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Open Session at 11 AM, 19th June, 2021



Prof. (Dr.) D.P. Agrawal,
Former Chairperson, UPSC

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NEARBY



JD(U) always believed in divisive politics: Chirag

NEW DELHI
Chirag Paswan on Wednesday accused his uncle, Pashupati Nath Paras, of betraying him, and the Janata Dal (United) of aiding the LJP rebels in crafting the split in the party.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

'Centre denied nod to probe oxygen deaths'

NEW DELHI
Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia claimed that the Centre has denied approval to a panel constituted by the Delhi government to probe the deaths of COVID patients due to oxygen shortage.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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Delhi police move SC against bail to 3 students in riots case

They were booked under the UAPA after protests against the CAA turned violent

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Twenty-four hours after getting bail, student activists Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asif Iqbal Tanha are yet to taste freedom as the Delhi Police quickly moved the Supreme Court on Wednesday against their release.

The virtual court of sessions judge Ravinder Bedi heard the students' lawyers press for their immediate release, saying they could not be made to spend another night in jail after getting bail.

But the police objected, saying they should not be released until the outstation addresses of the three students and their sureties were verified. In short, the police sought more time to file its verification report.

Sessions judge Ravinder Bedi recorded that he had

Devangana Kalita, Natasha Narwal and Asif Iqbal Tanha should not be made to spend another night in jail after getting bail

LAWYERS OF STUDENT ACTIVISTS

The High Court has lost sight of the evidence in the case. It was not a simple protest by students... there was evidence of terrorist activity

DELHI POLICE IN APPEAL BEFORE SC

heard both sides at "considerable length" and put up the case for orders at 4.45 p.m. However, at 6 p.m., the judge said his court had to go through a rather "heavy board" of bail applications and thus could not pass orders in the case. The judge went on to post the case for orders on Thursday at 11 a.m.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta is likely to mention the appeal against the bail order in the Supreme Court on Thursday.

The police, in their appeal

in the Supreme Court, claimed the High Court had lost sight of the evidence in the case. It was "not a simple protest by students". There was "evidence of terrorist activity". Seeking an immediate stay of the HC order, the police said it would otherwise affect all other cases registered by the National Investigation Agency under the UAPA.

In fact, the High Court had made particularly sharp observations in its June 15 order, accusing the govern-

ment of blurring the line between rightful dissent and terrorism.

The police arrested Jawaharlal Nehru University students and Pinjra Tod members Ms. Narwal and Ms. Kalita last year. Mr. Tanha, a Jamia Millia Islamia University student, was taken into custody in May 2020.

They were booked under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with the Delhi riots that broke out last year after protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) turned violent.

"It appears that in its anxiety to suppress dissent and in the morbid fear that matters may get out of hand, the State has blurred the line between the constitutionally guaranteed 'right to protest' and 'terrorist activity', the High Court said on June 15.

Row over assault on elderly man

Excess deaths in T.N. over 4 times official COVID-19 tally

60,773 more fatalities during second wave

SRINIVAS RAMANI
RAMYA KANNAN
CHENNAI

The number of "excess deaths" registered by the Civil Registration System (CRS) in Tamil Nadu ever since the COVID-19 pandemic hit (from April 2020 to May 2021) is 6.2 times the official reported figure of 24,232 deaths.

But in data accessed by *The Hindu*, the CRS recorded the number of deaths due to COVID-19 as 35,807 (14,652 in 2020 and 21,155 till May 2021), possibly adjusted over the months, an increase of nearly 47% in the deaths reported in the State health bulletin.

After omitting deaths due to causal factors unrelated to COVID-19, it is estimated that there were 1,61,581 excess deaths amounting to an undercount factor of 4.5 for the

Missing numbers: The number of "excess deaths" in Tamil Nadu is over 6.5 times the official COVID-19 toll in 2021. Following an increase in the tally registered in the CRS and after omitting deaths due to causal factors unrelated to COVID-19, the undercount factor reduced to 3.7

Period	Excess deaths	Official COVID-19 toll	CRS COVID-19 tally	Under-count factor*	Adjusted undercount factor**
2021	78,531	12,110	21,155	6.5	3.74
Apr '20 - May '21	1,51,408	24,232	35,807	6.2	4.5
Apr '21 - May '21	61,413	11,513	20,512	5.3	3.01

* Based on official COVID-19 toll | ** Based on CRS death toll and adjusted for deaths unrelated to COVID-19

pandemic period – April 2020 to May 2021. In the second wave (April and May 2021) alone, the CRS registered 20,158 COVID-19 deaths, but it was found that this was undercounted by a factor of 3, as the estimated excess deaths for this period were 60,773. The undercount factor for 2021 was 3.7.

Excess deaths in Tamil Nadu were calculated based on the month-wise number

of deaths registered by the CRS from January 2018 to May 2021, besides utilising year-wise data from 2015.

Data accessed by *The Hindu* included cause-wise deaths registered in the CRS and medically certified deaths data (close to 45% of deaths were medically certified in the State as of latest data from 2019).

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Cabinet panel approves additional fertilizer subsidy

One-time measure to provide relief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal to hike subsidy rates for phosphorus and potassium-based fertilizers by 140% in a bid to provide relief to farmers as the kharif sowing season begins. The estimated additional subsidy burden is around ₹4,775 crore, with the Centre emphasising that this is a one-time measure as part of COVID-19 relief.

Unlike urea, where the Centre sets a fixed maximum retail price, non-urea fertilizer prices are decontrolled, with the Centre fixing nutrient-based subsidy rates. So

far, a 50 kg bag of di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), the fertilizer most popular with Indian farmers after urea, was sold at ₹1,200, including a subsidy of about ₹500.

However, the bull run in the global commodity markets has seen a surge in prices of the imported raw materials as well as the finished fertilizer. In early April, a number of Indian fertilizer companies hiked their DAP prices to ₹1,900 per bag.

Farmers' groups protested against the ₹700/kg hike, pointing out that their input costs for the kharif season would spiral out of control.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Soon, drones might ferry vaccines

ICMR invites expression of interest

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Drones could soon be used for delivering COVID-19 vaccines in remote and hard to reach geographies in the country.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has invited expression of interest from drone operators to "develop a delivery model".

ICMR's Head of Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases Dr. Samiran Panda said the aim was to develop a model through a pilot project that could be emulated and adopted by the State governments. The ICMR had conducted a feasibility study



Difficult terrain: Health workers on a vaccination drive in Tral village of south Kashmir. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

in collaboration with the IIT-Kanpur.

"We need smart vaccination instead of mass vaccination to stem an epidemic. For this, we need to focus not only on areas where the

infection is intense but also on places where there are indications that the test positivity rate is still low and that if you saturate the priority groups there through innovative vaccine delivery me-

chanism, you can stop a surge. This is known as ring-fencing," Dr. Panda told *The Hindu*.

Technical specifications

The tender document lays down the technical specifications required, which include the ability of drones to fly "beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS)", carry a payload of up to 4 kg and cover a distance of up to 35 km.

While government rules now permit only those drone operations that are within visual range, the ICMR project comes at a time the Ministry of Civil Aviation has allowed 20 entities to conduct trials for long-range or "beyond visual line of sight" drone flights.

GOVT. TO FRAME NORMS ▶ PAGE 9

giving it a "communal colour" without verifying the details. The FIR was lodged against them under Sections 153, 153-A, 295-A, 505, 120-B and 34 of the IPC.

The police said Abdul Saad Saifi was allegedly beaten up by the accused, who included both Hindus and Muslims, as they were unhappy with the effects of a 'taweez' (amulet) provided by him.

The police lodged a FIR against social media site Twitter, news portal *The Wire*, journalists Saba Naqvi and Rana Ayyub, fact-checker Mohammad Zubair of *Altnews* and three others associated with the Congress for allegedly sharing on Twitter a video of the incident and

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Mithun questioned on poll speeches

Petitioner flags 'inflammatory' content

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA
The Kolkata police on Wednesday questioned veteran actor and BJP leader Mithun Chakraborty virtually for about 45 minutes in connection with a complaint that said he made inflammatory comments during the recent Assembly election.

The complaint, filed at a police station by an individual, alleged that Mr. Chakraborty had made inflammatory remarks, which could lead to breach of peace and provoke enmity between different groups.

Mr. Chakraborty, who was one of the star campaigners of the BJP, was often heard repeating dialogues from his films, such as *Ek Chobole Chobi* [death in one strike].

He joined the BJP on March 7 during a rally at Brigade Parade Ground in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

'Recreational purpose'
Mr. Chakraborty said his remarks were only for recreational purposes and had nothing to do with inciting violence. The 71-year-old ac-

Mithun Chakraborty at a campaign meeting held in Kolkata in March.

Tor had approached the Calcutta High Court for quashing the legal proceedings against him.

On June 11, the court directed that the actor be interrogated via video conference for the time being.

In the meantime, the petitioner or his advocate-on-record would communicate the e-mail address of the petitioner to the State so that for the purposes of interrogation or answering any query of the investigating officer, the petitioner can make himself available by way of video-conference," the order by Justice Tirthankar Ghosh read. The matter will come up for hearing again in court on June 18.



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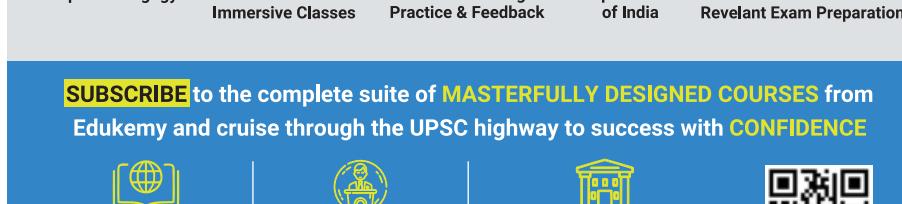
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Judo coach arrested in wrestler murder case

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch on Wednesday arrested a judo coach in connection with a brawl at Chhatrasal Stadium involving Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in which a wrestler died, an officer said.

The judo coach, Subhash, was apprehended from his residence in Kirari here. He was arrested after interrogation. He works as a physical training instructor in a government school in Rohini. He had come to the stadium around 11.30 p.m. along with Kala, said the police.

Mr. Subhash along with Sushil Kumar and other accomplices had allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over a property dispute.

Dhankar, 23, succumbed to injuries later.

Sushil Kumar was arrested, along with co-accused Ajay Kumar, on May 23 from Outer Delhi's Mundka area. The police said 11 people, including Mr. Kumar, have been arrested so far in connection with the incident.

Case lodged for promoting 'religious disharmony'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Special Cell on Tuesday registered a case following a complaint against an Instagram account allegedly making objectionable statements against three religions.

The police lodged a case on charges of promoting enmity among religions.

The complainant, a south Delhi resident, stated he came across "objectionable" content on the 'gurus' of three religions through WhatsApp on June 7 and the text was originally posted on Instagram.

A case under Section 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion... and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered.

Fed up with long queues, metro commuters take to social media

DMRC reiterates need to control passenger flow to ensure adherence to COVID rules

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the Delhi Metro services continuing to operate in a restricted manner, several stations are witnessing long queues outside the gates over the past few days.

On Wednesday, the DMRC took to Twitter to reiterate its message to passengers on the need to control the flow of commuters inside the stations. The public transporter said that certain stations were intermittently being closed temporarily to ensure compliance of relevant COVID-19 guidelines.

As part of crowd-control measures, while only select gates are functional at each station, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has also been temporarily closing gates to ensure social distancing inside the stations.

Increased waiting time

"The waiting time at the entry of some of the stations is also high since only a limited



Commuters wait outside a metro station after it was closed temporarily due to overcrowding. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

number of passengers are being allowed inside through a specified number of gates. We are aware that this is causing inconvenience and delay in journey to some passengers, especially during the peak hours and we apologise for the same," read the statement.

Since the resumption of metro services from June 7, after nearly a month of being suspended due to a lockdown in the national capital, the Delhi Metro is operating at a 50% capacity only.

Due to the reduced capacity inside coaches, only 25 passengers are currently permitted to be inside coaches at any given point.

For safer travel

The DMRC further added, "However, it may be appreciated that these measures are being taken to regulate and control the flow of passengers for their safe travel. We expect the situation to improve once more relaxations are allowed by the authorities in the days to

come."

With the growing queues outside some of the stations, several commuters have also taken to social media to complain about the increased waiting period before being able to enter the metro stations.

On June 13, social media user, Harshit Agrawal, in a tweet had asked how passengers could know if the coach is already full. "Have you arranged guards in each coach so that they can inform passengers about [whether] the coach is filled or still have seats?" read Mr. Agrawal's tweet.

In response to the tweet, the DMRC said, "In order to ensure social distancing and compliance to 50% seating in trains, entry of passengers is allowed in limited and controlled manner. Drives are also being carried out to counsel or sensitise passengers. Announcements are being made in trains in this regard."

Youth held for running sextortion racket

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old Mewat-based man was arrested for allegedly running a 'sextortion' racket and victimising 200 people, the police said.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) B.K. Singh said that the accused has been identified as Barkat Ali, from Haryana's Palwal.

The police said that they were investigating complaints by people who stated that their morphed obscene videos were being sent to them and that they were being threatened that the videos will be uploaded on the

social media. "Criminals would demand ₹15,000 from their targets as the victims could pay up and not file any complaint because of the small amount," Mr. Singh said.

Ali was arrested after a team acted on a secret information on his arrival in Gurugram.

During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused used to prepare fake ID with profile name and photographs of women on social media application after which they would send friend requests to wealthy people. The accused would

then share WhatsApp numbers and indulge in intimate chats. "Eventually, they would very tactfully lure the victim into stripping on camera which would be recorded by them," said a senior police officer.

The accused would then reveal their identity as YouTubers and threaten the victims that they would upload the videos on social media which would tarnish their image in front of family and friends. "The victims preferred to pay the extortion money instead of filing complaint in order to save his reputation," the officer said.

One held for supplying arms to gang

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 34-year-old man was arrested for allegedly supplying illegal firearms to members of a gang, the police said on Wednesday.

The arrest follows after three members of the "Santogang" were apprehended for their alleged involvement in a series of crimes, including robbery-cum-murder, committed within a span of a few hours at night

in the national capital.

The accused arms supplier, Sonu Panwar alias Baba Khan, was arrested from Baghpat district of Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, the police said, adding that he has also been found previously involved in a 2009 case of attempt to murder registered at Kotwali police station in the State.

Last week, the Delhi police had arrested three men, identified as Rizwan (28),

Shamshad (29) and Nasir (20), all residents of Loni in Ghaziabad, from Garhmukteshwar in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly committing a spate of robberies in a single night in the national capital.

Among the four cases registered against them, one was a robbery-cum-murder case.

According to the police, they arrested Panwar based on the disclosure made by Rizwan during interrogation. Mr. Singh said.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PMGSY (JKRRA) JAMMU.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

e-NIT No.-CEJ/PMGSY/6540/2020-21 Dated: 09/06/2021
Chief Engineer PMGSY (JKRRA) Jammu on behalf of The Government of Jammu & Kashmir, invites e-tenders on %age Above/Exceed (+) OR %age Below / Less, (-) basis (i.e., on Percentage-Rate Basis) from approved and eligible Contractors registered with JKRRA/JK State Govt, CPWD, Railways or equivalent and other State Govts up to 5.00 PM on 21-06-2021 for each of the following works including Defect Liability & Maintenance Period of three years for Stage-I and five years for Stage-II and Bridge after construction.

S. No.	Name of Work/ Package No	Name of the PIU	Const. Part (Rs. In Lacs)	Maint. Part (Rs. In Lacs)	Total (Rs. In Lacs)	Cost of documents (Rs. In Lacs)	Ernest Money (Rs. In Lacs)	Time Allowed for completion	Call of tender	Time and date of opening of tenders	Class of contractor
1	Balance work for Construction of Road from Dadri Morh to Kalan, Package No.: JK14-429, Stage-I, Phase-X, Block Pouni, District Reasi, Length - 4.45 Kms Advertised Cost excluding Maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 63.02 Lacs	Riasi	63.02	-	63.02	0.06	-	09 Months	1 st	23-06-2021 10:00 AM	Any registered contractor with State PWD/CPWD/Railways or equivalent qualifying eligibility criteria as provided in the Standard Bidding Documents can tender for the works
2	Balance work for Construction of Road from "L053 Bhaga to Lalesa Mare" Stage-I, under Package No.: JK14-531 Regular PMGSY Batch-I, 2017-18, Block Riasi, District Reasi, Length - 3.900 Kms Advertised Cost excluding Maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 225.05 Lacs		225.05	-	225.05	0.06	-	09 Months	2 nd	23-06-2021 10:00 AM	Any registered contractor with State PWD/CPWD/Railways or equivalent qualifying eligibility criteria as provided in the Standard Bidding Documents can tender for the works
3	Balance Work for Construction and Maintenance of road from Sular to Rua Bagh, Package No: JK14-334, Phase-VIII Stage-II, Block Ghordi & District Udhampur Length :10.300 Kms Advertised Cost excluding Maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 95.60 Lacs	Udhampur	95.60	18.45	114.05	0.06	-	09 Months	1 st	23-06-2021 10:00 AM	Any registered contractor with State PWD/CPWD/Railways or equivalent qualifying eligibility criteria as provided in the Standard Bidding Documents can tender for the works
4	Balance work for Construction of Road from L022 Bamota to Doula, Under Package No: JK07-93, Phase-X, Stage-I, Block Duggan(Bani) and District Kathua. Length :10.459 Kms Advertised Cost excluding Maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 209.60 Lacs	Billawar	305.60	-	305.60	0.06	-	09 Months	1 st	23-06-2021 10:00 AM	Any registered contractor with State PWD/CPWD/Railways or equivalent qualifying eligibility criteria as provided in the Standard Bidding Documents can tender for the works

- (a) The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://pmgsytendersjk.gov.in> from 06.55 PM On 11-06-2021 to 21-06-2021 (5.00PM)
- (b) The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://pmgsytendersjk.gov.in> from 05.00 PM on 14-06-2021 to 05.00 PM on 21-06-2021.
- (c) A Pre bid meeting will be held on 12-06-2021 at 12.00 Noon in the Office of The Chief Engineer PMGSY (JKRRA) Jammu to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised by the bidders of the Bidding documents.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer PMGSY (JKRRA) Jammu
Government of Jammu & Kashmir
Jammu and Kashmir

DIP/J-2519/21

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
Government of India

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

No. . PW-CE-NH-CTR-Tender Notice/Consultancy/2021-8721-29 Dated :15-06-2021

1. The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways through Public Works Department, Government of Himachal Pradesh has been assigned the work of Project Management Consultancy services for Widening to 4-lane of NH-53 Extn. from Km. 0/0 to 28/00 (Amb to Una) in the State of Himachal Pradesh and Widening to 4-lane of NH-70 (New-03) Jallandhar-Hoshiarpur-Gagron-Amb-Nadaun-Hamirpur-Tauni-Devi-Sarkaghat-Mandi road from Km. 58/400 to 114/00 (PB/HB border to Nadaun) in the State of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Proposals are hereby invited from eligible Project Management Consultancy (PMC) firms for preparation of Detailed Project Report, Pre construction activity and Project supervision during construction as well as maintenance period for the work of Project Management Consultancy services for Widening to 4-lane of NH-53 Extn. from Km. 0/0 to 28/00 (Amb to Una) in the State of Himachal Pradesh and Widening to 4-lane of NH-70 (New-03) Jallandhar-Hoshiarpur-Gagron-Amb-Nadaun-Hamirpur-Tauni-Devi-Sarkaghat-Mandi road from Km. 58/400 to 114/00 (PB/HB border to Nadaun) in the State of Himachal Pradesh. The Letter of Invitation (LOI) and Terms of Reference (ToR) including Request for Proposal (RFP) is available online on e-tender portal of <https://eprocure.gov.in>. The document can also be downloaded from www.infracon.nic.in. Cost of the Document must be furnished in the form of a non-refundable fee of INR 5,000 (Rupees Five Thousand only) by way of online payment only (payment through other modes shall not be accepted), through Bharat Kosh Portal (<https://bhارتકોષ.ગવ.ઇન>) [Select (i)Purpose: Sale of Tender Document (ii)Pay & Account Officer: Regional Officer, MoRTH, Shimla-171002]. The online payment receipt shall be submitted while submitting the proposal. The application form without proof of payment of application fee will be rejected without any intimation. Brief particulars of the work are as follows:

State	Name of the National Highway	Tentative length in km	Estimated PMC cost (in Rs. Cr.)	Assignment period
Himachal	NH-53 Extn. & NH-70 (New-03)	85.00 Km.	20.00	102 months [10 months for DPR- 8 months for preconstruction activity + 24months for the construction + 5 years for Maintenance]

3. The RFP has also been uploaded on "INFRACON" (www.infracon.nic.in). As such before submitting the proposal, the PMC firms shall mandatorily register and enlist themselves (the firm and all key personnel), on the MoRTH portal "INFRACON" and furnish registration details along with its RFP. A copy of Infracon Operation Procedure is also enclosed for bidder's reference.
4. All the bidders registered on Infracon shall form a Team on Infracon and which would be assigned unique Infracon Team ID. Bidders while submitting the proposal shall quote the Infracon Team ID.
5. Bid must be submitted online at e-tendering portal of The Ministry Road Transport and Highway (<https://eprocure.gov.in>) on or before 15.07.2021 at 17:00 hrs.

6. The following schedule is to be followed for this assignment:

i) Deadline for downloading of bids

ii) Last date for submission of queries

iii) Pre bid meeting

iv) Deadline for Submission of bids

v) Opening of Technical bids

:15.07.2021 at 15:00 hrs

:25.06.2021 at 15:00 hrs.

:25.06.2021 at 15:00 hrs.

:15.07.2021 at 17:00 hrs.

:17.07.2021 at 11:00 hrs

Yours Sincerely,

Chief Engineer,
National Highways,
HPWD, Shimla-2

Phone : 0177-2629416

E-mail: ce-nh-hp@nic.in
romorts@hima2@gmail.com

HPPWD, Shimla-2

HPWD, Shimla-2

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Timings
DELHI

THURSDAY, JUN. 17	
RISE 05:24	SET 19:22
RISE 11:28	SET 00:00
FRIDAY, JUN. 18	
RISE 05:24	SET 19:22
RISE 12:28	SET 00:32
SATURDAY, JUN. 19	
RISE 05:24	SET 19:22
RISE 13:30	SET 01:06

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 34 26
Safdarjung 34 26
Palam 38 25

Delhi Palam Today
37°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be very warm and humid. Night will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
38°C A dry weather to continue. Day will be slight hot with uneasy afternoon. Night will be slight warm.

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Man held under anti-conversion law, rape charge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Greater Noida police on Wednesday arrested a 30-year-old woman's live-in partner over allegations of rape and coercing her into changing her religion for marriage, officials said.

The accused, who has been arrested by officials of the Bisrakh police station, has been booked under the Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Ordinance, 2020, among other charges, they said.

"Accused Murtaza alias Mritunjay, 33, is from Moradabad district in western U.P. and had been living in a rented accommodation in Bisrakh. The accused and the complainant were in a live-in relationship," a police spokesperson said.

Insisted on marriage
"When the woman insisted on marriage, the man forced her for religious conversion. She approached us with allegations of rape and forced conversion attempt," the spokesperson said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Women and Child Safety) Vrinda Shukla said the FIR was lodged on June 14 and the man was arrested the very next day.

The FIR also invokes Indian Penal Code Sections 323 (causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult to provoke breach of peace), 506 (criminal intimidation), 376 (rape), 406 (criminal breach of trust).

Further legal proceedings have been initiated and will be completed soon, DCP Shukla added.

The woman claimed she worked in a pharmaceutical company where in 2019 she met the accused who was referred to as "Murtaza". When confronted, the man allegedly threatened and blackmailed her.

Kejriwal announces plan to train 5,000 youths as health assistants

They will help doctors and nurses in case a third wave hits the city, says Delhi CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

To prepare for a possible third wave, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Delhi government would train 5,000 youngsters as health assistants in the coming weeks. These Community Nursing Assistants will be trained in basic nursing, paramedic, lifesaving, first aid, home care, sample collection, oxygen concentrators and cylinders operations among other procedures.

"In case a third wave emerges, we might also witness a shortage of medical and paramedical staff as we had seen during the second and the first waves. Keeping this in mind, the government has devised a big plan for training 5,000 health assistants," the Chief Minister said during a digital briefing.

"In technical terms, they are called Community Nurs-



Healthcare workers at a COVID Care Centre in Delhi.
• FILE PHOTO

ing Assistants. So 5,000

youngsters will be trained for two weeks by the IP University and by the 9 medical institutes of Delhi," he said.

These 5,000 health assistants or Community Nursing Assistants will work as assistants to doctors and nurses and pressed into service as and when the need arises, he said.

"We will train these 5,000 people and they will be

trained for two weeks... they will be given a salary according to the number of days they work

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister

called when there is a need. They will be given a salary according to the number of days they work," he stated.

Apply from June 17

"So, online applications can be filled starting June 17. Training period will start from June 28 in batches of 500, that is the first batch of 500 will be trained for two weeks and after that, another batch of 500 will be trained," he also stated.

Mr. Kejriwal said all those who have passed their Class 12 exams are eligible. Applicants should be 18 years or

more and applications will be accepted on a first come first serve basis.

"I again hope that a third wave does not come about, but as per the information from the U.K., a third wave has emerged there. So we should also be fully prepared, keeping in mind the developments all over the world," he added.

The Delhi BJP, meanwhile, accused Mr. Kejriwal of attempting to take credit for the Centre-sponsored customised crash course programme for front-line workers.

"How long will you keep trying to take credit for the works of the Centre in your name? PM Narendra Modi is launching this programme on June 18. You are deliberately trying to show that you are doing it," Delhi BJP spokesperson Harish Khurana said.

The elderly had bought a 1,000 sq feet plot from a property dealer 15 years ago. The property dealer had assured him that he would get the ownership rights for the land. He later spent around ₹3 lakh to construct a house on the plot. But when he learnt that his house was illegal and would be demolished as per the Supreme Court order, he killed himself. His son, aged 36 years, works as a security guard.

The police have registered a case against the property dealer. However, a

70-year-old resident of Khoribasti ends life

Property dealer booked for duping him

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
FARIDABAD

A 70-year-old man ended his life at Khoribasti here on Wednesday after he learnt that his house would be demolished in adherence to the Supreme Court order. The police have registered a case against a property dealer who duped the elderly to sell government land to him.

The elderly had bought a 1,000 sq feet plot from a property dealer 15 years ago. The property dealer had assured him that he would get the ownership rights for the land. He later spent around ₹3 lakh to construct a house on the plot.

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Parleys for patch-up in strife-hit Tripura BJP unit

Dissidents for replacement of State chief

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

BJP's national organisation general secretary B.L. Santhosh, who arrived here on Wednesday, held hectic discussions with a cross section of leaders reportedly to work out a reconciliation between official and rebel groups.

He held a closed door one-to-one meeting at the party headquarters with several leaders to understand the differences and repair the cracks, highly placed sources in the party said.

Santhosh's meetings

Senior leaders like Ajay Jamwal and Phanindra Nath Sharma, who also arrived to oversee organisation matters, did not join the meetings Mr. Santhosh had with MPs Pratima Bhowmik and Rebatu Tripura, Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Debbarman and dissident MLAs. Tripura BJP in-charge Vinod Kumar Sonkar, who was also to arrive here, had to cancel his trip owing to a family matter.

After several months, dis-

sident MLAs like Sudip Roy Barman, Ram Prasad Paul, Ashish Das, Sushanta Choudhury and Ashish Kumar Saha went to the party office to meet Mr. Santhosh. Sources said he met the Chief Minister Biplob Kumar Deb, Deputy Chief Minister, two MPs, four Ministers and the MLAs who were called in six separate groups.

Cabinet expansion

Dissidents reportedly made some important demands including replacement of incumbent president Dr. Manik Saha, expansion of Cabinet and certain changes in the organisation.

He also met State office bearers, morcha presidents and district committee presidents.

Later in the evening, he met MLAs from the BJP's ally Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) at the residence of Mr. Deb.

Party sources said the deliberations of Mr. Santhosh will continue on Thursday. He will also meet State functionaries of the RSS before his return to New Delhi.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

V.SUBBIAH (88), FCA Chartered Accountant, KSG Subramanyam & Co, Coimbatore, attained Vaikunta Praapthi on 16th June 2021. Mobile Contact S.Venkatesh: +91 99449 63003.

SAD DEMISE



Mr. Venkatesh (51)
Senior Officer - HR, The Hindu, Chennai
Passed away on 16.06.2021
Address: 52/14, SBI Colony,
Chromepet, Chennai-600044.
Mobile: 9791014062

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TENDERS

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PUBLIC NOTICE
Know all men by these presents that Sh. Upendra Narain Tankha, S/O Late Sh. Jagendra Narain Tankha, R/O B-3, 426, Ekti Gardens, 9 I. P. Extension, Delhi-110092, revokes/cancels the Power of Attorney dated 4.2.2021 attested by Notary Public on 5.2.2021 given by Upendra Narain Tankha in favour of his cousin Sh. Harsh Tankha, S/O Late Kailas Narain Tankha, R/O 113 Golk Links, New Delhi -110003. The said Power of Attorney was drafted for court purposes only and the same was meant for 1/8th share of land in Dakhpatti, Rajpur Road, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. My client has revoked/canceled the said power of attorney. Whosever deals pertaining to the said Power of Attorney shall do so at his risk and responsibility in future.

Conditions not favourable for monsoon to cover North: IMD

Cyclonic circulation lies over U.P. and there is also a western disturbance'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Atmospheric conditions are still not favourable for further advance of monsoon into Rajasthan, remaining parts of Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday.

It said a cyclonic circulation lies over east Uttar Pradesh and neighbourhood and there is also a western disturbance.

These conditions are not favourable for the advance of monsoon, IMD Director General M. Mohapatra said.

"Large-scale atmospheric conditions are not favoura-



Tourists enjoy rainy weather in Shimla on Wednesday. ■PTI

ble for further advance of monsoon into Rajasthan, remaining parts of Gujarat, Punjab, Haryana and Delhi,"

the IMD said.

existing cyclonic circulation over east Uttar Pradesh, the IMD added.

Late onset over Kerala

Monsoon has reached Saharanpur in western Uttar Pradesh. The Northern Limit of Monsoon (NLM) continues to pass through Diu, Surat, Nandurbar, Bhopal, Nowrang, Hamirpur, Barabanki, Bareilly, Saharanpur, Ambala and Amritsar, it added. After making a late onset over Kerala on June 3, two days after its normal onset date, the Southwest Monsoon made a rapid progress covering large parts of area than its normal arrival date there.

Assam not to hold school board examinations

Cabinet recommends cancellation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Assam Cabinet on Wednesday recommended the cancellation of the Class 10 and Class 12 board examinations.

A final decision would be taken on June 18 at a meeting between the Education Department and various stakeholders.

The recommendation came less than a week after a group of students approached the Supreme Court seeking directions on the examinations scheduled tentatively in the first week of August.

Water Resources Minister and government spokesperson Pijush Hazarika said the Cabinet had also decided

not to allow home isolation to any COVID-19 patient who does not have separate accommodation facility at home.

The other Cabinet decisions included empowering the Social Welfare Department to procure rice directly from the FCI for the supplementary nutrition programme under the Integrated Child Development Services to reduce costs.

The statutes of Madhabdev University at Narayanpur, Bhattacharya University at Bajali, Birangana Sati Sadhana State University at Golaghat and Rabindranath Tagore University at Hojai were also approved for facilitating smooth functioning, Mr. Hazarika said.

Don't stop treatment even in case of e-card anomalies: Punjab govt.

Private hospitals told to continue services to beneficiaries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Wednesday directed all empanelled private hospitals that the treatment or e-card of the entitled beneficiary of 'Sarbat Sehat Bima Yojna' (the State Health Insurance Scheme) should not be stalled while the beneficiary was admitted to the hospital.

Mr. Sidhu said that in case of any anomalies in the e-card of the beneficiary, the same should be corrected only after the completion of treatment of the beneficiary patient, because the e-cards had been approved at the

end of the insurance company only. The State government had also provided free treatment for COVID-19 to the entitled beneficiaries under the scheme in all empanelled private hospitals. He said training would be provided to private hospitals to expedite the process of filing the claim under the COVID-19 packages.

Vaccination drive

Mr. Sidhu said the vaccination drive was running in full swing across rural and urban areas. "Punjab has received a quota of 5,98,060 Covishield doses from the Government of India whereas the State purchased a Co-

vaxin quota of 1,50,850. The utilisation of Covaxin received from the Centre is around 4,90,041 while 66,032 doses have been administered to public from the State purchase quota. On the same pattern, 48,16,580 doses of Covishield have been provided by the Centre and 46,43,786 of which have been utilised," he said.

He said the Punjab government had procured 5,86,000 doses of Covishield of which 5,30,603 doses had been successfully administered till June 13.

He said a total of 58,15,339 people had received vaccine till now.

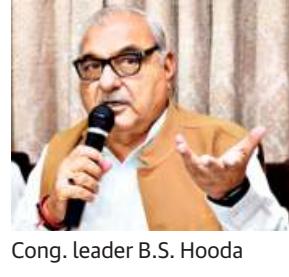
Hooda blames Haryana govt. for rising crime and unemployment

'Criminals have lost the fear of law as the govt. is sleeping'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Leader of Opposition in Haryana Assembly Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Wednesday said unheeding attitude of ruling BJP-JJP government towards the State's problems was to be blamed for the rise in crime and unemployment.

Mr. Hooda said the crime graph was rising in the State, which was worrying for everyone. "While criminals have lost all fear of the law, the government is in a state of deep slumber. Theft, robbery, dacoity, ransom and murder have become a part of routine in the State and the news of someone being



shot or killed in public has become common," he said.

Mr. Hooda said maintaining law and order is the responsibility of the State government but those in power are only concerned about their safety. "The government does not pay any attention to the safety of the life and property of the general

public. Seeing the way crime is increasing, it seems as if there is no such thing as government in the State," he said.

Figures tell the story

"The figures of the government itself testify to the increasing crime in the State. According to the recent report of NITI Aayog, Haryana has the highest number of murder cases per 1 lakh people, after Jharkhand. Besides, the NCRB data shows that there are 3 to 4 murders, 5 to 6 rapes, more than 100 robbery, theft, dacoity and ransom incidents take place in the State every day," Mr. Hooda said.

Odisha govt. announces partial lockdown till July 1

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government on Wednesday announced partial lockdown till 5 a.m. on July 1 following marginal improvement in the COVID-19 situation in the State. The present lockdown comes to end on June 17.

However, night curfew and weekend shutdown will continue.

"Odisha government has announced four lockdowns, including the present one, to bring the pandemic situation

under control. The rate of infection has come down significantly during the third lockdown. A fortnight ago, the test positivity rate (TPR), which was 14 to 15%, came down to 6%," said Chief Secretary Suresh Chandra Mohapatra here.

Odisha had already crossed the peak period of the second wave and the infection rate was falling fast, Mr. Mohapatra said, adding that hundreds of positive cases, however, continued to emerge in some districts.

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER: PWD BUILDING::ASSAM::

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3	PMC service for Construction of new medical college centering MMCH and Kalapahar campus along with 800 bedded General Hospital at MMCH Campus in Guwahati	RS. 99830.31 Lakh

The details may be seen in e-procurement portal website i.e. www.assamtenders.gov.in. The validity period of the Bid shall be 180 days from the date submission. The Bidders must be registered with the E-tendering system(ETS) of the Govt. of Assam, (website: http://assamtenders.gov.in)

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The Executive Engineer, HPWD B&R Division Kumarsain H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost	Starting Date for down-loading Bid	Earliest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid
1.	Annual surfacing on Oddi Kingal Km. 0/00 to 21/405 (SH-Rehewal coat 30 mm thick Bituminous Concrete in Km.7/000 to 11/000) (PMGSY).	Rs. 46,79,260/- w.e.f 17/06/2021	24.06.2021 up to 1800 Hrs.	Rs. 78,500/-	30.06.2021

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in.

Executive Engineer, B&R Division, HP

IN BRIEF



Sudhakaran takes over as Kerala PCC president

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
K. Sudhakaran, MP, was elevated as the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president on Wednesday. Former leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said Congress workers should unite behind the KPCC president and the party should act collectively.

After 41 days, Kerala to resume liquor sale

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Kerala will resume the sale of liquor after a hiatus of 41 days on Thursday. Consumers can buy them as takeaways from bars and outlets directly. The government has done away with the Bev-Q mobile phone application, which buyers used to reserve their slots in advance at the point of sale last year.

In-principle nod to discard Class 12 marks

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Kerala Higher Education Minister R. Bindu said the government had given in-principle approval to the proposal to discard 50% weightage for Class 12 marks for this year's entrance examinations for admission to engineering and pharmacy courses.

Noise pollution: HC castigates Bengaluru DCP

BENGALURU
The High Court of Karnataka on Wednesday castigated Deputy Commissioner of Police (Intelligence) of Bengaluru city, K. Santosh Babu, for saying that the Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules enacted in 2000 need change, instead of acting as per the rules against 12 places of worship on the complaints of illegality in use of loudspeakers.

Kerala CEO seeks report in Surendran case

State BJP chief accused of corrupt practices during Assembly election

K.S. SUDHI
KOCHI

The allegations of corrupt practices raised against BJP Kerala State president K. Surendran have taken a new turn with Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Teeka Ram Meenawar seeking a police report on the accusations.

Mr. Meena called for a detailed report from the State Police Chief (SPC) on a complaint filed by Saleem Madavoor, president of the Loktantri Yuva Janata Dal.

Mr. Madavoor wanted a probe into the alleged instances of people carrying huge bags from a helicopter used by Mr. Surendran for electioneering to his car.

The bags contained black money, which he transported to various destinations, giving the police and the Election Commission the slip, he said.

He alleged that the BJP State leadership distributed

complaints that Mr.

Surendran had paid ₹10 lakh to Adivasi leader C.K. Janu to contest from Sultan Bathery and BSP leader K. Sundara not to contest from Manjeshwaram were brought to the notice of the CEO.

Black money

The complainant stated that the ₹3.5 crore, which was robbed from Dharmarajan, an active Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh worker at Kodakara, was meant to be distributed in a constituency, overriding the Election Commission's directions on spending money for election.

Mr. Dharmarajan had also visited the election committee office of Suresh Gopi, MP, the BJP candidate in Thrissur, he said.

Mr. Meena told *The Hindu* that the report of the DGP would be forwarded to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for further action. If the police found merit in the



Surendran was accused of paying ₹10 lakh to Adivasi leader C.K. Janu to contest from Sultan Bathery. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

around ₹400 crore in black money in Kerala during the recent Assembly election. A copy of the complaint had been forwarded to the SPC.

Legal action

Mr. Meena told *The Hindu* that the report of the DGP would be forwarded to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for further action. If the police found merit in the

allegations, legal action would be initiated in accordance with the law and in consultation with the ECI. The provisions of the Indian Penal Code and Representation of the People Act could be invoked to deal with election-related corrupt practices.

Future course of action would depend on the police report, he said.

Chennai zoo loses another lion to virus

B. ARAVIND KUMAR
CHENNAI

ment since then. "It had not eaten for the past five days," a source said.

The zoo administration is in a state of shock after the death of the second lion. Of the 13 lions at the zoo, two were responding slowly to treatment, sources said.

A forest official said the death of two lions and the critical condition of two more showed the health management of the zoo in poor light.

"We are the only zoo in India that has lost two lions," the official said. Though eight lions at a Hyderabad zoo tested positive for the infection, all of them recovered.

Two die after consuming surgical spirit

STAFF REPORTER
KOLLAM

Two persons died and as many others were hospitalized after they allegedly consumed surgical spirit at Pathanapuram in Kollam.

The deceased have been identified as Prasad and Murukanand. Two others, Rajeev and Gopi, who had been undergoing treatment at a private hospital, were shifted to the Government Medical College Hospital on Wednesday.

All four had consumed isopropyl alcohol procured from a private hospital as liquor was unavailable due to the lockdown.

Six Maoists killed in exchange of fire in A.P.

Security forces seize weapons

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE
VISAKHAPATNAM

giah alias Ashok (DCM), Santu Nachika (ACM), Lalitha and Paike.

The security forces seized a huge cache of weapons, including one AK-47 rifle, two carbines, two modified 303 Lee Enfield rifles, one country-made pistol, some ammunition, explosive materials, extremist literature and kit bags.

According to Superintendent of Police B. Krishna Rao, the exchange of fire took place when a team from elite anti-Naxal force, Greyhounds, was on a combing operation in Theegala-metta village in Koyyuru mandal in interior part of Visakhapatnam Agency on Wednesday.

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.7	38	89	147	119	■■■
Bengaluru	.8	13	13	55	81	■■■
Chennai	.9	5	41	66	70	■■■
Delhi	.6	29	39	148	101	■■■
Hyderabad	12	20	16	6	14	■■■
Kolkata	.9	23	30	60	63	■■■
Lucknow	.3	58	56	60	96	■■■
Mumbai	.4	29	92	47	37	■■■
Pune	.5	20	83	133	81	■■■
Visakhapatnam	13	51	37	.52	.108	■■■

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kannur, Kerala recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 157, indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 11.

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

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

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

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

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

Ramayan actor Chandrashekhar dies at 98



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Veteran actor Chandrashekhar, best known for featuring in films like 'Cha Cha Cha', and 'Surang', and playing the role of Arya Sumant on the popular TV serial 'Ramayan', passed away on Wednesday due to age-related ailments. He was 98. Chandrashekhar breathed his last around 7 a.m. at his residence here, his son and producer Ashok Shekhar said. "He passed away in his sleep in the presence of family Mr. Shekhar said.

Maharashtra adds 10,107 new cases

10,567 patients recover; death toll crosses 1.15 lakh; Mumbai reports 821 fresh cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The number of recoveries barely exceeded the case surge on Wednesday with just 10,567 patients being discharged across Maharashtra as against 10,107 new COVID-19 cases. With a rise in daily cases as opposed to the last few days, the State's active case tally reached 13,661.

More than 1,200 deaths were added to the State's progressive death toll of which 1,070 were part of the Health Department's ongoing 'reconciliation' process. As many as 144 fatalities occurred in the last 48 hours and a further 93 were from the past week.

The State's total death toll has climbed rapidly to 11,390 with the State's case fatality rate going up to 1.94%.



Warding off virus: A health worker inoculates a construction worker with a dose of COVID-19 vaccine at Chandivali in Mumbai on Wednesday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

The State's total cases have touched 59,34,880 while its cumulative recoveries have risen to 56,79,746 with the recovery rate standing at 95.7%.

"Of a total 3,86,41,639 laboratory samples tested thus far, 59,34,880 (with the average case positivity falling in-

crementally to 15.36%) have returned positive with over 2.23 lakh samples being tested in the last 24 hours," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said.

Pune reported nearly 1,200 new cases taking its total case tally to 10,38,966. As per the State Health Depart-

ment figures, 16 deaths were recorded as the fatality toll went up to 15,744. According to district authorities, the active cases have declined below 11,000 while the death count reached 17,500.

Mumbai recorded 821 new cases to take its total tally to 7,17,172 while the active count touched 17,782. Eleven fatalities took the city's toll to 15,227.

In western Maharashtra, Kolhapur added more than 1,100 new cases taking its total cases to 1,36,588 of whom 12,487 are active. Sixteen deaths saw the toll climb to 4,260.

Neighbouring Satara registered 915 new cases and 16 fatalities, taking its total case tally to 1,82,376 of whom 7,488 are active. Its death toll has risen to 4,276.

Sangli logged more than 900 new cases.

Stars on the ground



Illumination: A Muslim man lighting an earthen lamp at Ahmed Shah's tomb in Ahmedabad on Wednesday as COVID-19 cases come down. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

The Hindu In School's mega camp a hit

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

The Hindu In School, in association with Parivar Asha, organised 'Creative Kids', a 10-day-long mega online camp, from May 31 to June 10, which saw participation of more than 165 children across India.

The camp that was curated for two age groups – juniors (7 to 10 years) and seniors (11 to 15 years) – aimed at helping children get over the monotony of the lockdown and teach them essential life skills. Children also learnt various art and craft activities. There were also engaging sessions on language development, theatre, mind mapping, body movement, and mental health well-being.

Chief guest of the grand



A session in progress.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Creative Kids
A Fun Camp for the Young
MINDS

THE HINDU

Parivar Asha

YOUNG WORLD CLUB

THE HINDU



Terrorising dissent

HC bail orders are an indictment of attempt to portray Delhi protests as terrorist acts

Caught between a statutory bar on grant of regular bail and a judicial embargo on any close examination of available evidence at the bail stage, those arrested under the country's main anti-terror law have been languishing in jails without trial for extended periods. The Delhi High Court orders granting bail to three student activists jailed for over a year for their alleged role in the February 2020 riots in Delhi represent a clear-headed effort to get around such impediments. Sound in legal reasoning and interpretation, the judgments of Justice Siddharth Mridul and Justice Anup Jai Ram Bhambhani have made a salient distinction between those accused of offences against the country's integrity and security on the one hand, and protesters or dissenters roped in unjustifiably under the rubric of 'terrorism' on the other. The Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act has been invoked by the Delhi Police against activists and others who were among those organising the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, on the claim that they had also fomented the riots. Under Section 43D(5), there is a legal bar on granting bail if the court is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds to believe that the accusation against those held is *prima facie* true. Adding to this onerous burden on the accused to demonstrate to the court that the accusation is untrue is a 2019 Supreme Court judgment that bars a detailed analysis of the evidence at the bail stage and rules that bail can be denied on "the broad probabilities" of the case.

The High Court has ruled that the bail court can look at the available evidence to satisfy itself about the *prima facie* truth of the case. In other words, there is no statutory invincibility to the prosecution case merely because the UAPA has been invoked. It has found that none of the three – Asif Iqbal Tanha, Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita – was specifically or particularly accused of any 'terrorist act', 'funding of a terrorist act' or an act amounting to a conspiracy to commit a terrorist act or something preparatory to it. Once the UAPA charges were not seen to be true, it was open to the court to admit them to regular bail until conclusion of the trial. Further, with 740 witnesses cited, there is no scope for early conclusion of the trial. Riots are matters concerning public order, and not the security of the state. The court's observation that the state, in its anxiety to suppress dissent, has blurred the line between the constitutionally guaranteed right to protest and "terrorist activity", is a stern indictment of the establishment. The Delhi Police has gone to the Supreme Court on appeal against the verdict, possibly in the fear that the ruling may foil its design to paint protesters as 'terrorists'. If the High Court's approach to grant of bail is upheld, it would help secure the liberty of other dissenters held under the UAPA elsewhere without sufficient basis.

Closure, compensation

Legal steps must go hand-in-hand with diplomacy to avoid *Enrica Lexie* repeat

Nine years after two Italian marines shot dead two fishermen off the Kerala coast under the belief that they were pirates, the criminal proceedings against them are set to be formally closed. The Supreme Court of India has ordered that the criminal trial against them be stopped, after Italy deposited compensation of ₹10 crore. The Permanent Court of Arbitration, a tribunal under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, had last year ruled that even though India and Italy had concurrent jurisdiction to try the case, the marines – Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre – enjoyed immunity from Indian jurisdiction as they were acting on behalf of a state. The UN tribunal had also ruled that the Indian fishing boat, *St. Antony*, and the victims were entitled to compensation, as *Enrica Lexie*, the Italian vessel, had violated the boat's right of navigation under the Law of the Sea. The two marines are likely to face trial in Italy, but as far as India is concerned, the monetary compensation may have to be treated as the only available form of closure for the moment. Given the legal tangles over jurisdiction, the lawfulness of their arrest and the location of their trial, as well as the provisions of law under which they should be tried, legal accountability through a criminal trial had been rendered extremely difficult. The legal heirs of the two victims are likely to get ₹4 crore each, and the owner of the fishing vessel, ₹2 crore.

In hindsight, the diplomatic turbulence the incident set off in the early days, the nationalist passions the killings raised and much of the delay in resolving the issue could all have been avoided. A possible way out was to have agreed to Italy's offer of compensation and a trial in its own jurisdiction – the very thing that came out of the UN tribunal's ruling. At that time, many in India believed it was an act of wanton killing, while those in Italy believed the fears of piracy were genuine. India's efforts to assert criminal jurisdiction succeeded in national courts, with the Supreme Court ruling in 2013 that prosecuting the marines, who had been brought into Indian waters from the Contiguous Zone, where the incident took place, was solely in the Union government's jurisdiction. However, when the NIA invoked a stringent anti-piracy law – the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Maritime Navigation and Fixed Platforms on Continental Shelf Act, 2002 – it was received with consternation in Italy. European nations objected to the trial taking place under a law that provided for the death penalty. The provisions of the Act were dropped, but this led to significant delay in prosecuting the matter. A lesson is that such incidents should be dealt with a combination of legally sustainable steps and diplomatic efforts to find early resolution.

'Record' FDI inflows, yes, cause for celebration, no

The inflows during 2020-21 have not been in sync with the Government's priorities for economic recovery



BISWAJIT DHAR &
K.S. CHALAPATI RAO

In an otherwise gloomy economic scenario, one area of cheer for the Government has been the numbers on inflows of foreign direct investment (FDI). In a recent press release, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry announced that "India has attracted highest ever total FDI inflow of U.S.\$81.72 billion during the financial year 2020-21 and it is 10 percent higher as compared to the last financial year 2019-20" (<https://bit.ly/3wBcEd6>). The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reported that the equity component of inflows was over U.S.\$61.4 billion, a 19% increase over the U.S.\$51.7 billion received in 2019-20. The credit for this record level of inflows was given to FDI policy reforms, investment facilitation and ease of doing business.

Taken on their face value, these numbers are indeed creditable, especially given that global FDI inflows in 2020 had declined by 42% over the level in 2019, and inflows to developing countries had fallen by 12%. However, if we consider the disaggregated data on inflows into India, the reality of foreign investors' participation in the Indian economy seems a sharp contrast to what the Ministry has presented (<https://bit.ly/35yBiN>).

RBI data as a pointer

The RBI provides a useful disaggregation of total inflows of foreign capital into India. This shows that net of repatriation/disinvestment, FDI inflows had declined by 2.4% in 2020-21, as compared to the previous year. This was due to a

47.2% increase in repatriation/disinvestment, which had reached a record level of U.S.\$27.0 billion. The RBI reports yet another disquieting aspect of foreign capital inflow in 2020-21, a high increase in portfolio investment, fuelled entirely by a 69-fold increase in the participation by foreign institutional investors (FIIs), totalling U.S.\$38 billion. This was the second highest level of FIIs' involvement in India, after they invested U.S.\$42 billion in 2014-15. Surely, sustained sizeable repatriation of the long-term FDI, together with a large increase in speculative capital does not bode well for an economy looking to recover from an economic slump.

Who the recipients are

Analysis of FDI inflows remains largely incomplete without referring to the largest recipients of FDI, which is possible using the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade database. Currently, data for the first three quarters of 2020-21 are available, during which 86% of the equity inflows for the financial year were received. This data shows that three Reliance Group companies, namely Jio Platforms, Reliance Retail Ventures and Reliance BP Mobility, together received U.S.\$27.8 billion or, 54.1% of the total equity inflows during the three quarters. Other large recipients, though with far lower shares, were Schneider Electric India, Byju's, ArcelorMittal India, GMR Airports and Amazon Seller Services.

More than U.S.\$20 billion of promoter's shares in Jio Platforms, currently having the largest wireless subscriber base in India, were sold to 14 foreign investors, including Facebook, Google, KKR & Co., Qualcomm and a number of financial investors and sovereign wealth funds. A major part of the funds was meant to facilitate Reliance In-



dustries to withdraw its investments already made in the form of Optionally Convertible Preference Shares. This, therefore, amounted to indirect acquisition of shares held by Reliance Industries. While the entire investment in Reliance Retail was by financial investors, viewed in the context of Reliance Group's expansion through acquisitions (e.g. Future Group and Urban Platter) the end use of the inflows becomes obvious. Again, bulk of the investment into Reliance BP Mobility was through the acquisition route.

Facebook's entry in Jio Platform offered two significant benefits to the foreign partner; one, to substantially expand its social media reach by piggy-backing on Jio Platforms and, two giving Facebook a share in India's rapidly expanding e-commerce business through Jio Mart. Following the Facebook deal, Reliance announced its partnership with Google for building an Android operating system, by selling 7.7% in Jio Platforms. Facebook's shareholding was pegged at 9.9% possibly because the International Monetary Fund (and also the RBI) stipulates that if a foreign investor holds 10% or more of voting shares in a company, the investor "exercises a significant degree of influence on its management". Interestingly, Jio Platforms remains "Indian controlled", even though two major American companies now own nearly 18% of its shares.

Acquisitions lie behind other

major inflows as well: Schneider Electric's acquisition of L&T's Electrical & Automation business, ArcelorMittal's acquisition of Essar Steel, and Byju's acquiring a number of companies including Akash Educational Services. GMR's deal with Groupe ADP of France paved the way for a foreign government-controlled company to have a say in India's aviation infrastructure. It may be pointed out that the RBI's data on acquisition-related inflows grossly underestimate the extent to which foreign investors have taken over existing businesses.

Skewed distribution

Perhaps alluding to these large cases of inflows, the RBI commented in its Annual Report thus: "Even though FDI inflows were stronger in 2020-21, their distribution was highly skewed. The coefficient of variation of FDI flows (based on transaction size) was larger during the pandemic period, implying concentration in distribution. The lower incidence of transactions points to the underlying weakness in FDI inflows during the year. Without the top five FDI deals, FDI inflows during 2020-21 would have declined by about a third of their level a year ago". The RBI is entirely correct in its observation that without the large inflows mentioned above, there is a serious question mark over FDI inflows. In the absence of large inflows, FDI equity inflows suffered a precipitous fall in Q4 of 2020-21, the second lowest inflows in Q4 since 2014-15 barring 2016-17.

Although the RBI has expressed its optimism that "[G]oing forward, the pipeline of FDI for 2021-22 could be supported by the thrust given to PLI and domestic growth prospects", the nature of the bulk of the "investments" which involved a mere transfer of shares without creating productive assets in the country perhaps belies the expectation that FDI can

contribute to the revival of the economy. This view is reinforced by the fact that contrary to the Government's expectations of a larger magnitude of inflows into the manufacturing sector, this sector received just 17.4% of the total inflows during 2020-21.

To the services sector

The services sector attracted nearly 80% of the total inflows with information technology enabled services (ITES) being the largest component, accounting for over 47% of the inflows thanks to the RBI's classification of Jio Platforms as "Other information technology and computer service activities". Wholesale and retail trade were the other prominent ones. According to the RBI, non-acquisition-related inflows into the manufacturing sector were the lowest in 2020-21 even in absolute terms, over the past five years. They were U.S.\$6.7 billion in 2020-21, as compared to U.S.\$12 billion in 2016-17, and were lower than even the previous year's amount of U.S.\$8.2 billion by 1.3%. Quick calculations based on the RBI data (which are gross underestimates) show that 34.9% of the reported inflows into the manufacturing sector were acquisition-related.

Clearly, FDI inflows have not been in sync with the government's priorities for the post-COVID-19 economic recovery: the AatmaNirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan, anchored on the revival of the manufacturing sector through the Performance Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme. When this is the situation, 'record' levels of FDI inflows during 2020-21 cannot be a cause for celebration.

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Energy inefficiency can short circuit cooling India

As Indian homes will be a key site where future cooling demand will play out, awareness of energy efficiency is crucial



ANNA AGARWAL

More frequent and intense heat waves are expected with a rise in global temperatures due to climate change. In the last three decades, there have been 660 heat waves across India causing 12,273 deaths (<https://bit.ly/3pXxtNj>). India, with low penetration levels of air conditioners (ACs), will likely require substantial cooling services to keep citizens healthy and productive. The India Cooling Action Plan (<https://bit.ly/3pZNm5B>) projects the number of room air conditioners to become about four times in the next 10 years, and about 10 times in the next 20 years, making India the world's largest energy user for cooling.

Scant data

Here lies a conundrum. Cooling will likely be at the forefront of India's adaptation to climate change, but if cooling needs are met with inefficient ACs, it could be the bane of India's mitigation efforts. Indian homes will be an important

site where this conundrum between cooling needs and potential emissions will play out. Despite its clear importance, the implications of an increase in residential cooling demand have not been carefully examined. Estimates of AC ownership and usage, the two factors which will determine the extent of future cooling demand, have little empirical backing. We know little about what cooling appliances people seek, and how and why people make their purchase decisions. The pursuit of energy efficiency, too – for instance, who buys efficient technologies and why – remains underexplored.

Delhi survey results

In a recently published paper (<https://bit.ly/3vBtTu>) in the *Environmental Research Letters*, my colleagues and I look at household cooling patterns, and unpack household characteristics that are leading to increased use of air conditioners and adoption of energy efficient choices. The findings are based on a door-to-door household survey in areas of Delhi, with above average levels of AC penetration.

We find that the desired levels

of cooling vary greatly even among relatively homogenous communities. In Delhi's wealthy neighbourhoods, 43% of the households own an AC, 39% own coolers and 18%



only have a fan. Further, the way households use ACs also differs quite a bit. While most households use an AC for three to four hours a day during peak summer months, about 15% use ACs for over eight hours a day. It is interesting to note that the India Cooling Action Plan in its estimation of residential cooling demand, assumes that an average household uses an AC for eight hours a day, which as per our study seems to be an upper bound. People prefer different AC set-point temperatures, again indicative of varying perceptions of thermal comfort. Half of the households set their ACs between 24°C-26°C, and 27% prefer their AC temperature to be between 21°C-23°C. This wide range of preferred AC temperatures have important implications on energy demand requirements, as every 1°C increase in AC set-point temperature can lead to additional 6%

numbers but not academic quality. Getting very high ranks in the NAAC accreditation *per se* is not the right barometer of merit. It is an open secret that these accreditation processes are biased in many ways.

MARY OOMEN,
Kuttappuzha, Tiruvalla, Kerala

■ This is an era defined by a strong executive that does not hesitate to wield vaguely worded provisions of draconian laws to shrink spaces for dissent and criminalise the protester. The High Court has spoken directly and wisely to fundamental concerns of the times, making it a good day for democracy.

S.S. PAUL,
Chakdaha, Nadia, West Bengal

■ Waiting for justice

The Italian marines obeyed the Supreme Court of India's orders for their trial and right til the end, the integrity and dignity of the Indian judicial process have been upheld (Inside pages, "SC closes trial against Italian marines", June 16). Yet, many of us do not understand why the law that was applied to prosecute the Italian marines is silent when it comes to the FIRs raised

against Sri Lankan Navy personnel for killing Indian fishermen off the coast of Rameswaram since 1983. Trespassing the waters of Sri Lanka should not result in killings; instead, judicial custody and diplomatic steps alone should be the remedy. The fact is that since 1983, the families of victims have been waiting for justice.

EDMOND RAVEN,
Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu

Kerala and education

A letter ('Letters to the Editor', June 16) in connection with the article, "Higher education in Kerala needs a new chapter" (Editorial page, June 14) justifies the setting up of more colleges to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) of the State of Kerala. Merely increasing GER will not improve the quality of higher education. Mediocre institutions will only add

overhaul of the system is needed to make society in the State a real democratic one.

SUKUMARAN C.V.,
Palakkad, Kerala

■ The state of education in Kerala leaves much to be desired. An egalitarian social setup, where women and marginalised sections enjoy greater freedom, social mobility and economic security, has never been the aim of (higher) education in Kerala. The rampant commercialisation of education, with self-financing colleges and unaided schools mushrooming everywhere, makes it something that has nothing to do with critical thinking and social change and justice. A fundamental

CONNECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The reference in the penultimate paragraph of "The race is not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong" (Between the Wickets column, June 16, 2021, Sports page) to India's win of the 1983 World Cup (60-over) should be corrected to (60-over).

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and amateur investors. Second, to use cryptocurrencies, a digital infrastructure including computers, smartphones, Internet networks and connectivity must be in place. India has achieved a network penetration that is still low. The absence of such a robust digital background also highlights the role of the Government in regulating cryptocurrencies, let alone granting them the status of legal tender.

BOBIN SAJI GEORGE,
Thiruvananthapuram

On the fringes

Primarily, as with any investment, the value of cryptocurrencies can fluctuate. Within their nascent stage of development (OpEd page, "Embracing cryptocurrency", June 16) there have been ups and downs in value and also sensitivity to publicity due to the high number of informal

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CM YK

A ND-NDE

A seesaw of science and pseudoscience

India is drifting rapidly towards a state of ignorance even as it aims for development



G.R. GOPINATH



People in Gujarat applying cow dung on their bodies believing it will boost their immunity against COVID-19. ■ REUTERS

Prime Minister Narendra Modi seems thoroughly modern. But he also appears to be steeped hopelessly in superstition. He promotes the exploration of the moon, orders the most sophisticated fighter jets, launches the first bullet train project, boasts about India being a vaccine 'powerhouse' that supplies vaccines to the world – all products of modern science. But he also simultaneously plumps for pseudoscience. He invokes cosmic energy to drive out the SARS-CoV-2 by exhorting the public to beat gongs and blow conches at auspicious hours based on ancient numerology; he does not pull up his Cabinet colleagues when they launch a yoga guru's concocted COVID-19 medicine, drugs that have no clinical evidence of trials and have been condemned by the Indian Medical Association. Mr. Modi speaks glowingly of India's scientific accomplishments in its mythic past and cites, for example, the elephant head transposed on Lord Ganesha as great strides in plastic surgery, long before the West invented it.

Nobel-winner physicist Richard Feynman coined the term 'cargo cult' to describe all kinds of pseudoscience that passed off for science over the ages – ancient superstitions, black magic, voodoo, witch doctors, astrology, mind reading, ESP (extrasensory perception), expanded consciousness, aphrodisiacs made from rhino horns, and other debatable ideas. He spoke of a 'Cargo Cult' of people, the South Sea islanders in the Pacific, who, during the world war, had seen planes landing and delivering cargos. After the war, they wanted to receive similar gifts from the skies. So they prepared landing strips to resemble runways, set up flares on either side, made wood pieces that looked like headphones, stuck bamboo stakes to resemble antennas, and waited for planes to land to deliver the goodies, the cargo. They waited and waited and repeated their exercise by adjusting the sticks and flares but the planes did

not land. They were missing something. They did everything right. But there were no planes. They were changing the form but not the substance. "We really ought to look into theories that don't work, and science that isn't science," said Feynman. "Cargo cult science" was his phrase for research that mimicked science. Despite never seeming to yield verifiable results, it garnered public acceptance because it seemed to possess the semblance of rigorous methodology.

A slew of offerings

India has a surfeit of charlatans – godmen and 'sadhus' of various hues, diabetics of native foods who have morphed into self-anointed doctors, and quacks who have turned apothecaries and practise various alternative medicines. Traditional practitioners have set up labs on a limited scale for analysing blood sugar and cholesterol levels, and equipment like X-ray machines and ECGs on the lines of western medicine to acquire the veneer of science that gives them credibility. They peddle everything from esoteric diets to cow dung and cow urine, as 'curealls' for all ailments, including the COVID-19 infection, which has ravaged the country. They offer various things to the rising middle class, from Vedic medicines, which promise immunity and boost potency to increase libido, to 'instant nirvana'.

It can't be denied that home remedies are often beneficial. If one has a bad cold, a concoction of crushed black pepper and turmeric boiled in milk will do wonders. A terrible bloated stomach can be eased by buttermilk garnished with garlic and ginger. Corns in the feet can be man-

aged without surgery by applying fresh lime and wrapping the affected parts in a ripe banana peel.

From home remedies to Ayurveda, there are many cures that work for illnesses. Alternative medicines from other parts of the world, including treatments from medicines used by tribal communities, have been useful and passed down from generations. But their limitations have to be recognised and acknowledged. Modern medicine, an offshoot of science that questioned existing beliefs and practices, discovered the method of experimentation to find out whether medicines worked, and if they did not, it encouraged exploring new ideas. This was the beginning of the scientific age.

Scientific progress has been possible only because the great men of science acknowledged their ignorance and were not afraid to question; each generation added to the fount of knowledge because they left the door to the unknown ajar. However, pseudoscientists are a danger to society because they are cocksure of their belief systems. They are not comfortable with doubts and uncertainties. It is alright to be not sure because certainty shuts all doors to corrections and blocks progress, which can be fatal for a civilisation.

Returning to the subject, one is compelled to wonder whether Mr. Modi is a man of science or pseudoscience. Why is he pushing both at different times and on different occasions? If it is a political strategy with an eye on the electorate to appease the public, both the modern and the rational, the traditional and the superstitious, it has not, going by the recent State elections, yielded the expected results. His mixed messaging,

mystic symbolism and mythic metaphors are incongruous with the image of a leader in a hurry to propel India to a technologically advanced nation alongside the modern developed economies of the world. While Mr. Modi's loyalists – both within the saffron fold and on the fringes – are wreaking havoc and showing India in a bad light as a country of obscurantists lost in ignorance and superstition and going back to the Middle Ages, his administrators and scientists at the helm of policymaking are paralysed by the predominance of regressive orthodox forces and are unable to give impetus to scientific advancements and infrastructural progress to lead India into the comity of developed economies. India, hitherto a rising power, suddenly seems a fonder ship adrift on the seas of pseudoscience amid a huge calamity.

Core values

The Indian civilisation, from its known beginnings, has served as a quest for knowledge for people to explore the deep meaning of life and existence. It is a great adventure of ideas in the history of the human spirit stretching back three thousand years. "Nothing is more sacred to man than his own history ... For us Indians, a study of Upanishads is essential, if we are to preserve our national being and character," said Indian philosopher and former President S. Radhakrishnan. He added, "There is much in our past that is degrading and deficient but there is also much that is life-giving and elevating. If the past is to serve as an inspiration for the future, we have to study it with discrimination and sympathy ... While the fundamental motives, the governing ideas which constitute the essential spirit of our culture are a part of our very being, they should receive changing expression according to the needs and conditions of our time."

Mr. Modi must heed the above words. Modern science is not antithetical to Indian thought. The spirit of enquiry, embracing new ideas and evolution through acquiring new knowledge is at the core of our being from the Upanishadic times. Without losing time, Mr. Modi must steer the nation back on to the path of science.

Capt. Gopinath is a soldier, farmer and entrepreneur

Acquitted but not forgotten

The right to be forgotten must be studied along with the concepts of fair criticism and accountability



RAMESH KALPATHY VAIDYANATHAN & SUYASH SARVANKAR

In an important development for the 'right to be forgotten', the Delhi High Court recently ordered the removal of one of its own judgments from easy access. The petitioner was acquitted of certain crimes by the court and the judgment was freely accessible on the Internet. Unhappy with this, the petitioner sought removal of the judgment from a leading database platform and search engines. The court, as a temporary relief, asked search engines to remove this order from search results, and ordered the database platform to block the judgment from being accessed by search engines. The High Court recognised that the petitioner may have a right to be forgotten, which must be balanced with the right of the public to access courts of record.

The right to be forgotten is, generally, the right to have information about a person removed from public access. The proponents argue that individuals should be able to determine the development of their life in an autonomous way. Persons cannot be perpetually stigmatised for past conduct.

In 2017, the Supreme Court recognised the right to be forgotten as being under the ambit of the right to privacy (specifically, informational privacy) under the Constitution. It observed that if someone desired to remove personal data from the virtual space, it ought to be respected. The top court observed that a lot of personal information may serve no "legitimate interest", was "incorrect", or was not "necessary" or "relevant". However, the right to be forgotten was subject to reasonable restrictions based on countervailing rights such as free speech. But despite the Supreme Court's judgment, the right remains underdeveloped in India.

For now, individuals may request data hosts to take down some content, and it may be taken down based on the policies of the respective hosts. For example, some embarrassing selves that a person posted as a minor may violate the terms of service. These photos may be taken down if so requested because they not only violate terms of service but are also unnecessary and irrelevant. However, if these photos have since become part of, say, a scientific study on Internet usage patterns by teens, or if the person now holds a prominent government office, they

now serve a public purpose.

There is a general consensus that people should be allowed to modify or delete information uploaded by themselves. However, whether this extends to information uploaded by third parties is uncertain. Take for instance a news article reporting an accusation of sexual harassment against a public figure. If the person was never convicted, should they continue to bear the infamy? Is abhorrent conduct reportable only if there is a legal proceeding to support it?

The U.S. example

Perhaps there is a lesson in the American civil rights movement. Back then, some governments filed defamation claims against newspapers to disincentivise them from reporting violence against protesters. In one of these cases, *The New York Times* was held liable to pay \$500,000 (a king's ransom in 1962) by an Alabama court for some errors in their content. In appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court intervened in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan (1964)*, and ruled that public interest reporting may continue without fear as long as it did not intentionally or recklessly make outright false statements. Thus, the court disallowed suppression of criticism and accountability, especially against powerful figures. The case has been cited by the Supreme Court of India several times. Nonetheless, many courts in the country have ordered take-down of unflattering news articles pertaining to legal proceedings, redaction of names of litigants, and removal of references from search results. However, this is perhaps the first instance of a court ordering the removal of access to its complete final judgment from certain spaces.

While there may be significant merit to the right to be forgotten, whether it extends to the removal of judgments of courts of record is uncharted territory. Judgments are published for good reasons. Trials held under public scrutiny act as a check against judicial caprices and help in enhancing the confidence of the public in the fairness and objectivity of the administration of justice.

The wrong that the Delhi High Court sought to correct could have been achieved by narrow tailoring. The court could have ordered that the name and personal details of the petitioner be redacted while maintaining public access to the judgment itself. Aware of the Streisand effect, the court names the petitioner repeatedly in its interim order, while removing the acquitting judgment from easy access. The issue has been listed for a final hearing and the outcome is keenly awaited.

The authors are with Advaya Legal

Higher education and COVID-19

Institutes should be given financial assistance to create safe campuses for students and staff

MILIND KUMAR SHARMA

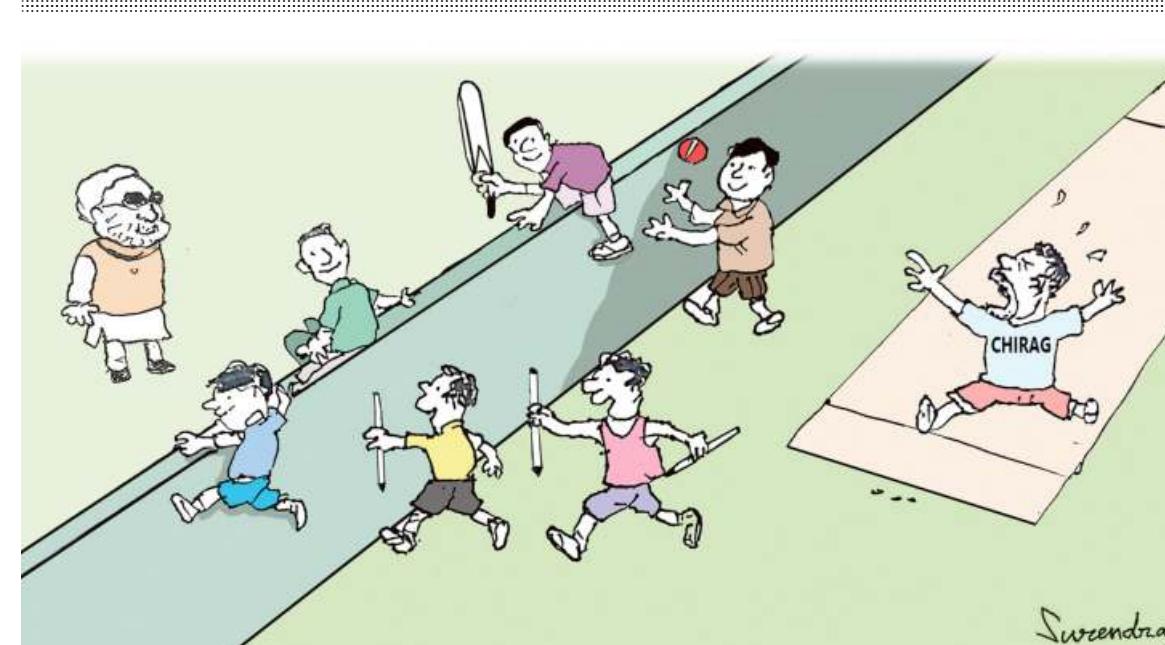
ed the situation. Reports of deaths of several teachers in prominent universities highlight the loss of the national intellectual capital and scholarship.

The UGC in its order dated November 5 last year listed guidelines for colleges to reopen post the lockdown. It recommended that State governments estimate and prepare for the required procurement of essentials, such as disinfectants and face masks, in each of their districts and zones in consultation with higher education institutes; it also asked them to draw out a plan for distribution. Universities and colleges were instructed to ensure a sufficient supply of these items to students, faculty and staff. The UGC also suggested that higher education institutes set up on-campus facilities for the isolation of symptomatic persons and for quarantining of those who were in contact with infected persons. Alternatively, they could tie up with State-run hospitals or other approved premises, as suggested by local authorities, for providing essentials to quarantined or isolated persons.

The need for quick action
But these measures are far from reality. Explicit budgetary allocations for higher education institutes for COVID-19 management were found to be missing in the States' annual budgets. This apathy on the part of institutes and policymakers (both at the Central and State levels) could endanger lives and may lead to a complete shutdown of academic activities in the time to come.

It is incumbent upon the UGC to direct State governments to generously provide financial assistance to higher education institutes for managing the COVID-19 crisis. The resources could come from the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) for the year 2021-22, which was released by the Department of Expenditure at the recommendation of the Ministry of Home Affairs much before the normal schedule, in view of the extraordinary public health crisis.

Numerous orders
The abysmal financial state of higher education institutes, especially State-run universities, combined with a lack of will on the part of State governments already overwhelmed by the vaccination drive, has exacerbated



DATA POINT

State	RURAL MALE (AGE GROUP)				NOTE: AGE 6-10 (PRIMARY SCHOOL), 11-13 (UPPER PRIMARY), 14-15 (SECONDARY), 16-17 (HIGHER SECONDARY)	RURAL FEMALE (AGE GROUP)				
	6-10	11-13	14-15	16-17		State	6-10	11-13	14-15	16-17
Kerala	99.5	99.8	98.2	90.8		Kerala	99.4	99.9	98.9	93.6
Goa	99.1	95.8	100	90.1		Sikkim	98.5	97.6	94.1	84.2
Sikkim	98.2	97.4	89.5	87.2		Goa	100	96.3	100	81.3
J&K	96.9	97.7	91.8	85.4		Himachal	99.4	98.3	94.4	81.1
Himachal	99.4	98.6	95	79.4		Manipur	97.3	95.2	91.4	81
Telangana	98.6	96.4	92	76.6		J&K	96.4	97.1	91.9	79.5
Manipur	98.2	97.9	92.3	76.4		Nagaland	94.3	93.9	89.8	77.3
Maharashtra	97.6	97.1	90.2	74.7		Meghalaya	95.2	95.9	87.8	76.1
Andhra	99.1	95.6	85.8	70.2		Telangana	98.3	96.3	89.4	70
Mizoram	96.3	96.7	89.1	69.5		Maharashtra	97.9	95.6	87.7	66.9
Bihar	90.5	89.5	80.9	69.2		West Bengal	98.5	97.2	92.3	65.2
Meghalaya	92.4	92.1	80	68.9		Mizoram	96.6	94.1	86.3	63.3
Karnataka	97.6	96.8	87.8	68.6		Karnataka	97.8	97.1	87.3	62.7
Nagaland	94.4	94.3	80.4	64.2		Assam	96.7	94.7	84.5	60.6
Tripura	97.7	97.1	83	62.2		Bihar	89.9	88.7	76.3	60.4
WB	98	93.3	79.1	58.6		Andhra	99.3	96.5	83.5	58.6
Assam	96.2	92.7	80.2	58		Tripura	97.3	95.3	90.4	57.6
Gujarat	96.4	91.4	69.7	45		Gujarat	97.3	85.9	53.7	29.2

1 In Bihar, attendance levels were relatively poor right from primary level of education. They were also poor in Meghalaya and Nagaland for the same level

2 In 10 States, less than 70% of rural girl students attended higher secondary school. Similarly, poor levels were observed among rural boys in 9 States



3 Rural Gujarat recorded the highest fall in attendance levels as students progressed from lower to higher education

4 The attendance levels did not drop much in rural Kerala with increase in education levels
Data are for 18 States/UTs for which detailed tables were released recently by the NFHS-5. All the figures pertain to 2019-20.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 17, 1971

Pakistan may seek a solution

(Washington, June 17) The United States believes that there is an "increasing awareness on the part of Pakistan" that it must seek a political settlement with representative elements in East Bengal. Though General Yahya Khan has said nothing to indicate such a change of attitude, and has insisted all along that the Awami League is dead as far as he is concerned, the United States is proceeding on the assumption that he will eventually seek a solution within the framework of proposals made by the Awami League prior to March 25.

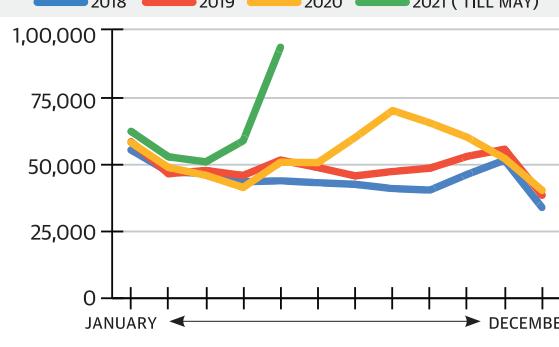
United States official sources say they have detected an inclination on General Yahya Khan's part to abandon his initial attempts to set up a "puppet Government" in East Bengal.

The United States itself is unwilling to define what it means by its calls for a "political accommodation". But it is less reluctant to concede that the Awami League's

FROM PAGE ONE

Excess deaths in T.N. over four times COVID-19 tally

Registered deaths: The graph depicts the month-wise number of deaths recorded in Tamil Nadu's civil registration system



Causes such as heart disease and heart attacks, diabetes mellitus, unclassified, liver disease, bronchitis, pneumonia, cerebro-vascular issues constituted more than 80% of all deaths registered in 2020 and 2021, increasing from 72% and 73% in 2018 and 2019, suggesting that there was a fall in other causes overall compared to COVID-related or similar causality. Deaths due to cancer for example fell from 3% in 2018 and 2019 to 2.6% and 1.9% in 2020 and 2021 so far. The inability to access standard care for chronic conditions over a period of two years, it is suspected, could have led to higher mortality over this period among patients who had comorbidities.

The proportion of men and women among the dead remained the same (60%-40%) before (2018 and 2019) and during the pandemic years (2020 and 2021).

Both the undercount figures, adjusted for unrelated causal factors and registered death count (3.7, 3) and unadjusted (6.5, 5.3) numbers, for 2021 and the second wave (April 2021-May 2021) respectively are, however, much less than the corresponding figures from CRS data estimated for Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh (42 and 43, 34 and 31.4) recently. The unadjusted figure for Tamil Nadu was also similar to that of Karnataka – an estimated five times the actual death count for 2021.

Raw data from the Greater Chennai Corporation on deaths show that the undercount factors (based on official deaths and not CRS adjusted figures) were 5.6, 4.1, 5.6 compared to 6.5, 6.2 and 5.3 for the State for the periods April 2020-May 2021, January to May 2021 and April-May 2021 respectively. This suggests that undercounting was lower in the city limits overall, but improvements in registration

in the rest of the State led to similar numbers during the second wave.

The inclusion of causal data along with the CRS registrations in Tamil Nadu helped in estimating the excess deaths in a granular manner. Releasing CRS data on death registrations along with causal factors nationwide from all States will go a long way in estimating the actual number of deaths.

Differences of opinion

"We need to understand that there are two different things at play – death certification, and medical certification of death. As far as registration of deaths, there is no major issue in the State. As far as medical certification goes, it is indeed an evolving process – driven by ICMR guidelines. But in many cases there have been differences of opinion about the underlying cause of death. For instance, doctors are conflicted whether a person had died due to complications from Parkinsonism, and has also tested positive for COVID-19. So medical certification is an evolving process, at best – guidelines are also shifting," explains Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan.

However, he adds that Tamil Nadu has an established mechanism of facilitating death audit, and a State-level reconciliation committee constituted for the express purpose of reconciling death data (COVID-related). "The government has been

clear about revealing the proper figures – whether it is related to deaths or positive cases. Reconciliation has been an important part, we even indicate such deaths in the daily bulletin we put out. In the field, health staff have also been overwhelmed, which might result in a lag in counting/certifying deaths," Dr. Radhakrishnan said.

(With inputs from Vignesh Radhakrishnan)

Nod for additional fertilizer subsidy

After a high-level meeting on May 19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the subsidy would be increased to ₹1,200 per bag, ensuring that farmers would not face any price rise. That decision was approved by the Cabinet on Wednesday, applicable for the kharif season only.

"This has been done as one-time measure as CO-
MID-19 package to reduce

the hardships of farmers. As anticipated that international prices may come down in few months, GoI may review the situation accordingly and decide regarding subsidies at that point of time," said an official statement.

The Centre has also directed all fertilizer companies to sell all their old stocks of DAP at the old prices only.

Uttar Pradesh police book Twitter, journalists

Twitter was named as accused for not taking any steps to remove the tweets in question, said the FIR.

Three persons have been arrested so far, including Parvesh Gurjar in whose house the victim was assaulted, said a senior officer. Police identified the other accused as Kallu, Poli, Adil, Aarif and Moshahid.

The FIR accused the journalists and political activists of deliberately trying to spread discord between Hindus and Muslims and disrupting public peace.

Tweeting a news link of the incident, in which it was reported that the man was beaten up allegedly for not

chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' and had his beard chopped, Mr. Gandhi said he did not believe that the true followers of Lord Ram could do such a thing. "Such cruelty is far from humanity and is shameful for both society and religion," he said on Twitter.

Mr. Adityanath responded saying that Mr. Gandhi should feel ashamed for trying to "spread poison in the society" despite the facts of the case being revealed.

Ms. Naqvi later issued a clarification and said her comment was based on a newspaper report. "I will wait for the investigation to be completed," she tweeted.

India to launch deep ocean mission

With Cabinet nod, it is poised to be among the few countries that can launch underwater missions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet has approved the long-pending deep ocean mission, which among other things involves developing a submersible vehicle that will allow a crew to plunge 6,000 metres into the ocean and hunt the floor for precious metals. If this works, India will be among a handful of countries able to launch an underwater mission at such depths.

In the works since 2018, the mission is expected to cost ₹4,077 crore over the next five years. The estimated cost for the first phase of three years (2021-24) would be ₹2,823.4 crore. The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be the nodal Ministry implementing this multi-institutional mission.

There are six components to the programme. A manned submersible will be developed to carry three people



Deep dive: One component of the mission is tapping deep-sea flora and fauna, including microbes. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

to a depth of 6,000 metres in the ocean with a suite of scientific sensors and tools. An integrated mining system will be also developed for mining polymetallic nodules at those depths in the central Indian Ocean. "The exploration studies of minerals will pave way for

Climate Change Advisory Services, which entails developing a suite of observations and models to understand and provide future projections of important climate variables on seasonal to decadal time scales.

Microbes, minerals

The next component is searching for deep sea flora and fauna, including microbes, and studying ways to sustainably utilise them. The fourth component is to explore and identify potential sources of hydrothermal minerals that are sources of precious metals formed from the earth's crust along the Indian Ocean mid-oceanic ridges. The fifth component involves studying and preparing detailed engineering design for offshore Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) powered desalination plants.

The second component involves developing Ocean

aimed at grooming experts in the field of ocean biology and engineering. This component aims to translate research into industrial applications and product development through on-site business incubator facilities.

The Deep Ocean Mission was in 2019 envisaged as a ₹8,000 crore mission, as *The Hindu* has earlier reported. India has been allotted a site of 75,000 square kilometres in the Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by the UN International Sea Bed Authority for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN). These are rocks scattered on the seabed containing iron, manganese, nickel and cobalt.

Being able to lay hands on a fraction of that reserve can meet the energy requirement of India for the next 100 years, say officials at the Earth Sciences Ministry.

Body brought up from mine in Meghalaya

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The body of one of at least five miners trapped in a rat-hole coal mine in Meghalaya since May 30 has been retrieved, officials said.

East Jaintia Hills district's Deputy Commissioner Ethelbert Karmalki said the body detected by a submersible robotic device was retrieved on June 16 afternoon and sent for an autopsy to ascertain the identity.

"The operation to detect and retrieve the other bodies will resume on Thursday," he told *The Hindu*.

District officials said the chances of survival of the other miners were very slim as the electronic devices could detect only two objects deep inside the water-filled pit, one of them turning out to be the body retrieved on Wednesday.

Class 12: SC to hold hearing on assessment

CBSE set to submit its criteria for assigning marks today, Education Ministry official says

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday is scheduled to hold a hearing in which the CBSE and the ICSE are expected to place on record the objective criteria by which they intend to assess the performance of Class 12 students whose Board exams have been cancelled due to the pandemic.

On June 3, Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal had informed a Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari that the process for fixing the criteria may take a "little time".

The hearing was based on a petition filed by advocate Mamta Sharma for cancellation of the exams.

Justice Khanwilkar had scheduled the case for June 17, for the Board to place the criteria/objective standards



Pandemic impact: Widespread protests by students led to the cancellation of the Class 12 exams. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

of assessment on record and for the petitioners to address the court on the issue.

The court had, on June 3, said it would prefer to keep the petition pending till the objective criteria were scrutinised.

The court had urged the CBSE and the ICSE authorities to interact on a day-to-day basis and come up with

Student concerns

"The students have apprehensions... Many students want to go outside for further education. This requires an urgent decision. Let the persons concerned interact on a day-to-day basis," Justice Khanwilkar addressed Mr. Das.

Ms. Sharma had, in her petition, earlier argued against the deferment of both exams to an unspecified date. She had said students cannot be made to suffer uncertainty in the

midst of an unprecedented public health crisis.

The CBSE is set to submit its criteria for assigning Class XII marks in the Supreme Court on Thursday, a senior Education Ministry official said.

A 12-member panel of stakeholder representatives was set up on June 4, soon after the decision was taken to cancel Class XII Board examinations due to the pandemic.

The panel was tasked with creating a formula to assign marks in lieu of the Board examinations.

Two members of the panel earlier told *The Hindu* that the stakeholder feedback had largely been in favour of using a combination of final examination scores from Class X and XI, and internal marks from Class XII. (With inputs from Priscilla Jebaraj)

Karnataka legislature tops with 31 sitting days

Study says it passed 61 Bills in 2020

T. RAMAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI



The Karnataka legislature met for an average number of 32 days from the years 2016 to 2019. ■ PTI

The COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown, which affected the functioning of the legislatures of several States last year, had an apparently marginal impact on the working of the Karnataka legislature, if the number of sitting days is an indication.

Compared with its average number of sitting days of 32 from 2016 to 2019, the Karnataka legislature, which is bicameral, met on 31 days last year, the highest for any State in 2020, according to a study that covered 19 States.

The southern State was followed by Rajasthan (29 days) and Himachal Pradesh (25 days). For comparison, Parliament met for 33 days last year.

In 2020, the average number of sitting days for the 19 States was 18, which was 11 less than the four-year (2016-19) average of 29.

Kerala, which had the distinction of remaining at the top in the four years with an average of 53 days, had only 20 days of sittings of the legislature last year, stated the study report, "Annual Review of State Laws 2020," which was prepared by the PRS Legislative Research ("PRIS"), a New Delhi-based think tank.

As regards other southern States, Tamil Nadu had met on 23 days against its four-year average of 35, Andhra Pradesh had met on 12 days (four-year average of 26) and Telangana had met on 17 days (four-year average of 25 days).

After the lockdown, Karnataka's figure of sitting days of the legislature was 10; Telangana 9; Andhra

In six months, trans ID portal has issued 1,500 certificates

Official says it will be available in 5 regional languages soon

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Just over six months after it was launched, the Centre's national portal for issuing certificates of identity to transgender persons has issued 1,557 certificates as of Wednesday, according to Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry data.

A total of 2,805 applications had been received since the launch of the portal on November 25 last year. Of them, 1,125 came from Andhra Pradesh, 696 from Odisha, 246 from Madhya Pradesh, 223 from Gujarat and 101 from Puducherry, data accessed by *The Hindu* showed.

Many States, however, had applications in single digit. Assam and Goa saw one application each; Rajasthan and Jammu & Kashmir had two each; and Punjab and Chhattisgarh had three applications each.

Out of the total, 2,327 ap-

lications were found to be valid, out of which 1,557 applicants had been issued certificates and 770 were pending, the data showed.

Among the issues related to the portal raised by trans activists was the language barrier.

Grace Banu, a Dalit and trans rights activist based in Tamil Nadu, said the portal was available for those who understand English or Hindi, leaving out a large part of the country.

Grace Banu, a Dalit and trans rights activist based in Tamil Nadu, said the portal was available for those who understand English or Hindi, leaving out a large part of the country.

Speaking during a webinar organised by Bahujan Economists, a platform for students and researchers in economics from marginalised communities, on Tues-

day, she said trans persons were finding it difficult to access welfare schemes for lack of IDs and the portal was not accessible to many.

More accessibility

When asked to comment, a senior official of the Ministry said the portal, which was available in English at transgender.dosje.gov.in, would be made available in five regional languages also by July to make it accessible to trans persons from across the country.

The official added that the format of the application could be translated soon.

However, integrating the information into the central database would take longer.

The official said the portal would be made available in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam, and one North Eastern language would be included by the end of June or early in July.

'Take calculated risks with professionalism'

Experts speak on digital transformation of law and how students can adapt to it

ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN
CHENNAI

As part of its Career Counselling 2021 series, held along with *The Hindu*, the Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science (HITS) hosted a webinar on "Digital transformation of law and how students can adapt to it".

'Outreach campaign on COVID-19'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Wednesday announced its plans for a nationwide outreach campaign to help those affected by COVID-19 and gather data on the infected patients and the deceased.

The outreach was announced on a day when former party chief Rahul Gandhi and Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan exchanged barbs on Twitter over vaccination.

Party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said its president Sonia Gandhi and Pradesh Congress Committee chiefs would also be writing condolence letters to the next of kin of those who passed away due to COVID-19. "This outreach programme aims to cover three crore households in 30 days," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gandhi had tweeted, "India needs quick and complete vaccination – not BJP's usual brand of lies."

In reply, Dr. Vardhan said, "Signor @RahulGandhi continues to remain lost in a mythical land furthering mythical claims without checking any facts!"

Adhir Ranjan shouted down at PAC meeting

Cong. leader attempted to criticise govt's vaccination policy

SOBHA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI



Public Accounts Committee (PAC) chairperson and senior Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was shouted down by BJP and Janata Dal(U) leaders at a meeting held on Wednesday when he attempted to make a political comment criticising the Union government's COVID-19 vaccination policy.

The meeting was called to shortlist the subjects that the committee would work on for 2021-22.

Political comment

When Mr. Chowdhury rose to make the concluding remarks, it was learnt that he read out a statement, a political comment, criticising the Union government's current vaccination policy and overall alleged mismanagement during the pandemic. He wanted the "vaccine production and distribution" to be investigated by the committee.

As per the panel's rules, no subject can be deliberated upon till there is a consensus among all members.

not the platform to make a political comment, sources said. They also reminded him that the meeting was not being telecast to an audience, so it was an useless attempt to score a political point here.

Mr. Chowdhury said he was only quoting facts that were already in the public domain.

Proceedings 'very ugly'

The shouting match went on in front of the senior officials of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG). One of the members who attended the meeting described the proceedings as "very ugly" and completely "avoidable".

Earlier, during the meeting, Mr. Baalu said since public money had been spent on pandemic management and vaccines, it needed to be investigated. There was no objection from anyone.

Because a consensus could not be built, the subject of vaccine production and distribution was not accepted as one of the agendas of the PAC for this year.

Even before he could read out the second paragraph of the statement, the BJP and the JD(U) started shouting at him.

The BJP's Bhupendra Yadav, Satyapal Singh and Rajeet Chandrasekhar; the JD(U)'s Rajiv Ranjan Singh; Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) leader T.R. Baalu; the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK)'s Thambi Durai; Rahul Shewale from the Shiv Sena; Bhartruhari Mahtab of the Biju Janata Dal (BJD); and Shakti Singh Ghohil from the Congress were the other members.

The BJP and JD(U) members criticised Mr. Chowdhury, stating that the PAC was

'HC cannot tell probe agency to arrest accused'

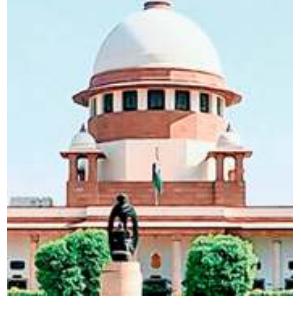
It is for the agency to take a call as to when a petitioner is to be arrested: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

High Courts cannot decide when investigative agencies should arrest an accused, the Supreme Court said in an order, adding that it is entirely the call of the probe officers.

A Bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and V. Ramasubramanian said it was beyond the jurisdiction of a High Court to direct the police to take someone into custody.

"It is for the investigative agency to whom the investi-



gation has been entrusted to take a call as to when the petitioner is to be arrested," the Supreme Court noted.

The court was hearing a

petition filed by a man accused in a rape case.

The Karnataka High Court had quashed a trial court order of May 24, granting the accused anticipatory bail in the case.

The High Court transferred the case to the Corps of Detectives and ordered the outfit to submit a final report in the case within four months.

However, the High Court also went on to direct the probe officer to take the accused into custody and produce him before the local

magistrate.

"We find that such direction to take the accused into custody is beyond the jurisdiction of the High Court. Whether an accused is liable to be arrested is based upon the decision of the investigating officer depending upon the material collected during the investigation, which may be conducted in a particular crime," the apex court said.

The Bench left it entirely to the investigator's discretion whether or not to arrest the accused.

The Bench left it entirely to the investigator's discretion whether or not to arrest the accused.

The court was hearing a

Cong. leader comes out in support of Pilot

Issue is about honouring party workers who played a key role in the 2018 poll win, says Shekhawat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid renewed factionalism in the Rajasthan Congress between Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, former Speaker of the Rajasthan Assembly, Deependra Singh Shekhawat, has openly come out in support of Mr. Pilot.

Mr. Shekhawat, who has been a five-term MLA, issued a statement saying that the issue in Rajasthan was not about the Cabinet expansion, but about honouring the Congress workers who played a key role in the 2018 Assembly election victory.

His statement comes two days after the Chief Minister's Office issued a statement that Mr. Gehlot would



Turf wars: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot with former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot last year. ■ ROHIT JAIN PARAS

not meet anyone in person for the next one or two months as a precaution in view of his condition following his recovery from COVID-19. This statement was interpreted as the Chief Minister conveying to the All India Congress Committee

(AICC) that he was in no hurry to carry out a Cabinet expansion.

Committee formation

After Mr. Pilot and his supporters rebelled against the Chief Minister last July, the AICC set up a three-member

committee to resolve the differences and accommodate Mr. Pilot's supporters in the Cabinet. It was seen as one of the steps to arrive at a compromise.

Mr. Shekhawat said, "These reports of a bargain going on for the number of positions in the Cabinet, boards and corporations are absolutely false. Mr. Pilot and all of us have been striving to seek honour and self-respect for the grassroots Congress workers".

"Those who valiantly took on the wrath of the BJP governments of Vasundhara Raja and Prime Minister Narendra Modi from 2014 onwards gave their sweat and blood to revive the Congress after it suffered its worst-ever defeat in 2013 – getting

only 21 out of the 200 seats. They need to get adequate recognition and respect now that we are the party in power," he stated.

Mr. Shekhawat said politi-

cal appointments should be given to those who have carried the burden of making the Congress win at the polling booths and not to cherry-picked retired bureaucrats and officers whose loyalties are temporary".

He added, "We have full faith in the commitment made by the high command to address all such issues that we have raised".

Mr. Shekhawat's state-

ment is seen as an assertion by the Pilot camp after reports that some of his loyalists may have joined the Gehlot camp.

JD(U) always believed in divisive politics'

Efforts were on to break the LJP even when my father was alive, says Chirag

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chirag Paswan on Wednesday accused his uncle, Pashupati Nath Paras, of betraying him, and the Janata Dal(U) of aiding the Lok Janashakti Party (LJP) rebels in crafting the split in the party.

Addressing his first press conference since the coup in the party, he sidestepped questions on the BJP's role, but did obliquely express disappointment that the party did not come to his rescue.

Mr. Paswan said efforts were on to break the LJP even when his father was alive. Asked if he blamed the JD(U), he said, "This is an internal matter of my party. How can I blame anyone if my own party members betray me? But, yes, I cannot



Chirag Paswan

deny the role JD(U) played. They have always believed in divisive politics and engineering defections."

Discontent in the party had been brewing since November 2019, when its founder and Mr. Paswan's father, Ram Vilas Paswan, decided to anoint the son to the post of national president. The internal differences peaked soon after his appointment.

Mr. Paswan replaced Mr. Paras, who, for long, held the post of the Bihar State unit chief with his younger cousin, Prince Raj.

The decision to campaign against the JD(U) and contest the polls alone while remaining in the National Democratic Alliance during the 2020 elections was the last straw.

Throughout the poll campaign, Mr. Paswan asserted that he remained in the NDA and loyal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He went on to compare his devotion to Mr. Modi as that of "Hanuman to Lord Ram".

When asked at the Wednesday press conference why he did not seek help from his "Ram" (Mr. Modi), he said, "If Hanuman has to seek help from Ram, then

what is the point of Hanuman or Ram."

"I am the son of Ram Vilas Paswan. If I was not scared to contest alone back then, then I have no reason to be afraid today, too," he added.

Mr. Paswan said he and his mother, Reena Paswan, made all efforts to keep the party and *parivaar* (family) together. "When I lost my father, at least I had my uncle. But today that he has also deserted me, I truly became an orphan."

He accused Mr. Paras of betraying him when he was suffering from a long bout of typhoid and was debilitated. "They tried to break the party when my father was in the ICU. And, finally, they decided to stab me in the back when I was bedridden," Mr. Paswan added.

They went into the LJP office amidst heavy police deployment. "Tomorrow, there is election for party president," Mr. Paswan said.

'SP spreading the illusion that MLAs are leaving BSP'

They are experts in narrow-minded politics, says Mayawati

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW



Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Wednesday accused the Samajwadi Party (SP) of spreading an "illusion" that some of her party MLAs were breaking away to join it. She noted that they had been suspended by her.

The SP was an expert in "narrow-minded politics" of casteism, manipulation and malice, she said.

MLAs meet Yadav

Ms. Mayawati's comments came a day after around half a dozen suspended BSP MLAs met SP president Akhilesh Yadav amid talks of them joining the party ahead of the 2022 Assembly

with the SP and an industrialist in order to defeat a Dalit candidate fielded by the BSP in the Rajya Sabha elections. If the SP was honest to these MLAs, it would not keep them hanging, she said. The SP knew that if it took them in, it would face a rebellion, Ms. Mayawati added. MLAs from the SP were restless to join the BSP, she said and alleged that the SP's moves, character and face had always been "anti-Dalit".

The BSP had won 19 seats in 2017. However, while on paper it has 16 MLAs, its actual strength is down to just seven due to rebellions and the recent expulsion of senior legislators Lalji Verma and Ram Achal Rajbhar.

Probe land purchase in Ayodhya'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday reiterated the demand for a Supreme Court monitored investigation into allegations of corruption in a land purchase at Ayodhya by the Ram Temple Trust.

The Congress general secretary, who is the party in-charge of Uttar Pradesh, in a Facebook post, said, "Any attempt to find an opportunity in faith is an assault on the faith of crores of Indians" and a "big sin".

Her remarks come just days after Ram Temple Trust general secretary Champat Rai denied all allegations of corruption.

"The Supreme Court should get the entire scam investigated under its supervision," Ms. Vadra said.

Govt. to frame norms for drones to carry vaccines

Focus is on air safety during BVLOS drone operations

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has invited expression of interest from drone operators to "develop a delivery model" for using drones to deliver COVID-19 vaccines in remote and hard-to-reach areas in the country.

The tender document lays down the technical specifications required, which include the ability of drones to fly "beyond visual line of sight" (BVLOS).

While government rules now permit only those drone operations that are within the visual range, the ICMR project comes at a time when the Ministry of Civil Aviation has allowed 20 entities to conduct trials for long-range or "beyond vi-

sual line of sight" drone flights.

These experimental flights start from June 18 and are likely to conclude by October. Based on learnings from these test flights, the government will frame the guidelines for BVLOS operations and they could be finalised by March 31 next year.

"Once the trials are over, different entities will submit their flight data and proof of concept, based on which the draft guidelines will be framed. Our task is to ensure air safety during BVLOS drone operations. These include ensuring that the drones stick to the assigned flight path, maintain robust communication and control link and are able to withstand the vagaries of nature," said Amber Dubey,

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, and head of the drones division.

Drone companies said the guidelines would pave the way for drone deliveries in rural, remote and peri-urban settings to begin with, and similar operations in urban areas would take much longer.

Ice boxes

"Vaccines are carried in ice boxes containing dry ice in order to maintain required temperature levels. These boxes contain data loggers, which have 4G network connectivity to relay live recording of temperature through a mobile app to an operator on the ground," said Wing Commander S. Vijay (retired), Chief Operating Officer, Skye Air Mobility.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

CONSTRUCTION ORGANIZATION E-TENDER NOTICE

No. DYCE-GC-II-TPJ-01-2021

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Deputy Chief Engineer, Gauge Conversion-II, Southern Railway, Tiruchirappalli invite E-tender for the following works as per notice inviting tender (NIT) e - Tender Portal www.irops.gov.in. The tenders intending to apply for the tender need to get enrolled in the portal www.irops.gov.in, and only online tenders will be accepted. E-tender Form shall be issued free of cost to all tenders. Both the tenders involves Bid Security Declaration in lieu of Bid Security (Earnest Money Deposit) and all the tenders are requested to submit the same as prescribed, while submitting the tender.

Name of the work:

Tender No. **DYCE-GC-II-TPJ-01-2021**

1. Gauge Conversion work between Tirurapuri and Agastiyampatti Section: Supply of welding portion for 60 Kg (90UTS) and 52 Kg(90UTS) rail joints, welding of rails by Aluminothermic welding technique with single shot crucible SKV process and supply of combination welding portion (52kg/60kg)- RDSO approved firms should only apply.

Advertised Value (in Rupees): 1,40,14,931.40

Period of Completion (in Months): SIX(6) MONTHS

Tender No. **DYCE-GC-II-TPJ-01**

IN BRIEF



Probe role of trusts that supplied Remdesivir: HC

MUMBAI The Bombay High Court on Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to examine the roles of MLA Zeehan Siddique and actor Sonu Sood in supplying Remdesivir through private trusts each had set up. "Was it possible for the public to ascertain the quality or source of these drugs?" the court asked.

No bias in Amphotericin B allocation, says Centre

MUMBAI The Central government told the Bombay High Court on Wednesday that there has been no discrimination in the distribution of Amphotericin B to treat Mucormycosis, or black fungus disease, among the States. The hearing will continue on June 18.

Use of drones mandatory for NHAI projects

NEW DELHI The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has made use of drones for video recording of the national highway projects during different stages of development, construction, operation and maintenance. These videos will be saved on NHAI's portal "Data Lake" to assess the progress made.

Cabinet approval for OFB corporatisation

'No change in staff service conditions'

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI Addressing a long pending reform, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a plan to corporatise the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), which has 41 factories, into seven fully government owned corporate entities on the lines of Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

Once implemented, the OFB, the establishment of which was accepted by the British in 1775, will cease to exist.

'Historic decision'

"This is a historic decision and there should be no concern on the part of the employees. There will be no change in service conditions of the employees which is also mentioned in the Cabinet note," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said, assuring the 70,000 employees who had expressed concern over the proposed move.

It is a major decision in terms of national security and also make the country self-sufficient in defence manufacturing as repeatedly emphasised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Mr. Singh stated.

Daily average of jabs continues to improve

22.8% of adults in the country have got at least one shot

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

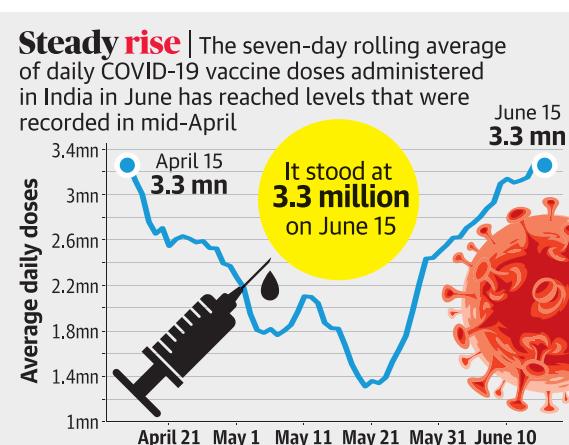
India recorded 64,964 new COVID-19 cases and 2,261 new deaths till 9.30 p.m. on Wednesday. The country has so far reported a total of 2,96,97,263 cases and 3,81,863 deaths.

Kerala reported 13,270 new infections, followed by Tamil Nadu (10,448) and Maharashtra (10,107). Maharashtra recorded 1,236 new fatalities, followed by Tamil Nadu (270) and Kerala (147). Maharashtra's fatalities include backlog deaths which were missed in the previous reports.

The figures do not include cases and deaths from Punjab, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tripura, Lakshadweep, and Ladakh. The data are sourced from the respective States' health bulletins.

Around 19.3 lakh samples were tested in the country on Tuesday (the results for which were made available on Wednesday).

About 28 lakh vaccine doses were administered in the country in the 24 hours ending 7 a.m. on Wednesday, which is 11.26 lakh doses fewer than what was recorded in the previous 24



hours. It is also 24,362 doses more than what was recorded during the corresponding period a week ago. The seven-day rolling average of daily vaccinations in the country continues to increase. It stood at 31.14 lakh on June 15, which is more than the 26.96 lakh recorded a week before (June 8).

India is also administering the highest number of average daily doses in the world, followed by the United States (1.14 million), Japan (1 million), and Brazil (0.92 million).

About 22.8% of adults in India, 43% of those aged above 45, and 46.6% of people aged above 60, have been administered at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, until 8 p.m. on Wednesday. While 15.7% of the country's population has received at least one dose, only 3.5% are fully vaccinated. The figures are based on the estimated population in 2021.

India continued to record the highest number of 7-day average daily deaths in the world with 3,721 deaths recorded on June 15. The two other countries with the highest fatality count after India were Brazil (1,986) and Colombia (577). Nearly 34% of the world's new deaths were recorded in India on June 15.

A key feature of the Bill is a unified law for the entire country, instead of separate rules framed by the States. The certificate of registration granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States.

The Bill provides for a central date base for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration, crew on an electronic portal. It requires all mechanically propelled vessels to be mandatorily registered. All non-mechanically propelled vessels will also have to be enrolled at district, taluk or panchayat or village level.

Four more persons, including two officials of the Punjab National Bank, have been arraigned by the CBI along with 18 others in a supplementary chargesheet filed recently in a case against fugitive Mehul Choksi and others for allegedly cheating the bank of ₹7,080.86 crore.

The new accused persons are an assistant general manager of the bank Sanjay Prasad and single-window operator Sagar Swant; Dhanesh Sheth, director of Gili India

'Vaccine interval based on studies'

Insights from tracking platform will be used for any new decisions: N.K. Arora

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The increase in gap between two doses of Covishield is based on scientific evidence, N.K. Arora, Chairman of the COVID-19 Working Group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI), has said.

In a release issued by the Union Health Ministry on his interview with DD News, Dr. Arora explained that the decision to increase the gap between two Covishield doses from four-six weeks to 12-16 weeks lay in the fundamental scientific reason regarding the behaviour of adenovector vaccines.

"In the last week of April 2021, data released by Public Health England, the United Kingdom's executive agency of the Department of Health, showed that vaccine efficacy varied between 65% to 88% when the interval is 12 weeks. This was the basis on which they overcame their epidemic outbreak due to the Alpha variant," he noted.

This issue was discussed and with no dissenting notes, the recommendation was that the vaccine interval had to be 12 to 16 weeks. The earlier decision of four weeks was based upon the bridging data available then.

Dr. Arora pointed to how emerging evidence and reports regarding the efficacy of partial vs full immunisation were being considered by the NTAGI.



Precious drops: At present, the mandated interval between two doses of Covishield is 12 to 16 weeks. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

of partial vs full immunisation were being considered by the NTAGI.

"Two or three days after we took the decision to increase the dosage interval, there were reports from the U.K. that a single dose of AstraZeneca vaccine gives only 33% protection and two doses give about 60% protection; discussion has been going on since mid-May whether India should revert to four or eight weeks," he observed.

"When the NTAGI took this decision, we also decided that India will establish a vaccine tracking platform – to assess not only the impact of the vaccination programme, but also the type of vaccine and interval between doses, and what happens when someone is fully / partially immunised. This is very important in India, since around 17-18 crore people have received only one dose, while around 4 crore people have received two doses," he stated.

Dr. Arora referred to a study by PGI Chandigarh that compared the effectiveness of partial vs full immunisation. "A PGI Chandigarh study very clearly shows that vaccine effectiveness was 75% for both partially immunised and fully immunised. So at least in the short run, effectiveness was similar whether you are partially or fully vaccinated. This was in relation to the Alpha variant which had swept Punjab, northern India and came to Delhi."

pens when someone is fully / partially immunised. This is very important in India, since around 17-18 crore people have received only one dose, while around 4 crore people have received two doses," he stated.

"And both these studies show that breakthrough infection with one dose is around 4%, and around 5% with two doses, basically hardly any difference. And the other study shows 1.5% - 2% breakthrough infections," he said.

When asked about any proposal to reduce the Covishield gap, he said a decision would be taken scientifically. "COVID-19 and the vaccination are very dynamic. Tomorrow, if the vaccine platform tells us that a narrower interval is better for our people, even if the benefit is 5% - 10%, the committee will take the decision on the basis of merit and its wisdom."

Inland Vessels Bill receives Cabinet nod

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave the nod to the Inland Vessels Bill, 2021, which will replace the Inland Vessels Act, 1917.

"Total 4,000 km inland waterways have been operationalised. The Bill will regulate safety, security and registration of inland vessels," tweeted Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

A key feature of the Bill is a unified law for the entire country, instead of separate rules framed by the States. The certificate of registration granted under the proposed law will be deemed to be valid in all States and Union Territories, and there will be no need to seek separate permissions from the States.

The Bill provides for a central date base for recording the details of vessel, vessel registration, crew on an electronic portal. It requires all mechanically propelled vessels to be mandatorily registered. All non-mechanically propelled vessels will also have to be enrolled at district, taluk or panchayat or village level.

Rajnath calls for open Indo-Pacific

India supports freedom of navigation in these international waterways, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India hoped that the code of conduct for South China Sea (SCS), being negotiated between the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and China, would lead to outcomes in line with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and did not prejudice the legitimate rights and interests of nations that were not party to these discussions, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday.

"Maritime security challenges are another area of concern to India. The sea lanes of communication are critical for peace, stability, prosperity and development of the Indo-Pacific region. In this regard, developments in the South China Sea have attracted attention in the region and beyond," he said at the 8th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Plus Meeting. "India supports freedom of navigation, over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways," he pointed out.

China and ASEAN have set a target of end-2021 to finalise the code of conduct but recently officials had said it



Maritime focus: Rajnath Singh addressing the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus via video conference. ■ PTI

tion, over flight, and unimpeded commerce in these international waterways," he pointed out.

China and ASEAN have set a target of end-2021 to finalise the code of conduct but recently officials had said it

may not be concluded by then. Mr. Singh reiterated India's call for a free, open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws. "Premised upon the centrality of ASEAN, India supports utilisation of ASEAN-led mechanisms as important platforms for implementation of our shared vision for the Indo-Pacific," Mr. Singh observed.

He expressed concern at cyberthreats like ransomware and cryptocurrency thefts and called for a multi-stakeholder approach, guided by democratic values.

Different kinds of bovine and other animal serum are standard enrichment ingredient used globally for vero cell growth. This technique has been used for decades in polio, rabies, and influenza vaccines," said the release.

Vero cells were washed with water and chemicals (also technically known as buffer) many times to make them free from newborn calf serum. Thereafter, they were infected with coronavirus for viral growth. Thereafter, the grown virus was then used to make the final vaccine and in the final vaccine formulation, no calf serum was used, the Ministry noted.

'No calf serum in Covaxin final product'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Wednesday refuted some social media posts on the composition of Covaxin, where it has been suggested that it contains newborn calf serum. It said that newborn calf serum was used only for the preparation/growth of vero cells. The final vaccine did not contain newborn calf serum, it asserted.

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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Four more persons, including two officials of the Punjab National Bank, have been arraigned by the CBI along with 18 others in a supplementary chargesheet filed recently in a case against fugitive Mehul Choksi and others for allegedly cheating the bank of ₹7,080.86 crore.

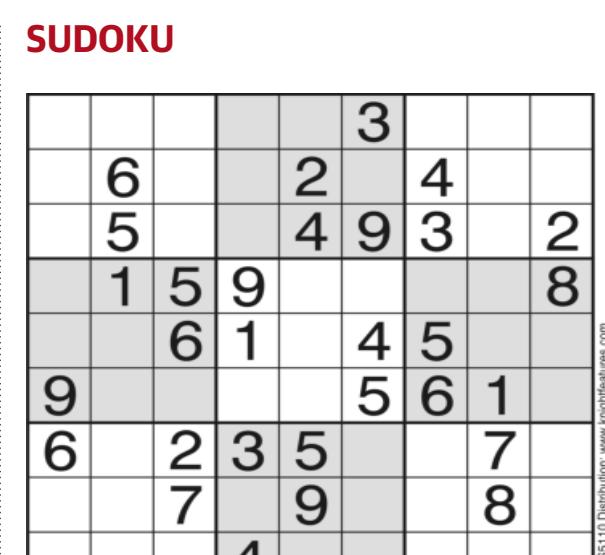
The new accused persons are an assistant general manager of the bank Sanjay Prasad and single-window operator Sagar Swant; Dhanesh Sheth, director of Gili India

Limited and Nakshatra Brand Limited, and Sunil Verma, international head of Mr. Choksi's Gitanjali Group of companies.

The other 18 individuals/entities, including Mr. Choksi, were also named as accused in the first chargesheet submitted in May 2018.

In the latest chargesheet, the CBI has invoked the IPC and the Prevention of Corruption Act provisions related to the offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating, criminal breach of trust and causing disappearance of evidence.

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13275 Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

D	E	C	L	R	A	T	H	S
N	Y	E	U	R	L	H	H	H
A	V	E	N	D	O	R	E	Y
S	B	I	E	U	I	I	B	B
S	T	R	E	S	O	S	O	O
I	W	R	A	P	E	E	E	E
A	O	L	S	A	I	I	I	I
U	N	R	A	P	D	D	D	D
T	A	O	N	N	I	I	I	I

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

FAITH

Govindaraja seen as Rama

In his Perumal Thirumozhi, Kulasekhara Azhvar praises the Govindaraja shrine in Chidambaram as Thillai Thiruchitramootam, said Akkarakkani Srinidhi in a discourse. He describes Ayodhya as a city surrounded by huge walls. Rama is born in the Surya kula, and He shines brightly in this illustrious family. He describes Rama as a great warrior – 'veeran.' Rama's valour is evident in the Ramayana, and Vedanta Desika who wrote Raghuvaneesha Gadyam, praises Rama with the words, 'Jaya, jaya Mahaveera.'

Kulasekhara Azhvar describes Rama's eyes being reddened, like lotuses. Rama looks like a dark cloud. Clouds can sometimes disappoint us, for when we expect them to give us rain, they move away. But the cloud that is Rama does not let us down. Parasara Bhatta, in his Rangaraja Stava, a work in praise of Lord Rangaraja of Srirangam, says Lord Rangaraja resembles a rain-bearing cloud. So dark in colour is He. The ornaments He is adorned with give out a variety of colours, so that it seems as if one is beholding a rainbow.

Where there are rain-giving clouds, there is lightning. What is the lightning in the case of this cloud known as Ranganaraja? It is the Goddess residing in His chest who shines like lightning. The Lord of Thillai Thiruchitramootam is described as 'Thani mudalvan' – the unparalleled, unequalled, unsurpassed One, the Supreme One, with all auspicious qualities. Kulasekhara Azhvar sings of Rama's killing of Tataka and His protection of Viswamitra's yaga. It is the same Rama who accomplished all that He resides in Thillai Thiruchitramootam. Rama who bent Siva's bow and married the large eyed Sita resides in Thillai Thiruchitramootam. The feet of those who have surrendered to Him, serve as Kulasekhara Azhvar's refuge.

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Warm hugs from miles away

Covid Art Museum, a global digital collective, has been documenting the pandemic through artworks and photographs that embody hope, fear and courage

SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

Even as COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc, artists are finding creative ways to express the myriad moods associated with the pandemic and lockdowns.

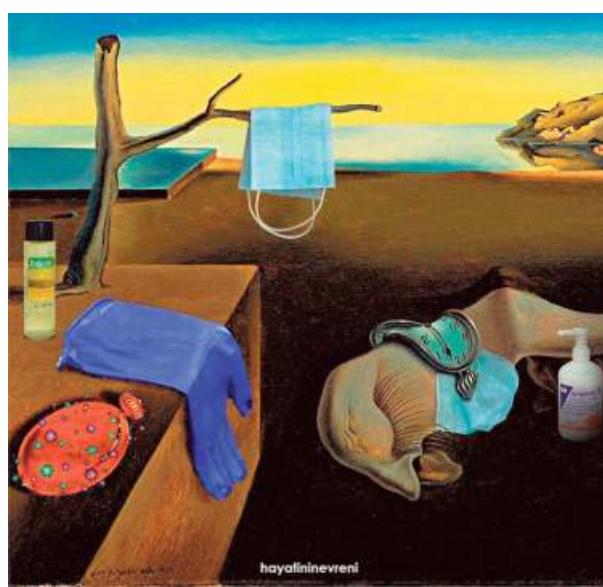
The Covid Art Museum (CAM), perhaps the first of its kind in the world, features art conveying hope, anxiety, courage, fear, boredom, struggle, solidarity, loneliness, and, even the feeling of 'languishing'.

Created by Emma Calvo, José Guerrero and Irene Llorca, three friends, advertising executives and art enthusiasts in Barcelona, Spain, the digital museum, launched on March 19, 2020 features art from all over the world. Centred on the pandemic, it includes photographs, animation, installations, illustrations, graphic art and cartoons.

Common elements such as masks, sanitisers, gloves, methods of social distancing and, of course, the Coronavirus itself, can be found in many of the pieces.

Edited excerpts from an email interview with José Guerrero:

Why did you create this



digital museum?

• We created the museum because we were locked up at home like everyone else, in Spain. It was a strange and worrying situation, but people were doing amazing things such as concerts on balconies, yoga classes on rooftops and streaming choreographies.

One of these activities was also art that talked about the pandemic. We thought it would be a good idea to bring all these works together in one museum so they

wouldn't fall into oblivion. That's how we created The CAM on Instagram from the sofa of our homes.

How many works are there now?

• There are more than 840 publications at the time of this interview. Every day we upload new works. They come from all over the world – from Brazil, USA and Spain to India, Indonesia and Russia.

How are the artworks



selected?

• The main criteria is that they should be related to the current moment: the crisis of COVID-19. That's why we don't close ourselves to any technique.

We collect all kinds of art whether they are illustrations, photographs, paintings, poems, drawings, animations, videos... From all the works received or found, a selection of those that best reflect the situation, is published.

Quality and originality are also important to us. Even if it is digital right now, we are still a museum. We want to keep the standards of a museum you would physically visit.

Has anyone from India been featured?

- There are several published works that have come from India and they are very interesting projects. They bring their particular vision of the situation, because despite the similarities, each part of the world has experienced the pandemic in a different way.

How do you think art has helped people cope with social isolation?

- The Internet connects people from all over the world regardless of distance, and that is very useful in the context of crisis, pandemic and quarantine.

Being stuck at home, under such circumstances, one can feel depressed, worried and very lonely.

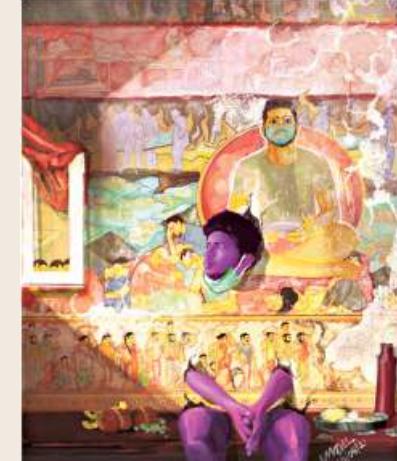
That's why we thought it was a good idea to create a museum that would show what was happening at the time.

Then, the public would see that millions of people were living and feeling the same thing. In times of crisis, it is essential to feel accompanied.

With the museum, people felt integrated into a community where they could participate and contribute their own works or simply write their thoughts in the comments section.

Portrait of an artist in quarantine

Art director Bala Govind Kumar's series, Quarantine Days, documents his days of living in isolation



ANASUYA MENON

acrylic or oil paint. But now I realise digital art gives you a lot of artistic freedom; it is easy to pursue even in extraordinary circumstances such as this."

The works are a meeting place of Bala's emotions and his physical reality. He describes each stage of the disease and his mental state – breathing difficulty, loss of taste and smell and fatigue.

"I could not work every day. On the days I felt better, I would create two works," he says.

After six days indoors, he went up to the terrace, spending time with plants which rejuvenated his mind and he captured that, in one of the works. Bala explains how art was not just restorative but also gave him a glimpse into the philosophical. "We are bound by time. Whatever we may think we are, we cannot run from this."

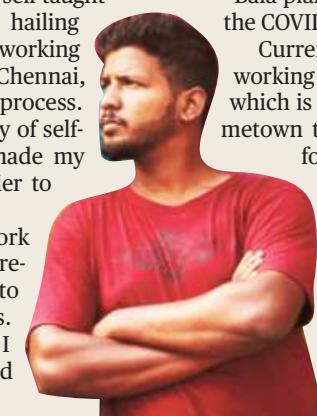
Bala plans to exhibit his works when the COVID-19 situation improves.

Currently in Tirunelveli, he is working on a series, Misplaced Goat, which is a quest to rediscover his hometown through its rich tradition of folk art.

Bala Govind's works are for sale @kalaa_shala on Instagram.

Talking to myself Bala Govind Kumar says his artworks proved restorative

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



High fives and smiles Ashok Kurmi doing his rounds in Mumbai ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ok revisits every locality after two weeks. He first sanitises the streets, the houses, doors and windows and then calls out to the kids, asking them to wear their masks before making an appearance. "Now they eagerly wait for me to visit them," says Ashok, adding that he is pleased to see them following his advice. It takes him around six hours to complete his work in a locality.

Sometimes, language can be a barrier, he says: "In some areas the kids understand Hindi or Marathi and in some places they understand Tamil. I plan ahead and make charts in those languages, with a little help from the Internet."

Ashok also takes the time to draw boxes at bus stands and taxi stands so people can maintain social distancing. He says the police are happy with his work, and even suggest which area to head to next.

Old habits
"Getting dressed up as a character is not new to me," says Ashok. "Every December, I used to distribute gifts to children in the waiting area of Sion hospital and Tata Memorial Hospital as Santa Claus," he says. This new role is an offshoot of that.

His family comprising his parents, wife and two-and-a-half-year-old daughter were reluctant to let him out initially. "But I explained to them that this needs to be done. People on the streets don't really have an idea of the risks and how to stay safe, and need help. Now, my family is supportive," he says, adding that they help him with his one-hour make-up routine, as he starts getting into the character of a clown.



The red-nosed superhero

This clown walks the streets of Mumbai, sanitising localities and spreading the word about hygiene and pandemic awareness among kids

PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Spiderman is often at Dharavi. Santa Claus, too, is a frequent visitor. Only, last Christmas he doled out masks instead of candy. All thanks to 37-year-old Ashok Kurmi, a benevolent shape shifter who changes his getup at the behest of children living in the Mumbai slums.

An employee with a pharmaceutical company, Ashok took it upon himself to spread not only joy, but also the message of hygiene, social distancing and the importance of masks, when the pandemic took the country in its grip last March.

"I was working from home. At about 11.30 am I would set out to various parts of Mumbai, sanitising localities and spreading awareness on COVID-19. I want to help people living in the slums, and the homeless who live under flyovers," he says.

Initially, Ashok wore a PPE kit but that made people, especially kids, nervous. They assumed that he was in their neighbourhood to take away a COVID patient. "I realised that if I wanted to communicate with kids, I should dress in a way that connects with them. So, I started visiting in a Mickey Mouse

costume. I got a good response and could teach them about the virus and how to stay safe," he says.

Eventually, the children started suggesting different characters for Ashok to dress up as. Doraemon, Santa and Spiderman followed in quick succession. He changes his look every 25 days.

Now, if you spot a clown armed with a sanitisation device on the streets of Mumbai, be sure to give him a pat on the back. "That is my current avatar," Ashok says over a call from Mumbai.

Being a clown does not come cheap. He bought a sanitisation machine for ₹9,000 with his own savings. "The sodium hypochlorite so-

lution that I use, costs around ₹1,300 for five litres. That quantity is easily used up in one area," he says.

So far, Ashok says he has sanitised around two lakh houses in the city. Right from conveyance and the masks he distributes to his costume and the charts he makes for the kids, all expenses are borne by him. It amounts to roughly ₹15,000 a month. Ash-



A hundred ways to say thank you

The Gratitude Project shows appreciation to frontline workers through a shared online journal

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

"It's one thing to be grateful, it's another to express it in ways that are deeper than just the words 'thank you,'" says Maya Patel, one of the founders of Mumbai-based Gratitude Project (GP) that was started in the last week of May. "We wanted the wall to be a space of that expression of how people's lives have been touched in positive ways."

Over the last year, there have been many projects offering thanks to frontline workers in healthcare, agrarian community, last mile delivery, law enforcement, sanitation, security, and media. Some of them write letters, some raise funds and others pitch in to buy them essentials.

Maya is also glad the project comes at a time when many people feel demoralised by the state of the nation while the rest of the world gets back to normal. While social media has certainly become a black hole of rants, they wanted GP to be a ray of light amid the noise.

Those working on the project are Maansi Vohra, Hriyanka Shah, Mili Sanwalka, Shivika Poonglia, Latisha Shah, Alekha Advani and Maya, all of whom worked with the YouthFeed India campaign over the pandemic. Through their work, the girls were able to see which communities were not given as much thanks as they deserved, and they conceptualised a gratitude hub.

The website, designed by SH-One with graphics by Ravina Puri, is minimalist so posts have more impact.

Maya adds that the team wanted people to be creative and explore beyond a 'normal thank you'. A skim of the website wall



Good messaging The TGP team; (below) some of the posts of gratitude on the site ▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

reveals different mediums such as photos, poetry and drawings – many in Hindi, Marathi and Punjabi.

"More than the messages we have received, it is the responses," says Maya. "As an initiative, our mission is to get as many posts up as possible, but to also get this in front of as many frontline workers as possible. We've been contacted by delivery executives and doctors who tell us, 'This made my day, I've had so many days of darkness'. That is our fuel to keep going."

Maya explains GP's core value: "If we couldn't show the frontline workers the gratitude they have received, we wouldn't have proceeded. We want people to know this whole concept is larger than it looks on screen, in terms of impact."

With the number of posts shooting past 500, including those written by Athiya Shetty and Soha Ali Khan, GP may be growing but Maya and her team want gratitude to grow more. "Our country has shown us there is humanity left and that people are happy to just help!"

The resurgence of JADDU

From dealing with criticism to battling injuries, Ravindra Jadeja talks about everything cricket and how he keeps mental health in check

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

A year-and-a-half leading up to the England tour of 2018 was hard on Ravindra Jadeja. It had been over eight years since he made his international debut. His potential as an all-rounder was still in question. He wasn't a regular in the side, especially in the limited-overs format. Between January 2017 to June 2018, Jadeja was not a part of four Tests, 25 ODIs and 22 T20s that India played.

"It was one of the hardest phases of my life, I used to be awake till early morning thinking about the game. I was constantly contemplating on how to overcome my hurdles, boost my confidence, and up my game," says Jadeja aka Jaddu from Southampton, where he is preparing for India's World Test Championship (WTC) final against the world's top-ranked side, New Zealand.

Jadeja is now an indispensable member of the team. His unbeaten 86 off 156 balls in the Oval Test of 2018 replenished his confidence.

Impressive performances followed across formats. Sample: a first Test century against the West Indies in 2018, a 59-ball 77 in the 2019 World Cup semi-final (albeit in a losing cause), and a 28-ball 62 in the Indian Premier League this year.

The Oval Test knock, according to Jadeja, was a marker of his resurgence. He ceased having sleepless nights after that. But thatinning was not a magic pill. "I worked hard on building my health and my mind," he tells us in an interview organised by ASICS, the sports brand he is associated with.

Jadeja explains how he takes care of his mental health: "I stick

to my routine that includes waking up early, following my diet, working out, spending time with my family, and most importantly

C Whenever I get some break, I visit my farmhouse and spend time with my horses as they have become an imminent part of my life.



with my daughter. She is my stress buster. Whenever I get a break, I visit my farmhouse and spend time with my horses as they have become a part of my life and have been there through all the highs and lows. My workout, especially running, is a vital part of my daily routine. I combine it with strength training and stretching to keep myself flexible."

The last couple of years has been challenging for sportspersons across the world, having to be in bio-bubbles. "You can't even meet your teammates, sometimes," he says. This is why he is grateful for having his family with him.

"It's a big advantage to have them with you on tours. You can spend time with them when you have nothing to do. When there aren't many restrictions, you can even go for a walk and explore new places with them," he adds.

With the WTC final set to begin on Friday, the focus, however, is back on cricket. Jadeja, due to an injury, missed the historic Gabba Test in Australia earlier this year and the home series against England that followed. So, he is raring to be a part of what promises to be another special match against New Zealand.

Playing it my way Ravindra Jadeja • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Conscious shoppers, designers and the creatively inclined, can source pre-used silk and cotton saris, dupattas and more from The Rewrap Company

Draped in memories Deepa and Mansi are full of ideas for how old fabrics can be reused • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fabric and maintenance," says Deepa. Mansi adds, "Some of our customers recycle saris into curtains or cushion covers. Silk is made into handbags or sari covers. People seem to have the time and are showing great interest in home decor now."

At The Rewrap Company, one can also buy yardage of upholstery fabrics, sourced from the manufacturer directly. "Apart from being useful for making table runners, shopping bags and cushion covers, we use these to make covers for the saris we sell," Mansi says.

The Rewrap Company has stocked over 150 products, and prices start from ₹150. Currently, they operate through the Instagram handle @therewrapcompany, but plan to launch a website soon.

"We want to be in the fabric space and stay away from pre-loved stitched garments. We cater to conscious buyers. Going forward we plan to offer consultancy in preserving saris that have antique or sentimental value. We can help preserve them by repurposing them in various ways. For example, a silk sari can be framed and mounted on the wall or even used as a partition. A cotton sari on the other hand, will be ideal for use as a blanket or curtain. Wedding veshtis/dhotis can be made into sari covers," says Deepa.

"The initial week was chaotic with our bedrooms filled with stuff we received from everyone. We segregated the collection based on quality, design,

THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13417



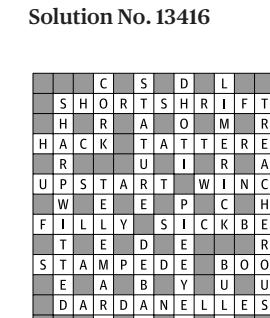
To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic Crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

Across

- 5 Deceitful – hedonists (anag) (9)
- 6 10 cents (4)
- 7 Sofa bed (3-3-2)
- 10 Bring into use (6)
- 11 Render harmless (6)
- 13 Exhausted the supply (4,2)
- 15 Vulgarised art (6)
- 16 Make sense of – trounces (anag) (8)
- 18 South African currency (4)
- 19 One aims to score between them (9)
- Down
- 1 Traduced (8)
- 2 A little rough (6)
- 3 Joined together – in duet

(anag) (6)
4 Scandinavian capital (4)
5 Amusement – temporary redirection (9)
7 Severe storm (9)
12 Soak (8)
14 Overweight (6)
15 Continue (4,2)
17 Try – ammunition (4)

*The solution will appear on June 24, 2021.
Solution No. 13416*



A Sari, reimaged

CHITRADEEPANANTHARAM

When friends and neighbours Deepa Balaji and Mansi Karra had to end their respective careers last year due to the pandemic, they decided to get together and focus on sourcing and selling pre-loved, unstitched fabric.

"My mother has been my biggest influence when it comes to the idea of sustainability. I grew up wearing my elder sister's outfits, which were later used by my cousin," says Mansi. "As an event planner, I observed that most brides use their expensive bridal wear such as sari or ghagra, just once. These special outfits could be used multiple times if shared with friends or cousins. I also realised that unstitched garments such

as sari or dupatta or stole can be recycled and repurposed imaginatively in many ways," she adds.

In April, the duo launched The Rewrap Company, an online shop to buy and sell pre-loved, gently used fabric. "We carefully choose the products we sell by assessing the garment for any stains or damage, sanitising it, and labelling it. If required we dry clean the sari. A significant number of saris in our collection are unused with the price tag intact," says Deepa, who shut her travel company which she ran for 23 years when the pandemic began.

"The initial week was chaotic with our bedrooms filled with stuff we received from everyone. We segregated the collection based on quality, design,



Draped in memories Deepa and Mansi are full of ideas for how old fabrics can be reused • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

fabric and maintenance," says Deepa. Mansi adds, "Some of our customers recycle saris into curtains or cushion covers. Silk is made into handbags or sari covers. People seem to have the time and are showing great interest in home decor now."

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"The initial week was chaotic with our bedrooms filled with stuff we received from everyone. We segregated the collection based on quality, design,

How to go green

Sustainability consultant Shriya Suriyanarayanan's podcast, Footprint, is a beginner's guide to sustainable living in India



Right on target Shriya's podcast is aimed at young, urban Indians and families • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

massive progress and innovation being led by startups, NGOs and individual contributors across India. But we still need to talk about this constantly because consumer demand will drive Government and private sector action."

Consumer behaviour is something she is optimistic about: "According to Google Trends, search interest in 'sustainable lifestyles' has increased over six times in the past year. This means there are people who want to lead a sustainable life, but are not sure how. When I was doing my research on sustainable solutions, I found a wealth of information available, but it was scattered." The extra time she had during lockdown in 2020 was when she "decided to channel that into something productive and bring all this information together as one comprehensive guide".

In the right context

Shriya adds that her focus is on the Indian consumer and Indian products. "Indians inherently lead more sustainable lives due to our cultural practices and socio-economic conditions. According to a recent report, India's per capita plastic consumption is half the global average. But we need to build on that with solutions that are viable in the Indian context. These podcasts help young, urban Indians and families take the next step towards alternative solutions," she states.

The podcast has built a listenership of over 40,000 since July 2020

While Season One is from an individual's point of view – on how to lead a sustainable life, Shriya is considering making Season Two from a business perspective. "It could cover issues such as sustainability within larger brands, how does one judge sustainability relatively, ethical and fair manufacturing, trade practices and the like," she muses.

Shriya admits that a sustainable lifestyle is not a pocket-friendly decision. She explains, however, "It is more expensive today because demand is less and the raw materials costlier. We hope to reach economies of scale soon, so it becomes affordable. But we need to remember that living more sustainably doesn't mean buying a lot of sustainable products. If you just buy less and use what you have for longer, that's a great start. Minimalism and sustainability are very closely linked."

Been there, done that



Alien invasion Chris Pratt in a scene from *The Tomorrow War* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Chris Pratt on playing a Former Delta Force Operator going to the future in 2051 in *The Tomorrow War*, to fight deadly aliens and save the planet for his daughter

MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

In *The Tomorrow War*, an upcoming military science fiction film, Chris Pratt plays Dan Forrester, a Former Delta Force Operator going to the future, 2051, to fight deadly aliens and save the planet for his daughter, Muri (Ryan Kiera Armstrong). The film directed by Chris McKay, has some hair-raising action sequences.

Talking of the biggest adrenaline rush at a virtual press conference, the *Jurassic World* actor said, "There was so much to choose from. Off the top of my head, there is a great sequence when we make the jump to 2051. There is this transition where we fall from the sky in Miami to land in a pool. There was some serious water work. We got to jump off of this high dive that we built out of a fork lift into the water. The camera followed us down and there were stunt people jumping down and landing on top of you forcing you under water. That sequence probably took two or three days.

You are trying to get smashed into the ground, come up and struggle into a close up underwater. It was a lot of fun."

Unlike the real world, in *The Tomorrow War*, it is the older people who are sent to fight the aliens. "Everyone who goes forward into the future is over the age of 30 and eve-

ryone who comes back to train us is under 30 because you can't live in both timelines at the same time. They are drafting a crop of people who are going to be dead in 2051. You are dealing with people who are making life decisions based not on the life that they could lead, but rather the world that they are leaving for their children. My character, Dan is doing this to protect his family. It is different to think about people being drafted away from their children rather than children being drafted away from their parents."

The SFX-heavy film called for a great deal of green screen work. Admitting it is liberating not having to work with a prop, Pratt says, "You basically force the animators to make your choices work. If you have a real tentacle, you are limited to how you can move it, but if you have a fake one, you can move it anyway you like. You can imagine an animator pulling their hair out saying, 'Oh, great. I have to make that work somehow!'

Drolly elaborating, Pratt says, "I have had my fair share of running from and fighting against creatures that aren't there. You could have a whole podcast episode about the way to achieve it. It is a combination of various things you are going to look at, whether it is a tennis ball or the guy named Troy who is seven feet tall and very scary. You look at Troy and think, 'That is certainly a person who could lift me up and break me in half.' He becomes significantly less scary when he is put in a giant grey leopard."

Acting opposite or fighting something that is not there is particularly embarrassing, Pratt says. "You put your trust in the director that they will not allow it to become a viral YouTube sensation."

The Tomorrow War premieres on July 2, 2021 on Amazon Prime Video.



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Biden, Putin hold 'great power' summit

The leaders agree to return their Ambassadors to their posts in an attempt to lower tensions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

GENEVA
U.S. President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded their summit meeting on Wednesday between what the American leader called "two great powers," wrapping up more quickly than expected.

The pair's second sit-down, with aides present on both sides, lasted about 65 minutes.

That session was to be divided into two parts with a break in between, but concluded without a second part.

The two sides had said they expected to meet for four to five hours but spent less than three hours together, including an opening meeting with just the two Presidents and each one's top foreign aide.

In a press conference held after the summit, Mr. Putin said they have agreed to return their Ambassadors to their posts in bid to lower tensions. Russia's Ambassador to the U.S., Anatoly Antonov, was recalled from Wash-



Face to face: U.S. President Joe Biden, left, with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, at Villa La Grange in Geneva on Wednesday. ■ AP

ington about three months ago after Biden described Mr. Putin as a killer. U.S. Ambassador to Russia John Sullivan left Moscow almost two months ago after Russia suggested he return to Washington for consultations.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin plunged into the face-to-face talks on Wednesday at a lush lakeside Swiss mansion, a

highly anticipated summit at a time when both leaders say relations between their countries are at an all-time low.

As the two leaders appeared briefly before media at the start of the meeting, Mr. Biden called it a discussion between "two great powers" and said it was "always better to meet face to

face." The meeting in a book-lined room had a somewhat awkward beginning – both men appeared to avoid looking directly at each other during a brief and chaotic photo opportunity before a scrum of jostling reporters.

Mr. Biden nodded when a reporter asked if Mr. Putin could be trusted, but the White House quickly sent

out a tweet insisting that the President was "very clearly not responding to any one question, but nodding in acknowledgement to the press generally".

Mr. Putin ignored shouted questions from reporters, including whether he feared jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Shaking hands

The two leaders did shake hands – Mr. Biden extended his hand first and smiled at the stoic Russian leader – moments earlier when they posed with Swiss President Guy Parmelin, who welcomed them to Switzerland for the summit.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Putin first held a relatively intimate meeting joined by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov.

Each side had a translator for the session, which lasted about an hour and a half. The meeting, after about a 40-minute break, then expanded to include senior aides on each side.

According to Palestinian sources, the Israeli Air Force targeted at least one site east of Khan Yunis in the south of the Gaza Strip. The military said that in response to the "arson balloons", its fighter jets struck military compounds belonging to the Hamas terror organisation".

It said "facilities and meeting sites for terror operations" in Khan Yunis were targeted. There was no indication of any casualties.

The military added that it was "prepared for any scenario, including a resumption of hostilities, in the face of continuing terror activities from the Gaza Strip". Firefighters said the balloons caused around 20 fires.

Tension spilled over to

the occupied West Bank, where a Palestinian woman was shot dead after attempting to ram Israeli soldiers with her car and attack them with a knife, the Army and the Palestinian Health Ministry said.

The Ministry said the woman later died of her wounds. The incident took place near Hizma, south of Ramallah, with official Palestinian news website Wafa identifying the woman as Mai Afana, 29, from the town of Abu Dis, near Jerusalem.

India extends \$100 mn loan to Sri Lanka

It will help in solar power coverage

MEERA SRINIVASAN

COLOMBO

India and Sri Lanka on Wednesday signed an agreement for a \$100-million loan from the Export Import Bank of India to support the island nation's efforts to expand solar power coverage.

Issuing a press statement on the bilateral initiative, the Presidential Media Division said one of the "key plans" of the government was to generate solar power, with the contribution of state-owned buildings, places of worship and houses of the low-income families. "Steps will also be taken to provide facilities to store solar energy in batteries for the low-income families that are unable to access the national power grid," the statement said.

Sri Lanka has an installed capacity of 4,213 MW of power. While 1,400 MW of that is hydropower, some 900 MW is produced from coal. Over the last five years, Sri Lanka has sought to tap more renewable sources of power, particularly solar power. The country's electricity demand is expected

China to send first crew to space station

ASSOCIATED PRESS

JIUQUAN

The three members of the first crew to be sent to China's space station say they're eager to get to work making their home for the next three months habitable, setting up testing and experiments and preparing for a series of spacewalks.

The three met reporters on Wednesday from inside a germ-free glassed-in room, hours before they were to blast off on Thursday morning. "First of all, we need to arrange our home in the core module, then get started on a whole range of diagnostic tests on crucial technology and experiments," said mission commander Nie Haisheng, 56, who is making his third trip to space.

Liu Boming, 54, whose one previous flight in 2008 included China's first spacewalk, said there would be multiple such activities during the mission as the astronauts prepare the Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, core module to receive two other modules to be sent up next year.

China offers glimpse of Tibetan life without the Dalai Lama

The Communist Party has been trying to Sinicize Tibetan life

ASSOCIATED PRESS

LHASA

A brisk wind ruffles yellow prayer flags as dozens of Tibetans, some on crutches, circle a shrine in a time-honoured Buddhist ritual. Across the street, a red banner spells out a new belief system, one being enforced with increasing fervour, of China's ruling Communist Party.

"Xi Jinping's new socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics is the guide for the whole party and all nationalities to fight for the great rejuvenation of China," the sign proclaims in Tibetan and Chinese script, referring to China's leader,

who has sought to put his imprint on virtually every aspect of life across the vast county.

Lately, that has increasingly encompassed religion, both in central China and on its fringes, such as Tibet. The party is pressing a programme to Sinicize Tibetan life to separate Tibetans from their language, culture, and especially, their devo-



The Dalai Lama

tion to the Dalai Lama, Tibet's traditional spiritual leader who has lived in exile since 1959.

In the sun-drenched courtyard of the Jokhang Temple, one of the holiest sites in Tibetan Buddhism, the head monk, Lhakpa, said the Dalai Lama is not its spiritual leader. Asked who is, he said: "Xi Jinping".

The Associated Press joined a rare and strictly controlled media tour to Tibet highlighting what the government describes as the social stability and economic development of the region after 70 years of Communist Party rule. Stops included monasteries, temples, schools, poverty alleviation projects and tourist sites.

That appears to reflect the party's confidence that it is prevailing in the global battle of public opinion over Tibet.

As a counterweight, Tibet rights groups continue to report detentions, economic marginalisation, a suffocating security presence and heavy pressure to assimilate with China's Han majority while pledging loyalty to the Communist Party.

In the model village of Baji east of Lhasa, the capital, residents dressed in traditional garments told foreign journalists how poverty alleviation campaigns had changed their lives. "Time has changed, so people's demands have changed. People need religious beliefs as their spiritual sustenance in old times, but now we don't," said Tsering Yudron, 25, an accountant.

"Tibet has eradicated extreme poverty," reads a 2019 government report on Tibet. "People now lead better lives and live in contentment. A brand new socialist Tibet has taken shape."

Field narrows as Iran poll candidates quit

Hard-liner Raisi seen as front-runner

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TEHRAN

Iran's presidential contest headed towards a showdown between the country's hard-line judiciary chief and moderate former central bank chief on Wednesday, as two candidates dropped out on the last day of campaigning to clear the path for the challengers.

Mohsen Mehrizadeh, the only reformist candidate in the vote, as well as hard-line contender Alireza Zakani withdrew from the race, state media reported, leaving just five candidates in the field ahead of Friday's vote.

Such dropouts are common in Iranian presidential elections in order to boost the chances of similar candidates.

The departure of 64-year-old Mr. Mehrizadeh, who served as Governor in two Iranian provinces, is aimed at consolidating support for top banker Abdolnasser Hemmati, who has positioned himself as a leading moderate and stand-in for President Hassan Rouhani, who is term-limited from running again.

Polling and analysts indicate that Mr. Hemmati lags behind hard-line judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi, the presumed front runner long cultivated by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Also ending his campaign, Mr. Zakani, a 55-year-old hard-line lawmaker twice rejected from running for President, threw his support behind Mr. Raisi.

"I consider him (Raisi) to be the most qualified," Mr. Zakani was quoted as saying by state TV. Other candidates were expected to follow suit later on Wednesday.

Mr. Mehrizadeh, the pro-reform candidate, had previously served as Vice-President in charge of physical education under reformist President Mohammad Khatami and as a deputy in the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, which runs the country's civilian nuclear programme.

EU nod for more Belarus sanctions

REUTERS

BRUSSELS

The European Union agreed additional sanctions on Belarus on Wednesday in response to the forced landing of a Ryanair flight in Minsk and the arrest of a dissident journalist on board in May, an EU diplomat said.

The sanctions, approved by EU Ambassadors and to be adopted by the bloc's Foreign Ministers at a meeting on Monday, target seven individuals with links to the

Belarus aviation sector, according to the diplomat.

EU Ambassadors also signed off on a fourth package of asset freezes and travel bans, to be imposed on more than 70 Belarusian individuals in response to last year's contested presidential election, the diplomat said.

This fourth package of measures was already being prepared when the Ryanair jet was forced to land in Minsk on May 23 and Opposition blogger Roman Protasevich and his girlfriend were arrested by Belarusian authorities. EU governments described the incident as air piracy and, at the start of June, banned Belarusian airlines from flying over European Union territory or having access to its airports.

The latest listing of seven individuals is meant as a stop-gap measure while economic sanctions are discussed to inflict real punishment on President Alexander Lukashenko.

Sevich and his girlfriend were arrested by Belarusian authorities. EU governments described the incident as air piracy and, at the start of June, banned Belarusian airlines from flying over European Union territory or having access to its airports.

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No radiation leak from nuclear plant: Beijing

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BEIJING

A Chinese nuclear power plant near Hong Kong had five broken fuel rods in a reactor but no radioactivity leaked, the government said on Wednesday in its first confirmation of the incident that prompted concern over the facility's safety.

Radiation rose inside the No. 1 reactor of the Taishan

Nuclear Power Plant in Guangdong province but was contained by barriers that functioned as planned, the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said.

The French co-owner on Monday reported increased "noble gases" in the reactor. Experts said that suggested fuel rods broke and leaked radioactive gas produced during nuclear fission.

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SI.No.	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No.	Total
1	CE/MM	M-03	1

For details of works/Procurement/Due date of submission/opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit website www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app, www.tangedco.gov.in, www.tenders.tn.gov.in DIPR/1767/Tender/2021

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Website: www.rwf.indiarailways.gov.in, E-mail: workstendercell@gmail.com

Tender Notice No. RWF/S/146/2021-22/04 Dated: 15.06.2021

E-TENDER: On behalf of the President of India, The Principal Chief Materials Manager / RWF invites electronic tender for the following work online through the website <http://www.reps.gov.in> from experienced / reputed contractors in the field.

Tender No.: RWF S TPT FA 0-1000 21-22

Due Date & Time: 08.07.2021-Tender closing at 14:15 Hrs.

Scope of Work: Carriage of Heavy Axles of 1100 MT from Rail Wheel Factory (RWF), Yelahanka, Bengaluru - 560 064 to various Railway consignees in India by road, under distance slab of 0-500 Kms. & 500-1000 Kms. (For detailed scope of work, please refer uploaded Tender Document).

Distance Slab: 0-500 Kms. & 500-1000 Kms. | Quantity | 1100 MT

Estt.Tender Value | Rs. 17,01,000/- | EMD Amount | Rs. 34,000/-

Contract Period | 12(Twelve) months from the date of commencement of Work

PRINCIPAL CHIEF MATERIALS MANAGER

AHMEDABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

E-SHORT TENDER NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR DRAINAGE PROJECT WORKS OF AMC UNDER GUJARAT RESILIENT CITY PROGRAMME (GRCP) UNDER WORLD BANK FUNDING PROGRAMME

Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation Re-invites Request for Proposal for following works.

(A) Request for Proposal from technically sound and experienced Consulting engineering firms for preparing Detailed Design, DPR, Tender, Estimate & Execution Drawings for Drainage Project works for Augmentation and Up gradation of Existing Sewage Treatment Plants, Construction of New Sewage Treatment Plants, Tertiary Treatment Plants, Drainage and Storm water works, works with Micro tunneling, Lake & Canal development, Conservation of Lakes, Rehabilitation of Existing Old Drainage lines for the below listed AMC area.

(1) RFP for West Zone, North West Zone, South West Zone, (Western Side)

(2) RFP for Central Zone, North Zone, South Zone, East Zone, (Eastern Side)

Online Submission up to : 23/06/2021 Up to 18:00 hours

Physical Submission : 24/06/2021 Up to 16:00 hours

Date of RFP (Technical Bid) Opening : 24/06/2021 at 17:00 hours

Detail and RFP available on : <http://www.nprocure.com>

DIAL: 155303 FOR COMPLAINTS REGARDING MUNICIPAL SERVICES*

Pakistan court adjourns Jadhav's case till Oct. 5

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MARKET WATCH

	16-06-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	52,502	-0.51
US Dollar	73.32	-0.01
Gold	47,814	-0.08
Brent oil	74.89	-0.16

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	706.70	-55.15
Asian Paints	3018.70	-23.50
Axis Bank	749.80	-1.10
Bajaj Auto	4110.45	-27.65
Bajaj Finserv	11856.15	57.45
Bajaj Finance	6081.60	-79.55
Bharti Airtel	536.75	-5.75
BPCL	481.25	-0.65
Britannia Ind	3639.45	7.60
Cipla	956.75	-12.95
Coal India	155.55	-1.60
Divis Lab	4300.70	-12.35
Dr Reddys Lab	5406.10	-4.75
Eicher Motors	2741.05	-22.45
Gasim Ind	1469.20	-26.05
HCL Tech	979.40	-6.05
HDFC	2521.45	-23.65
HDFC Bank	1484.60	-5.65
HDFC Life	692.15	-0.40
Hero MotoCorp	2795.40	-31.65
Hindalco	380.25	-10.60
Hind Unilever	2407.90	15.95
ICICI Bank	640.10	-5.20
IndusInd Bank	1013.70	-20.75
Infosys	1480.60	6.70
Indian Oil Corp	115.90	0.15
ITC	207.85	0.80
JSW Steel	705.40	-19.70
Kotak Bank	1760.60	-10.30
L&T	1490.90	-19.90
M&B	806.15	-2.45
Maruti Suzuki	7114.25	-52.00
Nestle India Ltd.	17965.20	280.40
NTPC	119.80	2.00
ONGC	126.70	1.35
PowerGrid Corp	242.15	-5.45
Reliance Ind	2211.60	-38.40
SBI Life	991.80	-4.05
State Bank	425.95	-3.55
Shree Cement	28224.75	-261.15
Sun Pharma	668.55	-4.65
Tata Consumer Products Ltd.	735.90	16.40
Tata Motors	349.55	-3.35
Tata Steel	1142.15	-32.15
TCS	3274.35	11.60
Tech Mahindra	1069.15	2.30
Titan	1714.95	-8.45
UltraTech Cement	6587.40	-80.90
UPL	838.20	-3.60
Wipro	555.25	-2.65

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on June 16		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.12	73.44
Euro	88.62	89.01
British Pound	103.21	103.66
Japanese Yen (100)	66.50	66.80
Chinese Yuan	11.43	11.48
Swiss Franc	81.32	81.68
Singapore Dollar	55.14	55.39
Canadian Dollar	60.02	60.28
Malaysian Ringgit	17.76	17.85

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



JLR starts delivery of SUV Range Rover Velar

MUMBAI

Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) India has begun deliveries of the new Range Rover Velar SUV in India starting ₹79,87 lakh, ex-showroom. The vehicle is available in the R-Dynamic S trim on Ingenium 2.0 l petrol and diesel powertrains. The petrol engine delivers a power of 184 kW and 365 Nm of torque and the diesel engine delivers 150 kW and 430 Nm of torque.

L&T Infotech to acquire Cuelogic Technologies
BENGALURU
Larsen & Toubro Infotech Ltd. (LTI) has signed a definitive agreement to acquire Cuelogic Technologies, a Pune-based digital engineering and outsourced product development firm. The value of the acquisition was not disclosed. Cuelogic's revenue for FY21 stood at \$5.50 million (unaudited). LTI said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday. Cuelogic would be integrated with the digital practice of LTI, it added.

Blue-collar jobs portal Apna raises \$70 million
BENGALURU
Apna, a jobs platform for the working class, has raised \$70 million in a Series B round led by Insight Partners and Tiger Global. Existing investors, Sequoia Capital India, Lightspeed India, Greenoaks Capital and Rocketship VC also participated. Apna had earlier raised \$20 million and is now valued at \$570 million, the company said.

Apna would use the proceeds to strengthen its presence and expand pan-India over the next six months.

Gearing up for Sputnik V commercial release: DRL
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories on Wednesday said it is gearing up for commercial release of Sputnik V vaccine. A limited pilot, rolled out last month and now in its final leg across cities, has helped test cold storage arrangements, CoWIN integration, track-and-trace and other logistical arrangements. DRL said the public could register for the vaccine on the CoWIN portal after the commercial release.

Direct tax receipts jump this FY

Surge reflects healthy exports, dispute resolution scheme's impact: economists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India's direct tax receipts in the first two-and-a-half months of 2021-22 have doubled to almost ₹1.86 lakh crore from the comparable period last year when the national lockdown hit collections, the Finance Ministry said on Wednesday.

Economists said the tax figures suggest the economy could post double-digit growth in the first quarter.

"The jump in the direct tax collections... reflects healthy exports and a continuation of various industrial and construction activities, given the lower stringency of the staggered regional lockdowns in 2021 versus the nationwide lockdown in 2020," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist at rating agency ICRA. "This supports our expectation



Returns spur hope: Tax figures indicate the GDP will grow in double-digits in Q1, says ICRA's Nayar. ■ G R N SOMASHEKAR

that GDP will record a double-digit expansion in Q1," she added.

Vivad Se Vishwas

The substantive rise in inflows could be attributed to dispute resolution scheme Vivad Se Vishwas that concluded recently, said Neeru Ahuja, partner, Deloitte In-

dia. "Taxpayers have taken advantage of the scheme and have settled their old disputes and litigation with the income tax department along with depositing their tax dues. This seems to be the main reason" for the jump in receipts, she added.

The collections from April 1 to June 15 include Corpora-

200 IBC pleas filed since Mar. 24: IBBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

About 200 applications for resolution of stressed assets have been filed under the insolvency law since the suspension of fresh proceedings ended on March 24, as per IBBI.

IBBI Chairperson M. S. Sahoo said, "Since the expiry of suspension on filing, about 200 applications have been filed."

"The higher threshold default of ₹1 crore coupled with support and forbearances limit the flow of applications," Mr. Sahoo said.

"Since the markets and the economy are not in the best of their times, the stakeholders may be waiting for the appropriate time to use the Code," he said.

Deal pricing in line with practice, law: PNB HF

'Price higher than valuers' floor price'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Amid concerns raised in certain quarters about its proposed ₹4,000 crore-deal with Carlyle group, PNB Housing Finance (PNB HF) on Wednesday said the process followed in determining the issue price for its securities was in line with the "market practice" followed by listed firms and in compliance with applicable law.

Responding to clarifications sought by the stock exchanges on Monday regarding the deal, the company – a subsidiary of Punjab National Bank – also emphasised that pricing was not required to be based on a valuation report from a registered valuer and that the

If approved, the ₹4,000-crore deal will see Carlyle group take control of PNB subsidiary

final price was higher than the floor price suggested by registered valuers.

The company also stressed that the price was arrived at after due consideration and weighing of various relevant factors, and hence the pricing for the preferential issue had been determined in compliance with the applicable law.

If it goes through, the deal – announced in May and subject to approvals – would also see Carlyle group taking controlling stake in PNB Housing Finance.

tion Tax of ₹4,356 crore and Personal Income Tax inflows, which include the Securities Transaction Tax, of ₹1.11 lakh crore. The collections in the year-earlier period totalled ₹92,762 crore.

"Despite extremely challenging initial months of the new fiscal, the Advance Tax collections for the first quarter of 2021-22 stand at ₹28,780 crore against Advance Tax collections of ₹11,714 crore for the corresponding period of the immediately preceding financial year, showing a growth of approximately 146%," the Finance Ministry said.

The advance tax kitty includes ₹1,358 crore as Corporation tax and Personal income tax of ₹10,422 crore. "This amount is expected to increase as further information is received from banks," the ministry added.

have to learn to live with the virus, complementing vaccines with ramping up investment in healthcare, logistics and research. The pandemic is a real shock with real consequences. Hence, there is a need to ensure that the recovery is built on a solid foundation of business investment and productivity growth."

The economy continued to wrestle with the second wave,

Speed, scale of vaccination to shape recovery: RBI Bulletin

Second wave has hit domestic demand, write bank officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The speed and scale of vaccination against COVID-19 will shape the path of recovery of the economy, which has the resilience and the fundamentals to bounce back from the pandemic and unshackle itself from pre-existing cyclical and structural hindrances, according to an RBI bulletin article.

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As per the current assessment, the second wave of the pandemic has mainly hit domestic demand, Reserve Bank of India Deputy Governor M.D. Patra and other central bank officials wrote in the article on 'State of the Economy'.

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Sneh and Deepti spin India back into the contest

The two off-spinners strike in the final session as England slips to 269 for six; Beaumont (66), Knight (95) lead the hosts' charge

INDIA IN ENG

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

BRISTOL

Off-spinners Deepti Sharma and Sneh Rana removed two batters each in the final session as India reduced England to 269 for six on the opening day of the one-off Test here on Wednesday.

After losing Lauren Winfield-Hill (35) in the first session, the hosts lost Tammy Beaumont (66) in the second session but stayed in control.

However, the visitors sent back Natalie Sciver (42), Amy Jones (1), England skipper Heather Knight (95) and Georgia Elwiss (5) in the post-tea session to make a strong comeback.

Debutant Sneh dismissed Beaumont and also trapped Jones in front. The off-spinner also got rid of Elwiss, who was held by Deepti.

Deepti broke the third-wicket stand of 90 between

Knight and Sciver by having the latter leg-before. She also trapped Knight in front five short of a century. Though the England captain went for a review, it proved unsuccessful. Knight's 95 came off 175 deliveries and contained nine fours.

Sophia Dunkley (12) and Katherine Brunt (7) will resume the England innings on Thursday.

Crucial wicket

In the second session, though India picked up the crucial wicket of Beaumont, England consolidated its position by reaching 162 for two at tea.

India toiled hard for most part of the post-lunch period before Sneh picked up her maiden Test wicket. She got rid of the in-form of Beaumont, who was brilliantly caught by Shafali Verma at short leg.

Beaumont faced 144 balls



Big wicket: Deepti Sharma traps England skipper Heather Knight in front. ■ REUTERS

and her second Test half-century was embellished with six fours.

Knight and Sciver then

batted cautiously as England made 76 runs off 28 overs in the second session.

In the opening period, the

hosts, after choosing to bat, reached 86 for one. The Indian pace duo of veteran Jhulan Goswami and Shikha

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings:

Lauren Winfield-Hill c Tanya b Pooja 35

(63b, 4x4, 2x6), Tammy Beaumont c Shafali b Sneh 66 (744b, 6x4), Heather Knight lbw b Sneh 95 (175b, 9x4), Natalie Sciver lbw b Deepti 42 (75b, 6x4), Amy Jones lbw b Sneh 1 (9b), Sophia Dunkley (batting) 12 (47b, 1x4), Georgia Elwiss c Deepti b Sneh 5 (1b), Katherine Brunt (batting) 7 (30b); Extras (b-2, lb-1, w-1, nb-2): 6; Total

(for six wkt. in 92 overs): 269.

Fall of wickets: 1-69 (Winfield-

Hill, 20.3 overs), 2-140 (Beaumont, 48.1), 3-230 (Sciver, 72.6), 4-236 (Jones, 75.4), 5-

244 (Knight, 78.1), 6-251 (El-

wiss, 81.2).

India bowling: Jhulan 18-2

44-0, Shikha 11-3-36-0, Pooja

12-3-43-1, Sneh 29-4-77-3,

Deepti 18-3-50-2, Harmanpreet

4-0-16-0.

Toss: England.

Pandey made a promising start, doing just enough to trouble the English batters on more than one occasion.

In the seventh over, Jhulan induced an edge from Winfield-Hill as she went for an extravagant drive but Smriti Mandhana dropped the chance in the slip cordon despite getting both hands to the ball.

In the next over, Winfield-Hill got lucky again. Debutant Pooja Vastrakar induced

a thick edge but the ball flew between second slip and gully to the boundary.

Pooja eventually had the last laugh as she had Winfield-Hill brilliantly caught by wicketkeeper Tanya Bhatia, giving India the breakthrough.

Five players made their Test debut for India: Shafali, Deepti, Pooja, Sneh and Tanya. For England, Sophia was the lone player to earn a Test cap.

IN BRIEF



Two India squads simultaneously playing may continue: Dhumal

NEW DELHI

India fielding two different squads in different locations due to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic can become a norm as it allows more bilateral cricket and some respite to all-format players from bio-bubble fatigue, said BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal on Wednesday. ■ PTI

Smith back on top of Test rankings; Kohli fourth

DUBAI

India skipper Virat Kohli (814 points) climbed to fourth while Australia's Steve Smith (891) reclaimed the top position, beating Kane Williamson (886), in the ICC Test rankings released on Wednesday. Rishabh Pant (747) and Rohit Sharma (747) kept their joint sixth spots. ■ PTI

If we can play freely, we will get the desired result: Rahane

WTC FINAL

ASHWIN ACHAL

In an Indian team filled with flamboyant batting superstars, the unassuming Ajinkya Rahane often slips under the radar. Rahane's recent numbers, however, underlines the value he brings to the table.

With 1,095 runs at an average of 43.80, the Mumbai batsman is India's leading run-scorer in this World Test Championship (WTC) cycle. His leadership qualities – which came to the fore in the memorable series win in Australia recently – is yet another asset.



Good tidings: Ajinkya Rahane has done well in the past at Rose Bowl, the venue for the WTC final. ■ FILE PHOTO

losses, Rahane did fairly well, scoring three fifties in four outings. The Indian vice-captain has also played at Southampton during his stint with Hampshire in the English county circuit.

The 33-year-old stated that spin could play a factor, even though the match could be affected by rain. "We don't want to go out there thinking about the weather forecast. In England, slow bowlers are the key. I've played many matches at Southampton – two Tests and two-three County games. It's about adapting to slow bowlers."

Too early
"It's too early to think about team composition, but we have a bowling attack which

can do well in all types of pitch and weather conditions," Rahane said.

Rahane, and indeed the Indian team, have good memories of the tour to Australia a few months ago. The Mumbai batsman had famously taken over captaincy duties from an unavailable Virat Kohli in the second Test, before leading an injury-ravaged side to a thrilling 2-1 win.

He stated that the victories in Australia helped revive interest in Test cricket, and that this trend is set to continue with the WTC final clash. "The Australia series was the biggest win for us. We did so well there. I thought people started to take interest in Test cricket once again," Rahane said.

A single bench of justice Gautam Patel set aside the award (order) passed by an

Many dangerous players in Indian batting line-up'

Southee says Kiwis need to be sharp

S. DIPAK RAGAV

New Zealand pacer Tim Southee feels that the two-Test series against England, which his team won 1-0, has provided the best preparation for the WTC final against India.

"We have had a great start to the tour. I think it's been a great preparation leading into the final. We have got a number of guys who have had good performances in the two Tests," said Southee in an online interaction on Wednesday.

On the Indian batting line-up, the 32-year-old said it has a good mix of youth and experience, and doesn't



Southee. ■ GETTY IMAGES

rely only on stars like Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma.

"There are so many dangerous players in the line-up, so we are going to have to be on top of our game as a bowling unit and we know how dangerous the Indian batting can be."

Relief for BCCI in Deccan Chargers case

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

In a relief to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), the Bombay High Court on Wednesday set aside an arbitration award

directing the Board to pay over ₹4,800 crores for the termination of Hyderabad Deccan Charges from the Indian Premier League (IPL).

A single bench of justice Gautam Patel set aside the award (order) passed by an

arbitrator who was appointed in 2012 to decide on the Board's termination notice to Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited (DCHL).

In July 2020, retired Supreme Court judge C.K. Thakkar, the sole arbitrator, had directed the BCCI to pay DCHL compensation of ₹4,814.67 crores plus 10% interest from 2012.

This was subsequently challenged before the high court.

Land's cutting edge. And the Kiwi pacemen will be backed by excellent slip catching.

The left-handed opening pair of Trent Boult and Tim Southee bowl an attacking length and swing the ball.

They are incisive with variations.

And the never-say-die Neil Wagner lends an unmistakable dash of aggression with his compelling short-pitched bowling.

Colin de Grandhomme is a natural striker of the ball and an accurate seamer. Both B.J. Watling and Tom Blundell are efficient 'keepers and competent batsmen.

The competition for spots is immense, reflecting depth.

The Kiwis have shown faith in left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel ahead of the experienced Mitchell Santner.

Pace will be New Zea-

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Pace will be New Zea-

Hummels' own goal gifts France victory

Miranchuk nets Russia's winner against Finland; Wales blanks Turkey

EURO 2020

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MUNICH

Mats Hummels' own goal was enough to hand France a 1-0 victory over Germany on Tuesday as the World Champion made a winning start to its Euro 2020 campaign by controlling the game. Hummels turned the ball into his own net in the 20th minute, which ultimately decided the contest.

France also saw Kylian Mbappe and Karim Benzema have second-half goals ruled offside, while Adrien Rabiot hit the post for *Les Bleus*.

"It was a clash that could have been a semifinal or a final, so to take three points was important," said France coach Didier Deschamps.

The result leaves France second on goal difference in the early Group F table behind Portugal, after the holder's 3-0 win over Hungary.

Pressure on Germany
The home defeat piles the pressure on Germany ahead of its next game against Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal on Saturday, also at the Allianz Arena. "It was a brutally intense game," said Germany head coach Joachim Low.

Seven years ago, it was



Heartbreak: Germany's Mats Hummels tried to make a lunging clearance but ended up putting the ball into his own net. ■ AP

Hummels' header which knocked France out of the 2014 World Cup in the quarterfinals as Germany went on to triumph.

The midfielder curled in the only goal just before the break in Saint Petersburg as Russia bounced back from losing its opening game 3-0 to Belgium.

In Group A, Wales beat Turkey 2-0 at Baku. Ramsey and Roberts were the scorers.

The results: Group A: Wales 2 (Ramsey 42, Roberts 90+5) bt Turkey 0; Group B: Finland 0 (Miranchuk 1) vs Russia 1 (Miranchuk 20-og) bt Germany 0.

their second game in Group B on Wednesday.

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Live on Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD)

Russia's Fernandes cleared of spinal injury

and rushed to the hospital for scans.

"Fernandes was suspected of having a thoracic spine injury," the Russian team said in a statement. "According to the scan results, Fernandes does not have a spinal injury. He is flying with the team to Moscow and will be under the supervision of the doctors of the Russian national team."

The full-back had a rough fall in the first half after an aerial duel which saw him land on his back and neck. The 30-year-old was taken off the pitch on a stretcher

"It's amazing, for sure I didn't expect this," said Auger-Aliassime after beating one of his heroes at the first attempt on the ATP Tour. "I thought he would be gone by the time I joined the Tour."

The 39-year-old Federer's match against 20-year-old Auger-Aliassime was the first time the Swiss was playing an opponent born in the 2000s. The 19-year age difference is biggest in any of his 1,522 career matches

Federer and Auger-Aliassime share their birthdays (August 8). When Auger-Aliassime was born in 2000, Federer had a 35-40 career record and had reached one ATP Tour Final

First time in 18 appearances at Halle that Federer hasn't made the quarterfinals. The first of these last-eight matches came eight weeks before Auger-Aliassime was born in 2000, with Federer losing to Michael Chang

TV PICKS

England Women vs India Women: Only Test, Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.**Euro 2020:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Sony Six HD (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Friday)**Copa America 2021:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 2.30 a.m. (Friday); Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 a.m. (Friday).

IN BRIEF

**Nets back into the lead against Bucks**

Kevin Durant had 49 points, 17 rebounds and 10 assists in one of the most spectacular performances in post-season history, sending the Brooklyn Nets back into the lead in the Eastern Conference semifinals with a 114-108 victory over the Milwaukee Bucks in Game 5 on Tuesday night.

With James Harden returning but delivering little offence and Kyrie Irving out, Durant played all 48 minutes and shot 16 for 23 from the field. He scored 20 points in the fourth quarter, perhaps the biggest shot a 3-pointer with 50 seconds left and the Nets protecting a one-point lead. The two-time NBA Finals MVP became the first player in NBA history to have at least 45 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists in a playoff game.

The result: Eastern Conference: Brooklyn Nets 114 bt Milwaukee Bucks 108. Brooklyn leads series 3-2.**Platini set to become FIFPRO board member**

PARIS Former UEFA head Michel Platini confirmed on Tuesday that he is set to become the French representative on the board of FIFPRO, the world players' union. "This makes me very happy," Platini said in a statement. He is due take up his post in November, a source close to the triple Ballon d'Or winner said. AFP

It's crowded at the top**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI The open section of the National under-14 online rapid chess championship on Wednesday created a record of sorts when 628 players completed three rounds.

Only four players, from the top-10 seeds, managed to be part of the 56-player leaders' group.

Ishaan Das caused the biggest upset of the day by beating fifth seed Aayush Bhattacharya in the first round. Eight more rounds remain.

Warner, Cummins and Maxwell to skip West Indies, Bangladesh tours

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MELBOURNE Seven top Australian cricketers who recently played in the IPL have pulled out of the country's white-ball tour of West Indies and Bangladesh.

The two tours are part of team's preparations for the T20 World Cup later this year. David Warner, Pat

Cummins, Glenn Maxwell, Jhye Richardson, Kane Richardson, Marcus Stoinis and Daniel Sams have requested not to be considered for the tours for various reasons while Steve Smith has been rested to fully recover from an elbow complaint which flared up during the IPL. Cricket Australia said in a statement.

Travelling reserves: Nathan Ellis and Tanveer Sangha.

The squad: Aaron Finch (Capt.), Ashton Agar, Wes Agar, Jason Behrendorff, Alex Carey, Dan Christian, Josh Hazlewood, Moises Henriques, Mitchell Marsh, Ben McDermott, Riley Meredith, Josh Philippe, Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson, Ashton Turner, Andrew Tye, Matthew Wade and Adam Zampa.

Sprinters Dutee Chand and Sprinter Dutee Chand are confident of earning a women's 100m quota place in the Tokyo Olympics through her world ranking.

Dutee, the National record holder with a timing of 11.22, said she would try to make the cut for the Olympics in Patiala.

Brand ambassador "I have been training at the National camp here for the last three months. There is no guarantee but I will try my best to touch the (Olympic) qualifying mark of 11.15 in the Indian Grand Prix IV (June 21) and National inter-state championships (June 25 to 29)," said Dutee at a virtual press conference.

Gukesh joined them by sensationally winning the Gelfand Challenge – an event on the Challengers Tour that offers the winner a wild card for Champions Tour.

P. Harikrishna could well be a fourth Indian 'wild card', should he get voted in by the premium members of official broadcaster chess24.com. The members have been asked to pick two

B. Adhiban, Arjun Erigaisi and D. Gukesh are set to make their debut in the \$1.5 million Meltwaters Champions Chess Tour when the seventh leg of the season begins on June 26.

Gukesh, the second youngest Grandmaster in history, will also become the youngest player on the Tour by replacing R. Praggnanandhaa for the honour. Praggnanandhaa was the youngest participant when he played the New in Chess Classic in April.

For the first time, three Indians will be part of the 16-player field that is likely to be headed by Tour leader and World champion Magnus Carlsen.

P. Harikrishna could well be a fourth Indian 'wild card', should he get voted in by the premium members of official broadcaster chess24.com. The members have been asked to pick two

Rahm starts favourite on a tough layout

Local star Mickelson has the chance to become only the sixth to complete the career Grand Slam

US OPEN

REUTERS
TORREY PINES (CALIFORNIA)

Jon Rahm, forced to withdraw from his last start with a sizeable lead because of a positive COVID-19 test, is a favourite at this week's U.S. Open at Torrey Pines where hometown boy Phil Mickelson seeks the one Major that has eluded him.

Cleared to play

Rahm was running away with the Memorial Tournament – leading by six shots after 54 holes – before having to withdraw and go into self-isolation but said on Saturday he was cleared to play after two negative tests in a 24-hour span.

The Spanish World No. 3, in search of his first Major, will be in comfortable surroundings on the South Course as he has four top-10 finishes in five events played there, including a win in the 2017 Farmers Insurance Open.

A number of big names

**Comfort factor:** Spain's Jon Rahm, practising ahead of the US Open, will be in familiar surroundings as he has four top-10 finishes in five events played at Torrey Pines. ■ AFP

like World No. 2 Justin Thomas and four-times Major winner Rory McIlroy are among those in the 156-player field who will try to snap out of a form slump on a notoriously difficult layout with penalising rough.

Defending champion Bryson DeChambeau, who overpowered Winged Foot last

year to win his first Major by six strokes, comes in having finished in a share of 18th place at the Memorial Tournament.

Six-times runner-up Mickelson, a three-time winner of the PGA Tour event at Torrey Pines, the course he grew up on, this week offers him an incredible chance to become

only the sixth person to complete the career Grand Slam.

Brooks Koepka, who counts two U.S. Open wins among his four Majors, may not be at 100% after surgery in March to repair a dislocated kneecap but has proven he can play through pain as he finished runner-up at the PGA Championship.

No Koepka-DeChambeau pairing

AFP
TORREY PINES

Those hoping for an early pairing of Bryson DeChambeau and Brooks Koepka were disappointed by Tuesday's pairings announcement.

Scenes of Koepka showing his unhappiness with DeChambeau's loud talking at the PGA Championship had sparked a social media spat between the two Major champions.

DeChambeau has been paired with Hideki Matsuyama and Tyler Strafaci, while Koepka will tee off alongside Justin Thomas and Collin Morikawa.

Visa, vaccination worries for shooters

KAMESH SRINIVASAN

NEW DELHI

Despite all the professional arrangements by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) and the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the two Tokyo-bound skeet shooters Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa are facing uncertainty regarding their vaccination and visa extension in Italy.

While Angad had his first shot of Covishield on April 1, Olympian Mairaj is still waiting anxiously for the first jab.

Considering the short duration before the Games, Mairaj has requested the Indian Embassy in Rome for Pfizer vaccine, so that he can have the second dose in 21 days.

Quite peeved by the consistent tame communication from the Embassy about requesting the local health authorities for the vaccine, without any positive response, the Indian camp has shot off a strong communication to the Ambassador Dr. Nina Malhotra.

**Fingers crossed:** Angad and Mairaj are hoping for a solution so that they can fly to Tokyo from Italy. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We are mentally, emotionally and physically disturbed after almost a month chasing the Indian Embassy for our vaccination and extension of our visas," wrote the Indian camp, seeking a quick resolution.

Mairaj could not be administered the vaccination earlier, as he was COVID-19 positive on April 27, and then tested negative on May 13, before flying to Europe.

With the visa ending on July 7, there is panic about extending it by a week so that the two can continue

their training peacefully and fly to Tokyo from Italy.

There is an alternate arrangement of the two shotgun marksmen going to Zagreb, Croatia, to join the rifle and pistol shooters, but that would considerably upset their training.

In fact, on the advice of the coach Ennio Falco, both the skeet shooters had opted to skip the World Cup starting in Osijek, Croatia, from June 24, so as to concentrate on the best possible preparation for the Olympics.

City opens at Spurs

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

LONDON

Champion Manchester City will start the defence of its title away to Tottenham after the fixtures for the 2021-22 season were unveiled on Wednesday.

City is among the sides heavily linked with Spurs striker Harry Kane, throwing up the tantalising possibility that the England captain could line up against his

boyhood club on the opening weekend.

Manchester United opens its campaign against Leeds at Old Trafford.

Elsewhere on the weekend of August 14, Brentford begins life back in the top flight for the first time in 75 years with a London derby at home to Arsenal, while Championship winner Norwich meets Liverpool on its return to the top flight.

Karun is Motorsport UK's youngest-ever board member

SPORTS REPORTER

CHENNAI

India's former Formula One driver Karun Chandhok was appointed to the Board of Directors of Motorsport UK, the governing body and membership organisation for four-wheeler motorsports in the

United Kingdom on Wednesday.

Karun, who has become Motorsport UK's youngest-ever board member, said,

"I moved to England from India nearly 20 years ago because the belief at the time was that if you wanted to get to Formula 1, you had to come and race in the UK as it was the capital of world motorsports.

"To have the opportunity to work with the rest of the Board and Motorsport UK in shaping the future landscape of motorsports in the UK is very exciting."

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Prequalification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites: www.osmcl.nic.in and <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason thereof.

SD/- Managing Director, OSMC Ltd., Odisha

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