed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam."

Hundreds of other islands, reefs and atolls in the South China Sea are contested by Brunei, China, Malaysia and the Philippines, with China claiming rights to resources within its so-called nine-dash line, or most of the region.

## Sudan to review Navy base deal: FM

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

Sudan's Foreign Minister Mariam al-Mahdi said during a visit to Moscow on Monday that lawmakers in the African country would consider an agreement brokered by its ousted leader to establish a Russian naval base there. Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Sudan's former president Omar al-Bashir in 2017 on building a naval base in Port Sudan.

## U.K.'s PM to confirm lifting of COVID-19 curbs next week

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set Monday to confirm "Freedom Day" next week with the lifting of most pandemic curbs in England, but will urge caution with experts worried the government is moving too fast.

Mr. Johnson was due to hold an afternoon news conference confirming that the government's tests have been met to allow a full reopening of the economy on

## Nepal gets 1.5 million J&J doses from U.S.

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KATHMANDU

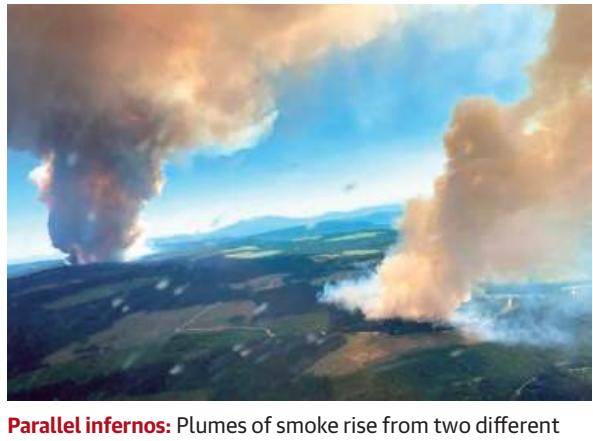
A shipment of 1.5 million doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine donated by the United States arrived in Nepal on Monday, which is struggling to inoculate its population.

"Today's delivery of the single-dose vaccine means that this single donation is enough to protect over 1.5 million people in Nepal," U.S. Ambassador Randy Berry said.

July 19, doing away with the final measures of a months-old lockdown.

Mr. Johnson, however, insists the time is right to move from legally enforced rules to personal responsibility, and use the summer months to prepare for a potentially more damaging wave of COVID-19 in the winter. "We are tantalisingly close to the final milestone in our roadmap out of lockdown, but the plan to restore our freedoms must come with a warning," he said.

## Wildfires rage as heat wave stifles western U.S., Canada



**Parallel infernos:** Plumes of smoke rise from two different wildfires in British Columbia, Canada. • FILE PHOTO

Experts attribute the phenomenon to climate change

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LOS ANGELES

The western United States and Canada was suffering under scorching temperatures to start the week, with heat warnings still in place Monday and authorities struggling to reign in wildfires in both countries.

Sweltering conditions hit much of the Pacific seaboard and as far inland as the western edge of the Rocky Mountains on Saturday and Sun-

day, in a dramatic, prolonged heat wave experts attribute directly to climate change.

The U.S. National Weather Service (NWS) had warned the dangerous temperatures will continue in the region for the early part of the week, forecasting highs of up to 115 degrees Fahrenheit (46 Celsius) in southern California, and issued a heat advisory for the Los Angeles area until Monday evening.

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Tender No.	Nomenclature	Tender Value in Lakhs Rs. (Approx.)
G-10/21-22	Procurement of Automotive Lubricants	1400.00
G-11/21-22	Procurement of Uniform Cloth	1000.00
G-12/21-22	Procurement of Enamel paints & Allied Materials	300.00
G-13/21-22	Procurement of Envelop and Curing Bags	215.00
G-14/21-22	Procurement of MS Angles and Flats	45.00
G-15/21-22		

MARKET WATCH		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	52,373	-0.03
US Dollar	74.58	0.08
Gold	46,796	-0.10
Brent oil	74.98	-0.70

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	718.05	-10.45
Asian Paints	2994.40	-11.20
Axis Bank	753.60	6.25
Bajaj Auto	3956.15	-39.75
Bajaj Finserv	12908.90	54.15
Bajaj Finance	6149.55	13.40
Bharti Airtel	529.65	-6.60
BPCL	451.00	-5.90
Britannia Ind	3470.40	-5.55
Cipla	959.85	0.05
Coal India	146.40	-0.30
Divis Lab	4588.75	-10.95
Dr Reddys Lab	5494.30	34.00
Eicher Motors	2709.50	-2.65
Grasim Ind	1536.15	36.00
HCL Tech	979.45	2.60
HDFC	2476.95	-19.50
HDFC Bank	1487.00	-15.00
HDFC Life	682.95	-0.30
Hero MotoCorp	2898.20	1.40
Hind Unilever	2444.15	-7.30
ICICI Bank	646.25	7.70
IndusInd Bank	1049.30	9.35
Infosys	1547.85	-15.05
Indian Oil Corp	107.20	-0.10
ITC	201.10	-0.25
JSW Steel	694.45	12.90
Kotak Bank	1731.95	11.90
L&T	1500.75	1.15
M&M	772.85	1.30
Maruti Suzuki	7470.10	44.40
Nestle India Ltd.	17641.40	5.40
NTPC	117.85	0.05
ONGC	118.55	0.65
PowerGrid Corp	229.00	-1.25
Reliance Ind	2084.10	12.90
SBI Life	1033.45	13.85
State Bank	427.45	3.70
Shree Cement	28034.95	532.20
Sun Pharma	668.55	0.65
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	773.90	9.95
Tata Motors	307.45	1.15
Tata Steel	1226.95	-12.40
TCS	3193.10	-15.05
Tech Mahindra	1056.60	4.85
Titan	1719.85	-0.75
UltraTech Cement	7093.75	194.20
UPL	821.45	6.90
Wipro	525.85	0.05

EXCHANGE RATES		
	TT BUY	TT SELL
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.37	74.69
Euro	88.10	88.48
British Pound	103.02	103.46
Japanese Yen (100)	67.50	67.79
Chinese Yuan	11.48	11.54
Swiss Franc	81.17	81.52
Singapore Dollar	54.98	55.23
Canadian Dollar	59.46	59.72
Malaysian Ringgit	17.74	17.83

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



Ola Electric raises 10-year, \$100-mn debt  
BENGALURU  
Ola Electric and Bank of Baroda on Monday signed the largest long-term debt financing agreement in the Indian EV industry on Monday. Ola said it would use this 10-year debt of \$100 million to complete Phase 1 of its Futurefactory, a global manufacturing hub for electric two-wheelers, coming up at Krishnagiri in Tamil Nadu at an investment of ₹2,400 crore.

MobiKwik files draft papers for ₹1,900-cr. IPO  
NEW DELHI  
Digital payments start-up One MobiKwik Systems on Monday filed preliminary papers with markets regulator SEBI to raise ₹1,900 crore through an initial share sale. The initial public offer (IPO) comprises fresh issuance of equity shares worth ₹1,500 crore and an offer-for-sale of up to ₹400 crore by promoters and existing shareholders, according to the Draft Red Herring Prospectus (DRHP). The issue also includes a reservation for the company's employees. PTI

# Liquidity buffer at NBFCs cushions fall in Q1 collections'

Last year, moratorium spurred fears on asset quality, liquidity, Crisil points out

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Higher liquidity cover at NBFCs enabled them to service debt in the near term, and cushioned the impact of lower collections during the second wave of COVID-19, Crisil Ratings said in a study of entities rated by the agency.

"That is a change from last year, when asset quality and liquidity fears multiplied after a moratorium on repayments and stringent lockdowns affected collections. This time around, the build-up in liquidity has been a crucial offset," the ratings agency said, adding that collections had again been affected in the current fiscal by



Repeat performance: Collections have been hit in this fiscal too due to the second wave, Crisil says. ■ C. VENKATACHALAPATHY

the second wave. In the wake of the second wave, Crisil conducted the study considering two stress-case scenarios. In the first scenario, in view of the collection challenges in the first quarter of FY22, it assumed col-

lections over the next quarter at 70% of the levels in the past couple of quarters. In the second scenario, collections were assumed to halve. In scenario 1, 96% of NBFCs were found to have liquidity cover for three

months' worth of debt repayments. In Scenario 2, the number was only marginally lower at 95%. Based on scenario 1, only 4% of NBFCs had low cover (less than one time), compared with 8% in June 2020, and 23% in April 2020.

"We find three factors have supported liquidity: fund-raising through special government schemes, improving collections in the second half of fiscal 2021, and limited disbursements," the agency said.

It pointed out that a number of NBFCs had increased provisioning levels in the past two fiscal years, and had thus enhanced buffers for asset-side risks.

## BSNL union asks DoT to clear dues running to ₹30,000 cr.

Seeks relief for stressed telco in letter to new Minister



see that this amount is funded to the BSNL at the earliest to enable the company to perform with more vigour and also take care of its employees' needs," it added.

As per the letter dated July 10, the dues include about ₹30,000 crore...we shall be highly obliged...if you could

a total of about ₹8,300 for surrendered Wimax and CDMA spectrum, and ₹1,051 crore for the government's BharatNet project. The union also said that poor marketing methods not in line with contemporary techniques plague BSNL, resulting in loss of revenue and market share.

To help revive two loss-making telecom PSUs – BSNL and MTNL – the Cabinet had in 2019 given an approval for their merger, with a revival package worth almost ₹70,000 crore. As part of the package, the two PSUs were to be merged and also allotted 4G spectrum, which is yet to be done.

## Zambian court halts sale of Vedanta assets

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A Zambian court has stayed the hearing by a state-appointed provisional liquidator for splitting up Vedanta Resources' Konkola Copper Mines unit and selling the assets.

The stay on the Konkola Copper Mines liquidation proceedings has been granted to allow Vedanta and the Zambian government to proceed to arbitration, Vedanta said in a filing with the Singapore Stock Exchange.

Vedanta has been locked in a dispute with the Zambian government since May 2019, when the Zambian government handed control of the mine to a liquidator.

## FM-led panel to decide on LIC stake sale

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved an initial public offering (IPO) of India's largest insurer LIC, the modalities of which, such as issue size, pricing and timing would be decided by a panel headed by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management had in January appointed actuarial firm Milliman Advisors LLP India to assess the embedded value of LIC ahead of the IPO, touted to be the biggest public issue in Indian corporate history. The government expects to come out with the IPO by the end of FY22, a senior official said on Monday.

## NMDC slashes iron ore prices by ₹200 per tonne

First time prices have been cut in FY22



tively, following two more revisions, including the last on May 12. In June, the firm had maintained the prices.

NMDC is keen on ramping up production to 44 million tonnes (MT) this fiscal. A senior official had recently said prices were 'looking good' and that there was good demand in the country. In FY21, NMDC had produced 34.15 MT and had sold 33.25 MT.

## Flipkart valued at \$37.6 bn after \$3.6-bn funding

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Flipkart Group on Monday said it had raised \$3.6 billion to fund its digital commerce activities in India.

The new investment values Flipkart Group at \$37.6 billion. The funding was led by financial investors GIC, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), SoftBank Vision Fund 2 and Walmart, along with investments from sovereign funds DisruptAD and Qatar Investment Authority, Khazanah Nasional Berhad.

Tencent, Willoughby Capital, Antara Capital, Franklin Templeton and Tiger Global were also part of the funding, Flipkart said in a statement.



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## IT, BFSI generous paymasters: TeamLease

Demand for software, hardware, telecom personnel rises 35% y-o-y: Monster.com



City for jobs: Bengaluru saw a 50% rise in demand for talent in June across sectors, from a year earlier. ■ G.P. SAMPATHKUMAR

ment of 10%, the report, which tracked 2,63,000 temp profiles across 17 industries in nine cities, said.

From a geographic perspective, the top paying cities (increments of 12% and above) were Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Kolkata.

Hiring on the rise Demand for professionals in software, hardware and tele-

com-

communications

erage) year-on-year (y-o-y) on account of acceleration in digitisation, said Monster.com, a Quess company.

Remarkable growth The telecom/Internet service provider (ISP) industry witnessed remarkable y-o-y growth (39%), alongside information technology (IT) – hardware, software (32%), and logistics, courier/freight/transportation (29%) industries that followed close behind. Bengaluru reported a considerable uptick in demand (50%) for talent in June across sectors compared with the year earlier.

Among other cities, Pune reported a hiring increase of 28%, Hyderabad 22%, Chennai 22%, Mumbai 7%, and Delhi 4%, according to Monster Employment Index.



## TV PICKS

**Tour de France:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.  
**England vs Pakistan:** 3rd ODI: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



**Lee wins three-way play-off at Scottish Open**  
NORTH BERWICK (SCOTLAND)  
Min Woo Lee of Australia made a 10-foot birdie putt on the first extra hole to win a three-way play-off against Matt Fitzpatrick and Thomas Detry at the Scottish Open golf championship on Sunday.

## ICC monthly award for Ecclestone, Conway

DUBAI  
England spinner Sophie Ecclestone edged out India's Shafali Verma and Sneha Rana to become the ICC Player-of-the-Month for June, while New Zealand opener Devon Conway bagged the honour in the men's category.

## Full focus on Olympic medal: Sai Praneeth

Shuttle happy with his preparations and fitness levels

## TOKYO GAMES

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

"I am aware that I need to cause one or two major upsets to be able to realise my dream of an Olympic medal," says World championship bronze medallist B. Sai Praneeth.

"When the focus is on winning a medal at the Olympics, everything else gets blurred. Once you enter a major event, the focus has to be on doing well backed by the right preparations," he said.

He is happy with his fitness level going into the Olympics. "I am the kind of player who can play my natural game straight away if I feel I am fit," he said.

On training at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium for the last one month, Sai Praneeth said it was a good move.

"The conditions should be similar in Tokyo and hence it was really good to train there," he said.

likely opponents formed part of the preparations.

Also coaches Agus Dwi Santoso and P. Gopi Chand had been providing "invaluable" inputs, he said.

On lack of tournaments before the Games, Sai Praneeth felt it would be the same for everyone and the preparations were planned accordingly. The pandemic restrictions were a bigger torture, he said. "You can easily sort out anything related to your game on the court. But, these restrictions and tests can be a real challenge," he said.

On this being his first Olympics, the 28-year-old shuttler said it did play on his mind but that he was trying to avoid any pressure.

On training at the Gachibowli Indoor Stadium for the last one month, Sai Praneeth said it was a good move.

"The conditions should be similar in Tokyo and hence it was really good to train there," he said.



**Chasing a dream:** B. Sai Praneeth is in the right frame of mind as the Olympics approaches.

■ FILE PHOTO

## ROME ANCHAK VICTORY!



**Amul**  
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daCunha/AB/752

## Bucks grab a crucial win

Antetokounmpo emulates O'Neal, James

## NBA FINALS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MILWAUKEE

Giannis Antetokounmpo powered Milwaukee Bucks to a 120-100 victory over Phoenix Suns on Sunday in the NBA Finals.

The 26-year-old Greek scored 41 points and grabbed 13 rebounds to spark the Bucks, who pulled to 2-1 in the best-of-seven championship series.

The two-time NBA Most Valuable Player, who had 42 points and 12 rebounds in a game two loss, joined Shaquille O'Neal in 2000 and LeBron James in 2016 as the only NBA Finals players

with back-to-back 40-point, 10-rebound performances.

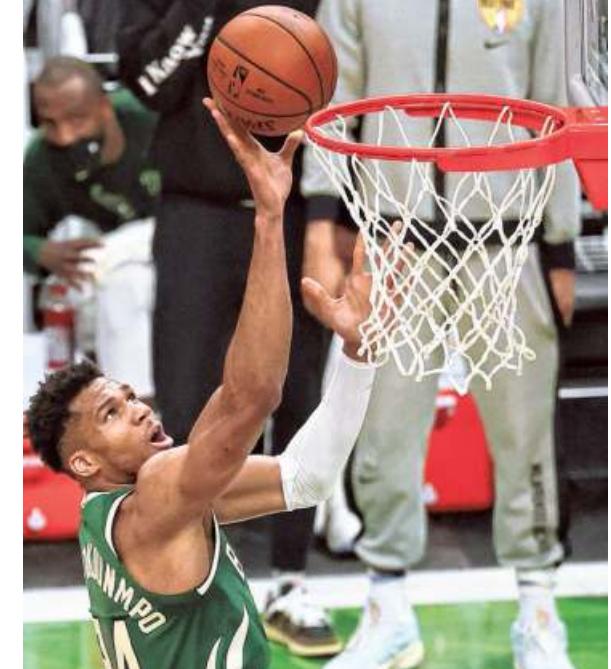
Jrue Holiday added 21 points and nine assists while Khris Middleton had 18 points, seven rebounds and six assists.

The Bucks, hosting their first NBA Finals game in 47 years, improved to an NBA-best 8-1 at home in the playoffs.

The Suns have a playoffs-best 6-2 on the road.

Suns guard Chris Paul, in the first NBA Finals of his 16-year career at age 36, led the Suns with 19 points while Deandre Ayton and Jae Crowder each added 18.

**The result:** Milwaukee Bucks 120 bt Phoenix Suns 100 (Suns lead series 2-1).



**Class apart:** The Suns had no answer to Giannis Antetokounmpo's brilliance on Sunday. ■ AFP

## A ring that measures quality of meditation

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) announced a partnership with Dhyana, the start-up behind the smart ring that measures the quality of meditation, and developed by chief national badminton coach P. Gopi Chand and the Oxford University alumni and biomedical technology entrepreneur Bhairav Shankar.

The IOA has acquired smart Dhyana rings and Dhyana's health management services for the Indian contingent headed for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and is working together to prioritise mental wellness and im-



Gopi with the 'Dhyana' ring. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

prove focus of the players amidst the ongoing pandemic, said Rajiv Mehta, general-secretary of IOA.

Dhyana thus becomes the first official meditation device to be used at the Olympics.

## Last 14 rounds of blitz... I was ecstatic: Anand

## GRAND CHESS TOUR

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

Viswanathan Anand turned the clock back in some style in Croatia. The 51-year-old outplayed several younger, stronger rivals to finish runner-up at the Croatia Grand Chess Tour, which concluded at Zagreb on Sunday. And this was his first tournament in 16 months.

After doing fairly well in the rapid section, the blitz games saw some vintage Anand. The five-time World champion was delighted with the way he finished.

"The last 14 rounds of blitz... I was ecstatic," Anand told *The Hindu* over phone from Zagreb on Monday. "I could have easily had another



**Off the board:** Kasparov and Anand in an animated conversation at the event. ■ FLICKR/GRANDCHESTOUR

two extra points at least."

Among his wins, he said he particularly liked the one against Anton Korobov of Ukraine in the blitz. "I also enjoyed my win with white pieces against Garry Kasparov," he said. His old rival though had a disastrous outing. The 58-year-old Russian, who has

been out of active chess after retiring in 2005, could score just 2.5 points from 18 rounds.

"We were all astonished by Kasparov's show," Anand said. "We understood he was rusty; so he was four years ago (at the St. Louis Grand Chess Tour) but then he posted quite a good performance.

I think this would motivate him to come back for one big tournament. I feel Garry will not want his last tournament to be like this."

## Next stop

Anand's next stop on his comeback trail – COVID-19 has kept him off the chessboard since February last year – is Dortmund where he will meet another old Russian rival, Vladimir Kramnik. The 14th and 15th World champions will play a match of No-Castling Chess from Wednesday.

As the name suggests, the format will not allow the players to castle, in an attempt to take the game away from opening theory. "I think these kinds of variants are entertaining," he said.

## Pressure brings out the best in Deepi

Her all-round show got India back in the series

## INDIA IN ENGLAND

P.K. AJITH KUMAR

India was down and nearly out when Deepi Sharma came on to bowl the 14th over of the second T20I at Hove on Sunday.

Chasing 149, England was 105 for two with two set batters at the crease in Tammy Beaumont and captain Heather Knight, but off-spinning all-rounder Deepi turned things around in that over.

She had Beaumont lbw and off the next ball Knight was run out thanks to Deepi's fielding off her own bowling.

At a virtual press conference later, she spoke of how crucial the over was in India's victory that levelled the three-match series.

"Beaumont's wicket was crucial for us," she said.



**Well done!** Deepi Sharma, right, celebrates the wicket of Tammy Beaumont. ■ GETTY IMAGES

"I was confident that the ball was hitting the stumps (England went for the DRS). And after that run-out (Knight), we pulled back."

Deepi had done her bit with the bat too, after India

was put in. She made an unbeaten 24 off 27 balls.

"We had a good start and we thought we could even get to 160, but our final score wasn't that bad, as we knew our bowlers could defend it,"

she said. Deepi said she enjoyed playing under pressure.

"I like to play in pressure situations," she said.

"As an all-rounder I always try to contribute as much as I can in any department."

## Nagal loses, but gets lucky

SPORTS BUREAU

HAMBURG

Sumit Nagal was beaten 4-6, 2-6 by Zhizhen Zhang of China in the second and final qualifying round, but made the main draw as a lucky loser in the €1,168,220 ATP tennis tournament in Hamburg.

## The results:

€1,168,220 ATP, Hamburg, Germany: Qualifying singles (first round): Isabella Shinikova (Bul) bt Riya Bhatia 6-2, 7-5.

€44,820 Challenger, Amersfoort, Netherlands: Qualifying singles (first round): Jeremy Jah (Ger) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-7(0), 6-4.

**Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):**

Filip Krajinovic & Dusan Lajovic (Srb) bt Luca Margaroli (Sui) & Sriram Balaji 6-3, 6-2.

€535,535 ATP, Newport, US: Qualifying singles (first round): Ruben Bemelmans (Bel) bt Sasikumar Mukund 7-5, 6-4; Ramkumar Ramanathan bt Darian King (Bar) 6-3, 6-4.

€250,000 WTA, Prague, Czech Republic: Qualifying singles (first round): Isabella Shinikova (Bul) bt Riya Bhatia 6-2, 7-5.

€1,168,220 ATP, Hamburg, Germany: Qualifying singles (second and final round): Zhizhen Zhang (Chn) bt Sumit Nagal 6-4, 6-2; First round: Nagal bt Lewie Lane (Ger) 6-3, 6-1.

## Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):

€44,820 Challenger, Amersfoort, Netherlands: Qualifying singles (first round): Jeremy Jah (Ger) bt Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-7(0), 6-4.

## Jyoti gets a bipartite quota place for Paralympics

Eligible for compound individual and mixed team events

## ARCHERY

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) on Monday gave a bipartite quota place to compound archer Jyoti for the Paralympics, said an Archery Association of India (AAJ) source.

Jyoti's inclusion will enhance India's medal chances in archery as the country can have representation in compound women's open individual event as well mixed team event.

**Four already qualified**  
Earlier, four Indians – Rakesh Kumar and Shyam Sundar in compound men's open and Vivek Chikara and Harbinder Singh in recurve



Jyoti. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

could not participate in a qualifying event in Czech Republic earlier this month due to Covid-induced restrictions and visa issues, the AAJ requested the IPC to grant a bipartite quota place to Uttar Pradesh girl Jyoti.

Jyoti has won several international medals, including silver in individual and mixed team events in the Fazza world-ranking tournament in Dubai and mixed team silver in the Asian para-archery championships in Bangkok in 2019.

## CAS rejects Uzbek appeal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) has turned down the Uzbekistan Swimming Federation's appeal against world body FINA's decision to invalidate results of an Olympic qualifying tournament after Indian swimmer Likith Selvaraj complained of manipulation in the event.

The FINA Executive's decision was made after receiving "evidence establishing that certain results from these two events had been manipulated by the Uzbekistan Swimming Federation (USF) in an attempt to qualify Uzbek swimmers for the Tokyo Olympic Games."

FINA said that its Ethics Panel will investigate whether further sanctions should be imposed on USF and any other implicated party.

## Bopanna keeping his fingers crossed

Suspense about Olympic doubles entry for him and Divij continues

## TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Rohan Bopanna is back home after Wimbledon to be with his family before he gets a possible call for the Olympics in Tokyo.

The suspense about the Olympic doubles entry for him and Divij continues, and there is no clarity even about where they figure in the waiting list.

## Change

"Doubles entry was supposed to be purely on the basis of singles or doubles rank. But there has been some change."

"The two players from Portugal Joao Sousa and Pedro Sousa got singles wild cards. And they also got dou-

bles entry despite their best combined rank being over 200," said Bopanna.

Bopanna, the former World No. 3 said that he visited the ATP office during Wimbledon every day to get some clarity about the Olympic entries, but nobody had any list that would make the picture clear.

He also pointed at the se-

cond Spanish team of Pablo Andujar and Roberto Carballés Baena whose best combined rank was around 170. Bopanna (38) and Divij had a combined rank of 113 on the entry cut-off date of June 14.

"Not only us, some good teams have also not got their entry yet. Matwe Middelkoop and Robin Haase, with

a combined rank of 73, could not get in," Bopanna said.

"I have been playing every week from the third week of April and decided to take a week off. If we get entry for the Olympics, I will go to Tokyo from here. Otherwise, after a two-week break, I will be playing in the US circuit," said Bopanna.

He was happy with the way he had played Wimbledon, especially the mixed doubles with Sania Mirza.