

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 6 JUNE 2021



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Modi, Xi responsible leaders and can solve bilateral issues: Putin



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Barbora Krejcikova of Czech Republic enters 4th round, defeats Svitolina

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Pearl Puri, TV actor of Naagin 3 fame, arrested over rape of a minor girl



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Actress Victoria Justice (right) and her sister Madison Grace pose together at the Race to Erase MS drive-in event at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California, on Friday.

— AP

MP: Planting trees must to get nod for building plan

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh government on Saturday made plantation of trees mandatory for getting building plan clearance by the concerned official agencies. Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the new rule on the occasion of World Environment Day on Saturday. He said his government was constrained to take the initiative of increasing green cover in the state owing to massive loss of green cover over the years.

■ **More on Page 4**

100 killed in attack in Burkina Faso

Ouagadougou: Armed assailants killed around 100 civilians in an overnight attack on a village in northern Burkina Faso, the government said on Saturday, in one of the deadliest attacks in the Western African nation in years.

■ **More on Page 6**

Naxals claim to have killed abducted cop

Raipur: Naxals have claimed that they killed a police constable who went missing on April 28 in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district, a senior official said on Saturday. The police were yet to confirm the death, he added. A statement issued in the name of CPI (Maoist) said that assistant constable Manoj Netam had been killed.

■ **More on Page 6**



Do you have black money to treat black fungus? Your bank account has nil balance after Covid treatment!

WEATHER

Max: 38°C
Min: 28°C
RH: 34%
Rain: 10%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula Ekadasi till 6.19 am
Star: Ashwini till 2.27 am (Monday)
Variyam: 9.57 pm to 11.45 pm
Durmuhurtam: 5.01 pm to 5.53 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.22 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.17 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.20 PM
MOONSET TODAY 3.45 AM

Delhi, Maha set to unlock from Mon

In Delhi, malls, shopping centres to open on odd-even basis; private offices can reopen with 50% capacity

Maharashtra districts split into 5 levels based on positivity rate and oxygen bed occupancies

VINEETA PANDEY
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

With the Covid-19 situation gradually coming under control and daily positivity rate falling below five per cent, Delhi and Mumbai are all set to open gradually from Monday.

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Saturday that markets will re-open and Metro services will resume from Monday, June 7, with conditions. "Lockdown will continue with more relaxation in other activities. Shops in markets and malls to be opened on an odd-even basis from Monday. The standalone shops, however, will be allowed to open daily from 10 am to 8 pm. Home delivery through e-commerce platforms has also been okayed. Private offices will be allowed to function with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said.

"In government offices, Group A staff will be allowed to function with 100 per cent capacity while Group B with 50 per cent staff," Mr Kejriwal said. Essential items shops and chemists will remain open on all days. But restaurants, theatres, gymnasiums, swimming pools, water parks, salons, educational and coaching

institutes, cinema halls, weekly markets will remain shut.

Maharashtra too announced a five-phased unlock plan under which cities and districts having positivity rate less than 5 per cent and oxygen beds occupancy less than 25 per cent — categorised as Level 1 — will see lifting of restrictions. Here all restaurants, malls, salons, movie theatres, shops can open. Under Level 2, districts having less than 5 per cent positivity and oxygen beds occupancy of 25-40 per cent, can reopen shops but malls, restaurants, gymnasiums, salons etc will get partial relaxations. Level 3 are districts with 5-10 per cent positivity rate and 40-60 per cent oxygen bed occupancy.

In Mumbai, which falls under Level 3, film shoots have been allowed and buses can operate at full capacity but with only sitting passengers. Mumbai local trains, which remain overcrowded during peak hours, will be out of bounds for local passengers and only essential workers are permitted to use these trains.

India on Saturday recorded lowest daily cases in nearly two months with 1.21 lakh

■ **Turn to Page 4**

India opposes vaccine passport at G7 meeting

New Delhi: Speaking at the G-7 health ministers forum, Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan "expressed India's concern and strong opposition to Vaccine Passport". He said with vaccine coverage as a percentage of population in developing countries still low compared to developed countries, such an initiative could prove to be highly discriminatory. Since WHO has not listed Covaxin among the list of vaccines approved for travel, Indians who have received this vaccine remain at a disadvantage till WHO adds Covaxin to its list.

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AAP claims Centre stalled doorstep ration delivery plan

Scheme would have benefitted 72L people

New Delhi, June 5: The Delhi government on Saturday claimed the Centre has "stalled" its ambitious doorstep delivery of ration scheme that would have benefitted 72 lakh ration card holders in the national capital and termed the move "politically motivated."

Sources privy to the development, however, claimed the lieutenant governor has not rejected the proposal as was being "portrayed" by the Delhi government.

"The file related to the notification of the scheme, proposed to be implemented through private vendors, has been returned for reconsideration to the chief minister by the LG," they said.

While asserting that it was prepared to launch the scheme in the next few days, the Chief Ministers Office (CMO), in a statement, claimed the lieutenant governor returned the file on June 2 stating the scheme cannot be implemented. The Delhi government was all set to launch the doorstep delivery of ration scheme within one to two days, benefiting 72 lakh poor beneficiaries, said the CMO statement.

It said, "The LG has rejected the file for implementation of doorstep delivery of ration citing two reasons — the Centre is yet to approve the scheme and an ongoing court case."

— PTI
■ **More on Page 2**

Didi nephew new TMC gen secy; no move on turncoats

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JUNE 5

A month after coming to power for the third consecutive time in West Bengal, Trinamul Congress supremo Mamata Banerjee on Saturday promoted her nephew and MP Abhishek Banerjee in party ranks — from youth wing president to general secretary — under a major organisational revamp effected with an eye on the upcoming municipal elections and under the policy of "One Man, One Post".

To improve her party's image and prepare for the municipal elections, which were deferred over the last one year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the chief minister also cautioned the TMC rank and file not to get involved in coal and cattle smuggling scams, which the CBI has been probing, and not to use the beacon in their vehicles, according to sources.

Ms Banerjee, who took the key decisions at two party meetings with senior leaders, ministers, MLAs and MPs on Saturday, has however adopted a "wait and watch" mode to the sudden wish among her party's "betrayers" to return to the TMC for their survival from the BJP following its poll-debacle.

TMC secretary general Partha Chatterjee said, "The most important decision of our organisational meeting was Mr Banerjees nomination by



Abhishek Banerjee

the CM for his appointment to the general secretary post." Party insiders revealed that the young Diamond Harbour MP got the promotion for his combatant role in the Assembly poll campaign, braving the BJP's allegations of his links to scams.

In the evening Mr Banerjee tweeted, "Humbled at the new role that @AITCofficial has bestowed upon me. I thank every single soldier of the party who fought this battle shoulder to shoulder with me despite all odds and helped Bengal emerge victorious. I assure all that I will leave no stone unturned towards the service of the people & take @MamataOfficial's message to every nook & corner in India in the days to come. I bow to all the senior colleagues in the party who stood by the party & its values despite all odds."

Young Tollywood actor Saayoni Ghosh, who contested as a TMC candidate at Asansol South Assembly seat but lost to Agnimitra Paul of the BJP, has become the TMC

■ **Turn to Page 4**

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 5

Over seven lakh people in Odisha have lost their jobs since the lockdown was re-imposed on May 5 to cut the rapid transmission of coronavirus in the state. As per the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy's (CMIE) latest data, the unemployment rate in Odisha was around 2 per cent (1.9 per cent) in April, but by May-end it shot up to 7 per cent. Due to this, an estimate reveals that in May, over 10.09 lakh had no jobs at hand as against a mere 2.76 lakh in April.

Among the 28 states, Odisha is among the top-five where the rates of unemployment have posted a sharp rise vis-a-vis the previous month.

Significantly, this massive blow to job creation has come at a time when during the first quarter of the year that ended in April 2021 the number of unemployed in the state had increased by nearly 1.24 lakh vis-a-vis the previous quarter of September-December 2020.

Historically seen, Odisha has always recorded a double-digit unemployment rate in the age-group of 15

to 24 years. The rates in the beginning of the year 2020 stood at 12.62 per cent in the age-group of 15 to 19 years and 18.09 per cent in the age-group of 20-24 years. However, when cut to January to April 2021, the unemployment rate had shot up sharply to 35.46 per cent and 14.91 per cent respectively in these age-groups.

An analysis of the district-wise data nails the prime cause. It has been observed that the districts that had a higher share in Odisha's employment chart have been the worst hit by the second Covid-19 wave.

Farmers burn copies of farm laws in Punjab, Haryana

Chandigarh, June 5: Farmers burnt copies of the Centres three farm laws near residences of BJP leaders and at other places in Punjab and Haryana on Saturday, observing the day of the promulgulation of the farm ordinances last year as Sampoorna Kranti Diwas.

Farmers carrying black flags raised slogans against the BJP-led central government for not scrapping the legislation which, they said, will "destroy" the farming community. Security personnel were deployed and barricades put up near the protest sites to maintain law and order. The call for observing "Sampoorna Kranti Diwas" was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha.

— PTI
■ **More on Page 4**

■ **Global minimum tax rate fixed at 15%** ■ **Amazon, Google may be affected**

G-7 sign pact to tax tech giants more

KELVIN CHANAP
LONDON, JUNE 5

The world's richest countries signed a landmark agreement on Saturday committing them to confronting corporate tax avoidance and making sure that giant tech companies pay their fair share, Britains treasury chief said.

Rishi Sunak, chancellor of the exchequer, said that finance ministers from the Group of Seven leading industrialised nations signed the pact on the second and final day of meetings in London.

Im delighted to announce that G-7 finance ministers on Saturday, after years of discussions, have reached a historic agreement to



Finance ministers from across the G7 nations, officials from EU and World Bank pose before a meeting at Lancaster House in London on Saturday.

— AP

reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age and crucially to make sure that its fair, so that the right companies pay the right tax in the right places, Sunak said in a video message posted on Twitter.

The G-7 ministers agreed

in principle to a global minimum tax rate of 15 per cent for multinational companies in each country they operate in.

US treasury secretary Janet Yellen, who attended the London meetings, said the agreement provides tremendous momentum

Govt: Last notice to Twitter to comply or face the music

New Delhi, June 5: The government on Saturday issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to "unintended consequences" including the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. The notice, however, did not mention a specific date to comply with the rules.

The Ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) said that Twitters refusal to comply with rules demonstrated the microblogging sites "lack of commitment and efforts towards providing a safe experience for the people of India on its platform". "Despite being operational in India for more than a decade, it is beyond belief that Twitter Inc has doggedly refused to create mechanism that will enable the people of India to resolve their issues on the platform in a timely and transparent manner and through fair processes, by India based, clearly identified resources," the IT ministry said.

The new IT rules for social media companies that came into effect last month mandate large platforms like Facebook and Twitter to enable identification of the "first originator" of any information that undermines the sovereignty of India, the security of the state, or public order.

Under the new rules, social media companies will have to take down flagged content within 36 hours, and remove within 24 hours content that is flagged for nudity, pornography, etc.

Indias new IT rules also

Twitter removes, restores blue ticks from some accounts

New Delhi: Social media giant Twitter on Saturday removed the blue verification tick from the accounts of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and other senior functionaries only to restore it after a lot of hue and cry by Sangh sympathisers on social media. Similarly, Twitter on Saturday removed the verified blue tick from the personal account of vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu. Officials of the Vice President Secretariat said the personal Twitter handle of Naidu @MVenkaiahNaidu was inactive for a long time and the Twitter algorithm removed the blue badge.

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mandate Facebook and Twitter to appoint a grievance officer, nodal officer and a chief compliance officer. These personnel are required to be resident in India. Non-compliance with the rules would result in these platforms losing their intermediary status that provides them immunity from liabilities over any third-party data hosted by them. In other words, they could be liable for criminal action in case of complaints. Twitter has an estimated 1.75 crore users in India, as per data cited by the government recently.

■ **Turn to Page 4**



V. Naidu



M. Bhagwat

SHORT TAKES

'No Malayalam': GB Pant hospital tells its nurses

New Delhi: A Delhi government hospital Saturday issued a circular asking its nursing staff not to use Malayalam at work as "maximum patients and colleagues do not know this language" which it said causes a lot of inconvenience. The circular issued by the Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (GIPMER), one of the leading facilities here, has asked its nurses to use only Hindi and English for communication or face "strict action". G.B. Pant nurses' association president Liladhar Ramchandani claimed it was issued in pursuance of a complaint sent by a patient to a senior officer in the health department, regarding use of Malayalam language at the hospital, while adding that "the union disagrees with the wordings used in the circular". The circular says, "A complaint has been received regarding Malayalam language being used for communication in working places in GIPMER. Whereas maximum patient and colleagues do not know this language and feel helpless causing a lot of inconvenience". "So, it is directed to all nursing personnel to use only Hindi and English for communication. Otherwise serious action will be taken," it reads. Ramchandani, also the secretary general of Delhi Nurses Federation said, "As a language's name, Malayalam, has been inserted in the circular, many will take offence". He also claimed that this circular was "consequent of the complaint filed by the patient" and "internally, there is no issue among the nurses and the administration". Many nurses at various hospitals across India, hail from Kerala, with Malayalam being their native language. The circular has drawn sharp criticism from other nursing unions too. — PTI

Rush in OPDs with post-Covid complications

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Delhi is witnessing a substantial decline in daily Covid-19 cases, but still, there's no respite for hospitals as patients load in out-patient departments (OPDs) continues to surge. In the second wave, patients are experiencing post-Covid complications that are more serious than those witnessed earlier. Not just mucormycosis (black fungus infection), but patients are reporting various other symptoms even weeks after recovery. Doctors in Delhi are seeing 25-30 patients suffering from post-Covid-19 complications in OPDs daily. Complications being seen in this wave are more serious as many patients are being kept on oxygen support for weeks, while some back to ICUs even after recovery. Many are experiencing fever, extreme fatigue, body/joint pains, and brain fog post-recovery; heart attacks, strokes, pneumonia, and collapsed lungs were also reported. Many patients are complaining of persistent high-grade fever even 3-4 weeks post-recovery, says Dr. Suranjit Chatterjee, Senior Consultant-Internal Medicine, Indraprastha Apollo Hospital. "Steroids have also been used this time...we are perplexed whether this is just an inflammation secondary infection," he said, adding apart from mucormycosis, other lung fungal infections and bacterial infections are seen. He said 80 per cent of their recent admissions were for post-Covid-19 problems.



Youth Congress activists at a demonstration against petrol price hike in New Delhi on Saturday. — G.N. JHA

■ Half of Metro fleet to operate with only 50% seating capacity

Delhi malls, markets to open on odd-even basis

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday announced that markets will re-open in the national capital and Metro services will be resumed from June 7 with conditions.

"Lockdown will continue with more relaxation in other activities. Shops in markets and malls to be opened on an odd-even basis from Monday.

"The standalone shops, however, will be allowed to open daily from 10.00 am to 8.00 pm. Home delivery through e-commerce platforms has also been okayed. The private offices will be allowed to function with 50 per cent staff," CM Kejriwal said.

"In government offices, Group-A staff will be allowed to function with 100 per cent capacity while Group-B with 50 per cent staff. Delhi Metro to resume services with 50 per cent capacity," he said. Gymnasiums, swimming pools, water parks, salons, educational and coaching institutes, cinema halls, theatres, and weekly markets will remain shut.

"As and when the situation keeps improving, more relaxations will be announced. This is what

414 Covid cases, 60 deaths in city, positivity rate 0.53%

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Delhi recorded 414 Covid-19 cases, the lowest in over two-and-a-half months and 60 fatalities on Saturday, while the positivity rate dipped to 0.53 per cent, according to data shared by the health department here. According to the latest health bulletin, the new fatalities pushed the death

toll from Covid-19 here to 24,557. On Friday, the city had recorded 523 cases with a positivity rate of 0.68 per cent, and 50 deaths. On Thursday, Delhi had recorded 487 cases of COVID-19 and 45 fatalities. This was the first time the daily death count had gone below the 50-mark since April 11 when the tally was 48.

is being done currently," said Mr Kejriwal. He informed that a team of doctors and experts will be set up to examine the demand of medicines to tackle the WhatsApp forwards of medicines.

The chief minister said the government is making provisions for children and is setting up a panel, as well as a task force, to track the next wave of infections.

On preparations against the potential third wave of Covid-19, the chief minister said, "We are making arrangements considering a peak of 37,000 cases in mind. A paediatric task force has been made. A storage capacity of 420

tonnes of oxygen is being created. Indraprastha Gas Limited has been asked to set up a plant to produce 150 tonnes of oxygen. Twenty-five oxygen tankers are being brought. Sixty-four small oxygen plants are being established. Buffer stocks of potential medicines will be made."

Mr Kejriwal said two genome sequencing laboratories will be set up for the detection of new variants. With a dip seen in the number of active Covid-19 cases, Delhi had begun the unlocking process from May 31 with factories and construction sector resuming operations.

37,000 cases. Keeping this number in mind, we will ramp up our beds, oxygen capacity and medicines," he said.

The government is buying 25 oxygen tankers and putting up 64 oxygen plants in the next few weeks to ensure Delhi doesn't face another oxygen crisis as it did during the second wave, he said.

Delhi is not an industrial state and doesn't have its own tankers but we are buying 25 tankers in order to prepare for the third wave.

"We are creating an oxygen storage capacity of 420 tonnes to tackle the possibility of another oxygen crisis. We have spoken to Indraprastha Gas Limited and asked them to create a 150-tonne oxygen production plant," the chief minister added.



BJP leader Vijay Goel along with party workers at a protest against private hospitals' monopoly on price of vaccines in New Delhi on Saturday. — G.N. JHA

'Happiness therapy' at Covid facility: Jain shares video

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Through songs and spiritual prayers, patients at a Covid centre in Delhi are being administered 'happiness therapy' to help them recover and cope up with the ailment.

Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain on Saturday shared a video on Twitter about such activities being conducted at the Covid Care Centre on the premises of Rakabganj Gurudwara.

"When the mind is healthy only then the body is healthy. This is how patients are treated at (a centre) run by the Delhi government at Rakabganj Gurudwara," he tweeted in Hindi.

In the short video clip,

two men in PPE kits can be seen chanting *'Itni Shakti Hume Dena Data'* and other spiritual prayers.

Moments later, the two men, holding microphones, go around the wards singing famous Bollywood numbers and patients clapping and cheering along.

Medical experts have said that Covid takes a toll on a patient's mind and positive thoughts helps in recovery. The exercise at this centre is aimed at giving patients a sense of psychological ease while undergoing treatment.

Delhi recorded 523 Covid cases and 50 fatalities on Friday, while the positivity rate stood at 0.68 per cent.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal at a digital press conference on Saturday. — PTI

More relaxation in lockdown

● **Malls and shopping centres will open on an odd-even basis - half shops one day, the other half the next day.**

● **Essential item shops and chemists can open on all days.**

● **All private offices can open at a limit of 50% employees only.**

● **For public sector offices, Category A employees can work on all days, but all categories under them can only work to 50% capacity.**

AAP govt set to make advance payment for vaccines: Atishi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

The Delhi government is ready to make "advance payment" for Covid vaccines, AAP leader and MLA Atishi said on Saturday as she once again urged the Centre to provide doses for the 18-44 age group. It has been almost two weeks since the AAP government in Delhi stopped administering vaccines to the 18-44 age group people. The Centre has said it will provide fresh supply of vaccines for the said age group on June 10.

"Today, both Covishield and Covaxin are available in private hospitals (for age group 18-44) but not in government-run hospitals and centres. The vaccine companies tell us that it is the Central government which decides who gets how much vaccine and when," said Atishi during the vaccine bulletin.

"So, we request the central government to provide us with vaccines for the 18 plus (group) like they have been providing for the 45 plus. Delhi is even ready to make advance payment for the vaccines," she added.

According to official data released by the Delhi government, the national capital administered 40,605 vaccine doses on Friday, out of which the first and second doses were given to 35,547 and 5,058 people, respectively.

The present stock of Covid vaccines in Delhi for the 45 plus category is over 6 lakh. This is after the state government received 25,000 Covaxin doses on Friday.

Centre 'stalled' doorstep ration scheme: AAP govt

'L-G returned file stating the scheme cannot be implemented'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

5kg food grains to non-PDS beneficiaries for free: Mantri

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

The Delhi government has started free distribution of five kg food grains to non-PDS beneficiaries, food and civil supplies minister Imran Hussain said on Saturday.

"The non-PDS ration is being distributed from designated schools from 10 am to 4 pm with weekly-off on Sunday. The fair price shops are open on all seven days to provide

court case."

Delhi food minister Imran Hussain, however, claimed that according to law, no approval is required for launching such a scheme. "More than six letters were sent to the Centre by the Delhi government since 2018 informing them of the scheme. Citing of an ongoing court case, wherein no stay has been ordered, to stop the rollout of such a revolutionary scheme makes it clear that this decision is politically motivated,"



Sanyukt Kisan Morcha members block the main road in front of a BJP MLA's office during their protest in Gurgaon on Saturday. — PTI

Man saved after FB alerts cops about self-harm live video

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

A 39-year-old man, who shared a live video of harming himself on Facebook, was saved by the swift intervention of the Delhi police after it was alerted by a call from an office of the social media giant thousands of kilometres away in the US, officials said on Saturday.

On Thursday night, one Shohan Lal (name changed), a resident of Dwarka in West Delhi, inflicted multiple deep cuts on his hand following an altercation with his neighbours.

Mr Lal works in a sweet shop and has two young children. He has been emotionally vulnerable since the death of his wife in 2016.

The altercation with the neighbours triggered him to take the extreme step. While doing so, he live-streamed it on Facebook, a senior police officer said.

While all this was happening, at around 12.50 am, DCP (CyPAD) Anvesh Roy received a call alert from Facebook's US office about a suspicious self-harm live video being posted by a male Facebook

user located in Delhi.

The alert was generated as part of the coordination framework established between Cyber Prevention Awareness and Detection (CyPAD), the Nodal Cyber Unit of Delhi police, and international social media platforms, the police said.

The police checked and analysed the account details shared by Facebook. The mobile phone number linked to the account was found to be switched off. Subsequently, the police obtained the address linked to the mobile number, which belonged to Dwarka, the officer said.

A nearby emergency response vehicle (ERV) and its in-charge, probationer sub-inspector Amit Kumar, rushed to the given address to trace the man who was on the verge of killing himself, the police said. When Mr Kumar reached the location, he found the man on the stairs in a very bad condition as he had suffered heavy blood loss. The man was rushed to a nearby hospital and later shifted to AIIMS Trauma Centre, the officer said, adding that his condition is stated to be stable.

free of cost ration to National Food Security (NFS) beneficiaries from 9 am to 1 pm and from 3 pm to 7 pm without any weekly off," Hussain said.

The non-PDS beneficiaries include unorganised workers, migrant workers, building and construction workers and domestic help.

"This distribution is being carried out from one school in each of 280 wards of Delhi," the minister said.

Hussain charged. The Delhi government was all set to launch the doorstep delivery of ration scheme within one to two days, benefiting 72 lakh poor beneficiaries, said the CMO statement.

It claimed that after accepting all suggestions of the Centre, the Delhi government had sent the file for final approval and immediate rollout of the scheme to the L-G on May 24 which was returned by him "rejecting" the scheme.

Kin of cop who killed himself allege he was being harassed

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Day after a 31-year-old on-duty sub inspector allegedly shot himself dead with his service pistol at a police station here, the family demanded action against the officers who harassed him.

The deceased, Rahul Singh, belonged to Agra district in Uttar Pradesh and lived with his family here.

He was posted at Pandav Nagar police station.

Biri Singh Chaudhary, father-in-law of Singh, said that the deceased got married to his daughter on December 9, 2020 in Agra.

"Singh always used to complain about the work load and a lot of pressure from his senior. He was not even getting leave. My daughter told me that he was very upset from past two to three days," Chaudhary said.

"His family members spoke to the DCP and other senior police officers on Saturday. They have also submitted a written complaint in connection with the incident and demand enquiry," Chaudhary said.

On Friday, Singh came to the police station to perform his duties. He went to the terrace of Pandav Nagar police station and killed himself. No suicide note was recovered from the spot.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) Priyanka Kashyap said, "We have received a written complaint from the family and we will be inquiring into it thoroughly and from all angles."

■ **THE GOVERNMENT** will also celebrate 'Van Mahotsav' from 26 June to 11 July as part of a mega drive under which 33 lakh saplings will be planted across the city, the minister said.

ment is the first state government to come up with a solution to stubble burning by using bio decomposer," Rai said.

"The Delhi government has also moved the Supreme Court against around 10 thermal power plants in NCR which are the contributors to this pollution," he added.

"The Delhi government under the leadership of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has helped us to bring down the air pollution by 25 per cent," Rai said.

Plantation drive of medicinal plants launched in city

SUPRIYA SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

The Delhi government has launched a mega plantation drive of medicinal plants to mark the World Environment Day, environment minister Gopal Rai said on Saturday.

The minister said that the Delhi government has 14 nurseries across the city and from Monday any person can visit these nurseries and can get medicinal plants for free.

"The medicinal plants which are available with the Delhi government nurseries are Amla, Amrud, Arjun, Jamun, Neem, Tulsi and others. We have 14 nurseries across the national capital and for the ease of the citizens of Delhi, we have also appointed one coordinator for each of these

nurseries. We are sharing the phone numbers of these coordinators and I appeal to people to contact them before going to the nurseries. Any person can order the plants from these coordinators and



Toxic foams float in polluted Yamuna river on World Environment Day in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

collect," the minister said.

The government will also celebrate 'Van Mahotsav' from 26 June to 11 July as part of a mega drive under which 33 lakh saplings will be planted

across the city, the minister said.

According to the minister, all the cabinet ministers of Delhi, Speaker of the Delhi legislative assembly, MLAs, NGOs and RWA 's will be taking part in this drive which will be handled by different departments and agencies including the environment department, DDA, MCD, PWD, BSES etc.

On 9 June a virtual meeting with all these agencies will be held and the entire plan will be finalised," the minister further added.

"In order to combat the air pollution, the Delhi government has taken several steps such as bringing the tree transplantation policy, anti-stub pollution campaign, electric vehicle policy, 'red light on Gaadi off campaign' and many others. The Delhi govern-

SHORT TAKES

₹120cr plan to save E. Kolkata Wetlands

Kolkata: The West Bengal government has chalked out a ₹120 crore plan, to be executed over five years, to protect and nurture East Kolkata Wetlands (EKW), a 12,500 hectare zone, a top official of the environment department said Saturday. A wetland is a land area that has water, either permanently or seasonally, and it takes on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem. The government has also set a programme to protect the coastline of the state which was damaged during cyclones Amphan and Yaas in 2020 and last month respectively. Additional Chief Secretary (Environment) Vivek Kumar said at a function held on the occasion of the World Environment Day. The plan to protect EKW has components like ways to stop encroachment, prevent contamination of water by pesticides used in farming and effluents from tanneries, besides creating awareness about the wasteland, a designated Ramsar site, Mr Kumar said. A Ramsar site is a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention of 1971. The EKW is a vital organ of the city helping to treat solid waste and averting its inundation in natural calamities, the official said. — PTI

HP govt cancels Class 12 exams

Shimla: The Himachal Pradesh government cancelled the Class 12 board examinations for 2020-21 and also extended the 'Corona curfew' till June 14, education minister Govind Singh Thakur said. He said that the ongoing coronavirus curfew, which was to end on June 7, has now been extended till 6 am on June 14 with all the existing restrictions. The decisions were taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Jai Ram Thakur here. The Cabinet decided to cancel 10+2 examinations for the year 2020-21 in line with the decision of Central government in this regard, he said. He said that for calculating the awards for Class 12 students, the HP Board of School Education would devise a formula taking a cue from the one being prepared by the CBSE. — PTI

Himachal BJP MLA Bragta dies of Covid

Shimla: Chief whip in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly and BJP MLA Narinder Bragta died due to Covid-19 at PGI Chandigarh on Saturday morning, his son Chetan Bragta tweeted. He was 68. Chetan Bragta, in a tweet, said his father succumbed to the virus after a long struggle against it. The three-time MLA was also the Chief Whip of the BJP in the state Assembly. Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur had visited PGI Chandigarh on Friday evening to enquire about his health. — PTI

TEAM IN BENGAL TO TAKE SOCK OF YAAS DAMAGE

Kolkata: A seven-member Central team will arrive in West Bengal on a three-day visit to make an on-spot assessment of the damage caused by cyclone Yaas, a senior official said on Saturday. The inter-ministerial team headed by SK Shahi, joint secretary in the ministry of home affairs, will take stock of the situation in South 24 Parganas district upon its arrival on Sunday, and Purba Medinipur the day after, he said. It is scheduled to complete its assessment in three days and leave for Delhi on June 9, the official said. "After reaching Bengal on Sunday morning, the team will head to the affected areas of South 24 Parganas district. There, it will hold a meeting with officials. "On Monday, the central team will be visiting Digha and Mandarmani in Purba Medinipur, where officials will give a presentation on the damage caused by Yaas," he said. According to government sources, the inter-ministerial team is also likely to hold a meeting with finance department officials during its three-day visit. Cyclone Yaas struck the coastal belts of Odisha and Bengal on May 26, dumping rain, flooding homes, and leaving behind a trail of destruction. — PTI

Gyms, restaurants, salons in Mumbai allowed to open from tomorrow Maha unlocks with 5-tier Covid plan

BHAGWAN PARAB MUMBAI, JUNE 5

Despite witnessing a sharp decline in coronavirus cases in recent days, life in Mumbai, the financial capital of the country, will not be entirely normal as the city will still have to face some of the Covid restrictions. Mumbai has been included in the level three of the Maharashtra government's five-level restriction plan, which has continued with some curbs on Mumbaikars.

The lockdown-like restrictions in the state were imposed in April this year when the second wave of the pandemic intensified. With coronavirus cases now under control, the state govern-

ment has issued a five-level restriction plan under its "Break the Chain" drive to unlock the state, under which relaxations have been offered as per the severity level of Covid-19 in those districts.

According to state government's guidelines, districts with a positivity rate between 5 and 10 per cent, or bed occupancy of over 40 per cent fall under Level three restrictions. The curbs imposed on these places have allowed the shops and stores to be open only till 4 pm, whereas malls, theatres and multiplexes will continue to be closed.

As per the restrictions, in level-3 districts, restaurants will only be allowed 50 per cent capacity till 4 pm on weekdays. Public



A health worker administers a dose of Covid-19 vaccine at a hospital in Vashi on Saturday.

— PTI

places for outdoor activities will only be open from 5 am to 9 am. All private offices will only be allowed to function with 50 per cent capacity till 4 pm on working days. For marriages, only 50 people will be permitted and for funerals only 20 are

allowed. Gyms, salons, beauty centres and wellness centres will be open till 4 pm with 50 per cent capacity. The public transport will be open 100 percent without standing. But the suburban local trains will not be thrown open for the general pub-

lic in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region of Mumbai, Thane, Palghar and Raigad.

The state has been divided into 48 units as per districts and municipal corporations, and five levels, depending on the positivity rate and occupancy of oxygenated beds. Districts with a case positivity rate of 5 per cent or less and occupancy of hospital beds is less than 25 per cent will come under Level 1. These districts shall be completely unlocked with all activities continuing normally including transport, shops, restaurants, malls, theatres, cultural events, sports, industries, government and private offices, construction activities, weddings and funerals, as in the past.

Modi, Xi are responsible leaders can solve Sino-India issues: Putin

No 'extra-regional power' should interfere in bilateral issues: Prez

St. Petersburg (Russia), June 5: Asserting that both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping are "responsible" leaders, Russian President Vladimir Putin on Saturday said they both are capable of solving issues between the two countries, and that it was important that no "extra-regional power" should interfere in the process.

With Russia publicly critical of the Quad, the four-nation grouping of India, the US, Japan and Australia, Mr Putin also told PTI that though it was not up to Moscow to assess how any nation should participate in an initiative and to what extent they should build their relations with other countries but no partnership should be aimed at making friends against anyone.

The Russian president's remarks, in response to a question on Moscow's view on Quad as well as India's participation in the grouping, were a veiled reference to the Chinese claim that the grouping is to contain Beijing's influence in the

Yes, I do know that there are some issues related to India China relations but there are always a lot of issues between neighbouring countries but I know the attitude of both the Prime Minister of India and also the President of China. These are very responsible people and they earnestly treat one another with utmost respect and I believe that they will always arrive at a solution to any issue that they might face.

— Vladimir Putin, Russian President



strategic Indo-Pacific region. He also asserted that there were no "contradictions" in Russia's partnership with India and the ties between Moscow and Beijing.

"Yes, I do know that there are some issues related to India China relations but there are always a lot of issues between neighbouring countries but I know the attitude of both the Prime Minister of India and also the President of China. These are very responsible people and they earnestly treat one another with utmost respect and I believe that they will always arrive at a solution to any issue that they might face.

"But it is important that no other extra-regional power is interfering with

that," the Russian President told PTI through a translator during a virtual interaction.

It has been more than a year since the military standoff between China and India erupted in eastern Ladakh on May 5, 2020 during which there were fatalities on both sides for the first time in 45 years. They have made limited progress in achieving disengagement at the Pangong Lake area while negotiations for similar steps at other friction points remained deadlocked.

Asked about the growing proximity between Russia and China and if that will impact the Indo-Russia security and defence cooperation, Mr Putin said the relations between India and Russia were developing quite

rapidly, quite successfully based on "trust".

"We highly appreciate such a high level of cooperation with our Indian friends. These relations are of a strategic nature. They cover a whole range of avenues of our cooperation in economy, energy and hi-tech. In defence, and I am not just talking about purchase of Russian arms...We have very deep profound relations with India based on trust," he said.

Mr Putin also asserted that India is Russia's only partner that they are working together with on "elaborating and manufacturing, especially in India, advanced weapon systems and technologies but that is not where our cooperation ends because our cooperation is multifaceted." — PTI

India opposes vaccine passports at G7

Vardhan says if implemented, proposal will be 'hugely discriminatory'

New Delhi, June 5: India

expressed strong opposition to the adoption of Covid-19 vaccine passports at the G7 meeting of health ministers, saying that such an initiative could prove to be "hugely discriminatory".

Health minister Harsh Vardhan, addressing the meeting of his counterparts from seven wealthy nations, raised concerns about the availability of vaccines and low rates of inoculation in developing nations.

A "vaccine passport" is a proof of vaccination against certain diseases that passengers are required to produce when they enter another country.



Health workers cross a temporary wooden bridge during a door-to-door Covid-19 vaccination campaign at Pulwama district's Tral, on Saturday.

— PTI

Only 3% of India's population is fully vaccinated, according to health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, and if this proposal is implemented, it will be "hugely discrimi-

natory." This year, India has been invited as a guest to the G7 summit.

"Considering the fact of lower levels of vaccination in developing countries in contrast to the

developed countries and still unaddressed issues related to equitable and affordable access, supply and distribution of safe and effective vaccines, India would propose that implementation of vaccine passports will be hugely discriminatory and disadvantageous to the developing countries," said Dr Vardhan.

"India will suggest that the same should be implemented duly taking into consideration emerging evidence on [the] efficacy of vaccines and under the overarching coordination of WHO duly attending to the anomaly of access and affordability as it exists today," he said. — Agencies

Mob storms Assam Rifles camp after man killed in firing

Imphal, June 5: One person was shot dead allegedly by a staff of the Assam Rifles in a village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district, triggering a mob to storm a camp of the para-military force in the area, the police said on Saturday.

Posts on torching of an Assam Rifles vehicle are being circulated on social media but it could not be confirmed by the authorities. The victim was fired upon in Chalwa village on Friday night and he succumbed to his injuries on way to a hospital in state capital Imphal early Saturday, superintendent of police P. Goulungmuon Singit said.

It is still not clear what led to the incident in the

village. The SP told PTI that following the shooting incident, a group of villagers reached the local Assam Rifles camp and demanded that the force hand over the accused to them.

The situation was tense in the area till Saturday morning but the police brought the situation under control, Singit said.

A case was registered in this regard at Kangpokpi police station.

The Assam Rifles spokesperson could not be reached for comment.

The para-military force personnel has been deployed in Manipur to help the state administration in counter-insurgency operation. — PTI

Bhagwat, Naidu lose Twitter blue ticks, restored after row

New Delhi, June 5: Twitter removed the "blue tick" or the verification badge from the personal accounts of vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu and senior RSS functionaries, including Mohan Bhagwat, only to restore it later on Saturday evoking a sharp reaction from Sangh leaders and followers who described the act as an example of "tech feudalism".

Amid the outrage, Twitter said according to its rules, the blue badge and verified status could be automatically removed from an account if it is incomplete or inactive for six months.

The controversy on the removal of verification badge came on a day when the Central government issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the



Venkaiah Naidu Mohan Bhagwat

Twitter said, according to its rules, the blue badge and verified status could be automatically removed from an account if it is incomplete or inactive for six months

norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act.

In the morning, officials of the vice-president secretariat said the personal Twitter handle of Naidu @MVenkaiahNaidu was inactive for a long time and the Twitter algorithm removed the blue badge.

The last tweet posted from the personal handle was on July 23 last year.

The officials said Twitter was contacted after they noticed this morning that the blue tick was removed. Before 10.30 am, the blue tick was restored, they said. Twitter said the

account has been inactive since July 2020. It said the verified badge has now been restored. The vice-president uses the official Twitter handle @VPsecretariat to send out tweets.

The accounts of RSS' Suresh Soni, Arun Kumar, Suresh Joshi and Krishna Gopal also lost the blue tick. But the badge was later restored after a lot of hue and cry by Sangh sympathisers on social media.

The blue tick was removed from five accounts belonging to senior functionaries of the RSS, the ruling BJP's ideological mentor, sources in the Sangh said. — PTI

GST revenues up 65% in May at ₹1.02 lakh crore

New Delhi, June 5: GST revenue mop-up remained above the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the eight straight month in May at over ₹1.02 lakh crore. The May 2021 collection is 65 per cent higher than ₹62,009 crore the Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue of May 2020. Collections last year were impacted as economic activity took a hit due to the lockdown imposed to check the spread of Covid-19.

However, the revenue for May 2021 is lower than the record over ₹1.41 lakh crore GST collected in April 2021.

"The gross GST revenue collected in the month of May 2021 is ₹1,02,709 crore of which CGST is ₹17,592 crore, SGST is ₹22,653, IGST is ₹53,199 crore (including ₹26,002 crore collected on import of goods) and cess is ₹9,265 crore (including ₹868 crore collected on import of goods)," the finance ministry said in a statement.

The above figure includes GST collection from domestic transactions till June 4 since taxpayers were given various relief measures in the form of waiver/reduc-

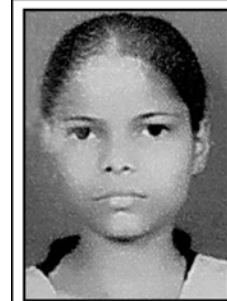
THE REVENUE the revenue for May 2021 is however lower than the record over ₹1.41 lakh crore GST collected in April 2021

tion in interest on delayed return filing for 15 days for filing of returns in May on account of the second wave of the Covid pandemic, it added. The collection figure crossed ₹1 lakh crore despite the fact that most states have been under strict lockdown due to the pandemic, the ministry said.

In addition, while the taxpayers with turnover above Rs 5 crore had to file their returns by June 4, which they would have otherwise filed by May 20, smaller taxpayers with turnover less than ₹5 crore still have time till first week of July to file the returns without any late fee, and interest and the revenue from these taxpayers is deferred till then.

"The actual revenues for the month of May 2021 thus would be higher and would be known when all the extended dates expire," the ministry added. — PTI

SEARCH FOR MISSING



Deepika

General Public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Deepika**, D/o Raju, R/o H. No. 2, Gali No. 1, Monga Nagar, Kartar Market, Delhi, **Age:** 18 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Face:** Long, **Complexion:** Fair, **Build:** Thin, **Wearing:** Brown Colour Top and Blue Colour Jeans has been missing from her home since **08.05.2021**. In this regard a **DD No. 59-A**, dated **08.05.2021** has been registered at **P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi**.

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

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.nic.in
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax : 011-24368639
DP/794/NE/2021

SHO

PS Nand Nagri, Delhi

Ph: 011-22137761, 8750870733

SEARCH FOR MISSING



TANNU @ TARUNA

General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Namely:** Tannu @ Taruna, **W/o:** Manish, **R/o:** H.No. E-3/19, Jhuggi Nand Nagri, Delhi, **Age:** About 19 Years, **Height:** 5', **Complexion:** Fair, **Build:** Medium, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Black Suit, Black Lower and Ladies Chappal in feet has been missing since 22.05.2021 from her house. In this regard **DD No. 73-A**, Dated **23.05.2021** has been lodged at **PS. Nand Nagri, Delhi**.

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

Phone: 011-24368638 and 24368641, Ext. 2101
Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/803/NE/2021

SHO

PS. Nand Nagri, Delhi

Ph: 011-22583307, 22585985

RESTORATION OF TRAIN SERVICE

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to restore the services of train no. 02287/02288 Sealdah - Bikaner Jn. - Sealdah Duronto Special train as per details given below:-

02287/02288 Sealdah - Bikaner Jn. - Sealdah Duronto Special Train (Via Dankuni)

TRAIN NO. 02287		STATIONS	TRAIN NO. 02288	
ARR.	DEP.		ARR.	DEP.
---	17:00	Sealdah	13:15	---
05:30	05:35	Kanpur Central	00:40	00:45
11:00	11:25	New Delhi	19:20	19:45
18:25	---	Bikaner Jn.	---	12:15

Days of Run : 02287 from Sealdah on every Sunday, Monday, Wednesday & Thursday from 09.06.2021 to till further advice and 02288 from Bikaner Jn. on every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday from 11.06.2021 to till further advice

Accommodation : 1st AC, AC 2 Tier & AC 3 Tier

Stoppages : Dhanbad Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Kanpur Central, New Delhi, Loharu Jn., Sadulpur Jn., Churu, Ratangarh Jn. and Sri Dungargarh stations.

Note: The above Special Train will run with full reserved Accommodation

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table and stations en route etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. 139 Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download Railmadad App

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SHORT TAKES

16-yr-old gangraped in Mumbai, 6 held

Mumbai: A 16-year-old girl was allegedly gangraped in Malvani area of north Mumbai after she attended the birthday celebration of her boyfriend, police said on Saturday. The incident took place on Tuesday night and six persons have so far been arrested and search was on for a seventh accused, an official said. "The girl left to attend her boyfriend's birthday party after bolting her house from outside so her kin could not stop her. The next day she complained of stomach pain and told her family about the gang-rape. Her complaint names seven people, six of whom have been arrested till Friday night," she said. All seven have been charged with rape, criminal intimidation, extortion among other offences, the Malvani police station official added. — PTI

Odia actor Atal Bihari Panda dies

Sambalpur: Veteran Odia actor Atal Bihari Panda, who was also a renowned playwright and lyricist, died due to old age-related ailments at VIMSAR, Burla in Sambalpur district on Saturday, family sources said. He was 92. Panda had lost his wife a few days ago, they said. Born in Binika village in Subarnapur district, Panda started acting in theatre in 1944. He had acted in over 100 dramas and also written 65 stage and radio plays, many of which were in the Sambalpur language. Panda was considered one of the pioneer playwrights of Sambalpur theatre. 'Phata Kapal' written by him was the first printed Sambalpur play. His second drama in the language, 'Bhains Aage Nagdhu' was also much talked about. After seeing one of his plays, former Odisha chief minister Dr Harekrushna Mahtab had suggested that he writes opera scripts. — PTI

Man dies in blast of electronic device

Umaria: A 28-year-old man died in Umaria district of Madhya Pradesh after a power bank-like device he found on a road exploded when he connected his mobile phone to it for charging, police said on Saturday. The incident occurred at Chaprod village on Friday, police said, adding that whether it was a power bank or any other electronic device is being confirmed. "The deceased, Ram Sahil Pal, found the device lying on a road while he was going to his farm located under Manpur police station area on Friday," SDOP Bharti Jat said. After returning home later, Pal plugged his mobile into the device at his neighbour's place. However, it exploded and he died on the spot, she added.

MONSOON MAY REACH BY JUNE 15 IN J'HAND, ODISHA

New Delhi The southwest monsoon is likely to advance into Odisha, Jharkhand, parts of West Bengal and Bihar, the India Meteorological Department said on Saturday, hinting at its good progress in the next 10 days. The IMD said the southwest monsoon has further advanced into more parts of central Arabian Sea, entire coastal Karnataka, Goa, some parts of Maharashtra, most parts north interior Karnataka, some parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, more parts of Tamil Nadu and central Bay of Bengal, and some parts of northeast Bay of Bengal. However, a lull is expected in the rainfall activity on June 7-8, Rajendra Jenamani of the National Weather Forecasting Centre of the IMD, said. But a low pressure area is expected to form in the Bay of Bengal by June 11. This will help in the progress of the monsoon and it is likely to advance into Odisha, Jharkhand, parts of West Bengal and Bihar, he said. The monsoon set over Kerala on June 3, two days after its normal onset date. The IMD has also made a forecast of a normal rainfall in June. It said no heatwave conditions are likely in the country over the next five days. The IMD said maximum temperatures of more than 40 degrees Celsius were recorded at many places over west Rajasthan and at isolated places over Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat and Odisha. — PTI

Farmers back on streets over 3 farm laws

Protest near BJP leaders' houses, burn copies of 3 farms laws in TN, Punjab, Haryana

Chandigarh, June 5: Farmers burnt copies of the Centre's three farm laws near residences of BJP leaders and at other places in Punjab and Haryana on Saturday observing the day of the promulgation of the farm ordinances last year a 'Sampoorna Kranti Diwas'.

Farmers carrying black flags raised slogans against the BJP-led central government for not scrapping the legislation which, they said, will "destroy" the farming community.

Security personnel were deployed and barricades put up near the protest sites to maintain law and order.

The call for observing 'Sampoorna Kranti Diwas' was given by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, an umbrella body of the protesting farmer unions, spearheading the agitation against the farm laws.

Protests were held at many places including Amritsar, Jalandhar, Mohali, Abohar, Hoshiarpur, Barnala, Nawanshahr, Patiala, Chandigarh, Sirsa, Jind, Karnal, Panipat and Ambala.

In Phagwara, farmers burnt copies of the farm laws near the residence of Union minister Som Parkash at Urban Estate. The protesters assembled near the GT Road and



Members of various farmers organizations burn the copies of the three agriculture laws during their protest against the Central government outside the residence of Punjab BJP spokesman Bhupesh Aggarwal in Patiala on Saturday.

— PTI

marched towards his residence. Police put up bar-

ricades on the road leading to Parkash's house to

prevent protesters from reaching there, officials said.

The Union minister was not at home at the time of the protest.

The agitating farmers also held a protest near Parkash's residence in Mohali district.

Meanwhile, members of the Tamil Nadu Vivasayigal Sangam, a farmers body, on Saturday burned copies of the three farm laws introduced by the Centre a year ago, demanding their repeal.

The protests were held in various parts of the State with the farmers assembling in small groups wearing face masks and maintaining

social distancing owing to the pandemic.

Recalling the year-long protest by farmers across the country and their sacrifices during the New Delhi stir, the Sangams State general secretary P. Shanmugam urged Tamil Nadu chief minister M.K. Stalin to take steps to pass a resolution against the farm laws in the Assembly.

Our chief minister wrote to the Union government recently seeking the withdrawal of the three farm laws for the welfare of the farming community. Stalin should pass a resolution against these legislations in the state Assembly soon, he said. — PTI



Manoj Netam

Chhattisgarh: Naxals claim to have killed missing cop

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL JUNE 5

Maoists on Saturday claimed to have killed a police constable who went missing in Chhattisgarh's north Bastar district of Kanker on April 28.

A press release issued in the name of CPI (Maoist) said assistant constable Manoj Netam was killed by Naxals on charges of spying for police even before he was recruited in the police force.

The outlawed outfit however said the body could not be handed over to the family of the slain cop.

This was the first time the Maoists failed to hand over the body of the person they killed.

Usually, Maoists throw the body in public after killing a person and leave a leaflet in the body owning responsibility for the murder.

"We have no information on the death of the cop. Investigation is on to ascertain the fate of the missing police constable", a senior police officer posted in Bastar said.

Netam, posted in Kodekurse police station in Kanker district, left on April 28 after his duty without informing anyone.

A couple of days later, his motorcycle and shoes were found abandoned on a road near Bhurke village under the police station limit, police said.

MP: Planting trees must to get building plan approval

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 5

The Madhya Pradesh government, on Saturday, made plantation of trees mandatory for getting building plan clearance by the concerned official agencies.

Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the new rule on the occasion of World Environment Day on Saturday.

Madhya Pradesh is the first state in the country to have introduced the rule.

"No house building plan, even those sanctioned under the Central project such as the Prime Minister Awas Yojana, will be approved without the plantation of trees by concerned individual or government bodies. The trees can be planted anywhere according to the convenience of the parties concerned," Mr Chouhan said.

► **NO HOUSE building plan, even those sanctioned under the Central project such as the Prime Minister Awas Yojana, will be approved without the plantation of trees by concerned individual or government bodies. The trees can be planted anywhere according to the convenience of the parties concerned.**

He said his government was constrained to take the initiative of increasing the green cover in the state owing to massive loss of green cover suffered by the state over the years.

"We need to protect the environment by increasing the green cover. The shortage in the supply of oxygen witnessed during the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic has demonstrated how important a role trees play for the survival of the human race. Destruction of nature will

pose a threat to the very existence of human beings," he added.

The chief minister said his government has developed an app called 'Vayudut App' to encourage people to plant trees and post pictures on the app. The app has so far attracted around 15,000 followers, out of which around 2,500 have planted trees and then posted the pictures on the app.

He indicated his government's decision to institute an award, christened 'Vayu Prerana Puraskar,' to honour green lovers every year.

Mr Chouhan has made it a point to plant a tree every day wherever he goes since he returned to power in the state for the fourth time in March 2020.

"It is the responsibility of every human being to protect our environment. Every person should plant a tree at least once in a year and nurture it," he added.

■ The move comes after killing of BJP's Rakesh Pandita Security audit of J&K politicians begins

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 5

Intelligence agencies in Jammu and Kashmir have started a fresh security audit of leaders of all major political parties, particularly local elected representatives like municipal councillors, village sarpanch, and heads of block and district development councils.

The move comes in the wake of the killing of BJP municipal councillor Rakesh Pandita, who was shot on Wednesday by militants in the Tral region of

South Kashmir's Pulwama district.

Local intelligence and security agencies have also asked political representatives to strictly follow the standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to their personal security.

Fresh intelligence inputs have revealed that militants could target more elected representatives in the coming days. Hence, it has been decided to further increase the security cover of such local political leaders.

Sources claimed it has

► **THE MOVE comes in the wake of the killing of BJP municipal councillor Rakesh Pandita, who was shot on Wednesday by militants in the Tral region of South Kashmir's Pulwama district.**

now been decided to provide bulletproof vehicles to local elected representatives who have a high threat perception. As of now, such vehicles are being given largely to state-level leaders.

"We have a number of bulletproof vehicles

which are not being used and are parked in our police lines. We will give them to these local leaders also as militants are planning a fresh offensive against them," a senior Central police officer posted in the Valley said.

Militants had killed Pandita when he had gone to visit a friend in the Tral area. Initial investigations have revealed that Pandita had not followed his security SOPs or norms. He had not even taken his security PSOs (protective service officer) with him.

Govt: Last notice to Twitter to comply or face the music

■ **Continued from Page 1** IT ministry said that though with effect from May 26, 2021, "consequences follow" given Twitter's non-compliance with rules "however, as a gesture of goodwill, Twitter Inc is hereby given one last notice to immediately comply with the rules, failing which the exemption from liability available... shall stand withdrawn and Twitter shall be liable for consequences as per the IT Act and other penal laws of India". The IT ministry in its notice observed that the world's largest democracy had been among the first countries in the world, outside the parent country of Twitter Inc, to enthusiastically adopt the microblogging platform.

"Users who are abused on the platform or are harassed or are subject to defamation or sexual abuse or become victims or a whole range of other abusive content must get a redressal mechanism that the same people of India have created through a due process of law," the IT ministry asserted.

The people of India, who use Twitter, "deserve and demand" a fair mechanism to address their grievances and resolve their disputes, it said. "Leave alone proactively creating such a mechanism, Twitter Inc is in the inglorious bracket of

refusing to do so even when mandated by law," the ministry said in its notice to the company.

Twitter declined to comment to an e-mail sent by PTI on the issue.

MeitY further confronted Twitter saying it was dismayed to note that the platform's responses to its letters neither address the clarifications sought, nor indicate full compliance with the rule "It is clear from your responses that till date Twitter has not informed about the details of the Chief Compliance Officer as required under the Rules," it said.

Also, resident grievance officer and the nodal contact person nominated by the company is not an employee of Twitter Inc in India as prescribed in the rules, the ministry said and added that office address of Twitter Inc as mentioned by the company "is that of a law firm in India, which is not as per the rules".

The ministry has made it clear to Twitter that such non-compliance will lead to "unintended consequences" including Twitter losing exemption from liability as intermediary under the IT Act.

The row over Twitter's handling of certain messages had recently blown up into an all-out war of words between the Centre

and the social media platform. The government had earlier slammed Twitter's remarks on alleged intimidation and threat to free speech and said that the microblogging platform had sought to undermine India's legal system, through its actions and deliberate defiance. The IT ministry had termed the company's stance as an attempt to dictate terms to the world's largest democracy. Twitter had previously drawn flak after it marked several tweets by ruling BJP leaders on an alleged strategy document of the Opposition to target the government over Covid as containing "manipulated media", triggering a sharp rebuke from the government. The government had earlier asked Twitter to "stop beating around the bush" and comply with laws of the land.

The new IT rules for social media companies that came into effect last month mandate large platforms like Facebook and Twitter to undertake greater due diligence and make these digital platforms more accountable and responsible for the content hosted by them. The Centre had said the new rules are designed to prevent abuse and misuse of platforms, and offer users a robust forum for grievance redressal. — PTI

Didi nephew new TMC gen secy

■ **Continued from Page 1** youth wing chief. This is the first time the TMC chief gave the post to a woman to pull the youth.

On the TMC turncoats' cry to make a comeback from the BJP, Mr Chatterjee added, "The issue was not discussed today. Our party chief has also not taken any decision in this regard. She is looking into it and will make the final decision."

Under the "One Man, One Post" policy, the TMC has decided not to allow a leader to hold a senior party post, like district chief, while continuing as a state minister, sources

said. Besides, former TMC Rajya Sabha MP and spokesperson Kunal Ghosh has also been made a general secretary.

Among others, three-time Barasat MP Kakali Ghosh Dastidar will lead the TMC women's wing while former Rajya Sabha MP Ritabrata Banerjee, who joined the TMC few years ago and maintained a low profile, has been given the task of heading the trade union wing at the state level. Film director Raj Chakraborty, who won as a TMC MLA from Barrackpore, will head the party's cultural cell.

Delhi, Maha set to unlock

■ **Continued from Page 1** cases in the last 24 hours. The deaths - 3,380 - however, still remain high. Country's weekly positivity rate is currently at 6.89 per cent while the daily positivity rate was 5.78 per cent on Saturday. It has remained less than 10 per cent for 12 consecutive days now.

Delhi on Saturday had a positivity rate of 0.53 per cent with 414 fresh cases, and 60 deaths. The city has 1,683 active cases. Its hospital beds and patients dependent on oxygen have reduced drastically.

However, Mr Kejriwal has set up a task force to prepare for a possible third wave.

In Maharashtra, districts having 10-20 per cent positivity rate more than 60 per cent occupancy rate will be under Level 4 and here no movement of people will be allowed on weekends and after 5 pm on weekdays. Level 5 will consist of districts with a positivity rate over 20 per cent and oxygen bed occupancy over 75 per cent. Here no movement of people will be allowed.

Lakshadweep row: 93 ex-babus urge PM Modi to step in Raise concerns over developments

New Delhi, June 5: A group of 93 former civil servants wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday, expressing "deep concern" over what they called were "disturbing developments" in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep in the name of "development".

They have urged the PM to ensure an appropriate development model, in consultation with the islanders with emphasis on access to safe and secure healthcare, education and just governance among others of Anti-Social Activities Regulation, and the Lakshadweep Animal Preservation Regulation, as well as an amendment to the Lakshadweep Panchayat Regulations that have generated widespread anxiety on the island and the nation at large, they have said in the letter.

"These drafts have been introduced without local consultation and are presently with the MHA, government of India for necessary approvals," said the letter written by ex-civil servants under the aegis of Constitutional Conduct Group (CCG). A copy of the letter has been shared with home minister Amit Shah and environment, forest and climate change minister Prakash Javadekar.

— PTI

THE ASIAN AGE

6 JUNE 2021



Shashi Warriar
Off the beaten track

The joys, perils and disasters of cooking

Some years ago, my wife and I shifted to our present house near the beach. It's some distance from Mangalore city, and we had trouble finding domestic help from the day we moved in here: we had to fend for ourselves, and we began to share household chores. As a result, I started learning to cook, something I'd put off for a quarter-century. I have since learned to fend for myself, and even enjoy cooking sometimes, to the extent that my wife can take a month-long holiday, leaving me to take care of the house and our pets.

But this is the story of why I put off learning to cook.

The year was 1989, the place Melbourne. I was unmarried, and had a small flat a few hundred metres from the beach, and, being a programmer, worked from home. That meant, unfortunately, that I also ate at home. Given a kitchen, I could produce only tea (bags please), coffee (instant), boiled eggs, and, after I learned to use a knife without cutting off a finger or two, rudimentary salads.

I struck up an acquaintanceship with a neighbour, a Greek called George. Over the weeks, he became my friend, guide, and confidant. And so, when I confessed to him a month after we met that I often missed spicy Indian food, he told me of the only Indian restaurant he knew: one in Flinders Street run by ISKCON. I had lunch there next afternoon, and discovered that its food was Indian but bland, being intended for Australian palates.

George then took me to a suburb called Dingley, and a warehouse full of foods from all over the subcontinent. So I stocked up on rice and spices from Punjab and coconut oil from Sri Lanka and papad — pappadam, actually — from Kerala. and, one day shortly after, decided to try my hand at cooking lunch. Being a lover of pappadam in all forms, I thought I'd start with deep-frying some.

I'd never done it before, but I'd seen my mother at it often. She used to heat oil in a wok, drop a pappadam into the oil, wait for it to cook, and fish it out with what was called in Malayalam a pappadam-stick, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a bulb-shaped wooden handle at the other.

I didn't have a pappadam-stick, but a barbecue skewer instead, a stiff wire with a point at one end and a ring at the other. The first pappadam came out fine, and as I ate it I dropped the next in the oil, and then the next. Just when I was done with the third, though, the phone rang, and I went to answer it, leaving the skewer in the oil.

I came back to the kitchen after a twenty-minute chat with a client, thinking I'd continue with the pappadams, and picked up the skewer, burning my finger and thumb. With a loud yell of pain, I dropped the skewer on my foot, and, naturally, let out another, louder yell. So when George, who heard the second yell, came running to investigate, he found me nursing small burns on my finger and thumb, and a three-inch-long one on my right foot. The burns on the hand were minor, but the one on the foot looked nasty: nasty enough for George to insist that I went to a doctor.

The doctor, who, like all doctors, had no qualms about prying into the private lives of his patients, asked how I got the burn. When I told him, he managed to disguise his laughter as a cough. But when I was leaving, he grinned, telling me that I'd made his day.

A few weeks later, I felt a strong urge to eat meat, cooked Indian-style. I called up a Malayali friend, got a recipe and some recommendations on what kind of meat to buy at the supermarket: go for the best, and since it lasts in the freezer, buy a large cut. That evening, I bought a two-kilo chunk of meat along with my regular groceries. George popped in to invite me home as I was putting away my purchases, so I put the meat in the freezer and went over to his place.

Next morning I took the meat out, thinking I'd cut off a bit to cook for lunch: my Malayali friend had instructed not to thaw meat out and put it back in the freezer without cooking it, and I didn't have a cooking pot big enough to hold all the meat I'd bought. That was when I discovered how hard frozen meat gets. None of the knives in the kitchen made the slightest impression on it. By now it had become a matter of honour (how could a frozen lump of meat get the better of *me*?) so I cleaned a chisel and tried to hammer a little lump off the big lump. The handle broke at the third blow. I considered borrowing George's chainsaw to cut it but gave up the idea because George was out.

That left me no choice. I thawed out the whole lump of meat and cooked it in two rounds. Both rounds tasted terrible. I ate all of it because, like I said, it had become a matter of honour. And, honour intact, I decided to give up cooking, a decision I reversed only a quarter-century afterwards. Now that I'm old and my honour is in tatters anyway, here's some advice for bachelors: learn to cook. It's a useful skill, and if you're willing to forgive yourself a few mistakes, it can be a lot of fun.

And when you buy a large lump of meat, cut it up before you put it in the freezer!

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



Acche Din: No one ever said it would be this hard



Manish Tewari
State of the Union

The NDA/BJP government's seven years tenure has been underpinned by a hodgepodge of grandiloquent pronouncements. If one were to obtusely believe the NDA/BJP then India has eradicated the scourge of a parallel economy post demonetisation. Is now "Atmanirbhar" courtesy a new wave of production by the domestic industries that has put an end to excessive foreign dependence. All the "wolf warriors" of the Chinese have been exterminated and the war against the Covid-19 pandemic was won in January 2021 itself in Davos.

ECONOMY

The Indian economy has tanked to its worst performing levels. Even pre-pandemic growth had halved to four per cent in 2019-20. In 2013-14, the size of the Indian economy was 1.86 trillion dollars. In 2020-21 it stands at 1.85 trillion dollars. By way of comparison China is a 16.64 trillion economy. All the fundamentals namely savings, consumption investment and employment are severely stressed. The unemployment rate is at a 45-year high. Per capita income is expected to dip by an unprecedented 5.4 per cent, from 1.34 lakh in the previous year to 1.27 lakh in the current year. The Cumulative Fiscal Deficit of the Union government for 2019-20/20-21 is 33.55 lakh crores. With seven of the largest PSUs being valued below par and put on the chopping block, the government now plans to sell the family silver to bridge an unparalleled deficit budget.

It has now become clear how completely hollow all the tall claims of Atmanirbharta were. India now ignominiously depends on foreign assistance to surmount health emergencies. We have even accepted food aid from Kenya. One can but help recall that even in the wake of a cataclysmic tsunami in 2004 Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh refused to accept any

foreign relief.

INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY

Erosion of institutional integrity has been the hallmark of the NDA/BJP government. From the CBI and the Election Commission to the Reserve Bank of India and even the higher judiciary, all face a crisis of credibility further widening the state-citizen trust deficit. The worst sufferer of this has been the temple of Indian democracy — India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.

In order to circumvent Parliament, the NDA/BJP government has often followed the ordinance route. In its seven years the current government has pushed more ordinances than any other government in a five-year term since 1952. Even the number of bills that have been referred to parliamentary committees have shrunk dramatically with zero bills being recommended in 2020. If that was not enough, government found egregious ways of further undermining the remit of Parliament by "classifying" key pieces of legislation as money bills.

All this while the government wallows in quantifying parliament productivity by passing several bills in a single day. What value do these quantifications hold when the essence of democracy, i.e. serious deliberations discussions and questioning of the government on key issues has been severely proscribed.

SOCIAL COHESION

During the seven years in power the NDA/BJP government has turned the idea of India on its head. This government does not believe in the founding values of the Indian state and has used all means necessary to create a majoritarian ethos.

It started with an assault on the freedom to eat, to dress as you like, to think, to express and most importantly the freedom to live

your life without fear or intimidation. With extortionate amount of money being funnelled into building false storylines fundamental freedoms have been systematically subverted.

The anti-CAA protests showed that a small but determined group can speak truth to power. The Prime Minister's silence on the subsequent Delhi Riots was deafening. When the three farm laws pushed agriculture into the free market without even an iota of concern for the small and marginal farmer the world is witness to the largest and longest peaceful agitation by the farmers.

Throughout the past seven years the government has used all means necessary to rupture the federal structure of the country. A total of nine state governments have been brought down by the BJP using unethical means. By destabilising states ruled by Opposition parties the BJP has time and again demonstrated contempt for the people's mandate. States have been left to fend for themselves in times of national crises. The recent vaccination fiasco being a striking example.

For the Modi government it is cooperative federalism on paper and a non-operative federalism in reality.

INTERNAL SECURITY

This government had projected itself to be a strong decision-making government, which would accord national security number one priority. But in terms of action the nation has not seen anything substantive. The Naga Accord, is in the doldrums and one knows if it exists or has vanished. Left-wing extremism has grown by leaps and bounds. Maoism and militancy, besides claiming lives of our jawans is also eating into the finances of the country. Mob lynchings and anti-religious conversion laws have attacked the very fundamental of the rights of citizens. Even the abrogation of Article 370 has had little positive impact on Jammu

The worst sufferer of this has been India's Parliament. No Indian Prime Minister has ignored Parliament so contemptuously as Prime Minister Modi has.

& Kashmir whilst institutionalising a sense of alienation and fear. Overall the government struggled to come to terms with domestic insurgencies, modernising the military and deterring potential threats from Pakistan and China.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The NDA/BJP government's cynical use of foreign policy as an exercise in personal brand building has had catastrophic consequences for the nation. At the time of writing this article the Chinese haven't vacated illegally occupied Indian territory in Eastern Ladakh. Any hope of return to status quo ante seems beyond the capacity of the current dispensation now that India has given up its tactical advantage on the Kailash heights. The spirits of Wuhan and Mamallapuram are long dead — a consequence of foreign policy becoming individual centric and being run in an ad-hoc manner rather than based on any strategic coherence.

The government's dealing with Pakistan in the last seven years has been characterised by U-turns, flip-flops and somersaults. This has precluded any possibility of a nuanced engagement with Islamabad. With India's rankings across several global indices falling severely, the MEA has gone over the top with the narrative of "interference in the internal democratic processes", conveniently overlooking that our head of the government had once canvassed for Donald Trump "abki baar Trump sarkar".

It is evident that the NDA government has failed in maintaining a balance between the United States, Russia, China and the European Union with foreign policy focussing on Modi first and India later.

The last seven years has unfortunately been a cacophony of mendacities. The NDA/BJP government has failed the people of India. The fantasy of "Acche Din" stands eviscerated. Today this country is humming an old Hindi melody albeit under its breath — *Koi Lauta De Mera Beeta Hua Din*.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

SLOW AND STEADY

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has done well to leave benchmark interest rates unchanged and reiterate that it would keep its accommodative stance to nurture economic recovery. RBI cut the growth forecast for FY22 to 9.5 per cent and inflation expectations were raised amid supply-side disruptions, signalling that the road ahead could be bumpy. Governor Shaktikanta Das pledged the central bank would do all it could to ensure that the economy recovers before looking toward any shift in stance. How soon we come out of the horrors of the pandemic and get back on track for economic recovery will also depend on the government and various other stakeholders getting their act together.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

BIBI WILL BE MISSED

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will miss his "good friend" Benjamin Netanyahu, who has served five terms as Israel's Prime Minister, has finally been outmanoeuvred from office by a coalition of rivals and opponents, heralding both change and more uncertainty in the region. But with the ideological affiliations of the newcomers well-known, New Delhi will have its diplomatic legwork cut out with the incoming dispensation.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

UNFAIR FINE

MANY CREDIBLE VOICES have expressed apprehensions on the effects of the 5G rollout. Therefore, even if the suit filed in the Delhi high court by actor Juhi Chawla was found wanting, it is decidedly unfair to have her fined ₹20 lakh. To dismiss it as a publicity stunt is certainly not called for. Perhaps the court wants to deter future litigants from what they feel are frivolous pleas in court. A financially vulnerable person will now definitely think twice about approaching it for redressal of grievances against government projects and policies.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

ANTI-NATIONAL GAG

GAGGING THE superannuated personnel of investigating agencies from penning down their learning experiences acquired during discharge of duties is uncalled for. The treatises of such erudite had indeed enriched the budding officials of the department in particular and people at large. It also provides a window of opportunity to the incumbent government to do course correction. Now in this age whence the media lacks veracity and is replete with prejudiced views, stonewalling objective and scholarly articles is a disservice to the nation.

Deepak Singhal
Noida

HEALTH IS WEALTH

THIS IS WITH reference to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent chat with students. They were encouraged by the PM to invest their time in a creative and productive manner and not let themselves be stressed out. Mr Modi also taught the youngsters the value of health and they got a chance to share their experiences with him. If they follow his guidance, they will not lose in any situation in life. Health is wealth.

Roshni Sethiya
Ujjain

SHORT TAKES

ABOUT 100
KILLED IN
BURKINA FASO

Ouagadougou, June 5: Around 100 civilians were killed in the deadliest attack in Burkina Faso since jihadist violence erupted in the country in 2015, security and local sources said Saturday.

The attack occurred during the night of Friday to Saturday when “armed individuals staged an incursion” into the northern town of Solhan, a security source said. “The toll, which is still provisional, is about about 100 dead, men and woman of different ages”, the source said.

FREE OPPN FIGURE
CHAMORRO, U.S.
TO NICARAGUA

Managua, June 5: The US State Department on Friday called on Nicaragua to free opposition figure Cristiana Chamorro, who is being held incommunicado at her home after her laptops and cell-phones were taken away.

Chamorro is a potential presidential candidate in the November 7 elections and the daughter of former President Violeta Barrios de Chamorro. Her detention is the latest in a series of moves by President Daniel Ortega that his critics say are to prevent candidates from running against him.

On Tuesday, the government charged her with money laundering involving alleged financial irregularities related to the Violeta Barrios de Chamorro Foundation for Reconciliation and Democracy.

CYBERCRIME:
LATVIAN WOMAN
CHARGED IN U.S

Washington, June 5: A Latvian woman has been charged with developing malicious software used by a cybercrime digital network that infected computers worldwide and looted bank accounts of millions of dollars, the Justice Department said Friday.

Alla Witte is charged as part of a 47-count indictment with participating in a cybercrime organisation known as the Trickbot Group, which authorities say operated in Russia and several other countries.

The group is accused of infecting millions of computers worldwide with malicious software that targeted hospitals, schools, governments, businesses and other entities.

Witte, who authorities say previously lived in Suriname, was arrested in Miami.

ASEAN ENVOYS
MEET MYANMAR
JUNTA LEADER

Bangkok, June 5: Representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations met with Myanmar's junta leader on Friday, six weeks after an emergency regional summit on the coup in the country drew promises of progress toward a solution but produced no tangible results.

State broadcaster MRTV showed Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing meeting with Brunei Second Foreign Minister Erywan Yusof and Asean Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi, but provided only a broad outline of their discussions.

Earlier this week, an Indonesian diplomat said the delegation's purpose was to seek Myanmar's nod of an Asean special envoy for the crisis, who is yet to be named. He said the choice involved both sides, making progress slow. The meeting received a cool response from Myanmar's opposition shadow government.

CLASH WITH PKK
REBELS KILLS 5
IRAQI KURD TROOPS

Arbil, Iraq, June 5: Five Iraqi Kurdish peshmerga troops were killed Saturday in a clash with fighters of Turkey's outlawed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), a senior Iraqi Kurdish official said. The PKK maintains rear-bases in northern Iraq which have come under renewed assault by Turkish forces since April.

Two peshmerga troops were also wounded in Saturday's clash in the Mount Matin district of Dohuk province, said Serbest Lazkani, deputy minister for peshmerga affairs in Iraqi Kurdistan's autonomous regional government.

The PKK's agenda has often put it at odds with Iraq's autonomous Kurdish government, which has sought to maintain good ties with Ankara. The peshmerga affairs ministry has called on “everyone to respect the borders of Kurdistan and to refrain from endangering its security and stability.”

JOBS REPORT
BOLSTERS GOVT
SPENDING: BIDEN

Washington, June 5: President Joe Biden portrayed the May jobs report as a jumping off point for more spending on infrastructure and education to keep growth going — essentially an argument for his agenda. But the employment numbers issued Friday also hinted at the possible limits of how much government aid can be pumped into the world's largest economy.

“We’re on the right track,” Biden said. “Our plan is working. And we’re not going to let up now. We’re going to continue to move on. I’m extremely optimistic.”

The May jobs report showed the complexity of restarting the economy after a pandemic shutdown and the mixed signals that can result when an unprecedented surge of government spending flows through the economy.

— AP

Bosnian church razed



Bosnian authorities have demolished a Serbian Orthodox church illegally built on the land owned by a Bosniak woman in Konjevic Polje, the village next to Srebrenica in Bosnia, on Saturday, after a 20-year-long legal battle that reached the European Court of Human Rights.

— AP

G7 FMs pledge 15%
global corporate tax

Hope to reach final deal at the July gathering of G20 group

London, June 5: Finance ministers from wealthy G7 nations on Saturday pledged to commit to a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15 percent, rallying behind a US-backed plan.

“We... commit to a global minimum tax of at least 15 percent on a country by country basis,” said a statement at the conclusion of their London meeting.

The G7 hopes to reach a final agreement at the July gathering of the expanded G20 finance ministers group, it added.

“I’m delighted to announce that G7 finance ministers... have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system,” said British finance minister Rishi Sunak, who chaired the two days of talks held in person after an easing of Covid-19 restrictions. It was attended by counterparts from Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the US.

The landmark move is aimed at getting multinationals — especially tech giants — to pay more into government coffers, which have been severely hit during the pandemic.

The talks have prepared the ground for a broader summit of G7 leaders in Cornwall, southwest England, starting Friday.

US President Joe Biden is set to attend next week's summit on his first foreign tour since taking office in January, while later Saturday US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen will hold a press conference following the G7 meeting.

ing the G7 meeting.

Momentum has grown behind the United States-led plans to limit the ability of multinationals like tech giants to game the tax system to boost profits, especially at a time when economies around the world are reeling from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Biden had called for a unified minimum corporate tax rate of 15 percent in negotiations with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and G20.

French economy minister Bruno Le Maire had told journalists in London that 15 percent is “a minimum. For us, it’s a starting point”.

— AFP

GLOBAL MINIMUM
tax would end the
race-to-the-bottom in
corporate taxation.

JANET YELLEN,
US Treasury Secretary

profits to countries with opaque tax structures,” he said, calling the move “bad news for tax havens”. Yellen on Saturday hailed

an “unprecedented commitment” by the G7 wealthy nations to achieve a global minimum corporate tax rate of at least 15 percent. “That global minimum tax would end the race-to-the-bottom in corporate taxation,” she said in a statement after the other G7 nations backed US President Joe Biden's plan to get tech giants in particular to pay more.

— AFP

British FM hails
historic tax deal

London, June 5: Britain's finance minister Rishi Sunak on Saturday hailed a “historic agreement” by G7 finance ministers

meeting in London to commit to a global minimum corporate tax of at least 15 percent. “I’m delighted to announce that G7 finance ministers today after years of discussions have reached a historic agreement to reform the global tax system to make it fit for the global digital age.”

Sunak said in a video statement.

— AFP

FB WELCOMES G7
MOVE ON TAX

London, June 5: Facebook welcomes a G7 pledge to commit to a global minimum corporate tax rate despite the social media giant risking paying more, its vice president of global affairs said Saturday. “We welcome the important progress,” Nick Clegg tweeted after the agreement by the G7 group of wealthy nations.

— AFP

NIGERIA SUSPENDS
TWITTER AS PREZ
TWEET DELETED

Lagos, June 4: Nigeria's government said Friday it was suspending Twitter indefinitely in Africa's most populous nation, a day after the company deleted a controversial tweet President Muhammadu Buhari made about a secessionist movement.

It was not immediately clear when the suspension would go into effect as users could still access Twitter. Many said they would use VPNs to maintain access to the platform. Others mocked the government for using the platform to announce the action. “You’re using Twitter to suspend Twitter? Are you not mad?” one user tweeted.

— AP

Zawahiri in Af-Pak border
area, alive but too frail: UN

United Nations, June 5: A significant part of the Al-Qaeda leadership resides in the Afghanistan and Pakistan border region, including the group's elusive leader Aiman al-Zawahiri, who is probably alive but too frail to be featured in propaganda, according to a United Nations report.

The report, issued on Friday, said that large numbers of Al-Qaeda fighters and other foreign extremist elements aligned with the Taliban are located in various parts of Afghanistan. Member states reported that a significant part of Al-Qaeda leadership remains based in the border

region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the core is joined by and works closely with Al-Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent, the twelfth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team said.

Al-Qaeda leader Aiman Mohammed Rabi al-Zawahiri, is believed to be located somewhere in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previous reports of his death due to ill health have not been confirmed. “One member state reports that he is probably alive but too frail to be featured in propaganda, the report said, without identifying the country.

It said Al-Qaeda's strategy in the near term is assessed as maintaining its traditional safe haven in Afghanistan for the Al-Qaeda core leadership.

The Monitoring Team noted assessments that have suggested a longer-term Al-Qaeda core strategy of “strategic patience for a period of time before it would seek to plan attacks against international targets again”.

This scenario is untested against stated Taliban commitments to prohibit such activities.

Al-Qaeda is reported to number in the range of several dozen to 500 persons.

— PTI

Calif. assault weapon ban overturned

Los Angeles June 5: A US judge overturned California's three-decade-old ban on assault weapons Friday in a move swiftly condemned by the state's governor Gavin Newsom as gun-related homicides surge across America.

In a 94-page decision, federal Judge Roger T. Benitez described California's assault weapons ban — in place in 1989 — as unconstitutional and defended the right of Americans to own semi-automatic rifles. “Like the Swiss Army

Knife, the popular AR-15 rifle is a perfect combination of home defence weapon and homeland defence equipment,” he wrote.

“Guns and ammunition in the hands of criminals, tyrants and terrorists are dangerous; guns in the hands of lawabiding responsible citizens are better,” he argued.

Benitez said he would give the state 30 days to appeal the decision, which Governor Newsom said posed a “direct threat to public safety” and which he

vowed to challenge. “We’re not backing down from this fight, and we’ll continue pushing for common sense gun laws that will save lives,” he said in a statement.

The decision comes as gun violence surges across the United States — and just over a week after a disgruntled, heavily-armed California public transit worker shot and killed nine people.

A search this week of the shooter's home — which was set ablaze shortly

before the attack — turned up 12 guns, around 22,000 rounds of ammunition and suspected Molotov cocktails. Mass shootings have also taken place in Florida, Indiana, California, Colorado and Georgia, in a surge in violence that President Joe Biden has branded an “epidemic”.

The US Supreme Court is also due to hear a challenge backed by the gun lobby to a New York law that restricts the carrying of firearms outside the home.

— AFP

CRYPTO | HOTSPOT

It was moved out of LA due to Covid curbs

Miami hosts huge bitcoin event

Miami, June 5: Thousands of people have descended on Miami for a massive two-day bitcoin conference that opened Friday — a sign that the US city, in the midst of a tech boom, is hoping to become the next cryptocurrency hub. “I don’t think there’s anything more important in my lifetime to work on” than bitcoin, given the flexibility it offers, billionaire entrepreneur Jack Dorsey, the co-founder of Twitter and payments firm Square, told a crowd-

ed auditorium.

“We don’t need the financial institutions that we have today. We have one that is thriving, that is sound, that is owned by the community, that is driven by the community,” said Dorsey, one of the keynote speakers at Bitcoin 2021.

Dorsey tweeted Friday that Square was considering making a hardware wallet for safely storing bitcoin. With 12,000 participants and all speaker sessions sold out, the Bitcoin

2021 trade show features exhibits from crypto mining companies, crypto traders and bitcoin exchange networks.

The conference was originally scheduled to take place in Los Angeles, but was moved due to tougher Coronavirus restrictions in California.

The line to get into the Mana Convention Center in Miami's trendy Wynwood neighborhood wrapped around the building. Everyone was in high spirits and there were no face

masks to be seen.

Beyond Dorsey, two of the other speakers were Cameron and Tyler Winklevoss, twin Harvard classmates of Mark Zuckerberg who sued him over claims he stole the idea for Facebook from them, and now run cryptocurrency exchange Gemini.

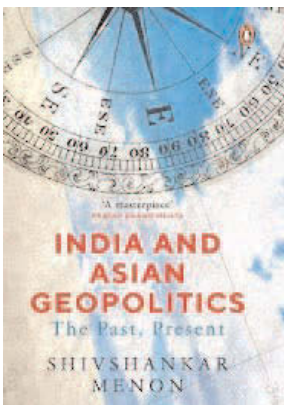
“We think bitcoin is gold 2.0,” Tyler said at a panel discussion. “When we get to Mars, what is the currency going to be in Mars? Dollars? No. Bitcoin.”

— AFP

INDIAN TOP 10
BESTSELLERS

NON-FICTION

- INDIA AND ASIAN GEOPOLITICS: THE PAST, PRESENT**
Shiv Shankar Menon
Penguin, ₹699
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- SHUGGIE BAIN**
Douglas Stuart
Picador, ₹499

Bahrison, New Delhi

FAST FACT

Forty-four-year-old **Mieko Kawakami** is the author of the internationally best-selling novel, *Breasts and Eggs*. She debuted in 2006 with her poetry and published her novella, *My Ego, My Teeth*, and the World, in 2007. She earlier worked as a bar hostess and singer. From 2015 to 2017, Kawakami conducted a series of interviews with Haruki Murakami. *Heaven* is her most noted work wherein she explores everyday dilemmas as a forum for examining fundamental questions of power and morality. She lives in Tokyo.

Hobsbawm's choice: When logic rejects nationalism..



Indranil Banerjee

review

Karl Marx, to put it mildly, disliked Capitalism. This of course did not prevent him from writing tones on the subject. And as is to be expected not much of what he wrote on the subject was complimentary. Britain's best-known historian, Eric Hobsbawm, traverses a similar path in his writings on Nationalism. Despite professing a "dislike" for nationalism, the historian devoted dozens of essays on the subject. Donald Sassoon, Hobsbawm's historian friend decided to put together this new volume, "Eric Hobsbawm on Nationalism" nine years after Hobsbawm's death because of the relevance of this contentious subject. We stand, writes Sassoon, "on the doorstep of an age when the internet and the globalisation of capital threaten to blow away many national boundaries while, partly as a reaction, nationalism seems to re-emerge with renewed strength".

Hobsbawm's views on nationalism were strongly influenced by his personal experience and views on the destructive power of nationalism as it evolved in Europe since the early 19th century. "His anti-nationalism is not surprising," notes Sassoon.

"He was a Jew opposed to Zionism. He was British but born in Egypt in the year of the Russian revolution. His grandfather was Polish. His mother was Viennese. His father was born in England. His parents married in Switzerland. His wife, Marlene, was born in Vienna and bought up in Manchester. He grew up in Vienna and Berlin, and was a boy in Germany when the Nazis took over - an experience that left an enduring impression. He wrote in his autobiography that Berlin had made him a lifelong Marxist and communist, a political project which, he acknowledged, had utterly failed."

As a young man he took part in the Second World War, after which he went on to complete his PhD in history at Cambridge. His insightful books on economic history quickly won him a place in the top bracket of world historians. His famous trilogy — *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* and *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914* — is mandatory reading for most students of economics and history.

According to one reviewer of his works, Iker Itoiz Ciáuriz, "...Hobsbawm was a fierce critic of nationalism. A close

analysis of Hobsbawm's work, especially his 'Age' quartet, *The Age of Revolution: Europe 1789-1848*, *The Age of Capital: 1848-1875* and *The Age of Empire: 1875-1914*, and *The Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914-1991*, reveals Hobsbawm's evolving scepticism and opposition to nationalism. He would come to argue that nationalism, driven by industrial capitalism, undermined the universalist goals proposed by revolutionary movements, particularly in Europe."

Hobsbawm argues that nationalism is a relatively recent construct and mainly a European phenomenon. The rise of nationalism coincided with the emergence of an educated class in various European regions and the rise of the bourgeoisie. He felt that nation-

alism outside Europe was largely a consequence of European imperial power.

However, he did not entirely disregard the positives of nationalism including, most importantly, the rise of democracy that eventually accompanied nationalism. At one point he conceded: "I remain in the curious position of disliking, distrusting, disapproving and fearing nationalism wherever it exists... but recognising its enormous force, which must be harnessed for progress if possible."

It would, therefore, be incorrect and unfair to dismiss or classify his writings on nationalism to be wholly critical. He was too great a historian not to recognise the nuances and many implications of the processes and constructs associated with nationalism.

For instance, Hobsbawm cautions against a new trend emerging around the world, based on the demand of self-determination and the rise of nationalistic feelings within existing nation states. He voices his concerns in the chapter on "Perils of the New Nationalism".

Referring to the relatively recent creation of small and tiny nation states, Hobsbawm writes: "Of course such states — even much larger ones — are not independent in any meaningful sense. Politically and militarily, they are helpless without outside protection, as Kuwait and Croatia show. Economically, they are even more dependent. Few separatist movements hope to go it alone."

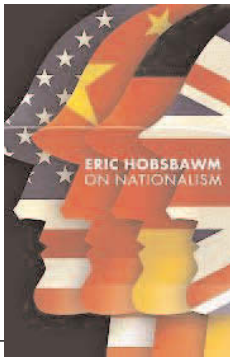
"The usual reason given by would-be state builders is that

the people of the territory concerned have constituted a 'nation' from the beginning of time, a special ethnic group, usually with its own language, which cannot live under the rule of strangers. The right of self-determination, they argue, implies states that coincide. Almost everything about this argument is historically wrong, but as Ernest Renan noted more than a century ago, 'Forgetting history, and even historical error, are an essential factor in the formation of a nation.' However, we are concerned not with history or rationality but with politics.

"However, if we can understand the forces that led to a revival of the politics of national consciousness, and even sympathised with the feelings that inspire it, let us have no illusions. Adding another few dozen to the member states of the UN will not give any of them any more control over their affairs than they had before they became independent. It will not solve or diminish the problems of cultural or any other autonomy in the world, any more than it did in 1919."

This, therefore, is clearly a book that needs to be read over an extended period of time. There is much to ponder over. Perhaps it's not for everyone either. Large parts of it would be totally incomprehensible to readers who have little or no knowledge of European and world history. But those who can persevere will find much fodder for the intellect.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues



ERIC HOBSBAWM ON NATIONALISM
Edited by DONALD SASSOON
Hachette, ₹799

An insider's view on elite publishing in Indian Right's shadow

Abdullah Khan

review

In a unique narrative style that blends the sophistication of the metro cities with the raw sensibilities of a small town, and that mixes slow and silent manifestation of feelings with sudden emotional outbursts, Siddharth Chowdhury, in his latest offering *The Time of the Peacock*, tells us the sociopolitically insightful stories of contemporary India, the India which has taken a sharp right turn after staying left-of-centre for almost seven decades of its post-Independence existence.

The book is a collection of three interconnected stories — you can call them novellas — and each is told through the point of view of a unique character with a distinctive socio-linguistic background.

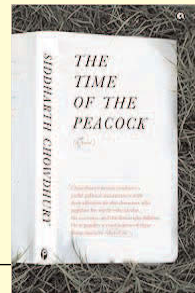
Bhasha India, the opener, has a central character called John Nair, a Malayali editor heading the Indian branch of a multinational publishing company. With John, we travel from Delhi to Sidhrawali in Haryana where he has a small farmhouse and during this journey we get to know about John's backstory. We meet a cast of characters including cow vigilantes gone berserk. Cosmopolitan John Nair who is married to a Kashmiri Muslim girl finds these events disconcerting. He is also worried about his employee and caretaker of his farmhouse, Ramzan, a Muslim, and a Bengali at that. Ramzan has the double risk of being branded a foreigner, read Bangladeshi, and lynched.

The interestingly named narrator of the second story, *Wallace Water* is Angika Raag 'Nishad', a gifted Bihari writer and translator. Her surname indicates that she comes from the marginalised community of traditional boatmen. Though her mother is a high caste Bengali, she has to carry the burden of her father's surname. While narrating her stories, she not only tells about the caste matrix that exists in Bihar but also introduces us to the changing political landscape of the state during Lalu Prasad's rule as Mandal politics takes centre stage.

Ritwik Ray, the bard of Patna, who was a character in Chowdhury's debut story collection *Diksha at Saint Martin* and the protagonist of his novel, *Patna Roughcut*, is the central character of the third story titled *Freebooter*. Ritwik is an eccentric with a long list of idiosyncrasies but sensitive and caring. He is writing a novel called *Godse Chowk*. The title of Ritwik's novel is a metaphor for our times. Through Ritwik, we get introduced to a Bihari leftwing activist and writer, Ramanuj Sahi. Coming from the prosperous and dominant Bhumihar caste, Sahi chose the path of the revolution and fought for the downtrodden. He ended up in jail accused of being an "urban Naxal".

In addition to a thoughtful meditation on the present sociopolitical situation of India, the book also gives us an opportunity to have an insider's view of the Indian publishing world. As the author is an editor in a leading publishing house, he passes on important, interesting and authentic information about the workings of the publishing industry to his readers. The other fascinating aspect of Chowdhury's writing is his ability to evoke a sense of place and time. As always, he has created multilayered characters. His prose has the crispness of "silao khaja" and sweetness of "Sasaram's belgrami". For the uninitiated, *khaja* and *belgrami* are famous Bihari delicacies.

Abdullah Khan is a Mumbai-based novelist, screenwriter, literary critic and banker



THE TIME OF THE PEACOCK
By SIDDHARTH CHOWDHURY
Aleph, ₹499

Bookseller's love story in wartime Paris shows past is never behind us



Sridhar Balan

review

Everyone has a story and sometimes this story is made up of several stories culminating in one major narrative. This narrative is what we tell ourselves and so often that we believe it. Not only does it promote a perception of ourselves but more importantly, it's how we want others to perceive us. This narrative not only shapes our self-concept but also helps us in approaching relationships, situations and decision-making.

Charlotte Foret, the main protagonist in our story has such a narrative. It helps her and her young Vиви to survive not only the latter stages of the war but also lead a more fulfilling life after liberation.

Charlotte works in a bookstore in Paris in 1944 and virtually runs it as the owner is called up to the front, captured by the Germans and sent to a labour camp. The bookshop, *Librairie de Bruyere*, owned by her father's old friend Etienne de la Bruyere, has been her favourite haunt since childhood and it was only logical that she would begin to work there

after her master's degree in English literature from the Sorbonne. The shop like other bookshops in Paris before the war, had become a focal point for cultural interaction. But the war changed all this and the Nazi Occupation of Paris changed it even further. Her father, a left-wing publisher with his own imprint, Editions Aumont, could not bear to compromise the integrity of his imprint under the Nazis. He preferred the option of closing down his imprint rather than make a "deal with the devil". He had managed to flee before being arrested. This was similar to the closure of the iconic "Shakespeare & Co" bookshop by its owner Sylvia Beach in protest against the Nazi Occupation of Paris.

But Charlotte could not exercise that option. She was not the owner of the shop but even more importantly, the shop had to be kept open by her and her assistant Simone to earn whatever meagre income they could to eke out a bare living in difficult times. But running the bookshop under the

watchful eyes of the Nazis was fraught with danger. There is a 'Liste Otto' or Otto List, an official list of French books banned under the Nazi Occupation. Stocking of books on the list in the shop, would invite confiscation, arrest and closure of the shop. It could also mean transportation to a concentration camp.

While Charlotte hoped she may be spared the last option as she was Catholic, Simone was a Jew, who had to have the yellow six pointed Star of David sewn prominently on her jacket and risked instant arrest and deportation. Yet, both Charlotte and Simone kept a few of the books in the Otto List scattered around the shop, their subtle gesture of defiance.

The moment of reckoning comes when a German officer of the Wehrmacht becomes a regular visitor to the shop. He is polite, quiet, speaks French and is always browsing. Charlotte is with her daughter Vиви, a badly malnourished Vиви for there is almost nothing to eat in the stricken city. While Charlotte is fearful of the German's presence, he seems to be fond of books and reading. One day the officer comes to the cash till with a book in his hands. Mechanically, she runs up the bill and gives him the change. It's then she notices the book. It's by Stefan Zweig with a section on Freud. Books by Jews and on Jews are forbidden and this is both! While Feldman does

not mention the title, we can safely conclude it's *The World of Yesterday*. Charlotte feels it's a test and is fearful of arrest. The German reassures her and they enter into a conspiracy of silence.

Now begins an intense relationship with the Nazi. She learns that he is Julian Bauer, a doctor more given to saving people than exterminating them. But it is his kindness towards Vиви that wins Charlotte's heart. Finding her sick and malnourished, he brings medicines and food for her. He tells Charlotte that Germans are a much better people than what is

portrayed by the Nazis. Deprived of love ever since Laurent, Charlotte's husband and Vivi's father got killed in the car, Charlotte enters into a passionate affair and finds Julian is circumcised! He soon confesses that he is a Jew and is in the German army with false papers.

While powerless to prevent a Jew professor from arrest in the shop, Julian does come through with help for Simone when she is arrested for wearing the Star of David with press studs rather than it being sewn on. He manages to send a food packet for her but is unable to prevent her transportation to a camp.

As Germany begins to lose the war and the Nazis begin leaving Paris, Julian hatches up a desperate plan to save Charlotte and Vivi. He drives them to a deportation camp for Jews at Drancy, a nearby town. That's the last Charlotte sees of him. When the camp is liberated, Charlotte and Vivi are mistaken for Jews and Charlotte allows the deception to continue.

Along with Vivi, she is finally sponsored by Horace Field an American publisher in New York and a friend of her father's. He runs the publishing house Gibbon & Field where she is employed as a senior editor on the strength of knowing four languages.

In New York, Charlotte becomes a naturalised American but her past continues to haunt her. She is

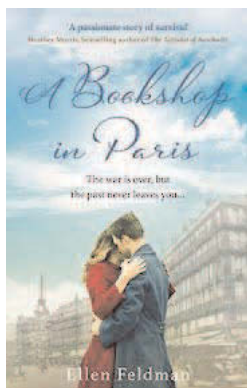
fearful of being denounced as a "collabo" or collaborator with the enemy. She had met Simone in Paris after she had been freed and their relationship was never the same as Simone resented her relationship with Julian. Her guilt over Julian continues after she learns that he has escaped and is living in exile in Bogota. Though she gives a good character certificate to the Jewish rabbi in Bogota, it's Julian who is unable to bear his tormented past and commits suicide. Charlotte is haunted by his memory as he wills his medical certificate from the University of Heidelberg to her.

She finally confesses the details of their wartime life in Paris to Vivi and tells her they are not Jewish.

Encouraged by Horace who has fallen for her and who himself has a past during the war which rendered him a paraplegic, she leaves for a two week tour to France to source manuscripts and to finally lay the ghosts of her past.

Fast paced, the book, though a work of fiction, has been well researched and with historical sources cited. It comes with a list of questions for reading club discussions.

The writer is a senior publishing industry professional who has worked with OUP and has been a senior consultant with Ratna Sagar Books



A BOOKSHOP IN PARIS
By ELLEN FELDMAN
Simon & Schuster, ₹399

SHORT TAKES

Footballer Thapa tests +ve in Doha

New Delhi: India midfielder Anirudh Thapa has tested positive for Covid-19 and is under quarantine in a separate room in the team hotel in Doha.

Thapa tested positive on Wednesday, a day before India lost 0-1 to Asian champions Qatar in their joint World Cup and Asian Cup qualifiers in Doha. "Yes, Thapa tested positive and he is isolated (from other team members)," All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das said. The 23-year-old Chennaiyin FC player will be tested again for the virus in a few days. He has played more than 20 matches for India. India are already out of contention for a World Cup berth but remain in the reckoning for the 2023 Asian Cup. — PTI

Docs say Milkha stable and better

Chandigarh: Legendary Indian sprinter Milkha Singh, who is battling Covid-19 in the ICU of PGIMER here, is stable and his condition is "better than yesterday", the hospital said on Saturday. The 91-year-old, who is being closely monitored by a team of three doctors, is still on oxygen support. "On the basis of all the medical parameters today, that is June 5, his condition has been observed better than yesterday," Prof Ashok Kumar, official spokesperson of PGIMER, said in a statement. The top hospital had on Friday said that Milkha was "better and more stable". Milkha's family also issued a statement through a spokesperson that the iconic athlete "is stable and doing well, but still on oxygen." "Please ignore the rumours floating around. It's false news," the spokesperson said.

Indian-origin girl shines at US Open

San Francisco: Megha Ganne, an American teen amateur with Indian parentage, continued to hold the spotlight with an even par round on the second day to sail into the weekend rounds in tied-third place at the US Women's Open here. The 17-year-old Ganne, who came into the Major after battling through a 3-for-1 play-offs in the qualifiers last month, had three birdies and three pars. She also had three bogeys in the last seven holes on 12th, 15th and 18th at The Olympic Club. Yuka Saso of the Philippines took the 36-hole lead with rounds of 69-67 and if she wins on Sunday, she will be of the same exact age as the tournament's youngest all-time champion Inbee Park. Park was 19 years, 11 months and 17 days old when she captured this title 13 years ago. — PTI

Ex-umpire persists with racism claims

London: Former English umpire John Holder has hit out at England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) over the latter's statement that he and his colleague Ismail Dawood have withdrawn their claim of institutional racism. Holder accused the ECB of being "disingenuous" and "misleading" following their racial discrimination claim. The duo had announced their intention to sue the ECB in December after alleging that their careers as umpires had been affected by institutional racism. "Our case against the ECB has been beaten on a legal technicality. I haven't withdrawn any of the claims I made," Holder said. — PTI

LA Clippers force game 7 vs Dallas

Los Angeles: Kawhi Leonard tied his postseason career high with 45 points as the Los Angeles Clippers beat the Dallas Mavericks 104-97 on Friday to stave off elimination and force game seven in their Western Conference NBA series. The Clippers kept their season alive by winning in front of an almost full house at Dallas' American Airlines Center, marking the first time in NBA history that the road team has won the first six games in a best-of-seven series. Game seven is Sunday where the Mavericks have won three games. — AFP

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CZECH POUNCE

Krejcikova of Czech Republic stuns 5th seed Svitolina

Paris, June 5: Novak Djokovic moved effortlessly into the French Open fourth round for the 12th successive year on Saturday, setting up an intriguing duel against Italian teenager Lorenzo Musetti. In women's, Elina Svitolina (fifth seed) went down to Barbora Krejcikova of Czech Republic.

World number one Djokovic, the champion in Paris in 2016 and chasing a 19th Grand Slam title, brushed aside 93rd-ranked Ricardas Berankis of Lithuania 6-1, 6-4, 6-1. Djokovic is bidding to be the first man in more than half a century to win all four majors on multiple occasions.

DJOKOVIC TO MEET TEEN SENSATION

Next up for the Serb is 19-year-old Musetti after the 76th-ranked Italian fired 50 winners past compatriot Marco Cecchinato in a 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 victory.

He becomes just the sixth man since 2000 to make the fourth round of a Slam on debut.

"I have practised with Novak so I know a little bit about his game. There will be more tension, but it's what I have been working for since childhood," said Musetti.

"I really like how he plays. He's got a lot of fire-power from both forehand and backhand," Djokovic said ahead of a first meeting with Musetti.

Fellow Italian teen Jannik Sinner, a quarter-finalist in 2020, also made it to the second week, easing past Sweden's Mikael Ymer 6-1, 7-5, 6-3.

NADAL IN FOURTH ROUND FOR 16TH TIME

Defending champion Rafael Nadal reached the fourth round for the 16th time with his third win of 2021 over Britain's Cameron Norrie.



Czech Republic's Barbora Krejcikova serves the ball to Ukraine's Elina Svitolina during their third round match at the Roland Garros in Paris on Saturday. Krejcikova won 6-3, 6-2. — AFP

Nadal, chasing a 14th Roland Garros title and record-setting 21st Grand Slam, won 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 and goes on to face Italian teenager Jannik Sinner for a place in the last eight.

The third-seeded Spaniard, who now has a record in Paris of 103 wins against just two losses since his 2005 debut, defeated Sinner in the quarter-finals at last year's tournament.

ONLY THREE TOP-10 WOMEN LEFT

Krejcikova of the Czech Republic reached the last 16 for the second successive year with a 6-3, 6-2 victory over three-time quarter-finalist Svitolina (fifth seed).

World number 33 Krejcikova goes on to face former US Open champion Sloane Stephens for a place in the quarter-finals.

"I am super happy, most of my shots were amazing," said the Czech who is on an eight-match winning streak after capturing a maiden singles title in Strasbourg last week.

Stephens, the 2018 runner-up in Paris, defeated Czech 18th seed Karolina Muchova 6-3, 7-5. Fourth seed Sofia Kenin, the runner-up in 2020 and the highest seed left, came back to beat fellow American Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-1, 6-4.

The top three seeds, Ashleigh Barty, Naomi Osaka and Aryna Sabalenka all failed to get beyond the third round.

In all, only four of the top 10 made the third round, the fewest in 20 years.

Serena Williams, seeded seventh, plays her last 16 match on Sunday.

Eighth seed and defending champion Iga Swiatek has made the third round for the loss of just seven games. — AFP

RESULTS

Men (Third round): Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Ricardas Berankis (LTU) 6-1, 6-4, 6-1; Rafael Nadal (ESP x3) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-3, 6-3, 6-3; Lorenzo Musetti (ITA) bt Marco Cecchinato (ITA) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3; Jannik Sinner (ITA x18) bt Mikael

Ymer (SWE) 6-1, 7-5, 6-3; Diego Schwartzman (ARG x10) bt Philipp Kohlschreiber (GER) 6-4, 6-2, 6-1; Jan-Lennard Struff (GER) bt Carlos Alcaraz (ESP) 6-4, 7-6 (7/3), 6-2.

Women (third round): Ons Jabeur (TUN x25) bt Magda Linette (POL) 3-6, 6-0, 6-1; Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Karolina Muchova (CZE x18) 6-3, 7-5; Barbora Krejcikova (CZE) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x5) 6-3, 6-2; Sofia Kenin (USA x4) bt Jessica Pegula (USA x28) 4-6, 6-1, 6-4; Marta Kostyuk (UKR) bt Varvara Gracheva (RUS) 6-1, 6-2; Iga Swiatek (POL x8) bt Anett Kontaveit (EST x30) 7-6 (7/4), 6-0.

Samba boys on a roll

Porto Alegre (Brazil), June 5: Star forward Neymar scored a retaken penalty as Brazil maintained their perfect start to South American World Cup qualifying with a 2-0 win over Ecuador on Friday.

Richardlison had given Brazil the lead on 64 minutes and Neymar sealed the win deep into injury time, but only after another VAR farce.

Referee Alexis Herrera initially gave a free-kick against Gabriel Jesus after contact between him and Angelo Preciado in the Ecuador area five minutes from time.

But after an interminable four-minute VAR review, he changed his mind and awarded a penalty.

Neymar stuttered in his run-up but Ecuador goalkeeper Alexander Dominguez wasn't fooled and easily saved his weak shot.

Ecuador were then down the other end attacking when Herrera blew his whistle and brought the game back for encroachment by Dominguez.

Neymar retook the penalty and this time sent Dominguez the wrong way.

The slapstick ending could not mask a deserved victory for Brazil, who now top the qualification table by four points from unbeaten Argentina, with Ecuador third, two points further back.

Predictably, Brazil dominated the early possession with 75 percent of the ball in the first quarter of an hour.

But it wasn't until 20 minutes that they first threatened with Richardlison millimeters away from turning home a whipped inswinging Neymar freekick.

Moments later Richardlison played Gabriel in on goal but Dominguez was out quickly to smother his poked effort.

Ecuador were their usual physical selves but showed little of the



Brazil's Neymar (right) celebrates with Lucas Paqueta after scoring his team's second goal against Ecuador during a World Cup qualifying match at Beira-Rio stadium in Porto Alegre. — AP

attacking verve that had seen them score 13 goals in their previous three matches.

Neymar in particular felt the full force of Ecuador's muscular approach.

Brazil thought they'd gone in front three minutes before the break when Gabriel converted a right wing cross from Danilo but Ecuador were saved by a narrow offside call.

A minute later Dominguez had to scoop behind a rasping long-range drive from Neymar.

Ecuadoran chances were few and far between, with fullback Preciado blazing over from 20 yards on 58 minutes.

Brazil coach Tite had seen enough and brought on forward Gabriel Jesus for defensive midfielder Fred, who was making his first appearance for the Selecao since 2018.

The switch paid instant dividends. After Dominguez saved low to his right from Neymar, he was poorly beaten on 64 minutes at his near post by a shot from

Richardlison.

It was one-way traffic and Marquinhos headed over the bar before Dominguez made partial amends for his earlier clanger, saving low to his right to deny Gabriel Jesus and then blocking a shot from Gabriel with his foot. Gabriel, whose nickname is Gabigol, then headed wide of an empty net from Richardlison's cross on a lightning counter-attack after Dominguez made a rash dart out of his area. — AFP

ITALY CRUISE PAST CZECHS IN WARM-UP

Bologna, June 5: A week before they kick off Euro 2020 in Rome, Italy crushed the Czech Republic 4-0 in Bologna on Friday, keeping an eighth straight clean sheet.

Ciro Immobile, Nicolò Barella, Lorenzo Insigne and Domenico Berardi all scored for the hosts who will open the Euro against Turkey next Friday.

In the absence of Paris Saint-Germain midfielder Marco Verratti, who is nursing an injured knee, Jorginho, a Champions League winner with Chelsea, and Barella quickly set the tempo for Italy. Italy's strikers Lorenzo Insigne and Ciro Immobile wasted early chances, before Immobile of Lazio broke the deadlock in the 3rd minute. — AFP

SPAIN AND PORTUGAL IN DULL DRAW

Madrid, June 5: Spain and Portugal drew 0-0 in a friendly warm up for the European Championship in a friendly at the Metropolitano in Madrid on Friday.

The match was both an occasion to officially launch the two nations launching a joint bid to host the 2030 World Cup and the hosts to test out a new-look defence.

Cristiano Ronaldo had a frustrating night on his first game in Madrid since leaving Real in 2018 and came close to scoring twice and set up a good chance Diogo Jota filed to take advantage of.

Backed up by Joao Felix, Ronaldo was largely neutralised by Barcelona pair Sergio Busquets and Thiago Alcantara in a tight home midfield in front of a remodelled defence. — AFP

WORLD | T20

Cup to be shifted to UAE & Muscat

New Delhi, June 5: The marquee T20 World Cup in October-November is set to be shifted to the UAE and Muscat (Oman) with the BCCI having internally intimated the ICC to go ahead with its preparation due to a tricky Covid-19 situation in India.

While the UAE was always the first back-up option, Oman's capital Muscat has been added as the fourth venue, apart from Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Sharjah, for the tournament that will start in the last week of October. "Yes, the BCCI, during the ICC board meeting, has formally asked for a four-week window to take a final call but, internally, they have said that they would like to keep the hosting rights and wouldn't mind the tournament being held in UAE and Oman," a senior board official, privy to ICC board developments, said.

He said that Muscat has been zeroed in specifically for the preliminary rounds of the 16-team competition, which will also allow the three UAE grounds to get sufficient time to freshen up after 31 IPL games.

"If IPL finishes by October 10, then the UAE leg of World T20 can start off in November which would give three weeks' time to the pitches to be spruced up for the global event. In the meanwhile, the first week can be held

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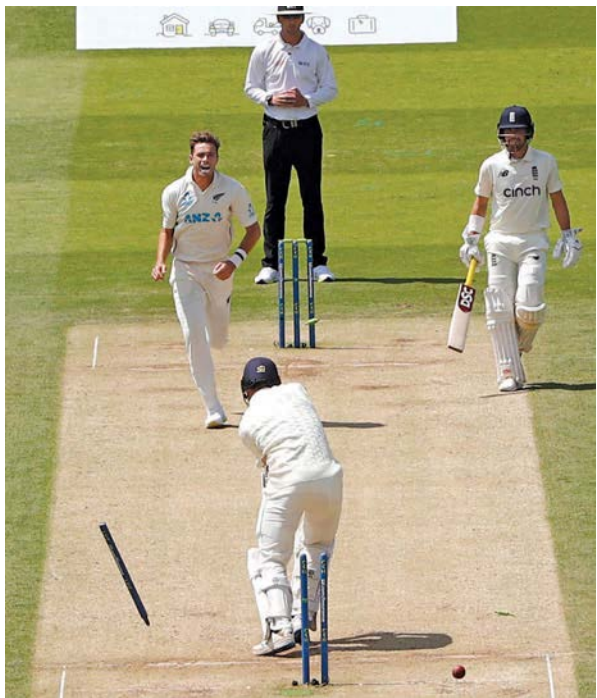
in Oman," he said.

A majority of the ICC board members believe that India is trying to bide time as they take stock of the situation at a time when it is very difficult to predict how things pan out in October-November.

"If you think about it practically, India is now reporting around 120,000 plus cases which is close to one third of what was being reported at the end of April and start of this month.

"But sitting on June 28, if you say 'yes' to holding the World T20 in India, how can you predict the health situation in October if there is a third wave," the seasoned official asked.

The second question is if the BCCI is wary of resuming the eight-team IPL in September in India, how can it hold a 16-team event in the country within a month's time. — PTI



New Zealand pacer Tim Southee celebrates after dismissing England's James Bracey for a duck on the fourth day of the first Test at Lord's on Saturday. — AFP

Southee's six-for puts Kiwis on top

London, June 5: Rory Burns hit a gutsy century to help England recover from a collapse on the fourth day of the first Test against New Zealand at Lord's on Saturday.

England were in danger of following-on but Burns' 132 meant they avoided that embarrassment, although a total of 275 all out was still 103 adrift of New Zealand's first-innings 378 that featured debutant opener Devon Conway's remarkable 200.

Veteran paceman Tim Southee led New Zealand's attack with 6-43 in 25.1 overs to secure yet another place on the Lord's honours board after his 10-wicket haul in 2013.

But the Black Caps would have been in an even stronger position had they not reprieved Burns on 77

and 88 in the first of this two-match series.

Burns was still nine runs shy of his third Test century when he was joined by last man James Anderson.

But their entertaining stand of 52 delayed the tea interval before Southee had Burns, in sight of batting for the whole innings, caught behind to end a stay of nearly eight hours that saw the Surrey left-handed opener face 297 balls including 16 fours and a six. Anderson's presence encouraged Burns, 91 not out when joined by the No 11, to go for his shots, including an extravagant slog-swept six off left-arm quick Neil Wagner. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES (DAY 4, AT TEA)
New Zealand 378 vs England 275 in 101.1 overs (Rory Burns 132, Joe Root 42, Ollie Robinson 42, Tim Southee 6/43).

LECLERC CLAIMS POLE IN CRASH-LADEN QUALIFYING

Bake, June 5: Ferrari's Charles Leclerc claimed pole for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix after a crash-laden, red-flagged qualifying session in Baku on Saturday.

Mercedes' world champion Lewis Hamilton will start alongside Leclerc, who is looking for quick redemption after taking pole in Monaco only to retire from the race when his car broke down on the warm-up lap.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen leads Hamilton by four points in the drivers' championship after winning in Monaco last time out, and is on the second row of Sunday's race with the Alpha Tauri of Pierre Gasly for company.

Q3 was halted with a minute remaining when Gasly's teammate, Japanese rookie Yuki Tsunoda, crashed at turn three, with Carlos Sainz in the following Ferrari taking quick avoiding action, locking his wheels and smashing into a safety barrier. — AFP